

ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS THROUGH BUSINESS EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS"

HAFIZU BARDE

08035944530

MAHMUD MOHAMMED LELE

08036027275

AMINA S. MOH'D

08034774126

Department of Business Education
School of Vocational and Technical Education
Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare. Bauchi State

ABSTRACT

This paper examined the role and relevance of Business Education in achieving sustainable development goals in Nigeria; challenges and prospects. It looked at the concept of sustainable development goals, the concept of Business Education, its objectives as well as its relevance in achieving sustainable development goals in Nigeria. It also highlights some challenges of business education in Nigeria and suggested some prospects that could bring about a workable business education for self-reliance and sustainable development in the country. Finally, the paper concluded that business education is an inevitable tool in achieving sustainable development goals because of its relevance in providing the needed manpower in industries and as well provides its recipient with the skills to be self employed by establishing small scale business which will in turn lead to the sustainable development goals of ending poverty and promoting the well-being of individuals in Nigeria.

Keywords: Business Education, Sustainable Development, Self-Reliant, Challenges, Prospects.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education has remained the most indispensable tool for personal and national transformation. This is because education has been the major instrument for national development for many countries of the world. According to Agi and Yellowe (2013), education is important for the development of human resources, impartation of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude. It is the basis for transformation, industrialization and a highway to global knowledge economy. Education could therefore be viewed as a veritable platform for tackling socio-cultural, economic, and political, scientific and technological challenges facing many nations of the world.

Business education is a core component of Technical and Vocational Education programme and taught by professionally trained male and female business educators in universities and colleges of education in Nigeria. Business education programme is concerned with teaching the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for a successful career in office and business world. Deborah (2015) describes business education as education that enriches basic education for teaching career, entrepreneurship, business understanding, office understanding, office environment and vocational practices. In the view of Onajite (2016), business education encompasses education programme for business, office occupation, economic understanding, entrepreneurship and it seeks to develop in the learners basic skills for personal use in the future. Muhammed (2014) opine that business education programme involves training students in topics relevant to the business world such as accounting and marketing.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 for the year 2030. The SDGs are part of Resolution 70/1 of the United Nations General Assembly, the 2030 Agenda.

The goals are broad based and interdependent. The 17 Sustainable Development Goal's each have a list of targets that are measured with indicators. 193 member nations of the United Nations; Nigeria inclusive, formally took on implementation of these global goals in the year 2016 with hopes of full attainment in every country by 2030.

2.0 THE CONCEPT OF BUSINESS EDUCATION

Business education represents a broad and diverse discipline that is included in all types of educational delivery systems-elementary, secondary and tertiary institutions. It includes education for office occupation, distribution, marketing occupations, accounting, business teaching, business administration, business management, typewriting, stenography and secretarial education or studies.

Business education is often times described as education for and about business whose primary purpose is to prepare individuals for gainful employment in business occupations (Nwosu, 2013). The value of Business Education programme could be determined by its ability to adequately prepare and equip appropriate individuals in such a manner that they could fit into specific jobs or establish themselves upon graduation from school. It is a programme of instruction that consists of two parts as follows:

- a. Office Education: For office careers through initial refreshers and upgrading education leading to employability and advancement in occupations
- b. General Business Education: A programme that provides students with information and competencies which are needed by all in managing personal business world (Osuala, 2014).

Business Education is a field of training in business practices and in specific skills such as accounting, management, information processing, keyboarding, typewriting, record keeping, shorthand. Business education is conducted on two distinct levels: education for administrative support personnel in business and industry, and collegiate education for business administration and for business teacher preparation (Cross, 2008). Business

education therefore, should provide the individuals a foundation to work and live as productive citizens in a changing global economy

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The objectives of business education as identified by Muhammed (2014) is to enable the students to gain experience with skills such as leadership and communication also to provide students with information about all aspects of business. He is also on the opinion that, business education is needed by students in the contemporary world because business education develops life skills for economic success and helps students to develop skills and attitudes needed for career success.

However, in the opinion of the researchers, the relevance of business education in achieving sustainable development in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized because of its potential in equipping the recipients with the relevant skills for self-employment. This is in conformity with the statement made by Ukairo (2017) that business education can be a major instrument for national development because it promotes industrialization through its entrepreneurship offerings. Business education is considered to be one of the crucial vehicles for social equity as well as sustainable development if it is accorded proper status by the government and other stakeholders.

3.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

On September 25, 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted 17 goals which form the universal, integrated and transformative 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. 193 member nations of the United Nations; Nigeria inclusive, formally took on implementation of these global goals in the year 2016 with hopes of full attainment in every country by 2030.

The 17 goals, also referred to as global goals are further broken down into 169 specific targets which fundamentally lean on three crucial domains of environment, economy and society. Each of the goals has a stake in one of these domains with the ultimate goal of ensuring inclusive development for everyone in every city of the world through the mitigation and subsequent eradication of poverty, reduction of hunger and food waste, creation of enabling environments for growth and development, protection of the planet and so on.

Sustainable development means the all-round development of an individual. This tallied with the statement made by China, Lilly and Igbemi (2017) that sustainable development is all

about improving the lives of people. In the opinion of Hansa (2014), sustainable development deals with the carrying capacity of natural system with social, political and economic challenges faced by the society. Sustainable development is believed to be a holistic approach to improving the quality of life through judicious use of available natural resources. In the context of business enterprise, sustainable development means adopting business strategies and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders presently and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future.

The aim of sustainable development is to balance our economic, environmental and social equity and justice. The United Nations development program (2015) in its framework for sustainable development marshaled 17 sustainable development goals. The sustainable development goal also known as transforming our world is a set of seventeen goals to transform the world by 2030. The sustainable development goals include among others to:

- End extreme poverty including hunger
- Promote economic growth and decent jobs within the planetary boundaries
- Achieve gender equality, social inclusion and human rights.
- Achieve health and well-being at all ages.
- Improve agriculture systems and raise rural prosperity
- Empower inclusive, productive and resilient cities.
- Curb human -induced climate change and ensure sustainable energy.
- Secure biodiversity and ensure good management of water, oceans, forests and natural resources.
- Transform governance and technologies for sustainable development.

The main aim of sustainable development is to balance our economic, social and environmental needs. In support of this, Ukairo (2017) noted that for sustainable development to be achieved in any nation there must be a balance between environmental, societal and economic considerations needed to maintain and improve the quality of generations to come. Appreciating the role business education play in economic and social development of the nation, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) identified that one of the objectives of business education is to help the recipient to appreciate the world around him and contribute maximally to the social and economic development of the nation. In order to fully achieve the sustainable development goals of ending extreme poverty including hunger and also promoting economic growth in Nigeria, integrating some of the sustainable development issues into the curriculum should be one of the top priorities of educational planners.

In the context of the study, sustainable development entails equipping the graduates of the Business Education programme with vital skills for self-employment that they can contribute to the economic development of the Nation. This will help to reduce hunger and improve the standard of living of the populace.

4.0 RELEVANCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Business education is very relevant in achieving sustainable development in Nigeria because it educates individuals for and about business and also it provides the needed manpower in industry. According to Osuala (2014), business education is for technology and vocational education students. It helps them to develop personal skills such as recording, retrieving, coordinating, analyzing, organizing and reporting data used for business decisions. It also help business education students to develop personal use skills related to business occupation. The skills acquired in business education can help the recipients to establish small scale business and run it successfully. By doing this, it may likely end poverty and hunger leading to good health and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) affirmed that one of the objectives of TVET is to produce manpower required in industry, commerce and agriculture. Nwokike and Okoli (2015) noted that business education at all levels is aimed at providing training that will equip the recipients with business skills that will enable them function optimally in their working environment. Nwokike and Okoli (2015) further identified some areas where business education is relevant in achieving sustainable development goals in Nigeria which include among others, it

1. Provides the needed manpower in industries
2. Produce graduates that are job creators
3. Provides the recipients' with necessary skill for transition into labour market
4. Promotes economic growth
5. Increase the overall productivity of the labour force
6. Provides effective learning for the recipient for lifelong livelihood
7. Educates individuals for and about business
8. Help the recipients to be producers and distributors of goods and services
9. Help the products of the programme to use the results of production as consumers
10. Help the recipients to contribute maximally to the social and economic development of his nation. Etc.

5.0 CHALLENGES OF BUSINESS EDUCATION

According to Inegbenebor (2015), the following are the major challenges of business education which need to be addressed to attain the desired goals which will inturn lead to the attainment of sustainable development goals in the country.

1. Orientation of school administration. It is important to state that many school administrators are ignorant of the value and potential of business education in national competitiveness and development. Therefore, business education in such schools may not have the level of support that it needs to gain acceptance among students and staff.
2. What to teach and to who? Most teachers or instructors do not know what to teach and the people who are being taught. Inability to distinguish between business education and management will always pose a challenge to business.

3. Who to teach? The skill business is seen by people to be an all comers' game. The popularity of the required preparation to jump in to the train or bandwagon. Yet, the teaching requires special training and experience.
4. Lack of teaching materials: The lack of teaching material especially the right materials that are suitable for the teaching of the skills in Nigerian schools constitutes a challenge in business education.
5. Un-coordinated and weak institutional support for education: The government and its agencies responsible for business development have not addressed the problem of business education at all levels of the educational system.

6.0 THE PROSPECTS OF BUSINESS EDUCATION

Having considered the above challenges of business education, the following recommendations have been drawn in order to help pave for self-reliance and sustained development of the nation:

1. Proper orientation of the students: there is the need for skill edict to have a significant promotional content that would stimulate and sustain the interest of the students in the programme. The issue of wage earner culture should be discouraged by encouraging a self-reliant culture.
2. Proper orientation of school administrators: through intensified support, school administration should strive to educate them on education in order to be well equipped and help transform the country for sustainable development. The national university commission (NUC), National commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and the national board for Technical Education (NBTE), should go beyond prescribing the minimum academic standards with respect to education organizing seminars and workshops with the aim of enhancing the competence of school administrators.
3. Knowledge of what teach and to whom: there should be a forum for educators to brainstorm for the purpose of generating ideas for use by institutions of higher learning.
4. Competent teacher to handle business education: Each university, polytechnic and college of education should build capacity in this area to have meaningful result. A good technique that can be useful in improving teachers' interest to encourage the educational institutions involved to share resources, knowledge and experience in this area through seminars, conference and workshops.
5. Provision of teaching material: Materials should be provided to match current demand of the society. The delivery of skill development programs in the country should be identified with the teachers adequate furnished with repellent materials.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Preparing the graduates for the competitive world of work has been the sole aim of Business education. Skill acquisition is considered indispensable towards self-reliance and sustainable development of the nation. Considering also the role of business education in fostering economic development, the role of business education cannot be overemphasized, due to the uncontrollable high rate of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. From the above discussion therefore, it could be concluded that business education is an inevitable tool in achieving

sustainable development because of its relevance in providing the needed manpower in industries. However, the skill acquired by its recipient could help them to be self employed by establishing small scale business. By doing so, the sustainable development goals of ending poverty and promoting the well-being of individuals could be achieved through business education programme which will eventually lead to sustainable development in Nigeria.

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