



## Business Education in Nigeria: A Tool for Capacity Building for National Development

**N. C. Emeasoba**

*Department of Educational Foundations  
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike*

### Abstract

Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and at the wake of 21<sup>st</sup> century, it became apparent that national development depends on educational advancement, which in turn depends on technological progress. Business Education is a vocational education that prepares beneficiaries for gainful employment and sustainable livelihood. The objectives of business education generally are borne out of the needs of industry, commerce, and society. These objectives are highlighted in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004), the inculcation of the right types of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society; and the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities, both mental and physical, as requirements for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his or her society. This paper examines the role of business education in capacity building for national development such as establishing a small scale business ventures by its graduates, provides knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as a producer and/or consumer of goods and services etc. Finally, some recommendations were made among which is, that government should allocate more funds to business education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria to enhance effective capacity building in our society for national development, teacher-student ratio of 1:30 should be maintained for quality delivery of courses and the need to shun corruption in our society by both the leaders and the led.

(**Keywords:** Business Education, Capacity Building, National Development.)

### Introduction

Development empowers people and promotes important changes in their lives. However, development cannot take place by itself. It requires educated, skilled and competent people. The Business Dictionary.com (2010) explains education as the wealth of knowledge acquired by an individual after studying particular subject matters or experiencing life lessons that provide understanding of

something. It goes further to say that the most common forms of education incorporates studies of variety of subjects. This implies that education comprises different disciplines ranging from general education, agriculture, medicine, engineering, business education and others.

Development is a complex issue, with many different and sometimes contentious definitions. From a general perspective, development

means a progression from a simpler or lower to a more advanced, mature, or complex form or stage. It is also defined as the gradual advancement or growth through series of progressive changes. A basic perspective equates development with economic growth. It is from this perspective that United Nations Development Project (UNDP) in Development Workers in Global Solidarity (2010) defines development as implying to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living and to be able to participate in the life of the community. Development is also seen as a purposeful change in a society that contributes to social and economic well being and advancement of its people without creating any disharmony (UNESCO, 2009). Development is a dynamic process. It empowers people and promotes important changes in their lives. From purely economic perspective, development brings about improvement in human welfare, quality in life and social well being. It is about satisfying the population's needs and wants. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) expressed the need for functional education that has to be relevant, practical for acquisition of appropriate skills and development of competencies as equipment for the individuals to live in and contribute to the development of the country. This calls for the shift from general to vocational education which

business education is a part of. Business Education is a vocational education that is directed towards developing the learner to become productive in teaching, paid employment and self-employment. It prepares beneficiaries for gainful employment and sustainable livelihood. It is a statutory duty of the Nigerian higher education to groom the required human capital through relevant manpower training, abilities, attitudes, skills and knowledge. Business Education which is very vital to the national development of any country, aimed at the production of skilled manpower for self reliance has not been given its rightful place. Agomuo (2004) noted that the perceived weakness of business education programme in Nigeria is lack of creation of conducive training environment which includes: professionally qualified teachers, relevant and adequate instructional materials, up-to-date equipment and tools, adequate funding, proper administration and management of the programme, resource centres and persons.

Promoting Business education programme through a properly coordinated education would help in economic sustainability and national development. Building the necessary capacity to realize this is therefore an important prerequisite. These issues are the focus of this paper.

### **Concept of business education**

Ntukidem (2002) asserted that Business Education is a vocational aspect of education that has a definite role in preparing and equipping students with skills that increase their chances of finding a job after schooling across territorial boundaries and also equips the students with knowledge and skills they need to create their own employment. Business education is concerned with education that seeks to educate individuals for and about business.

Agomuo (2004) defined Business education as a broad field of study consisting of (a) Office Education, a vocational programme that provides office careers, and (b) General Business which provides its trainees with information and competencies needed for managing and using business. Business Education is a major component of vocational education which the National Policy on Education (2004) emphasized. Olowale in Amoor (2010) noted that all vocational programmes of which business is a sub-set, are designed to build in the individuals different skills and knowledge that could enable them to have means of livelihood. Therefore business education prepares students for entry into and advancement in jobs within business and prepares them to also handle their own business and function as intelligent or wise consumers and citizens in a business economy. Therefore, Business Education includes virtually all the

knowledge and skills which holds prospect for gainful employment. It is very vital to national development that is aimed at the production of skilled manpower for self-reliance.

### **Capacity Building through Business Education**

Capacity building is an acquisition of education which prepares individual learner in a gradual process to bring out the best in him towards self reliance. Capacity building can also be seen as planned development of knowledge, outputrate, management, skills, and other capabilities of an organization through acquisition, incentives, technology, and/or training.

Groot and Moolen (2001) noted that Capacity Building is much more than training and includes the following: human resource development, the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them; organizational development, the elaboration of management structures, processes and procedures, not only within organizations but also the management of relationships between the different organizations and sectors (public, private and community); institutional and legal framework development, making legal and regulatory changes to enable organizations, institutions and agencies at all levels and in all sectors to enhance their capacities.

Business Education as that aspect of total education programme provides knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as a producer and/or consumer of goods and services that business offers. It is a very essential ingredient for the success of any enterprise. Nwosu (2008) noted that graduates of business education can develop small scale business ventures which if properly managed are able to keep members of families gainfully employed and generate sufficient income with which to maintain their families and continually improve their standard of living in the society; provides business consultancy services for individual, companies, organizations etc; repair and service computers, electric typewriters, to organizations, companies and business outlets.

### **Business Education and National Development**

Amoor and Udo (2008) noted that Business education is an area of instruction that has been in existence for several decades, and it plays a very significant role in national economic development. Business education has been defined in several ways, most of which highlight its vocational nature. It is a form of vocational education that is directed towards developing the learner to become productive in teaching, paid employment and self-employment (Amoor, 2010). Business education prepares beneficiaries for gainful employment and sustainable

livelihood. It is generally seen as education for and about business. Business education for business is that aspect of vocational education which provides instruction and preparation for office occupations such as secretary, shorthand-typist or stenographer, bookkeeper, data processor, word processor, computer analyst and accountant. On the other hand, education about business provides knowledge and understanding of the economic, financial, marketing, accounting, management system and other branches of business endeavour. In other words, education about business prepares students to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy.

Umezulike and Okoye (2013) considered business education as the key agent of economic and technological development either as a way of developing human capacity, increasing the shield of workforce for modernization, industrialization, and environmental development or as a matter of personal freedom and empowerment of the populace.

Amoor (2010) notes that business education plays a significant role in the economic development by providing knowledge and skills to the learners, thereby, enabling them to adequately impart knowledge into others, and handle sophisticated office technologies and information systems. The goal of business education is primarily to produce competent, skillful and dynamic

business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work. It has as its primary aim, the preparation of people for roles in enterprises such roles could be as employee, entrepreneur and employer or simply as self employed. Vocational and technical skills and competence has been identified (Rufia, 2013) as critical success factors in the actualization of Nigerian Vision 20:2020 which is about Nigeria becoming one of the first 20 economies in the world by the year 2020. Business education holds the prospect of contributing, through its job creation and self-employment packages, for the attainment of vision 20:2020. A gainfully employed individual contributes to GDP per capita, reduces poverty and unemployment which are some of the indices of development.

Ugwuogo (2013) noted that a well trained business educator can successfully be engaged in the following areas:

- Teaching profession from secondary to university level depending on qualification.
- Business enterprise – as a promoter, manager, marketer, account clerk, secretary, word processor, sales representative, broker etc.
- Proprietorship of private schools – primary, secondary, tertiary, computer training institute and so on.

Umezulike and Okoye (2013) noted that the services of business education in the rebranding and economic reformation of Nigeria cannot be an overstatement because the demands of business services are indispensable towards the nation building. It could assist in ensuring stability and sustainability of Nigerian economy in the following areas: personnel services, secretarial services, administrative and managerial services, financial/accounting services, interpersonal relationship services, distributive and marketing services, and entrepreneurial services.

Therefore, there is no gain saying the fact that business education, an aspect of vocational education, is what Nigeria needs most now to help her solve most of her social, economic and developmental problems.

### **Challenges of Business Education**

- **Poor funding:** Many institutions do not have the funds for purchasing the most up to date pieces of equipment needed for effective take off of this technological concepts. Education Trust Fund has been of enormous assistance in raising structures in the institutions. It should extend its services to providing up-to-date equipment. A Business Education graduate must be versatile. Ability to work on most state of the art equipment as regards the demands of the course content is of

paramount importance. (Egbe, 2008).

- Training and re-training of Business Educators is very important so that they can adapt to technological changes in the society.

- The curriculum of Business Education in tertiary institutions needs to be reviewed so as to capture the needs of the organizations in the global world and market so as to fit into the world of work globally. There should also be a monitoring program to ensure that the desired results envisaged in designing the curriculum are achieved. This monitoring should involve both academics and practitioners to create a bridge between the study program (school activities) and the world of work.

- **Power outage:** When modern equipment are made available and once there is lack of electricity supply, it hinders machine usage. This will reduce the quality of practical training of the students.

- **Unqualified Teachers:** Teachers are critical stakeholders in curriculum implementation. The employment of unqualified teachers to teach business courses is a great disservice to quality of business education graduates.

- **Modern Technologies:** Modern office equipment comparable to those used in modern business offices should

be provided for business education programme so that our graduates will be well equipped for office automation with the students – equipment ration of 1:1.

- **Large Class Size:** The high student-teacher ratio affects quality of delivery of practical courses like word processing, data processing, keyboarding and others.

### **Effects of the Challenges on National Development**

As technology changes and advances rapidly, it necessitates correspondingly rapid changes in human resources needed. When the students are trained to meet the challenges of newer technologies they will be able to man Nigeria's vehicle of industrialization. To carry out the transformation process of achieving quality output (graduates) delivery, when our tertiary institutions provides enabling environment with well equipped and sufficient modern up-to-date machines, gadgets and related information technology initiatives the student will acquire practical skills that would reduce unemployment and raise the tone of social and economic development (Usoro, 2010). The teachers are vital instruments in national development and when trained and re-trained in their areas of specialization will update their knowledge and keep abreast with new devices, technological changes and innovations coming up so as to develop the students with the right

skills and knowledge of 21<sup>st</sup> century (UNESCO, 2009).

The review of our educational programmes/curriculum and early introduction of technological knowledge right from our primary schools will help the student to develop critical thinking and knowledge discovery ability and link them to technical and vocational development that will enable them to be self – reliant for national development. Uwadia in Ugwuogo (2013) in agreement with this, maintains that the single most significant complex of social control tools for national development is found in the educational system be it formal or informal. The centre for Global Development (2002) reports that education gives people the skills they need to help themselves out of poverty and into prosperity; with education, people are better prepared to prevent disease and to use health services effectively; when people are self-reliant and earn wages, they in turn, contribute to national economic growth. Education supports the growth of any society, democracy, political stability, allowing people to learn about their rights and acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to exercise them. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) recognizes education as an instrument par excellence for national development. All the restructuring and policy formations in education are aimed at repositioning education for national development. The huge investment many international organizations and

agencies like UNICEF, UNESCO, USAID and DFID, are making in education are in recognition of the role of education in development. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are anchored on the premise that poverty reduction and the provision of basic social services should be at the core of development (Ugwuogo, 2013).

### **Conclusion**

The key role business education plays in economic growth and development makes it an important factor demanding attention of all stakeholders – government, educationists, politicians, social change agents, and so on. There is the need to provide the human capital and physical facilities that would support the achievement of the targeted objectives and provide the needed fund to train and retrain business educators, facilities, equipment and tools critical to the hands-on activities involved in the training. Business education has been identified as a means of tackling poverty and unemployment because it has the potential of engendering development. Since there are fewer job openings than graduates, the major challenge facing the institutions is to equip the graduate with appropriate skills and competencies for self-employment, self-reliance and where possible, employment in the formal sector. It is the possession of these skills needed by the labour market that will enable them to contribute maximally to

national development of the Nigerian nation.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations if implemented will help in increasing the capacity of business education to engender national development:

1. Only qualified business educators should be recruited to teach business education courses at all educational levels. The already recruited ones should as a matter of urgency go for re-training especially in the use of ICTs.
2. Obsolete technologies should give way to computers and other modern ICTs.
3. Computer laboratories should be properly networked for teachers and students to take full advantage of shared printer, shared logic/resources and other resources.
4. Teacher-student ratio of 1:30 should be maintained for quality delivery of practical courses.
5. Government and proprietors should increase funding of business education programme. Also, institutions and business education departments are urged to look for alternative means of funding to augment fund from government and proprietors.
6. There is need to shun corruption in our society by both the leaders and the led.

### References

- Agomuo, E.E. (2004). Cooperative Efforts to Business Teacher Preparations. *Business Education Journal*, 4((2), 25 -36.
- Amoor, S.S. & Udoh, A.A. (2008). The role of secretarial education in Nigerian economic development. *Journal of Educational Research and Development*, 4(2), 291-294.
- Amoor, S.S. (2010). The need to improve teacher quality in business education in Nigerian universities. *International Journal of Education Research*, 11(1), 1-11.
- Business Dictionary.com (2010). What is education? Definition and meaning. Retrieved 30th April, 2015 from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/education.htm>.
- Centre for Global Development (2002). Education and the developing world. Retrieved on 30th April, 2015 from [www.econ.lastate.edu/cordoba/red.pdf](http://www.econ.lastate.edu/cordoba/red.pdf).
- Egbe, R.O. (2008). Business Education in a globalised society: issues, challenges and strategies. *Business Education Journal*, 1(8), 12-17.
- Federal Government of Nigeria (2004). *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: NERC.
- Groot and Moolen (2001). Capacity Building. Retrieved on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2015 from



- <https://www.fig.net/...washington.on....>
- Ntudikem, E.O. (2002). Business education for Sustainable Development. *ABEN Book of Readings*, 1(2), 18-22.
- Nwosu, E.N. (2008). Towards improved capacity building in business education. *Business Education Journal*, 1(8), 25-28.
- Rufai, R.A. (2013). Nigeria's attainment of vision 20:2020 depends on massive vocational and technical skills. *Federal Ministry of Education Weekly Bulletin* 2(58). March 26.
- Ugwuogo, C.C. (2013). Business Education and National Development: issues and challenges. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 3 (4).129. Retrieved on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 from [www.cser.orgjoudex/php/jersarticle/view/434/451](http://www.cser.orgjoudex/php/jersarticle/view/434/451).
- Umezulike, A.N. & Okoye, A.C. (2013). Promoting the stability of the Nigerian Economy through Quality Assurance in Business Education. *ABEN Book of Readings*, 3(1), 181-187.
- UNESCO (2009). Education and national development in Nigeria. Retrieved on April 30, 2015 from <http://community.vanguardngr.com/profiles/blogs/education-and-national-development-in-Nigeria>
- Usoro, E.B. (2010). Developing Human Resources in tertiary Business Education for youth Empowerment and National Development in Nigeria. *Review of Higher Education in Africa*, 2(1), 13-23.