

PROMOTING BUSINESS EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR A GREEN ECONOMY IN AKWA IBOM STATE.

BY

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Abstract

This paper focuses on promoting Business Education Curriculum for creating sustainable society and developing the core and marketable skills and competencies that enable graduates to actively participate in shaping the environment in which they live and work. Business education is described as the education for business and about business. In this paper, concept of Business Education, indices for effective Business Education, problems militating against Business Education for a green economy were fully discussed. Conclusion and recommendations were drawn. It is required in this paper that government, curriculum planners and educational bodies to take these emerging skills need as important in order to structure Business Education curriculum that will promote innovation, creativity, pervert reduction and quality growth. The effort of this restructuring should be to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and provide students with the building blocks they need to live eco-friendly and sustainable live. The education bodies involved should adopt flexibility and ensure that high quality and appropriate skills that benefit broad section of the economy and more opportunity for high productivity are enhanced. There is need for the practicing teachers to undergo in-service training in order to be well equipped with the new skills and modern methodology in order to contribute meaningfully in greening the economy. Businesses outside the schools (informal education) should be incorporated into business education programme in order to help the students play significant role in greening the economy of Akwa Ibom State.

Key Word: Business Education, biodiversity, climate, eco-friendly, mismatch

Introduction

Business Education is described as the education for business and about business. It equips the recipients with innovation and creative skills that would enable them function effectively in the society. It is designed to equip students with the needed skills, knowledge and

capabilities for the promotion of innovation of green technology, conservation of natural resources and to be useful in the world of work. It as equips its recipients with skills for identifying viable business opportunities, viable business management. Asuquo (2018) defined Business Education as a

programme in Vocational Education which offers specialised instruction for office occupation and general business orientation. The author added that the philosophy of business in Nigeria is predicted on the fact that every citizen is a participant on the nation economic activities either as a producer or consumer of goods and services and that every citizen must be conscious of his/her contribution to the economic wellbeing of the nation. Nwanewezi (2015) described Business Education as part of general Education, an encompassing Education for office occupation, business teaching, business administration and economic understanding. Abdulkadir (2015) noted that one remarkable characteristic of business education is that its products can function independently as self-employed and employers of labour. A critical examination of the above definitions of Business Education shows certain things in common which include:

1. Business Education is concerned with the equipping the individuals with skills and competencies required for participation in the business world.
2. These skills may be for personal use, such as enabling the individuals to be good consumers of the products of the business enterprises.
3. The skills may be for entry into the business community as employer or employee.

From the above definitions, there is need for business education programme to be

periodically evaluated and restructured so as to meet up with the need of the learner and the society. It is obvious according to Asuquo (2018) that many other expectations are placed on Business Education. For instance, a review of economic :

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growing demand for business education skills in the context of the green economy. Business Education should prepare students for the needs of a green economy. That is preparing students to contribute to the wider sustainability agenda and facilitate learning about planetary boundaries, physical limits and enable students to develop the skills to work the problems and uncertainty around them. Students should develop desirable attributes with people in the local community and empower them to respond effectively, creatively, intelligently and jointly to challenges and opportunities. These business skills according to Loiseau (2016) will help to drive the transition within individual organisation. Some of these skills required to support the transition are relatively new. The author further stated some of the new skills to include skills supporting resource efficiency (recycling, remanufacturing, maintenance, eco-design), low carbon industry, climate change and skills to manage natural assets. These skills according Loiseau (2016) could be obtained through the introduction of environmental and Business Economics Education.

Observation shows that there is a mismatch that exists between industry demand and education system after, a mismatch that exist in curriculum sustainability which may be required as a curriculum issue. These create barriers for organisations as well as job seekers in the context of green economy. Allen and Velden (2017) defined Business Education mismatch as lack of coherence between skills required and offered for a given job. These mismatches according to Loiseau (2016) have led to massive rate of unemployment and underemployment because of lack of communication skills, strategic thinking skills, research and development skills, poor manpower, inadequate academic facilities, poor funding, lack of introduction of other relevant courses. This arises as a result of failure of Business Education programme to prepare students for the job market. Therefore, the match between the required skills and the skills provided in schools plays a crucial role for economic growth. The effort should be to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and the changing face of the economic (socially undesired growth rate, general price instability, inequality distribution of income and balance of payment disequilibrium), social, political, among others. Merino-Saum (2019) added that humanity is likely to face serious challenges in the coming decades because of the above mentioned problems. Merino-Saum (2019) posited that these problems cannot be tackled in isolation

because they are all interconnected. The economic system right now according to the authors is not fit enough to deliver a good balance of environmental and social goals. MacVaugh and Norton (2019) postulated that the economic system is incentivise overconsumption, degrade communal bonds and destroy natural wealth. This, according to the authors is unavoidable because this is how our economy has evolved to operate. Therefore, to solve these problems, certain reforms and restructuring have to be made in areas such as curriculum design, curriculum development, introduction of Business Economic Education, Environmental Education and generic business practices in order to promote Business Education and develop core and marketable skills and competences that enable individuals to actively participate in shaping the environment in which they live and work. These invariably will lead to a green economy.

Concepts of a Green Economy

A green economy is an economy that aims at reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities for sustainable development without degrading the environment and enhancing poverty reduction among others. Trigwell (2018) defined a green economy as a low carbon industry, resource efficient and socially inclusive. The author further stated that it facilitates sustainable development, resource and energy-efficiency, creates

decent work and green jobs, respect planetary boundaries or ecological limits or scarcity and involves in integrated decision-making. Mannuele (2015) posited that, for an economy to be green, it must not only be efficient, but also fair. Fairness according to the author implies recognising global and country level equity dimensions, particularly in assuring a just transition to an economy that is low-carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. Wilson (2014) posited that a feature distinguishing it from prior economic regimes is the direct valuation of natural capital and ecological services as having economic value. In a green economy, Hendari (2016) stated that growth in employment and income are driven by public and private investment in such economic activities, infrastructure and the assets that allow reduced carbon emissions and pollution, enhanced energy and resource efficiency and prevention of loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services are encouraged. The vision of a green economy is the one that will provide property for all within the ecological limits of planet. This vision according to Sterling (2017) is guided by five principles which are wellbeing, the efficiency and sufficiency, justice, the planetary boundaries and good governance.

In the wellbeing principle, a green economy enables all people to create and enjoy property. This type of economy is people-centered. Its purpose is to create

genuine, shared property, focuses on growing wealth that will support wellbeing. This wealth is not merely financial but includes the full range of human, social, physical and natural capitals, prioritise investment and adds to the sustain

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~~knowledge and education needed for all~~
people to prosper among others.

The efficiency and sufficiency principle is geared to support sustainable consumption and production. An inclusive green economy is low carbon, resource conserving, diverse and circular. It embraces new models of economic development that address the challenges of creating prosperity within planetary boundaries; recognizes that there must be a significant global shift to limit consumption of natural resources to physically sustainable levels if we are to remain within planetary boundaries, subsidies with true costs to society, through mechanisms where the polluter pays where benefits accrue to those who deliver inclusive green outcome.

The justice principle promotes equity within and between generations. It is inclusive and non-discriminatory. It shares decision-making, and especially supports women empowerment, promote the equitable distribution of opportunity and outcome, takes a long term perspective on the economy, creating wealth and resilience that serve the interests of future citizens while also

acting urgently to tackle today's multi-dimensional poverty and injustice, promotes empowerment of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) among others.

In planetary boundaries principle, the green economy safeguards, restores and invests in nature, recognises and nurtures diverse values-functional values of providing goods and services that underpin societies and nature's ecological value that underpin all life itself; acknowledges the limited sustainability of natural capital with other capitals, employing the precautionary principle to avoid loss of critical natural capital and breeding ecological limits, invest in protecting, growing and restoring biodiversity, soil, water, air and nature systems.

In the good governance principle, the green economy is guided by integrated, accountable and resilient institution. An inclusive green economy is evidenced-based. Its norms and institutions are interdisciplinary, deploying both sound science and economics along with local knowledge for adaptive strategy. It is supported by institutions that are integrated, collaborative and coherent-horizontally across sectors and vertically across governance levels and with adequate capacity to meet their respective roles in effective, efficient and accountable ways; requires public participation, prior informed consent,

transparency social dialogue, democratic accountability and freedom from vested interests in all institutions. The green economy is a universal and transform

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quo. It requires a fundamental shift in government priorities. Realizing this change is not easy but it is necessary if we are ever to achieve the green economy.

Problems militating against business education for a green economy

Poor curriculum design/lack of proper implementation: Curriculum design is a rewarding process which enable teacher to have professional conversations about the intended and taught the curriculum. Curriculum design provides educators with the opportunity to discuss what is essential. Unfortunately, this sometimes does not hold true because of some hindrances. These barriers to curriculum design include proper panning, budget allocations, scheduling, tradition, inability together required materials, communication, constant change, policies written in vague terms among others. On the other hand, lack of proper implementation, shortage of specialised teachers, unconducive learning environments, poor infrastructural facilities and lack of funds, political interference, inadequate remuneration Therefore, school leaders and curriculum planners should utilise websites and online communication in order to share the curriculum design process.

Poor teacher preparation: Training, planning and coaching are the pillars in which teachers preparations are built on. This is important because it will improve teaching skills, enhance students learning and performance, effective use of time, increase confidence, demonstrate passion and skills and brings fewer disciplinary issues. These will help to manage problems more quickly and more efficiently. The most important is the content and pedagogical knowledge of the teachers. Other problems include too many irrelevant activities to be performed within a limited time and with materials so diverse that thorough completion of the programme is impossible, under funding of the programme especially on the new reforms, lack of necessary instructional materials or resources could also affect the effectiveness of the business education programme, the role of the state and designing of appropriate government policy mixes and dealing with distributional concerns and impacts, weak regulatory framework towards achieving a green economy, lack of institution-community partnership, the problem of producing consumer graduates, the problem of achieving radical and not just incremental sustainable technological change. All these pose serious problems to sustainable green economy. These problems could be addressed through the following indices.

Indices for effective business education programme

1. **Green Curriculum design:** As a response to the growing state policy priority around sustainability, there is need to run a new institutional change programme.

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Education taking a holistic view to embedding sustainability within the curriculum. Green Business Education is an effort that supports global sustainability in every way. Trigwell (2018) maintained that a green Education begins with the future in mind, designing a learning experience for students that will prepare them to lead the world toward a healthier, cleaner, more sustainable future. Therefore, there should be curriculum restructuring to meet the current needs of the state in order to bridge the gap between industry demand and educational system. Greening the curriculum will prepare graduates who are ready to tackle 21st century challenges such as climate change, social inequalities unsustainable lifestyle and the urgent need to switch to a renewable energy-based economy. Greening the curriculum means being open to nature as teacher, the outdoors as classroom and sustaining life for all future generations as the most important objective in our curriculum. The green curriculum encourages a greater understanding of the environment and ecological issues. Students are encouraged to practice

what they learn by creating their own growing spaces.

2. Curriculum implementation:

Curriculum goals, intention and objective of the school have to do with selection of learning experience, organisation of experiences and finally specification of evaluation procedures. Smithers (2017) assured that universities are to produce graduates that are grounded in generic skills and quality Education for the state economic development. Despite the laudable philosophy of Business Education programme in recent times, observation has shown that Business Education graduates suffer labour market discrimination because of lack of adequate skills, knowledge, competencies. Curriculum therefore should reflect what works, as opposed to what is popular. This implies that the curriculum content implementation in Business Education should enable business students to attain the society's expectation and perhaps most importantly their needs, creating impact on emerging and developing on economies. That is strengthening vocational skills necessary for the promotion of innovation, creativity, green technology and conservation of natural resources, poverty reduction and quality growth among others.

3. Implementation of Environmental Education:

Environmental Education refers to organised effort to teach how natural environment function and how human beings can manage behaviour and ec

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Environmental Education as a subject helps students to understand environment sustainability. This can be one of the solutions in the midst of the global warming that widely impacts on the life of human being. Depdiknas (2013) postulated that Environmental Education increases awareness that relates with the natural dependency in economy, social, politics and ecology across cities, provide everyone with opportunities to acquire knowledge, values, responsibility and skills that are required to protect and improve the quality of environment, create new attitudes of individuals, groups, society as a whole. One of the effective strategies in implementing Environmental Education in teaching and learning according to the author is contextual approach. This approach develop a way of thinking that students will lean more meaningfully by working alone, finding by themselves and constructing their own knowledge and skill, carry out inquiry-based activities (by cycles of observing, questioning, hypothesizing, collecting data and making conclusion), develop students' curiosity by questioning,

create learning community (learning in groups, small groups, peer groups or hosted experts), model the examples of teaching and learning (teachers being the models in doing something such as seeding plants and recycling), reflect at the end of the class (such as direct statement on what is learned during the teaching and learning, comments and suggestions of students on the teaching and learning, discussion or evidence of student work) and conduct authentic assessment such as assessing activities and reports.

4. **Teacher education/in-service training:** Teacher education focuses on the impartment of training to the teachers with the main purpose of achieving the desired academic outcome. This is very important because they play important role in leading to effective growth and development of the students. In-service training on the other hand acts as a catalyst for a teachers' effectiveness. It is a way of updating teachers' skills and knowledge for improving teaching and learning which lead to better job performance. Teacher education according to Trigwell (2018) is divided into pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher education. Pre-service teacher education is the type of teacher education that is responsible for the fundamental background

grooming of aspiring teachers for the acquisition of substantive foundation of curricular contents and pedagogy as well as professional values expected of a teacher in whose hands the future of the students and the nation

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green economy can be well transmitted to all students by a teacher. Teachers should be aware of right curriculum, pedagogy and discipline to infuse the concept of sustainability in students' life. By exposing students to nature and allowing them to learn and play outside, foster sensitivity, appreciation and respect for the environment. For the society to have green economy, institutions of teacher education have to have impacts. This is considered important because they have a way of influencing national curriculum in the theorizing and expatiating on the curriculum of schools which were formulated and designed by the Ministry of Education. Institutions of teacher education should have unrestricted opportunities to reorient their courses to include the study of any emerging theme. (UNESCO, 2015) stated that the institution should work hard by not only equipping the teacher with the concept into the initial teacher training programme but should endeavour to acquaint prospective teachers with the basic understanding of method, strategies and techniques

required to educate for sustainability, following the successful completion of their course. It will help teachers to face new challenges as in the case of business education for a green economy.

5. **Business Economic Education:** This is a field in economic that deals with issues such as business organisation, management, expansion and strategy. McMeawn (2012) posited that business economic education includes how and why corporations expand, the impact of the entrepreneurs, the interactions between corporation and the role of government in regulation. The aim of this education is to help the students in establishing relationships between difference economic factors such as the market structure, income, interest rate, exchange rate, inflation, wages, demand and supply, law and policies, among others.
6. **Generic Business Practices:** Here, students need to be given opportunity to develop generic attributes besides disciplinary knowledge. This includes communication skills, problem-solving skills, computer literacy skills, information literacy skills, ability and willingness to learn and teamwork. All business will also need to respond to the transition to a green economy, as they consider the impact on their goods and services and how

they produce these. Increased resource efficiency can increase profits and competitiveness making Nigeria industries stronger and more resilient. All workers will need the abilities:

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effectively to the shift to greener business practices. All businesses need strategic business management to build resource-efficient business models leading to bottom line benefits and in preparation for new regulation, it requires skill in financial accounting services around carbon and natural environment accounting and also require skills to design and adopt technologies, products and processes increasing resources.

7. **Provision of Academic Facilities:** Facilities have been observed as a potent factor to qualitative business education. According to Oni (2012), facilities constitute a strategic factor in organisational functioning. This so because it determines to a very large extent, the smooth functioning of any educational system. Oni further stated that their availability, adequacy and relevance influence efficiency and productivity. Fairombi (2018) posited that the wealth of a nation or society could determine the quality of education in that land, emphasizing that a society that is wealthy will establish good school and employ quality teachers. Learning facilities are needed to help such students learn

with ease, thus bring about academic achievement.

8. Proper Funding/green Financing:

The word funding is the act of providing resources usually in form of money (financing) or other values such as effort or time for a project, a person, a business or any other private or public institutions. Funding of Business Education remains one of the important resources that are needed to manage the programme, improve the standard of education and are associated with students' outcome. Lack of funding can alter the opportunities for students to meet their academic potential. It means an inability to invest in what matter to students. Green financing is a subset of sustainable finance and focuses on promoting and facilitating the funding of activities, policies and businesses that positively impact the environment, including the reduction of carbon use and adoption of more climate-resilient systems.

Conclusion

The success of Business Education in greening the economy in Akwa Ibom State hinge on qualitative manpower, efficient implementation of curriculum, adequate funding, favourable government policy and motivation. Business Education should align its curricula to labour market demands in order to provide individuals with sufficient skills

necessary to access good jobs. There must be in place a framework for pulling together resources and expertise of Business Education. This will create understanding, corporation and good academic

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education issues. Business Education has to be fully launched into the industrial age especially now that business preparedness has become increasingly paramount.

Recommendations:

1. To address the current socio-economic changes taking place worldwide, Business Education must be ready to amend and revise some of its curricula where necessary so as to effectively become a driving factor for the implementation of socio-economic development strategies. Merino-Saum (2019) lamented the gap between policy decisions in the field of Business Education and implementation of those policies.
2. Ensure high quality and appropriate Business Education skills: For business education to meet the economic, social and political trends of the time, the programme must be taught by qualified business educators or professionals.
3. Promotion and proper coordination of business education, industry and work environment: As a matter of urgency, there is need to improve the status and attractiveness of Business Education by professionalising it. Flexible and workable policies on business

education and proper recruitment pattern should be put in place, to increase skill levels, provide better access to delivery of learning for all.

4. Encourage continuing Business Education: The greatest weakness in the execution of business education is disjointed training and lack of continuity of the programme from primary school level to tertiary institutions on-the-job training. Government is good at formulating very viable policies and goals for the betterment of its citizens but the question is to what extent do the planners and implementers ensure that programme starts from infancy stage to fully completed and assessment stage without creating gaps along the line
5. Adoption of uniform standard of training and certificate: There is need for government to have analysis of the number of Business Education institution and training centers. The essence is to increase the mobility of training and occupation. There is need for government to put in place proper machinery in order to standardise, monitor and control of these certificates.

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