

FUNCTIONAL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION AS MEANS OF ACHIEVING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines the place of functional business and entrepreneurial education within the context of good governance and sustainable development. The paper takes a critical look at the concepts of business, entrepreneurship education and sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper also looked at the synergy between business and entrepreneurship education, good governance and sustainable development. The paper stresses the fact that the growth and development of a nation are hinged on the level of resourcefulness of the people and good leadership which is a function of the quality of purposeful educational attempts. The paper notes that good governance is the major prerequisite for achieving sustainable economic development in Nigeria. The paper concluded that good governance and sustainable development are achievable through the infusion of teaching and learning of functional business and entrepreneurial education into the school curricula at all levels of education. The paper recommends functional business and entrepreneurial education for all students at all levels of education irrespective of career aspirations.

Key words: Business Education, Entrepreneurial Education, Good Governance, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

The progress of a nation is a function of the level of the resourcefulness of the people which to a great extent, relates to the level and quality of the training and purposeful development in education in that nation. This is corroborated by Soludo (2007) when he stated that poverty status correlates with adult literacy rates. Education is the key to national development. This is because it

unlocks the economic potentials of a people; empowers and equips the individuals in society to participate in, and benefit from their national economy; facilitates economic development; and provides the basis for transformation (Aluwong, 2020). Education is the essential tool for sustainability. The present global economic crisis suggests that the entire world is in a war between functional education and catastrophe.

Observations show that the entire world is hungry because of natural disasters such as tsunamis, floods, droughts and earthquakes, and human factors such as wars and fraudulent financial practices (Aluwong, 2020). These situations are the causes of the global economic recession. All educational attempts must, therefore, de-emphasize 'job-based' workplace.

Business and Entrepreneurship education must be emphasized and used as the tool for fighting the war against poverty and unemployment; it must be emphasized in all our educational attempts. This is what the whole of Europe, America, Canada, China and Asia are doing (Wilson, 2007). Given the thrust of the 21st century, the entire education enterprise must be re-positioned in such a way that it improves the quality of life for all humans. This paper has, therefore, discussed the following issues.

Business Education

Business education is generally perceived to be one of those major occupational areas of technical and vocational education. Aluwong (2020) observed that business education is for general knowledge of business practices; it is also training in specific skills useful in business. Sutherland and Banick (2005) saw business education as the acquisition of and application of the unique set of knowledge and skills used in commercial and industrial organizations.

Business education is, therefore, education for and about business. It typically prepares students/recipients for an occupation in business or a business-related field, or a teaching career in the academia. It involves teaching students the fundamentals, theories and processes of business. To this extent, it is more than business teacher education. As Olian (2004) observed, "business education is about proactive and in-depth analytical skills in the business disciplines."

Essentially, business education according to Aluwong (2020) is:

- a) an integral part of general education;
- b) a means of preparing for occupational fields and for effective participation in

the world of work in business environments;

- c) an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenship;
- d) an instrument for promoting environmentally sound sustainable development; and
- e) a programme for poverty reduction.

The mission of business education is to provide businesses, organizations and individuals with high quality programmes necessary for meeting the challenges and opportunities of today's business environment. To this extent, it prepares students to be productive workers and successful entrepreneurs (Aluwong, 2020). In pursuance of its objectives, subjects such as financial accounting, economics, ICT, auditing, taxation, operations management, finance, public sector economics, business communications, business statistics, management, business mathematics, keyboarding, shorthand, secretarial duties, labour economics, entrepreneurship, cost and management accounting and marketing are offered, taught and learnt. Those students pursuing a career in teaching also take 'education' courses including teaching practice.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship is a French word which is derived from the root word, 'entreprendre', meaning to undertake or to do something. The concept was first introduced in the 13th century and the meaning has evolved since then. For instance, in the 20th century, the term was viewed by economist Joseph Schumpeter (1883 – 1950) as "creative destruction" because established ways for doing business were destroyed by the creation of new and better ways of doing it (Akadns.Net, 2008).

Aluwong (2020) observed that the concept of entrepreneurship applies both to managing small businesses and large organizations, and to managers carrying out entrepreneurial roles through which they initiate changes to take advantage of

opportunities. To this extent, Sole Proprietorships, Partnerships, Limited Liability Companies (private and public), Corporations/Public Utilities and Non-Governmental Organizations are forms of entrepreneurship. Observations show that corporate entrepreneurship is actually intrapreneurship because the action is within (Aluwong, 2020). Current emphasis and more focus on innovation and efficient customer service delivery in the public sector is essentially entrepreneurship. The essence of entrepreneurship is goal oriented change that utilizes the enterprise's potentials.

Good Governance

Good governance is a term used in development literature to describe how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in their attempt to ensure human rights. It is thought to be the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority in managing a country's affairs at all levels. It is also looked at as the process of decision-making and how the decisions are implemented or not implemented (Richardson, 2008 and Wikipedia, 2010). The 2009 Ibrahim Index of African Governance according to Obi (2009) showed that Nigeria ranked 35 out of 53 African countries and ranked 11 out of 16 West African countries in respect of good governance. Good governance is necessary for peace, security, investment and sustainable national development. Governments provide the needed infrastructure such as water, power, education, health facilities, etc.

Governments also provide the enabling environments for investments particularly in the private sector. As Richardson (2008) opined, good governance ensures that the private sector becomes the engine of economic growth, executor, investor and manager of business while government plays the role of the enabler, facilitator and regulator helping the private sector to grow, create jobs and wealth. Essentially, good governance ensures transparency, free flow of information, proper accountability, efficient and effective use of scarce resources in the economy. It's good

governance that can attract and retain more global collaboration with international partners such as World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF. By implications, Nigeria is still not doing quite well in the area of good governance. Therefore, a lot of concerted efforts are required particularly in the area of good governance.

Sustainable Development

Sustainability is the long-term availability of proper means that are necessary for a longterm achievement of pre-specified goals. In order to clearly explain the concept of sustainable development, it is important to define, first the terms, "sustainable" and "development". According to the Oxford Dictionary of English, "sustain" means to strengthen or support physically or mentally, cause to continue for an extended period or without interruption. On the other hand, it defined development as a specified state of growth or advancement. Therefore, putting the two meanings of sustainable and development together, sustainable development implies a continuous state of growth or advancement for an extended period (Ogbaga, Ike & Edet, 2021).

Sustainable development has also been defined as the development that meets the needs of me present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Data Revolution World, 2020). It is important to emphasize here that sustainable development stems from the present to project the future. The desired result of sustainable development is a state of human living conditions in society and the use of resources to meet human needs while preserving the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Ogbaga, Ike & Edet, 2021). Sustainable development in the context of this discourse requires the infusion of business and entrepreneurship education into curricula of tertiary institutions that will promote good governance, boost and expand economic production, human welfare and invariably actualization of sustainable development in Nigeria.

Synergy between Business and Entrepreneurship Education, Good Governance and Sustainable Development

Aladekomo (2004) writes that the Ashby Commission set up to review the educational policy was because the country wanted to produce manpower for the positions that would be vacated by the whites. The expectations was that undergraduates were to be prepared in leadership styles, managerial thinking and decision making procedures suitable for large organizations and good governing style of the society. Generally, from all the above, Education for Ifenkwe (2013) is regarded globally as a potent instrument for introducing and sustaining social change in human societies, as well as shaping its destiny. Apart from serving as a vehicle for enhancing upward social and economic mobility, education is regarded as a key to social reconstruction and an instrument for conserving, transmitting and renewing culture (Oyerinola, Bolaji, Adio and Bello, 2016). This refers to the fact that education can be the basis for positive organization and good governance in any society considering the type of leaders each society possess. The extent to which a society is educated indicates the level of governance in the society; hence, education signifies good governance by the leaders.

Education has always been linked to economic development or growth. Explaining how education contributes to economic growth, a U.S Economist Stone (2017) maintained that improvements in labour quality due to education and training can also boost productivity. Stone (2017) also emphasized that improvement in managerial efficiency or technology allows business to produce more with the same amount of labour and capital which can lead to growth on potential GDP of a country. The issues so far raised above relating to economic growth show that one of the most important factors that lead to sustainable economic development is the quality of available labour. The quality of labour is determined in turn by education and training. Besides, the type of education received by individual at any given period of time and in any

geographical area, to a great extent, determines the quality of labour supply in the area (Oyerinola, Bolaji, Adio & Bello, 2016). Since one of the goals of business education, according to the NPE (2014) is to provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development, it then means that business education is imperative for sustainable development in any society (Ogbaga, Ike & Edet, 2021). The point being made here therefore is that business and entrepreneurship education provides entrepreneurial, managerial, marketing, accounting and ICT skills capable of contributing meaningfully to sustainable development and good governance in Nigeria.

Achieving Good Governance and Sustainable Development through Business and Entrepreneurial Education

To achieve these objectives, the education industry must play a definite role. The education system must emphasize self-reliance, wealth-creation, work-creation and workerpreneur. The National Technical Working Group (2009) stated that the most important key to achieving rapid and sustainable economic development is the development of Nigeria's human capital. The group asserted that a lot has to be done at all levels of the education enterprise, from basic to tertiary. The education plan, therefore, must consider parameters for each level such as:

- Access and equity;
- Standards and quality assurance
- Infrastructure;
- Teacher quality, motivation and development; and
- Curriculum relevance.

Given the mission of business education, entrepreneurship and business education must be made effective and sustainable. This is because, the most beneficial way to access the labour market is self-employment.

Essentially, business and entrepreneurship education have the propensity to continually:

- i) provide more business skills to all Nigerians irrespective of sex, intellectual ability, physical disability, culture or religion;
- ii) reduce unemployment and inescapably poverty, brought about by lack of specific business skills;
- iii) raise and sustain a generation of job creators rather than job seekers in Nigeria;
- iv) raise and sustain generations of honest Nigerians who will have the capacity to fight corruption and other vices in Nigeria; and
- v) raise a generation of Nigerians who can contribute to sustainable national development.

To realize sustainable development, there is a need for good governance. It is only good governance that can ensure a head-on fight against unemployment, poverty and corruption. Currently, the economy seems to be facing challenges such as inadequate infrastructural facilities, macroeconomics corruption, human development and bad governance. A cursory look at the issues of poverty and corruption shows that:

Poverty - is a state of deprivation. Sachs (2005) noted that a United Nations' slogan says "Poverty anywhere is threat to prosperity." Poverty can be relative or absolute. United Nations' Reports in Adama (2008), Aluwong (2009) and United Nations' News Centre (2010) show that:

- about half of the world's population (over 3 billion people) is poor, that is, lives on less than \$2 per day;
- over 850 million people go hungry every day;
- over 8 million people die every day because they are too poor to stay alive;
- over 500 million people in African, Asian and Latin American countries live in 'absolute poverty';
- 70% of the poor are women;

- about 1 billion people entered the 21st century unable to read or sign their names;
- 75% of the world's illiterate are women; and
- 67% of children denied education are girls.

Poverty is observed to be the main reason why Sub-Saharan Africa is lagging behind all other regions of the world in meeting EFA objectives. While 97% of Nigerians are at the risk of malaria, we are further told that Nigeria is the 4th worst in the world in medical system because of poor infrastructure (Shosanya, 2009).

Corruption - generally thought to have started in Nigeria in the 1970s during Gen. Yakubu Gowon's regime but became endemic in the 1990s. In 2004, the country was said to be losing 40% (about 100,000 barrels) of her oil wealth to thieves each day! The country is ranked the world's 7th most corrupt nation (153 out of 159 nations (NationMaster, 2010).

Conclusion

In this paper, the role of functional business and entrepreneurship education in achieving good governance and sustainable development in Nigeria has been discussed. The paper notes that good governance is necessary for the attainment of sustainable development. Good governance and sustainable development are achievable through the infusion of teaching and learning of functional business and entrepreneurial education into the school' curricula at all levels of education.

It is the platform of this paper that learning today must include 'learning the future' because the future is only open to those who prepare for it. It is also the position of this paper that business and entrepreneurship education are the major routes through which Nigeria can salvage her young men and women from the claws of unemployment, poverty and inescapably, violent crimes and other social vices.

Recommendations

The literatures that were reviewed for the study has necessitated the advancement of the following recommendations:

1. The educational policy makers should redesign the curriculum of the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions to include business and entrepreneurship education that will take the country out of the bottom of the development ladder. Create such genuine and feasible educational policies that are germane for good governance and sustainable development.
2. Functional business and entrepreneurship education should be taught more seriously at all levels of the education enterprise, from primary to tertiary.
3. Business and entrepreneurship education should emphasize financial knowledge and attitudes that encompasses business management, cash management and planning as well as computer appreciation training to promote good governance and realization of sustainable development.

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