

EVALUATION OF STUDENTS LEARNING IN BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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Abstract

Evaluation is part of life. It is assumed that whenever a question is asked and answer provided; evaluation has taken place. Likewise, the students learning in business education, evaluation is inseparable. Business education programme remains the most needed kind of education due to its lofty goals. Business education programme when properly planned and developed with great care and on the basis of ample information without evaluation, it is not always as effective as hoped. The only way to secure a continually effective educational programme is by maintaining a continuing evaluation of objectives of learning experiences. This implies that evaluation of students learning is an integral part of business education. Therefore, the concern of this paper is the evaluation of students learning in business education programme. The paper also reviews some concepts like business education programme, and evaluation. The paper further contained the types, techniques, principles, and purposes of evaluation of students learning. Therefore, the paper concludes that evaluation of students learning in business education programme is the critical aspect of the entire programme, and this could uphold the saying “no evaluation, no meaningful education programme”. Based on this conclusion, it was recommended among others that business educators should ensure that students are exposed to evaluation criteria and tools regularly used in teaching-learning process in order to reduce fear and anxiety.

Introduction

The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical for the individual to live and contribute to the development of the society is seen as a cardinal point in the Nigeria's National Policy on Education. Countries that thrive in all sectors of their economy did embrace education as their bedrock. It can be convinced that a nation is as good as the kind of education it embraces. Therefore, the role of business education in the provision of required skills, knowledge and competences

cannot be overemphasized. Usoro (2016) posited that business education is a programme in Nigeria education system that prepares students for entry into and advancement of jobs within the business. It involves acquisition of skills, knowledge and competences which make the recipient proficient. The author further asserted that business education remained an umbrella which all business programmes take a shield, such as marketing, accounting, office technology, management and secretarial studies. Business education is a sub set of

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). It is form of vocational education that aimed of developing the learner to become productive in teaching, paid employment and self-employment. As stated by Udukeke and Usoro (2023), people who practice certain professions, vocations or trades are often required to possess certain traits, skills, attitude, and knowledge that will help them to thrive.

According to Akpan (2003) cited in Akpan (2018), business education is defined as the training for the acquisition of business skills and competences needed on business occupations and a systematic learning experiences designed to give individual gainful employment in the areas of accounting, management, data processing, marketing, among others. Similarly, Solomon and Udoayang (2018) revealed that students that are fully groomed in business education can help revive the country's economy since they would be equipped with required knowledge and skills of being self reliant after graduation in terms of starting their own businesses. This does not just happen but as a result of its compressive curriculum.

The curriculum of business education embedded with the content that make students to have experiences of influencing their physical, social and emotional growth in desirable ways and towards desirable ends. This statement is agreed with the objectives of business education curriculum outlined by Osuala (2009). These include to: afford all students the pertinent information to enable them to explore and learn about the world of work and the relevant interest and career area of their choice, help every student become an intelligent consumer of goods and services, enable students to acquire saleable skills in the field of their choice, enable the students to realize the advantages of business courses within their university preparatory programmes, train students for various activities common to many professional, industrial, agricultural, marketing and home management occupations, provide training that will result in developing individuals who are well adjusted and capable of coping with the world in which they live, and help

students prepare for, choose, enter into and progress satisfactorily in occupations of their choice. The foregone is necessity in determining the worthwhile learning experiences of the students.

Learning takes place through the experiences the student has and through the reactions the students makes to the environment. Learning is a permanent change in the behaviour of students as a result of experiences or exposure to the learning activities. But, to National School Improvement Network (NSIN) (2014), learning is a reflective activity which enables the learner to draw upon previous experience to understand and evaluate the present so as to shape future action and formulate new knowledge. Learning creates relevant and memorable educational experiences that successfully address the specific challenges of today's society. In the words of Enang (2009), five vital guidelines are relevant for students learning. These are; design a purposeful journey, make efficient use of limited time available to learners, directly link learning goals to activities, build upon existing understandings and address gaps in understandings and provide immersive real world simulations. These enable students learning to yield its expected result by making the learners a better product. This might be a different case when considering the business education as at today.

Unfortunately, learning process in business education in some of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria is still at its crudest form. Similarly, Orike, Iyallo and Okereke (2017) maintained that majority of students of business education are still relying on textbooks information, lecturers class verbalization, etc. due to general poor attitude toward innovation. It is worrisome as many business education students are yet to enjoy the benefits of e-learning because of inadequate electronic resources and timely evaluation of the programme. There is considerable concern by business education students, their teachers, employers of business education graduates and curriculum experts that the students' learning process is not being achieved. This has been largely

attributed to the claims that the teaching-learning process is not well implemented. Under these circumstances, it would appear that business education might not be meeting the needs, aspirations and expectations of the society, students and employers of labour and the required minimum academic standards of the National Universities Commission. Peter, Offiong and Ukpong (2014) observed that successful learning cannot occur without high quality evaluation. The quality of any educational system is thus, directly linked with the quality of evaluation, while Usen (2023) said that for students to acquire the skills and competences to handle a task effectively and for the programme to be of standard where graduates can compete with others within and outside Nigeria, there is need to periodically evaluate business education programme.

Evaluation is a systematic determination of a subject's merit, worth and significance, using criteria governed by a set of standards. It can assist an organization, program, project or any other intervention. Evaluation is a measure of the degree to which the student has achieved the objectives of the training and instruction. The purpose of evaluation is to determine whether or not the student is competent in the learning activity or occupation to verify that the learning experiences were effective in developing occupational capabilities and competences and to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in order to plan further instruction. Ubulom and Dambo (2016) defined evaluation as the systematic process of collecting information, analyzing the information collected then using the analyzed results to form judgement on students learning.

Student learning is defined as the measurable skills, attitudes, and knowledge of the learner as a result of participation in an educational activity. Students make meaning of contents they experience in a learning episode. Student learning ensures the degree of mastery of the content of instruction by the students or how much of what the teacher has taught that the students have gained. Student learning cannot work in

isolation of evaluation. Osuala (2009) revealed that even when a business education curriculum is planned and developed with great care and on the basis of ample information, it is not always as effective as hoped, the only way to secure a continually effective educational programme is by maintaining a continuing evaluation of objectives of learning experiences.

Evaluating students learning takes time and effort but well-designed procedures provide students with valuable information about what and how they are learning. Several methods such as tests, assignment, respondus, students response system, peer assessment, self-assessment and group work assessment also aid the task of evaluating student learning. Although, class tests and assignments can give a glimpse of teaching effects and students satisfaction but it does not aid in knowing how much the students are learning. Teaching effectiveness can be improved by changing the way student learning is evaluated, hence better evaluation of students learning may help in better effectiveness of teaching. According to Ubulom (2012) some teachers might think that giving home works and assignments can help students gain more subject knowledge without knowing that students who perform well in homework and assignment might not perform better in the exam. It is no longer in doubt that knowledge is valuable than grades and only effective learning process can enhance students' knowledge to be more than mere grades. It is on this premise that this paper tackles the evaluation of students learning in business education programme.

Concept of Business Education Programme

Business Education is an embodiment of vocational knowledge and skills needed for employment and advancement in a broad range of business career. It is education for business or training skills which is required in business offices, clerical occupation and business policy analysis. Okoye (2013) defined Business Education as an education programme that orientate students in the art of business making, use of computers, service

delivery, secretarial jobs, stenography, account clerking, office information system and management. Oduma (2021) maintained that business education involves education for office occupation, distribution and marketing occupations, business teaching, business administration and economic understanding. Oduma further showed that business education is education FOR and ABOUT business; with the primary purpose of preparing individual recipients for gainful employment in business occupations, whether paid employment or self-employment the emphasis is on exposure to and acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude relevant and adequate for employment in specific business occupations. Business Education houses four academic programme components as follows:

Accounting Education Option: Aniaigor (2016) noted that the accounting education option of business education focuses on the preparation of intelligent graduates who will possess sufficient knowledge in accounting principles and practice, and who will be competent to impart accounting knowledge to others.

Entrepreneurial Education Option: The entrepreneurial option of business education also focuses on enabling the recipient to be entrepreneurially conscious, be able to survey any given environment and visualize the type of business that could successfully thrive in the environment. The Entrepreneurial option also prepares the beneficiary to be able to explore business opportunities and be able to pool resources together to pursue the opportunity.

Marketing Education Option: The marketing education option of business education is designed to ensure the preparation of well-informed business education graduates who will be capable of exhibiting intelligent behaviours, conduct and knowledge in all forms of exchange transactions involving requisition, purchases, containerization, store and stock keeping, and salesmanship. The marketing education option is a lucrative discipline especially in

considering the unemployment situation in our society today (Adibe, 2018). The marketing option is entrepreneurial oriented and can spur one to be entrepreneurially inclined.

Office Technology and Management

Option: The office technology and management focuses on grooming the beneficiaries who will specialize in the study, and be able to use and apply modern office electronic equipments in the discharge of office functions. The programme exposes its recipients to the use of modern office technologies in carrying out office information related tasks. The office technology and management (OTM) is focused on the preparation of graduates who are well informed in office routine functions, office technology and office management and administration in both the private and public organizations (Akpan, 2018).

Goals of Business Education

Goals of business education programme in Nigeria are multifaceted in nature. According to Akpan (2018), a cursory look at departmental handbooks of various business education programmes in Nigeria reveals the following as goals of business education to:

- (i) produce efficient and effective management, secretarial, accounting, finance and marketing managers.
- (ii) produce business educators who will impact the needed skill and competences to others.
- (iii) inculcate the right business attitude and values for the survival of the individual and abilities to occupational opportunities in business.
- (iv) provide students with saleable skills and competences both mental and physical required in the world of work.

Concept of Evaluation

Evaluation means different things to different people. Evaluation is the process of alienating, obtaining and providing useful

information for judging decision alternatives. Evaluation is a systematic, rigorous, and meticulous application of scientific methods to assess the design, implementation, improvement, or outcomes of a programme so as to make value judgment (Okpala, Onocha and Oyedeji, 2013). Evaluation is not the making of value judgment that is subjective, rather it is the application of formal inquiry techniques for data collection in order to conceptualize, refine and determine the effectiveness or worth of a programme with a view to aiding decision making as to whether to continue, modify or terminate the programme. It is both qualitative and quantitative in nature; and the process of making objective judgment is based on the qualitative and quantitative information obtained from measurement.

Evaluation as a collaborative activity is very pertinent to the discussion of evaluation of students learning in business education programme. It is expected therefore that all interest groups involved in an educational programme such as the programme developers, administrators, operators and consumers should report on the worth of the programme to ensure its effectiveness and quality. Dike (2015) stressed that evaluation aimed to determine the worth of learning, especially when the programme has been overdue in existence. Evaluation is an integral part of any teaching and learning process. Whenever a question is asked and answered, evaluation takes place. Thus, both learning and evaluation overlap and merge into each other. It is not possible to have teaching and learning without evaluation. The emphasis here is that the purpose of evaluation is to identify any discrepancy that may exist between teaching-learning standards and performance of students so as to modify or overhaul the programme of business education.

Types of Evaluation in Business Education

Formative Evaluation: This occurs in the early stages of the teaching/learning process. It may be made between the beginnings of the programme. According to Nworgu (2012), formative evaluation is the type of evaluation

carried out while the programme is being developed. It provides data for improvements of the programme. It influences instructional objectives, course content and teaching methods by revealing areas where students are weak and by exposing ineffective teaching methods. It also encourages the students to learn by showing the progress they have made.

Summative Evaluation: This is at the end of the programme. The students' performance, the quality of teachers, the processes, and strategies used by the teacher are evaluated to give the final verdict as to the usefulness of the programme (Nworgu, 2012). A final examination is usually employed in summative evaluation, therefore, for the examination to be useful, its content must correspond closely to the requirement of the occupation that the students were trained for.

Ultimate Evaluation: This evaluation takes place after the student has completed his/her course programme, passes the prescribed examinations and actually starts work in the position he/she was trained. According to Dike (2015), ultimate evaluation does not take place until the student complete the training and has gained employment in the chosen field. It is important to note that ultimate evaluation does not take place in the classroom or workshop but rather in the industry itself.

Programme Evaluation: This is an evaluation of the whole programme to determine the extent to which it has served the purpose for which it was established. This may be used in programme planning, programme improvement, decision making, personal improvement and accountability (Ubulom and Dambo, 2016). It also involves collection of data and the use of the collected data to assess the effectiveness and quality of the programme. Unless the aims of business education programme are realized, the resources used in running the programme may be regarded as wastage.

Techniques of Evaluation

The following are the three major techniques of evaluation as stated by Ubulom and Dambo(2016):

1. **The Evaluation of the Educational System:** This is achieved by studying its product, that is the students.
2. **Accepted Standards:** This is achieved appraising the educational establishments as they are measured against predetermined standards.
3. **Evaluating Organizational or Behavioural Outcomes:** This is carried out in terms of goals which have been established. This is by far the most meaningful in evaluating business education programme.

Principles of Evaluation

According to Shaibu, Ameh and Barinem (2016), Business education programme has common segments used in evaluating students, teachers, or a single department based on the following principles:

1. Evaluation should include economic factors as well as educational objectives. They should be one of the prime factors considered in determining whether a programme is a success or a failure.
2. Evaluation should include appraisal of both student outcomes and the educational establishment like the accreditation of educational programmes.
3. It should be made in terms of the objectives of the programme.
4. Evaluation should be conducted on the basis of what should have been accomplished as well as what has been accomplished.
5. It should be integrated and interpreted into a portrait. This means that evaluation is more than gathering of data for information. It includes the analysis of the data and value judgments of the data collected.
6. Evaluation has to be a continuous process. It should be conceived as a

continuous cycle of related activities/operations.

7. Evaluation should be targeted at areas of interest word to achieve stated objectives.

Purposes of Evaluation of Students Learning in Business Education Programme

1. **To determine how well students are learning:** Many educators are interested in evaluating students learning to determine whether students are learning, for reasons that may include the following:
 - (i) **To discover the current status of students knowledge and understanding:** Barkley and Major (2016) opined that it is vital to identify students' prior knowledge in order to know appropriate starting points for instruction. Again, an important principle in learning is to work at a level that is appropriately challenging. Evaluation helps teachers to identify struggling students who need help and those who may benefit from the advanced tasks. Eventually, teacher wants to know if students have indeed learned what he attempted to teach them. Hence, it creates vital information at multiple points throughout the lesson period.
 - (ii) **To solve a problem in the teaching:** Students may give attention to their phones, tablets, or laptops and not participate in the class discussions. They may not demonstrate as much critical thinking as expected. Evaluation provide business educators with data about the reasons these problems are occurring, which in turn may point to potential solutions.
 - (iii) **To determine whether there is need to change direction of teaching:** Business educators may

be wondering whether students understand the information, or using collaborative groups and wondering if all students are participating.

Conducting evaluation can help to answer questions about whether the pedagogical choices are effective so that, if necessary, changes can be made.

(iv) To find out how students are experiencing learning in the classrooms:

Evaluation determining whether students are learning what they should and could. There are times that educators want to know how students are experiencing the learning activities or classroom environment. Indeed, because business courses climate can influence learning itself (not to mention student evaluations), it can be quite useful to collect information about students experience as well as learning itself.

2. **To give students feedback on their progress:** Imagine trying to learn something with only a vague sense of what you are supposed to learn and then not getting any feedback on how you are progressing. Such experience would be haphazard, the process would be frustrating, and in the end such student may learned nothing at all. Therefore, students need to know what they are supposed to learn as well as what they need to be able to do to demonstrate that they have learned.

3. **To improve the profession through the scholarship of teaching and learning:** The Scholarship of Teaching and learning (SoTL) entails viewing the work of the classroom as a site for inquiry, asking and answering questions about students' learning in ways that can improve one's own classroom and also advance the larger profession of

teaching. Dike (2015) asserted that SoTL is scholarly inquiry into student learning which aims at improving teaching and learning.

4. **To provide information to institutional and external stakeholders on how well students are learning:**

Business educators are being asked to provide evidence of what and how well students in their courses are learning to a variety of institutional and external stakeholders. Therefore results can provide evidence of the effectiveness of teaching or the quality of student learning as follows:

(i) **As part of the professional dossiers:** Teachers have to provide evidence of their effectiveness. Evaluation influences decisions that affect teachers' professional careers. It provides a complete picture of teaching effectiveness that can be used for professional dossiers, whether for hiring, promotion, tenure, or merit review.

(ii) **To institutional assessment efforts and accrediting agencies:** Accreditation agencies are assuming more of the responsibility for stimulating and monitoring evaluation. Thus, the data can be used to report on student learning both to the institutions and accrediting bodies.

1. **To craft the evaluation question:** It is important to know, what is the question to ask about student learning? Here are some examples of the kinds of questions considered:

(i) **To what extent has the learning been successful?** That is, how well can students demonstrate accomplishment of the learning outcome? One answer to this question is by looking at the final learning product. Based on the evaluation of this product, one should be able to determine achievement of the outcome for

both individuals and the class as a whole.

(ii) **Has there been cognitive or affective change in students over time?** This question may be answered by giving students a pre-test, offering instruction, and then giving a post-test. The change that occurs between the pretest and posttest is considered to represent the change in learning over time. Certainly, the change that is documented may have occurred due to factors other than the course activities.

(iii) **How do these results compare with others?** It may be informative to analyze how the results compare to data gathered for other groups. Examples of these groups include students in the same course that you taught in other academic terms, students in the same or similar courses taught by other teachers, and subgroups of students differentiated by characteristics such as academic major, student level (such as freshman), prior background, and so forth.

Challenges in Evaluation of Students Learning in Business Education Programme

Ekaira (2003) cited in Shaibu et al. (2016) revealed the following as the challenges facing the evaluation of students learning in business education programme:

(i) **Course Work:** Most teachers test their students whether they are taught or not, and in some of the courses at times, the score on a test is used severally in the subsequent test because of the demand on the teacher by the school management. However, the business education teacher and the school management should consider the fact that feedback from evaluation has future implication, hence should not assess for the sake of assessment.

(ii) **Large Class:** This has to do with a class comparatively big in size, number or quantity than usual or expected. In most higher institutions in Nigeria, the population of business education students in the class is too much for effective teaching and evaluation to take place

(iii) **Establishment of assessment standards:** Svinicki and McKeachie (2011) stated that students use grading criteria to determine what they should concentrate on learning in a course. By making grading policies clear, students' attention focus on what is most important for them to learn and retain. Because grades communicate the relative weight of course goals and assignments and because grades in a course may have great influence on students' future academic work, most students are very sensitive about grades and the criteria on which they are based. Determine assessment criteria from the onset, explain these standards clearly to students and reinforce their application consistently throughout the quarter. Consistency is also important when it comes to concerns such as accepting late papers and taking more than the time allotted for an exam. Attention to these matters in the beginning will save time and energy later.

(iv) **Aptitude Testing:** The common practice in business education evaluation that is against the principle and practice of education is the placement of students which is very challenging for example, some students when having science background would go for business education courses at tertiary level simply because they could not get admitted into science based course. Such placement is done on the basis of their achievement and not on their aptitude.

(v) **Irregular Supply of Electricity:** Most business education equipment requires electricity supply to operate during the

conduct and assessment of tests and assessments. Its absence negatively affects the administration of examination.

- (vi) Poor ICT: How to make better use of information technology in education process is a major challenge in evaluation. Hence, the equipment and facilities must be made available in the schools.
- (vii) Dearth of Qualified Business Educators: There are no enough qualified and sufficient number of dedicated business education teachers needed to teach the content of business education curriculum.
- (viii) Financial Challenge: Here, money is needed for the procurement of required materials and services. Implementation has failed due to insufficient funds.
- (ix) Poor keeping of records: Keeping accurate records of evaluation of each student's performance is important. One should also keep the records for a while after the quarter is over, since students may come back later to question a grade, finish an incomplete or ask to write a recommendation. Records will help to justify or reevaluate a student's final grade if necessary.

Conclusion

The change in the environment, needs and aspirations of people obviously affect the policies and practices of business education programme. Business education is a dynamic programme of study that requires timely evaluation. Evaluation is an inevitable in the whole programme of business education. This implies that without evaluating students learning in business education at all times, it will eventually absent and loose its force in the society. Evaluating students learning is a clarion call in this contemporary society. Therefore, it is not an overstatement that business educators are not giving adequate attention in terms of evaluation, thus, affects students learning. Then, this paper concludes that evaluation of students learning in

business education programme, which hitherto overlook, is the critical aspect of the entire programme, and this could uphold the saying "no evaluation, no meaningful education programme".

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Business educators should ensure that students are exposed to evaluation criteria and tools regularly used in teaching-learning process in order to reduce fear and anxiety.
2. Curriculum planners should ensure that the rudiments of evaluation are properly incorporated into business education programme and how it will be applied.
3. The Agencies and Research bodies should see the timely evaluation of business education programme as a matter of urgency in order to meet the standards and needs of the students.
4. Federal Ministry of Education and National Universities Commission should work cooperatively to ensure that business education programme is made compulsory programme in all institutions of learning because of its necessity in the society.

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