

BUSINESS EDUCATION: AN INDISPENSABLE TOOL FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH-EAST STATES OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The study was carried out by the researchers in the South East States of Nigeria to determine how business education could be an indispensable tool for achieving sustainable development. A survey research design was used for the study. The population comprised 46 business educators teaching in public universities in the South East States of Nigeria. A self-structured questionnaire developed by the researchers and carefully validated by the experts in the Faculty of Education of Enugu State University of Science and Technology was used for data collection. Mean and Standard deviation were used to answer the two research questions that guided the study while t.test hypothesis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the study showed that business education programme is an indispensable tool for achieving sustainable development in the South East States of Nigeria because it provides the needed manpower required in industries. The study equally revealed that one of the strategies for achieving sustainable development in the South East States of Nigeria through business education programme is to ensure that the school curriculum is relevant to the skills required of industries. Moreover, there was no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business educators on the relevance of business education in achieving sustainable development and the strategies for achieving sustainable development in the South East States of Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended among others that the curriculum planners should ensure that the school curriculum content is relevant to the skills required of industries because of the relevance of the programme in providing the needed manpower in industries.*

KEYWORDS: Business Education, Sustainable Development, Business Educator, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Business education is a core component of Technical and Vocational Education programme and taught by professionally trained male and female business educators in universities in the Sought East States of Nigeria South East States of Nigeria is one of the six geo-political zones and has five states. There are six public universities offering business education programme in the South East States of Nigeria.

Business education programme is concerned with teaching the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for a successful career in office and business world. Anyaeneh and Nzegwu (2015) describe business education as education that enriches basic education for teaching career, entrepreneurship, business understanding, office understanding, office environment and vocational practices. In the view of Onajite (2016), business education encompasses education programme for business, office occupation, economic understanding, entrepreneurship and it seeks to develop in the learners basic skills for personal use in the future. Schell (2003) opine that business education programme involves training students in topics relevant to the business

world such as accounting and marketing. In addition, Schell states that business education involves training students in the softer skills such as leadership.

The objectives of business education as identified by Schell (2003) is to enable the students to gain experience with skills such as leadership and communication also to provide students with information about all aspects of business. According to Association of Business Educators of Nigeria,(ABEN, 2017), business education is needed by students in the contemporary world because business education develops life skills for economic success and helps students to develop skills and attitudes needed for career success. In the opinion of the researchers, the relevance of business education in achieving sustainable development in the South East States of Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized because of its potential in equipping the recipients with the relevant skills for self-employment. This is in conformity with the statement made by ABEN(2017) that business education can be a major instrument for national development because it promotes industrialization through its entrepreneurship offerings.. Business education is considered to be one of the crucial vehicles for social equity as well as sustainable development if it is accorded proper status by the government and other stakeholders.

Sustainable development means the all round development of an individual. This tallied with the statement made by China, Lilly and Igbemi (2017) that sustainable development is all about improving the lives of people. In the opinion of Hansa (2014), sustainable development deals with the carrying capacity of natural system with social, political and economic challenges faced by the society. Sustainable development is believed to be a holistic approach to improving the quality of life through judicious use of available natural resources. In the context of business enterprise, sustainable development means adopting business strategies and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders presently and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future. In the context of the study, sustainable development entails equipping the graduates of the programme with vital skills for self employment that they can contribute to the economic development of the Nation. This will help to reduce hunger and improve the standard of living of the populace.

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

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

-Transform governance and technologies for sustainable development.

The main aim of sustainable development is to balance our economic, social and environmental needs. In support of this, Ukairo (2017) noted that sustainable development for sustainable development to be achieved in any nation, there must be a balance between environmental, societal and economic considerations needed to maintain and improve the quality of generations to come. Appreciating the role business education play in economic and social development of the nation, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) identified that one of the objectives of business education is to help the recipient to appreciate the world around him and contribute maximally to the social and economic development of the nation. In order to fully achieve the sustainable development goals of ending extreme poverty including hunger and also promoting economic growth in the South East States of Nigeria, integrating some of the sustainable development issues into the curriculum should be one of the top priorities of educational planners. Also, Government shall take necessary measures to ensure that quality of instruction at all levels of education shall be oriented towards acquisition of functional skills and competencies necessary for self-employment which will eventually lead to sustainable development in the South East States of Nigeria.

Business education is an indispensable tool in achieving development and its sustainability. It is against this backdrop that the researchers seek to determine how business education programme could be an indispensable tool for achieving sustainable development in the South East States of Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

Most countries of the world especially developing countries are facing economic recession. At a critical time like this, what the nation needs is a theoretical and skill oriented programme that can equip the products with skills relevant for sustainable development. This will help to end extreme poverty, hunger, create jobs and promote economic growth and finally achieve sustainable development. Without a functional education program like business education, achieving the sustainable development goal of ending extreme poverty including hunger and promoting economic growth and decent jobs within the planetary boundaries will be a mirage.

Purpose of the study

The general purpose of the study is to determine how business education programme could be an indispensable tool for achieving sustainable development in the South East States of Nigeria. Specifically, the study tends to determine the:

1. Relevance of business education in achieving sustainable development in South East States of Nigeria and
2. Strategies for achieving sustainable development in the South East States of Nigeria through business Education program in Universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered by the study:

1. What is the relevance of business education in achieving sustainable development in South East States of Nigeria?

2. What are the strategies for achieving sustainable development in South East States of Nigeria through business education programme

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business educators in Universities in the South East on the relevance of business education programme in achieving sustainable development in the south East States of Nigeria

H₀₂: A Significant difference does not exist between the mean responses of male and female business educators teaching Universities in the South East on the strategies for achieving sustainable development through business education programme

METHOD

A descriptive survey research design was used to carry out this study. The study was carried out in the South East States of Nigeria with a population of 46 business educators made up of 18 male and 28 female business educators teaching in public Universities in the South East States of Nigeria offering business education programme. The instrument used for the study was a self- structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The items had a 4-point rating scales of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree with a corresponding values of 4, 3, 2 and 1. The instrument was validated by three experts from Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology. The instrument consists of 25 questionnaire items. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t- test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Any item with a mean of 2.50 or above was regarded as agree while any item with a mean score below 2.50 was regarded as disagree. The hypothesis of no significance difference was upheld if t- calculated value was greater than the t-table value of 1.96 value at 0.05 level of significance and at 44 degree of freedom. However, the hypothesis was not upheld if the t. calculated value was less than the t. table value of 1.96 but not upheld if the t. calculated value was less than the t.table 1.96 and at 0.5 level of significance.

RESULTS

The results of the study were obtained from the two research questions answered by the study and two hypotheses tested and analyzed

Research question 1

1. What are the relevance of business education in achieving sustainable development in the south East States of Nigeria

Data collected in the respect of this research question is presented in the Table 1

Table 1: Mean ratings of male and female business educators on the relevance of business education in achieving sustainable development

S/N	The relevance of Business Education programme in achieving sustainable development include:	\bar{X}	SD	Dec.
1	Provides the needed manpower in industries	3.72	0.46	Agree
2	Promotes economic growth	3.54	0.50	Agree
3	Provides the recipients' with necessary skill for transition into labour market	3.59	0.50	Agree
4	Increase the overall productivity of the labour force	3.11	0.92	Agree
5	Provides effective learning for the recipient for lifelong livelihood	3.48	0.75	Agree
6	Produce graduates that are job creators	3.46	0.50	Agree
7	Ensures that school teaching is relevant to the skills required of industries	3.30	0.70	Agree
8	Meet the labour market needs of business and industries	3.35	0.74	
9	Educates individuals for and about business	3.74	0.44	Agree
10	Help the recipients to be producers and distributors of goods and services	3.11	1.04	Agree
11	Help the products of the programme to use the results of production as consumers	3.13	0.81	Agree
12	Help the recipients to make judicious socio-economic decisions as citizens	3.20	0.69	Agree
13	Help the recipients to contribute maximally to the social and economic development of his nation	3.46	0.72	Agree
GRAND MEAN/SD		3.40	0.67	Agree

Table 1 shows that all the 13 items with corresponding mean of 3.27,3.54,3.59,3.11,3.48,3.46,3.30,3.85,3.74,3.11,3.13,3.20,and 3.46 are the relevance of business education in achieving sustainable development in South East States of Nigeria. The low standard deviation shows the homogeneity of the respondents in their responses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between male and female business educators in Universities in the South East on the relevance of business education in achieving sustainable development

Table2: t. test analysis of Male and Female Business Educators on the relevance of the business education in achieving sustainable development in South East

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t.cal	crit. t	Dec.
Male	18	3.40	0.68				Do not
Female	28	3.40	0.69	44	0.00	1.96	Reject

Table 2 denotes the summary of t. test analysis of items 1-13 in Table 1. Table 2 shows that t. calculated of 0.00 are less than the critical table value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance and

44 degree of freedom. Therefore the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is not rejected. This shows that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female business educators on the relevance of business education in achieving sustainable development in the South East States of Nigeria.

Research Question Two:

What are the strategies for achieving sustainable development in the South East States of Nigeria through business education programme.

Table 3: Mean ratings of male and female business educators on the strategies for achieving sustainable development through business education programme.

S/N	Item statement	\bar{X}	SD	Dec.
1	Integrating climate change into the curriculum	2.33	0.97	Disagree
2	Integrating sustainable consumption into the curriculum	2.63	1.00	Agree
3	Integrating disaster risk consumption into the curriculum	3.00	0.84	Agree
4	Integrating biodiversity into the curriculum	2.67	1.01	Agree
5	Integrating poverty reduction into the curriculum.	3.07	1.00	Agree
6	Ensuring that the school curriculum content is relevant to the skills required of industry	3.67	0.47	Agree
7	Improving the programme through upgrading of facilities or equipment	3.67	0.47	Agree
8	Integration of new technologies in teaching and learning of business education	3.63	0.49	Agree
9	workshops and conferences that promote sustainable development need to be organized for the students	3.54	0.50	Agree
10	Provision of grants from the government and international organisation	3.52	0.51	Agree
11	Proper mentoring of students on sustainable development issues	3.46	0.50	Agree
12	Participatory teaching that motivate learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development	3.59	0.50	Agree
GRAND MEAN/SD		3.23	0.68	Agree

Table 3 indicates that out of the 12 items on strategies for achieving sustainable development through business education programme, business educators disagree on item number one with a corresponding mean of 2.33, that is, (integrating climatic change into the curriculum)

H₀₂: Significant difference does not exist in the mean responses of male and female business educators in the South East States of Nigeria on the strategies for achieving sustainable development

Table 4: t-test analysis of male and female business educators on the strategies for achieving sustainable development in South East States of Nigeria

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t.cal	Crit. t	Dec.
Male	18	3.24	0.73				Do not
Female	28	3.11	0.75	42	0.27	1.96	Reject

Table 4 shows that the t.cal is 0.27 while t. table is 1.96. Since the t.cal is less than the t.table, the null hypothesis is upheld. Therefore significant difference does not exist in the mean responses of male and female business educators in Universities in the South East States of Nigeria on strategies for achieving sustainable development through business education programme.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the findings in table 1 revealed that business education is very relevant in achieving sustainable development in the South East because business educates individuals for and about business and also it provides the needed manpower in industry. According to Osuala (2004), education for business is for technology and vocational education students. It helps them to develop personal skills such as recording retrieving, co-ordinating, analyzing, organizing and reporting data used for business decisions. It also help business education student s to develop personal use skills related to business occupation. The skills acquired in business education can help the recipients to establish small scale business and run it successfully. By doing this, it may likely end poverty and hunger leading to good health and sustainable development in the South East States of Nigeria.

Nwokike (2015) Citing Azih & Nwosu (2012) noted that business education at all levels is aimed at providing training that will equip the recipients with business skills that will enable them function optimally in their working environment. Equally, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) affirmed that one of the objectives of TVET is to produce manpower required in industry, commerce and agriculture. From the findings of the study, it is therefore worthy to note that business education programme is an indispensable tool for national development.

From the findings of research question 2, it was found that some of the strategies for achieving sustainable development through business education programme include among others, to ensure that the school curriculum is relevant to the skills required of industry and also improving the programme through upgrading of facilities or equipment. The findings is in uniformity with the findings made by Nwokike and Okoli (2015) that one of the ways of improving the quality and relevance of business education programme in universities is by institutions laying more emphasis on the manpower need of the industry. Nwokike and Okoli, also affirmed that quality mechanism should be put in place so that students are not taught with outdated equipment. The researchers are of the opinion that if the recipients are taught with modern technological equipment, the graduates of the programme will acquire the relevant skills required of industry and for self-employment.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, it could be concluded that business education is an indispensable tool in achieving sustainable development because of its relevance in providing the needed manpower in industries. The skill acquired by the recipient could help them to be self employed by establishing small scale business. By doing so, the sustainable development goals of ending poverty and promoting the well-being of individuals could be achieved through business education programme which will eventually lead to sustainable development in the South East States of Nigeria.

Recommendations: Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended that:

1. The curriculum planners should ensure that the school curriculum content is relevant to the skill required of industry because of the relevance of the programme in providing the needed manpower in industries for sustainable development.
2. Policy measure should be put in place to improve the quality of the training facilities for proper acquisition of skills by the recipient for sustainable development.

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