

THE PLACE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN HUMAN CAPACITY BUILDING IN EASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper Titled The Place of Business Education in Human Capacity Building in Eastern Nigeria, adopted survey method in evaluating the inputs of business education in the human capacity building of the good people of Eastern Nigeria. The paper examined the meaning of education, the meaning of business and business education as a concept. The relationship between education and business was reviewed. The role of education to the modern society and its impacts on the economy of Eastern states of Nigeria was discussed. The researcher's claim on the decline in technological development in Nigeria was highlighted and the paper was concluded with possible recommendations on the improvement of business activities in the Eastern Nigeria

Keywords Business, Education, East, Nigeria, Igbo, Business Education, Trade, Manufacture, Technology, School, Skills, Production, Curriculum, Networking

Introduction

Business is the daily activities of mankind; humans are characterized by activities for daily survival, the activities ranges from movement from place to place, recreational activities, academic activities, political activities and above all economic activities. Economic activities overrides the other activities due to its importance in the lives of man, economic activities are the activities that places food on the table. Human depends greatly on food for daily survival and development. Therefore, it is quite important to carryout economic activities, however if economic activities are been practiced without development, there is every tendency of the sector to deplete. In the ancient days, economic activities were limited to petty farming and gaming for just immediate family consumption. Later in the olden, the need for exchange of items due to individual quest and opportunity cost of wants and availability, this gave room for barter trade.

In the modern day business, several factors accounts for the reason why business should be given a high priority in the daily activities of man. Among the factors includes but not limited to; population explosion, this factor is necessary to be considered because subsistent agricultural methods can no longer feed the population of the world. Countries like China and India have population density of over one billion people, if business strategies that will help to manage this population are not employed; it is obvious that hunger will wipe the nations. Trade factor, in the existence of man on planet earth, humans depends greatly on each other as such, no single group of people can produce all that her people desires, the reason is that natural resources varies from place to place, as some are endowed with solid minerals others are blessed with arable land etc. Therefore, it is imperative to develop a business acumen that will be able to address trade differences and fashion out the possible understanding process that can accommodate all interested party in the business arena.

Technological factor, the advancement of humans from its crude nature is important. Man needs technology for his daily progress, man requires clothe for dresses, car for movement, machines for food procession and medicines to keep fit, all these can't be possible without the strategic roles of business.

Based on the reasons above, business can be seen as the economic development of man and the process by which a nation improves its economy politically, and the social well-being of its people. According to economists, politicians, and other stakeholders of the 21st century, business is the modernization, westernization, and industrialization of both human, services and goods.

Business and economic development has a direct and indirect relationship with the environment and environmental issues. Whereas economic development is a policy intervention endeavored with aims of economic and social well-being of people, economic growth is a phenomenon of market productivity and rise in GDP, while business is the driving factor for the growth. (Smith & Smith 2008).

Business as a factor of production, development and national sustenance has contributed immensely to the infrastructural development, academic development, social context development, economic development and political development of every nation of the world including Nigeria. (Lieberman, 2013).

Nigeria being a multi-diversified nation blessed with several natural and human resources based on geographical locations and business oriented nation full of individual efforts in harnessing the opportunities that abound, the Northern region is characterized by farming, the Western region by education, the Southern Region by Oil politics and the Eastern region by trade. It is against this backdrop that the researcher intends to x-ray the Place of Business Education in Human Capacity Building in the Eastern Nigeria.

Business Education

Business education is two words in one. It is important to discuss the concepts separately before treating it as one entity. But there are some questions that needed to be asked as follows;

What is Education? Is it Different from Schooling?

According to Mark .K. Smith who explores the meaning of education and suggested that education is a process of inviting truth and possibility. He argued that it is a wise, hopeful and respectful cultivation of learning undertaken in the belief that all should have the chance to share in life.

It is ironical that people often confuse education with schooling. When education is mentioned people think of places like schools or colleges where seeing or hearing of words is organized. Some might also look to particular jobs like teacher or tutor. Mark postulated that the problem with this believe is that while looking to help people learn, the way a lot of schools and teachers operate is not necessarily something we can properly call education. He argued that educators have chosen or fallen or has been pushed into 'schooling' – trying to drill learning into people according to some plan often drawn up by others. Paulo (2009) in Mark; famously called this banking – making deposits of knowledge. Such 'schooling' quickly descends into treating learners like objects, things to be acted upon rather than people to be related to.

Mark strongly believes that education is a process of inviting truth and possibility, of encouraging and giving time to discovery. He referred to John Dewey (1916; 1938), who defined education as a social process – 'a process of living and not a preparation for future living'.

In his view educators tend to act with people rather than on the people, their task is to educate (related to the Greek notion of *educere*), to bring out or develop potential. Such education is:

- *Deliberate and hopeful*. It is learning that we set out to make happen in the belief that people can 'be more';
- *Informed, respectful and wise*. A process of inviting truth and possibility.
- *Grounded in a desire that at all may flourish and share in life*. It is a cooperative and inclusive activity that looks to help people to live their lives as well as they can.

Mark concluded by answering the question 'what is education?' given here can apply to both those 'informal' forms that are driven and rooted in conversation – and to more formal approaches based in curriculum. The choice is not between what is 'good' and what is 'bad' – but rather what is appropriate for people in this situation or that. There are times to use transmission and direct teaching as methods, and moments for exploration, experience and action. It is all about getting the mix right, and framing it within the guiding *eidōs* and disposition of education.

Luno (2018), defined education as the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. He explained that educational methods include storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, and directed research, he maintained that education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators, but learners may also educate themselves, and concluded that education can take place in formal or informal settings and any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational.

Collins (2018), defined education as the implementation result of the societal curriculum. Collins stated that education is the acquisition of knowledge refined by the learner as induced by the environment, the teacher, instructor and the guider. He maintained that the curriculum could be formal, informal or non-formal but the resultant effect is the objective which is change in desired behaviors as anticipated by the societal norms and value system.

What is Business?

Business can be defined as an organization or economic system where goods and services are exchanged for one another or for monetary purposes.

This process can be privately owned, every business requires some form of investment and enough customers to whom its output can be sold on a consistent basis in order to make a profit.

Business education

Business education is the process of teaching learners the fundamentals, theories, and processes of business, it is a general term that encompasses a number of methods used to teach students the fundamentals of business practices. These methods range from formal educational degree programs, such as the Master of Business Administration (MBA), to school-to-work opportunity systems or cooperative education. Business education programs are designed to provide students with the basic theories of management and production. The main goals of business education programs are to teach the processes of decision making; the philosophy, theory, and psychology of management; practical applications; and business start-up and operational procedures. (Dillon, 2014).

The major concern about these definitions is that it lacks merit on the ground that it does not consider informal training as part of education in the realm of business. Among the business mongers in Nigeria less than 5% holds a degree in business studies, yet they make head ways in building the economy, then why can't it be considered as part of education in business.

In the words of Luno 2018, "Unless the education makes you a good human being it is of no use". Education should not be considered only what we learn in school or colleges.

Learning is a continuous process, everything we learn in life forms part of education. Schooling is a formal process of acquiring knowledge which is divided into stages and classes, acquired in sequence which ultimately makes the student fit for the world and business activities.

The critical challenge of education is the aspect of schooling that lays emphasis on student to be employable. It should be noted that education is beyond the confines of school.

The continuous innovation, review, and changes in our educational curriculum introducing ethics and moral education show that all is not well in our system. Our society trains children and teaches them how to dream big, how to become good lawyer, engineers, and doctor etc without the inclusion of business skill attached.

It is with these curriculums that children attained the schools goals devoid of morality and self-reliant. The resultant effect of this lopsided curriculum is massive corruption in our society.

Every parent wants their wards to be very rich, without teaching them how to be skillful businessmen that will lead them into happiness.

The Nigerian society is at the verge of another civil war because parents have created two different world classes due to over dependant on central economy. The rich get richer while the poor get poorer. Lack of business knowledge has practically made our society devoid of all the basic dignities which the humans would have enjoyed.

Centre of Business in the Eastern Nigeria

Back in the 1800's the eastern Nigeria have been known for self-reliance, through harnessing of palm fruits, fishing and farming. Today the instinct of business have grown through the gene of their children, in the 19600's the eastern Nigeria have developed business experts known around the world, for supplies of ammunitions during the 2nd world war. Chief Ojukwu the father of the Commander In Chief of the defunct Biafra Nation was known for heavy transport business, Ekene Dili-Chukwu among others.

Today the Eastern Nigeria has become the hub of business in Nigeria. The Central Onitsha market located at all nooks and crannies of the Onitsha city, is known for all encompassing goods, the Aba central market and Owerri are not left out of the business development in the eastern Nigeria. From the history of education in Nigeria, the West ranks first in education, East second and North last. This second position is not unconnected to much interest attached to business than education in the eastern Nigeria. It's now obvious that the rapid developments witnessed recently in the eastern Nigeria are based on the revenues generated from trading and the construction of technological parts.

Role of Business education in Eastern Nigeria

Beyond the Classroom Activities

In the bid of the World's quest for mass literacy and quality education for all, as well promoting lifelong learning as identified by United Nations' 17th Sustainable Development Goals: "Education is the key that will allow many other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved. When people are able to get quality education they can break from the cycle of poverty. Education, therefore, helps to reduce inequalities and to reach gender equality. It also empowers people everywhere to live more healthy and sustainable lives. Education is also crucial to fostering tolerance between people and contributes to more peaceful societies." According to UNESCO report as retrieved in 2015, the systemic nature of education, along with the need for cooperative solutions was highlighted. UNESCO'S Director-General Irina Bokova has this to say: "Education is a shared responsibility between us all: governments, schools, teachers, parents and private actors. Accountability for these responsibilities defines the way teachers teach, students learn, and governments act. It must be designed with care and with

the principles of equity, inclusion and quality in mind.” With the assertion of UNESCO, it implies that those who could not cope with conventional education should be given trade and skill educations to enable them become responsible citizens of the society.

One of the regions identified by Federal ministry of Education in Nigeria as still struggling to provide access to education is Eastern Nigeria: “More than half of children that has not enrolled in school due to trading lives in Onitsha and Aba, which makes it the region with the second largest number of out-of-school children in Nigeria. And this region has a very young population so it will have to provide basic education that will include business to the children between the ages of 12 and 30 years of age in 2030”. Experts suggest that investing in higher technical and business education and research may be the solution. Eastern Nigeria needs business, science and technological schools in Nigeria than any other region considering their inputs in the business economy of Nigeria.

Historically the ability to discover and develop machines in Nigeria has been hampered by lack of expertise and infrastructure. The reasons for this varied but include the massive brain drain, over many decades, fueled largely by a lack of meaningful investment in research infrastructure by most Nigerian governments, which makes it almost impossible for scientists to implement what they have learned back home. Technology in Nigeria can be said to have died a natural death alongside Biafra as a Nation. (Seabright, 2010).

Contributions of Business Education to the Economy of Eastern Nigeria

Small and Medium scale businesses are designed to exploit the unique set of skills, knowledge and ideas of their owners to manufacture, sale products and services. Education and work experience vary greatly from one entrepreneur to another, and different types of businesses require different sets of skills and expertise to succeed to a great extent. While no formal business training is required to start a successful business, studying business education can be advantageous to entrepreneurs and their employees.

Expanding Business Skills in the Area

The primary benefit of studying business education is that it helps to equip entrepreneurs, owners and managers of firms with essential business skills and knowledge. Those with no formal business training might be ill-prepared to handle tasks on the business side of the venture, such as creating a business plan, accounting and negotiating, but with the presence of business education experts, business owners employs them to manage their firms in the East.

Business education has attracted many business owners whom would have found nothing good in school to enroll in school thereby learning other useful knowledge that equally help to improve a business owner’s ability in analyzing data, improving financial decisions and make better predictions about the business. Business education helps the business setting in the east to be more proactive against loss in the business.

Business Education have created a lot of jobs for the youths who studied Business management in the east, this is not unconnected to low rate of unemployment among the Igbos.

Old perception on business education remained that it is a field of study that enables personnel to manage finance for business owners or those who only estimate budget, understand profit and loss. That’s relatively truth but today’s education also involve managing people, working together to achieve results, interpersonal relations and communications as well governance, this is relative to Anambra producing one of the best Governors in the history of Nigeria in person of Peter Obi.

Business education has eradicated the problems of poor communication in business where only Igbo language was used for trading in the past. Business education has lead to

effective management techniques, not just in terms of coursework but by working with others on projects in class, the people of the East now have acquired the experiences on how to work with other ethnic groups for a common goal.

Business education has contributed to the high professional level of the Easterners to be the most viable in the banking industry in Nigeria.

Networking Opportunities

A major landmark of business education in Eastern Nigeria is that Easterners are now exposed to networking opportunities with like-minded business professionals, professors and peers. This has opened up new possibilities for partnerships and mentoring as well employment opportunities in the east. Small business owners can now run to professors for advice within their reach this is another form of advantage over other entrepreneurs who can't get friendly expert advice on networking or who lacks such expertise within their locality. (Illeris, 2002).

Conclusion

Conclusive, it is worthy to note that education is a valuable adventure in the life of mankind. Nevertheless, business education enhances an entrepreneur's chances of launching a successful business, but it does not guarantee successful business enterprise. Even seasoned and successful business people also face some challenges of failure when developing new business firms. Formal and informal business training supplies business owners with more tools to deal with their various challenges and take advantage of opportunities as well.

Recommendations

Having rooted for the relevance of business education in the capacity building of Eastern Nigeria indigenes, the following recommendations are made to sustain the spirit of productivity in the region;

1. Following the recent fall on the educational standards in Nigeria, over depending on paper rather than skill, the Easterners should continue to embrace trading as a means of livelihoods.
2. Compulsory education should be encouraged at the primary and secondary level to help build the business structures in the East.
3. Federal and State governments should endeavor to build more technical and business education schools across the East to boast the morals of the business eager youths.
4. Business development funds should be raised by the government to support the business of with small and medium scale industries in the east.
5. Entrepreneurship programs should be advocated for by the various level of government to encourage people not relying much on central employments.
6. Those who studied business education should be given priority of employment to encourage others into the field.
7. Local goods should be patronized by the government and other people to encourage local production in the East.
8. Business education should be introduced in the school curriculum at the primary level to give the Easterners the sense of belong in business as the landmark.
9. Other tribes in Nigeria should emulate the Igbos, because virtually all the goods manufactured in this nation is a product from the East.
10. Historical traces on the skills and knowledge exhibited by the Late O.C Ojukwu and his commandants should be revisited to regain the technological exhibitions demonstrated during the Nigeria/Biafra civil war.

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