

Funding Business Education Programme in Nigerian Tertiary Institution: The Way Forward

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***Abstract:** The paper examined the various ways of sourcing funds to argument government contribution towards implementation of effective business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It is an expository research design using secondary data. The paper explored the concept of business education, examined the current method of funding business education programme in public tertiary institutions in Nigeria and the way forward.*

***Key words:** Business education programme, tertiary institution, Nigeria*

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Introduction

Business education has been signed out as an important discipline that plays a very important part in providing individuals at all age levels with the ability to function effectively in the business world. It involves the acquisition of knowledge, skills, understandings and attitudes to perform in the world of business as a producer and/or consumer of goods and services that business offers. Olaniyan and Ttiloye (2012) observed that business education programme represents a broad and diverse discipline that is included in all types of educational delivery systems – elementary, secondary and post secondary. It includes education for office occupations, business teaching, business administration and economic understanding. It is an integral part of general education which involves the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge of occupations in various sectors of the economy. Otijole in Olaniyan and Ttiloye (2012) noted that business education plays a dual role of preparing the individuals for gainful and useful employment after leaving school as well as educating them to be intelligent consumers of the goods and services of business. Utoware and Edionwe (2012) said that business education is the education for the acquisition and development of skills and competencies, attitudes and attributes which are necessary for efficiency of the economic system. Ulinfun in Aliyu (2001) viewed business education as education for business or

training in business skills which are required for use in business office, clerical occupation and business policy analyses. Osuala (2004) sees business education as a programme of instruction which consists of two parts: Office education – a vocational education programme for office career through initial refresher and upgrading education leading to employability and advancement in the office occupations; and General Education, a programme to provide students with information and competencies, which are needed by all in managing personal business affairs and in using the services of the business world.

Mulan in Utoware and Edionwe (2012) opined that the success of any business education programme depends largely on the objectives of the programme, availability of equipment, adequate textbooks, a well-defined curriculum and availability of effective and efficient teaching staff, as well as other educational resources.

According to Ademola (2000), economic hard times has forced many Nigerian to recognize and accept the potentialities of business education in insulating them from the discomfort of unemployment and employability. A good system of business education programme provides a social manpower foundation for technological and industrial growth. Thus, the attention which business education has received since the implementation of the National policy on Education is partly traceable to the vicissitudes of the economic down turn which accentuated in the early 1980s.

Ademola (2002) noted that in the past, business education at all levels in public schools was being financed by the government through regular allocation of funds, students through tuition and development levies. Despite these major sources of funds to business education system, there exists acute shortage of funds to implement fully the business education programmes. The effect of this lack of adequate funds can be observed in shortage of infrastructure in many schools, ill equipped business education laboratories and irregular payment of teachers' salaries.

Since it has become clear that the government alone can no longer effectively fund business education there is need to assist the government identify sources of funds for the implementation of the business education programme, especially at the tertiary level of education in Nigeria. This paper is, therefore, a modest attempt to identify the various ways of sourcing of funds to argument government contribution for business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Design of the study

This is purely an expository research design using secondary data.

Ibigbami (2000) observed that business education is categorized into basic business courses namely, Economics, Commerce, Accounts, Secretarial clusters and Distributive Education. All these courses are competency based and career oriented, hence, the multi-faceted nature of business education is a problem to the teacher and the nation. Today, education is very expensive and business education is even more expensive. The present-day business education requires the use of expensive equipment and machines as well as specialized and skilled manpower. It is, therefore, capital intensive.

Yabani in Ibigbami (2000) noted that the National Policy on Education (1981:20) acknowledged five types of technical institutions outside the University system, but Yabani however, indicated three broad classifications. They are:

1. Vocational Schools at post primary level for production of artisans leading to Trade Test Certificate awarded by the Ministry of Labour.

2. Technical Colleges at Post Junior Secondary school level for production of Craftsmen and Master Craftsmen leading to the award of the Federal Craft Certificate and the WEAC Technical commercial certificates which has been replaced by (NTC) and Advanced National Technical Certificate (ANTC) for courses based on NBTE curricula.
3. The Polytechnic/Colleges of Technology and similar post secondary institutions like Colleges of Agriculture, which offer courses leading to the National Diploma (OND) and Higher national Diploma (HND) and produce technicians and Higher Technicians/technologists.

These were contained in the National Board for Technical education's report submitted to the National council on education in 1987. This submission leaves out a fourth and indeed, an important category recognized by the national Policy on education itself. This is the Technical education of which business education is part at post secondary level, yet outside the University system namely, Colleges of Education (Technical).

Funding Business Education in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

Ibigbami (2000) said that the biggest problem facing business education today is inadequate funding. Most times, the subvention granted to the institutions running business education courses are not enough and would not come in good time to meet the basic recurrent expenditure, which is the payment of salaries and allowances when they fall due. The other recurrent expenditure known as other charges for the proper day to day running of business education programmes in these institutions are not forth coming. Hence, there are dilapidated structures and abandoned equipment which were conceived for providing business education. The running cost of the items are too prohibitive for the institutions lean financial resources.

Related to the inadequate subvention is the late release of subvention. This, coupled with the low level of workshop fees paid by students, compared with the corresponding expenses to be covered is flimsily inadequate. There are funding gaps between the budgets submitted by business education institutions and the amount released to them by the government. In fact government subventions to these institutions have not kept pace with student's enrolment growth.

Business education programmes in Nigeria's tertiary institutions have not been adequately funded despite the fact that science, technology and vocational education remain the prerequisites for national development. The authenticity and fulfillment of these statements lie on adequate funding of this sector of education. Adeyemi (2005) highlighted this point by stating that the strategy for the technological advancement of any nation must give top priority to the provision of adequate funds, high caliber staff and high quality equipment to the institutions responsible for training and research in technology. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, these institutions seem not to be given the attention and consideration they deserve. The departments offering business education programmes in the institutions are ill-equipped, ill financed and their staff and students are not provided with adequate encouragement and incentives. For these reasons, these programmes have been in poor state. There is inadequate quantity and quality of instructional equipment, insufficient number of quality academic staff and classrooms. There is also lack of maintenance culture, inadequate provision of the latest technologies in business education,

inadequate supply of consumables, machines and equipment spare parts, inadequate training and retraining for already serving staff. This is also in line with Ezeugwu (2009) who pointed out that insufficient fund for business education programmes has hampered the progress of all levels of education. Business education remains the prerequisites for national development.

Adetunji (1994) lamented that due to the difference between the time agreed upon for fund release and the actual time of availability from government, heads of institutions undertake a lot of shoddy jobs and projects. Apart from this fact, the quality of teaching and research has dropped and qualified teachers and professionals lined-away for other sectors of the economy. Adetunji was of the view that alternative sources of fund should be found to supplement government resources. Adetunji noted that as far as Nigeria is concerned, no actual serious attempts has been made to estimate the costs involved in programmes of business education. All efforts geared towards this end has been on paper. Business education has continued to be under financed, when considered in relation to the tasks to be undertaken, and when compared to other sectors of education, and this is due to:

Firstly, lack of national policy and clarity over purpose and significance of business education on the part of the government.

Secondly, the civil service, especially Ministries of Education, and labour to mention but a few, are controlled by people who themselves were trained at a time when business education was not conceived as being important. To most of them, even parliamentarians, the other sectors of education are the normal and proper ones; business education is not more than a peripheral frill, and hence, funds meant for her are usually brutalized by them. Whenever there is any economic or finance belt-tightening, business education votes are the first to be cut.

Thirdly, business education is looked upon as a semi-professional job, one better left for the willing, unpaid and other volunteers.

Fourthly, there is the conviction that learners should pay for their education and that only by doing so will the facilities provided be appreciated.

All these constitute problems to policy issues n funding of business education, especially from government in the context of prevailing social, economic and political realities. Worse still, the formulae used for allocation is biased.

Ibigbami (2000) said that the principle underlying the funding of Business education is that there is a minimum level of funding below which the programme cannot be effective and should not be attempted. This is because of the capital intensive and uncompromising nature of the programmes due to the following reasons:

- 1) High demand for equipment and specialized manpower unlike the other educational programmes;
- 2) Provision of funds for continuous research and development.
- 3) Acquisition of equipment, based on changing technology.
- 4) Construction and maintenance of infrastructures
- 5) Funding of students practical experience schemes

- 6) Payment of remunerations for the varying categories of business personnel.
- 7) Staff development programmes and activities.
- 8) The repairs, rehabilitation and refurbishing of equipment and tools
- 9) Training and retraining of students and employees on improved facilities and equipment.
- 10) Ideal administrative structures suitable for business education institutions and programmes management.
- 11) Adequately supplementing the resources of business education trainees as a means of motivating them.
- 12) Follow-up, supervision, inspection and studies on employees and practitioners in Business Education.
- 13) The trainer/teacher/lecturer of a group of skill should be a master of relevant occupation.

Titiloye (2008) said that the greatest problem of business education is inadequate funding. Titiloye noted that enough funds is needed to purchase equipment to constantly service the machines, to replace outdated accessories and to purchase necessary materials that can aid in teaching and learning process. This financial involvement scares a lot of institutions from establishing business education department in their institutions. Alakpa (2012) lamented that in most of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria, business education is poorly funded and this has affected the quality of business education graduates turned out yearly. Okeke and Eze in (2012) regretted that poor funding has created a serious challenge to the successful implementation of business mandate in Nigeria. Okeke and Eze noted that business education is capital intensive, and therefore needs funds to procure computer system, typewriters, furniture and sizeable laboratories to make the programme become effective and efficient and as it is found in most developed nations.

Agbo (2012), identified the following strategies currently used in funding of business education programmes in tertiary institutions in Enugu State of Nigeria (1) increases in school fees, (2) periodic fund raising by the management, (3) renting of facilities, (4) establishment of bookshops; (5) leasing of typing pools; (6) student union dues; (7) donations from clubs and organizations; (8) donations from Alumni association; (9) launching of departmental journals; (10) proceeds from organizing social activities; (11) establishing photocopying centers; (12) sale of stationeries; (13) government allocations; (14) government grants; (15) development levies by students; (16) PTA levies; (17) interest on banked money.

The Way Forward

Agbo (2012), however, opined that the current strategies in use in the funding of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Enugu State Nigeria, are not adequate enough to solve their problems, and consequently, Agbo suggested the following innovative strategies for effective funding of business education programme in tertiary institutions in Enugu State: (1) reserving a certain percentage of property tax collected by the state for the

funding of business education; (2) reserving a certain percentage company tax to business education; (3) annual contributions by the users of business education products; (4) establishment of endowment fund by the community where the programme is situated; (5) establishment of endowment fund by philanthropic organization; (6) establishment and operating of business centres by departments; (7) establishment and operating of cyber café by the departments; (8) organizing short term course for secretarial staff; (9) organizing workshop and seminar for practicing secretarial staff; (10) commercializing the typing of students projects; (11) special allocation of funds to the department of business education; (12) offering secretarial services at cost to the public; (13) organizing in-service training at cost especially on ICT; (14) special technological education tax on operators of business centres and cyber cafes within the local government area where the programme is situated; (15) special technology education levy by business education students; (16) establishment of a commercialized relaxation centre such as cinema and video clubs by the business education department; (17) donations from Alumni Association; (18) donations from clubs and organizations, (19) periodic funds raising by the management; (20) interest on banked money; (21) proceeds from organizing social activities; (22) launching of departmental journals; (23) establishment of bookshop.

Ademola (2000) suggested the following strategies for the funding of business education programmes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Registered companies/parents

1. By giving loans and scholarships to outstanding students.
2. By donating buildings and supply of equipment to schools for business education.
3. Admitting students for work experience freely.
4. Donations to the Business Education Endowment Fund

Federal, State and Local Government

1. Motivating and encouraging community to assist in embracing the sponsor of projects needed by business education schools.
2. Organizing drama and exhibitions and using the money realized for promoting business education programmes.
3. Giving special grant up to 20%, 10% and 5% respectively of income tax in addition to budgetary allocation to business education
4. Tolls collected from roads, allocating about 10% of it to business education.

Clubs and Societies/Religious Bodies

1. By giving loans and scholarships to deserving students
2. By providing prizes and trophies to be competed for.

3. Providing equipment for Business Education programmes.

The ingredients and techniques found out to be useful for stimulating the supply of funds according to Ademola (2000) are:

1. Business Education could organized seminars, workshops and conferences to make the populace realize the importance of Business Education and the need for the community and general public to support it.
2. Through exhibition by the business community the general public could be convinced to finance business education.
3. A national Board for Financing Business Education should be set up comprising representatives of different bodies. Company representatives, religious bodies, parents, club and societies etc.
4. Appeals could be made to individuals, organizations, clubs and societies etc. to come forward and support business education programme.

Conclusion

For business education to be effective, it must be adequately supported financially by all concerned. If Nigerians could pull their resources together to finance business education as identified by this paper, then adequate foundation must have been provided for the most desired sustainable development of Nigeria.

Recommendations

A number of sources have been identified for generating funds to complement government subvention; but because of the intermittent nature of these sources, searches for most reliable sources of funding business education should be explored. The following are, therefore, recommended:

- 1) Legislation on education should have a section relating specifically to business education, indicating government intention to allot certain percentage for the running of business education programme in Nigeria. It should be recalled that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) advocated 26% budgetary allocation to education funding by developing nations. Therefore, Federal, State and Local governments in Nigeria should agree on a certain percentage to be devoted to business education in Nigeria because everybody needs the products of business education.
- 2) Education Trust Fund ETF should set apart a certain percentage of its funds specifically for the running of business education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
- 3) Registered companies in states where business education programmes are run in tertiary institutions should be compelled to give certain percentage of their profits for the funding of business education.

- 4) Communities and individuals should give scholarships to outstanding students. They should also erect buildings and buy equipment for business education department in consultation with the relevant authorities of the institutions.
- 5) States and National Assemblies should determine the school fees and other levies which students should pay, if necessary, and such funds should be properly managed and accounted for.

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