

**SKILL ACQUISITION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION: A VERITABLE TOOL FOR
SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Abstract

National Economy has been affected by recession owing to corona virus disease (covid-19), insecurity, ethical differences , fall price of oil, kidnapping, armed robbery, political influence and other social ills. This has caused excessive importation of goods, borrowing and low investment inflow. The study focused on ways of reshaping the economy through skill acquisition in business education as veritable tools for sustainable national development. The study discussed the concept of skill acquisition, business education and sustainable national development, types of skill acquisition available in business education, importance and challenges of skill acquisition and sustainable national development. The paper concluded that business education which is an essential part of vocational and technical education in Nigeria has remained relevant in equipping individual with skills needed to approach in the changing labour market and dual knowledge that help them to be producers of goods and services and also users of such goods in the society. Therefore, the skills acquired by business education graduates would help them to perform well in the place of work and make them self reliant. It was recommended that educational administrators should engage personnel with vocational skills to teach practical courses so that the training will geared towards preparing skilled manpower. There is also need for establishment of more entrepreneurship and marketing skill acquisition centers to help the graduates to market their goods and services.

Keywords: Skill Acquisition, Business Education, Sustainability and National Development.

INTRODUCTION

The Nigeria economy has been affected by covid -19, fall price of oil, insecurity, political influence, kidnapping, change of currency, yahoo boy's syndrome and ethical violence is a manifestation of long term ills in the structure of the economy that has become full blown in the present day Nigeria. The ugly situations have brought about undeniable feelings of disappointment in the economy. The result is that, many firms are facing a lot of challenges due to dramatic fall in domestic industrial production as a result of insufficient raw materials and high tax. The exchange rate of naira keeps falling against pound sterling and dollar. There is high rate of inflation, rising taxes, falling wages, high cost of goods and services, high cost of living, etc. There are also wide-spread of manpower contractions, both in public and private sectors of the economy. The state and federal government therefore find it difficult to meet up with the financial obligations. The high rate of killing, kidnapping, unemployment, poverty and instability are very serious issues facing the nation.

The need for skill acquisition in business education as a veritable tool for sustainable national development cannot be over emphasized because, it helps business education graduates to become more intelligent consumers of goods and services, with sole aim of becoming better producers of goods and services. Unemployment among the youth today is on the increase and the situation is pathetic as the number of people graduating from the tertiary institution looking for employment opportunities are increasing day by day. This is why business education is a formidable force in empowering the youths and nations as entrepreneurs for sustainable economic development. They also help to create awareness and coordinate business ideas to its graduates thereby ensuring more Nigerians to be employable with marketable and saleable skill. According to Omidiji and Ogwu (2019) skill acquisition is the systematic and sequential development of skills that promotes efficiency and effectiveness in the performance of a specific job. Business education has become necessary in the sustenance and development of economy because it helps to shape and reshape the mentality and mind set of individual towards independent living. Skill acquisition is vital for Nigeria to grow economically, particularly in this era of dwindling economy. Federal Government of Nigeria has recognized skill acquisition as an important factor in the drive to enhance productivity, reduce youth unemployment and achieve sustainable economic development (Nwankwo, et al 2018). Therefore, effective skill acquisition in business education is an indispensable tool towards producing a self-reliant nation.

Skill acquisition is a form of training of individual or group of individuals that can lead to acquisition of skill and knowledge for self sustenance. Such training can be achieved in an informal setting such as under apprenticeship system or in a formal way such as school environment. It also involves a gradual change from less effective behaviour to extremely proficient one. According to Azuka and Nwosu (2018) business education is seen as an aspect of vocational and technical education that remained relevant in producing the needs of individuals and that of the society through skill acquisition.

Business education is seen as education for and about business. Business education is the type of education that equips individual with occupational skills and

knowledge that will enable them fit into, and finds job satisfaction in the labour market. According to Iwu (2019) business education programme assist to develop students' with managerial and business decision making skills through training and practical experience in form of case studies, group projects and industrial training (IT). It is also seen as an aspect of vocational and technical education which is designed to develop competencies in management, administration, marketing, bookkeeping, accounting, office technology and communication technology (Udo&Babaigida, 2017). The said skills equip and empower learners to live, learn and work as productive citizens for their various nations. The objective and goals of business education at all levels of education are to develop the basic skills for business education, to relate the knowledge and skills acquired for national development and to develop the basic skills in office occupation to provide the needed background for teaching in business subject.(Shaibu, et al 2019).

Business education is a type of education that assists individuals to acquire skills which can be applied to solve problems in business and office occupation. It is seen as an aspect of education that helps in preparing individual for initial employment to upgrade existing skills to retrain in new or related business and office occupation. Business education also has a definite role of equipping students with knowledge, attitude, skills and competencies needed to become productive members of the society. Business education is a planned programme of learning experience that begin with the exploration of career options to support basics academic and life skills as well as enabling one to achieve high academic standards, leaderships, job creators and preparations for business world and continuing education . A key aspect of business education is to provide a continuous programme of planned learning experience to equip individuals to effectively fulfill roles.

- a. To provide and distribute goods and services.
- b. To use the result of production as consumers.
- c. To make judicious socio-economic decisions as a citizen.

Business education is a major element used to ensure that there is sustainable national development in a developing country such as Nigeria. For business education to achieve its goals the following must be considered:

1. There must be appropriate strategies for promoting skill acquisition to achieve its goals.
2. There must be appropriate strategies for promoting entrepreneurship for poverty reduction.
3. There must be appropriate strategies for promoting skill acquisition for the production of skilled graduates for sustainable national development.

Therefore,, acquisition of the requisite skills is key for job creation and employment as a means of increasing productive power of any economy.

Skill means the ability to do something well, gained through training and experience. It can be seen as the abilities, capabilities and expertise acquired through deliberate systematic and sustained training necessary to adaptively perform job functions effectively. Skill acquisition should be seen as a veritable tool in business education programme as skill acquired would aid job creation, youth empowerment and poverty alleviation which in turn have the capacity to solve various social problems. To guarantee the quality of education and for self reliance, emphasis should be placed on skill content

of vocational business education with necessary requirements for gainful employment and thus help to sustain government's effort in combating crime and delinquencies in our society (Udo&Babaigida, 2017).

The acquisition of skills by business graduates will help to enrich the national economy as well as making it possible for sustainable national development. According to (Udo&Babaigida, 2017).For this to be sustained there is need to have quality business education teacher to teach practical skills to produce skilled manpower for sustainable national development. Sustainable national development as far as it is concerned is not a fixed concept, as it is a culturally directed search for dynamic balance in the relationship between social, economic and natural systems, a balance that seeks to promote equity between the present and the future and equity between countries, races, social classes and gender. To achieve this, an appropriate sustainable national development must be put in place for the rich and poor nations of the world.(Shaibu, et al 2019).

Skill acquisition in business education is a practical instrument that is used in developing knowledge, ability and skills in the learners in such a way they can use it to solve problem of the society. But for this to be reality, there is need for appropriate strategies that promote skill acquisition for sustainable national development for instance adequate funding of the programme, reviews of the programme to accommodate practical skills, employment of qualified personnel, effective assessment and development of staff, appropriate use of quality instructional materials and as well as standardization of requirements for admission of students, quality teaching facilities, good administration, quality curriculum, quality textbooks, good administration and regular accreditation etc. Skill acquisition is a practical instrument that is used in developing knowledge ability, attitude and skills in the learner in such a way that he/she can be responsible citizen.

Concept of Skill Acquisition

Skill acquisition is known as the type of learning in which students acquired the skills that will enable them to function effectively in their day today activities as to improve their sustainability as a process for theoretical understanding of the concept or idea in the course of study such as business education. This is in line with the position of Amesi (2017), who stated that skill acquisition is ability and capability acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained effort of smoothly and adaptively carry out complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive) things (technical), and or people (interpersonal), skills can be acquired through teaching and learning of business education. Based on our understanding of the processes involved in skill acquisition, we can develop effective practices. According to (Shaibu,Okpe and Kaduru 2019), skill acquisition is the process of demonstrating the habit of active thinking or behavior in a specific activity. Such training can be achieved in an informal setting such as under apprenticeship system or in a formal and regimented environment such as school environment. He further stated that skill acquisition is seen as the ability to do or perform an activity that is related to meaningful exercise, or job.

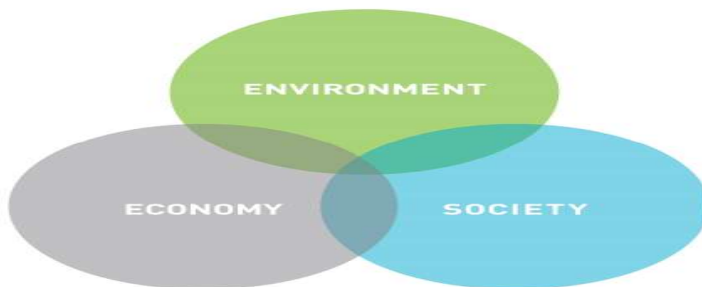
Concept of Sustainability

Sustainability is a complex concept. The most often quoted definition comes from the UN World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED): “sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Consequently, sustainability has been defined as fulfilling the needs of current generation, without compromising the needs of future generations, while ensuring a balance between economic growth and social well being. It presumes that resources are finite, and should be used conservatively and wisely with a view to long-term priorities and consequences of the ways in which resources are used.

According Olaleye and Akinwunini (2010), sustainability is the develop, deliberate and systematic ways of ensuring the survival of a state and its population while balancing the use of management of social, economic and political resources in a manner that will benefit everyone and future generation so as to enhance the skills acquisition in business education. Sustainability is a holistic approach that considers ecological, social and economic dimensions, recognizing that all must be considered together to find lasting prosperity.

Method of sustainability

There are three method of sustainability:



Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability takes into account the social and ecological consequences of economic activity. It also means that human communities across the globe are able to maintain their independence and have access to the resources that they required financial and to meet their needs.

Social Sustainability

A socially sustainable society is one in which all members have equal rights, all share equitably in societal benefits, and all participate equally in the decision-making process.

Environmental Sustainability

Ecological integrity is maintained, all of earth’s environmental systems are kept in balance while natural resources within them are consumed by humans at a rate where they are able to replenish themselves.

Concept of Business Education

Business education is a programme that prepares individuals with multiple skills to teach or work in industry and equally set up a business as an entrepreneur and employ others (Ibrahim, 2017). According to Azuka and Nwosu (2018), business education is an aspect of vocational education that concerned with preparation of skilled manpower. It is seen as an area of study that prepares students for occupation in business or business related field or teaching career in the academic. Business education has been seen as education about business or training in relevant skills in office occupation. Business education is also, seen as a study that assists individuals to acquire skills, which they can apply to solve problems in business and office occupations. Okeke and Nzekwe (2019), affirmed that business education is a skill drilling and acquisition course which is capable of making its students employable or self employed on graduates in order to help facilitate economic activities in the country. It is the wish of every student to get job or start up a business after graduation. Enang and Okute (2019), pointed out that skill and knowledge are the engines of economic growth and social development of any nation. It is also an education that prepares individual for career in business where instruction is designed to prepare youths and adults for actual practice in the world of business. Shaibu, et al (2019), stated that this type of education assists under graduate and unemployed youth in the society to generate employment, income and contribute to the needs of the society. We should bear in mind, that business skills are one of the tools that make individuals to become economic producers and wise consumers of goods and services. Amisi (2018), stated that equipping business education students with practical skills is a guarantee to a white collar job and substance of the economy. Business education, being a dynamic and a programme for sustainable development should adapt to change in digital technology and in the business world.(Okoye, 2017). This means that, there is need to enlighten the students of business education on need to embrace Electronic commerce (E- commerce), Electronic tailing (E-tailing), Electronic business (E- Business) to show case or sale their products in line and as well be producers of goods and services and also users of such products. According to Azuka and Nwosu (2018), business education is known as the programme of studies, which comprises four parts –

1. Creating awareness in occupation
2. Preparing youth for work in business occupation
3. Preparing people to become better citizens and consumers of goods and services
4. Preparing business teacher.

Azuka and Nwosu (2018), further maintained that business education prepares youths for vocations and also furnishes them with relevant information concerning their lives both as citizens and as individuals.

The Goals of Business Education

(Ekpenyoung (2010) in Umeh and Oguejiofor (2018) stated the following as the goals of business education:

1. To prepare the youth for meeting community, state and national economic aspiration..
2. To develop individuals who will properly equipped with the pre-requisite knowledge and skills for productive work life;

3. To produce students with vocational and technical knowledge.
4. To develop in the youth the right attitudes and skills towards work.
5. To equip the learners to develop skills for making national economic decision in various areas of business.

Skill Acquisition in Business Education

The development of adequate skill and competencies is an important characteristic of vocational business education programme at all levels of Nigeria education system. To support this, one of the National Educational Objectives stated that the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical are important for all Nigerians to live and contribute to the development of the society.(Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004). Consequently, the National Educational Policy document (2004) states that the Nations educational activity should be centered on the students in order for them to acquire maximum skills acquisition for self development and fulfillment in the labour market. Skill is seen as experience, aptitude and competence, appropriate for a particular job, and has to do with experts knowledge and creative resources to a level of mastery. To acquire skill, an individual needs to acquire basic training or knowledge that is related to the task to be performed whether through formal, informal or a combination of the two. In view of this, the process of developing capacities through all levels of education and training occurring in formal, non- formal and on the job setting which enable individuals in all areas of the economy to be fully and productivity engaged in livelihood and to have the capacity to adapt their skills to meet the changing demands and opportunities of the economy and labour market especially in the E-world (Enang and Okute, 2019). According to Ihekwoaba (2017), Skills can be seen as the ability to demonstrate a system and sequence of behavior that is functionally related to attaining a goal. However, skill can be known as the ability to do something well, usually gained through training or experience that is needed. The acquisition of maximum skill acquisition helps individuals to be engaged in productive work either for themselves or for employers of labour. This enables business education graduates to qualify for and hold productive employment as well as increase their productivity and earns more remuneration. According to Okoro (2018), skill acquisition in business education is an indispensable tool towards producing a self-reliant nation and dynamic economy. In view of the importance of equipping students with skills for gainful employment and self- employment, federal republic of Nigeria(FRN, 2013) stated that there is need to improve the quality of business education programme using appropriate strategies. This reveals that the programme has imparted in its graduates, office skills, entrepreneurship skills, marketing skills, communication skills, job creation skills, analytical thinking skills, managerial skills and strategic skills that help them to be competent at work place. Mohmond and Yunusa (2018) saw skill acquisition as a process undergone in a programme to achieve efficiency for self-reliance and national development.

Types of Skill Acquisition in Business Education

According to Busola (2016), the following are available skills acquisition in Business education

Arithmetic Skills: It has to do with the acquiring of arithmetic skills. The students should have knowledge on how to calculate, so that they know when they are making profit or not.

Communication skills: this is the ability to communicate effectively in business related issues, business education students should be able to know the fundamentals of English to enable them communicate with the general public that needs to buy their product or able to impart the positive knowledge to students they are training. Okoli (2017), stated that communication skills have become a challenge in the service delivery of Business Education of small scale business especially when verbal and non verbal communication skills are needed.

Book keeping skills: this is the act of acquiring skill to record the products and give account of daily transactions.

Typing skills: this skill is very important because there is need for business teachers to build the speed and accuracy of their students to enable them use internet for e - business and also for those that are operating business centers in order to meet up with the daily activities.

Filing skills: this is the act of having knowledge on how to file documents and be able to retrieve them when needed. According to Idih, Ani and Njoku (2017), filing and records keeping helps for easy identification and retrieval of documents.

Marketing skills: These are necessary skills required to market goods produced. This gives Students ideas and strategies to market their product. According to Emeh(2016), entrepreneurship education helps business men to acquire marketing skills that help them to excel in business.

There are also other available vocational skills: farming skills, photocopying, desktop publishing and networking, bead making and fashion design (Ihekwoaba, 2017).

Importance of Skill Acquisition

Amesi (2017) stated the following as Importance of Skill Acquisition for sustenance of national development.

1. **Self employment:** they are exposed to be independent on their own.
2. **Crime rate reduction:** when people have job of their own, crime will be reduced and it will help to boost the economy.
3. **Raising capital:** it helps the students and graduates to raise capital for investment capital which yield huge return at the end of every investment. For instance, after National Youth services corps (NYSC) they must have saved money to set up a business of their own.
4. **Strategic planning:** it helps the business owners to set strategic goals and means of achieving their goals.
5. **Crisis Management:** it help business education graduate to manage crisis anywhere they find themselves.
6. **Communication skills:** with this skill, business education graduates can communicate with all manner of person.
7. **Accounting education:** it exposes students to accounting practice.
8. **Economic education:** it exposes the students to have knowledge of the economic situation when there is inflation or deflation. Skill acquisition and youth

development are emphasized in Nigeria to meet up with the needs to reduce the rate of unemployment among the youth and national development

9. **Distributive education:** it exposes students to have knowledge of buying and selling.
10. **Office technology and management education:** it exposes the students to have knowledge of typing and representing the organization.
11. **Employment generation:** it helps in creating job for job seekers. Nwaukwa, Iloeje, and Nwogu(2018) stated that skill acquisition leads to employment generation in small and medium enterprise such as computer business centers, book binding and printing press etc.
12. **Improve quality of life:** it helps in transition from unskilled to skilled thereby increasing their earning potentials.

According to Ihekwoaba (2017), there are 2 types of skills relevant to business education system

1. **Mental skill:** it is the type of skill that involves thinking, reasoning and solving of problems. This type enables business education graduate to think and reason on the type of business that will excel in any location and still pay their bills.
2. **Manipulative skill:** this skill is associated with vocational education. It allows business educators to use tools and instrument to bring out the desirable result.

Acquisition on the other hand is seen as the act of getting knowledge, skill and experiences etc. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) saw skill acquisition as one of the policies embarked upon in Nigeria with the sole aim of alleviating poverty, sophisticated crime and corruption rates, rural-urban drift, unemployment and other social vices by providing technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economy development. Skill acquisition is also an avenue for eradicating poverty and hunger by creating employment, thereby creating job opportunities and wealth creation.

Challenges of skill acquisition in business education

Business education programme is witnessing the following challenges:

1. **Employment of non business teachers to teach business courses:** unqualified teachers are employed to teach skill courses thereby not imparting the required values.
2. **Strike, unrest and lockdown:** It is known that educational system are negatively affected by incessant strike actions as a result of disagreement between government and the academic staff union of universities (ASUU) and their counterpart in polytechnics and college of educations. The latest issue of school closure nationwide was as a result of Nigerian election which invariable disrupted the smooth running of the academic calendar.
3. **Corruption during employment:** Employment in Nigeria has become an essential community meant for highest bidder and for those that are politically connected.
4. **Sex for grade as part of examination malpractice:** Sex for grade is a phrase used to describe a practice where lazy students especially among female who offer

themselves to lecturers in exchange for higher grades. The phenomenon can reduce the quality of our graduates to certificate carriers with little or nothing to offer intellectually.

5. **Inadequate funding:** This has affected the implementation of setting up the programme thereby not providing the necessary equipment used for practicals.
6. **Corruption and mismanagement of fund:** Corruption is now a recurring decimal in our country. School administrators responsible for managing educational funds mismanage them at the detriment of the students.
7. **Lack of interest in vocational and technical education:** Technical and Vocational education in Nigeria are poorly funded.
8. **Inadequate facilities and equipment:** Business education is capital intensive, but the implementers fail to provide the necessary equipments for the actualization of its goals.
9. **Inadequate electricity supply:** Lack of electricity is also an impediment in impacting the necessary computer skills on the learners.

Sustainable National Development

Sustainable development is an act of guiding principles for economic, environmental educational, scientific as well as vocational and technical and social development that aspires to meet the pressing need of the current situation of Nigeria. It is also known as the development of the generations in order to cater for the needs of the citizens of the nation without compromising. This is in line with the view of Agwazie (2020), who stated that sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present needs of a nation without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. It can be seen as a process of improving on the range of opportunities that will enable individuals, humans and communities to achieve their aspirations and full potentials over a sustainable period of time. Enwemasor (2016), stated that business education is the part of vocational education that prepares individuals for gainful employment through the acquisition of skills and knowledge that prepares individuals for the world of business. It is a basic tool for sustaining the economy because it is an economic activity- that helps to generate skills and knowledge for employment. This also ensures self reliance in employment generation, self employment for skilled individual. While maintaining the resilience of the economic, social, and environmental system sustainable development can be measured in good road networks, enough and adequate hospitals and health facilities, practice federal character and equal access to functional development opportunities, adequate security of lives and properties, job creation and industrial rise and social security support for the vulnerable ones. Sustainable development is the state of having well balanced, steady and effective use of human, material and capital resources for total economic independence of a nation without compromising the future (Umezulike and Okoye, 2013).

Njoku and Ani(2018), made the following points on how business education can sustain the nation through entrepreneurship education:

Reduction of crime: A skilled person is banned to be busy with his/her work without joining the groups that causes problem.

1. Creation job opportunities: with the help of skill acquisition centres, people are engaged with one skill or the other. Directly, they are employed and able to make profit and also responsible citizens.
2. Payment of tax: establishment of business by individuals attract payment of tax for national development.
3. Acquisition of relevant skills and competence will help to reduce the rate of drop out among the Nigerian youth.
4. It will help to make the youth's intelligent users of the product of technology as well as more reliable vehicle for economic prosperity and diplomatic supremacy of the Nigerian.
5. Equipping individual with relevant skills needed to approach to changing labour market.

Conclusion

Skill acquisition in business education is very important for sustenance of national development. The paper concluded that skill acquisition in business education is necessary and essential as to make one more viable in the world of work and for business educators to contribute effectively for national development. The system has derailed from its original intentions because the learning conditions are not conducive, laboratories are not well equipped with technological devices for practical learning, unequipped classroom, libraries are supplied with obsolete materials, constant strike, kidnapping and killing of lecturers and students, ethnic differences, cashless policy without a functioning network to make transfer and outbreak of diseases posed threat which affected the school system and the economy. The malfunction in some areas present opportunities which the government must strategies to grasp and make necessary changes. Business education programme tries to equip, transform and prepare individual with relevant skills needed to approach the changing labor market. It contributes and sustains the economy through the training and transition from unskilled to skilled. Therefore the skill acquired by business education graduates have enabled them to be relevant in the world of work and make the economy to shift from industrial economy to automated economy which has also contributed to sustainable national development. However, there is need for appropriate authorities to provide conducive learning environment, well equipped laboratories for practicals and improve on the school system and curriculum content so as to make them to be relevant or meet the national goals.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. There is need for government to build more marketing skill acquisition centres to enable business education graduates to market their business more effectively to their prospective customers.

2. Government and non-governmental organization should provide soft loans for graduates to enable them set up their own business.
3. Curriculum planners should often review the curriculum so as to match with the current realities and cope or meet up with the current trends.
4. The government should ensure effective release of fund to enable students of business education acquire the necessary skills required in the world of work.
5. Educational administrators should engage personnels with vocational skills to teach the practical courses, so that the training will be geared towards preparing skilled manpower.

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