

**IMPORTANCE OF CURRICULUM UNIFORMITY IN BUSINESS EDUCATION
PROGRAMME IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA.**

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ABSTRACT

The need for business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria to adopt a uniform curriculum has necessitated this study. This paper examined the need for curriculum uniformity among tertiary institutions that offers business education programme in Nigeria. The concept of curriculum and business education was discussed, with importance of curriculum uniformity in tertiary institutions highlighted. This paper further, discussed factors that affect curriculum uniformity in business education programme at tertiary institutions. And concluded that, there is need for professional business educators, governments, ministry of education and other relevant agencies to keep pace with the emerging students needs and so that curriculum uniformity in business education programme at tertiary will be established. The study recommended that; governments, professional business educators, ministry of education, curriculum planners, and business education policy makers should properly identify the needs of students in order to enhance effective curriculum uniformity, provide a clear learning goals and their expected outcomes and draft out proper methods of evaluation that will be used to determine whether curriculum uniformity among tertiary institutions has been established.

Keywords: Business Education, Curriculum, Programme, Uniformity, Tertiary Institution.

Introduction

Curriculum is the means through which the laid down educational philosophy of a nation is translated into concrete reality. It contains prescribed courses of studies which student must learn in order to reach a certain level of studies. (Efanimajor and Okolocha,2020). Curriculum describe comprehensively the goals and objectives of a particular course of study, organization of the course content area, and evaluation of

students' academic achievement in that particular course of study. The importance of curriculum cannot be overemphasized as it provides a framework for all learning experiences a learner undergoes while in school. Mushtaq (2020) noted that the continuing drive towards what has become known as democratization of education, a number of issues have arisen with the concepts uniformity and diversity being especially prominent, just as the twin concept of equity and excellence have posed challenges to educators and policy makers. In various ways, the concept of uniformity and diversity have raised issues with regard to all aspects of education goals, curriculum, instructional strategies, staff development resources allocation, organization, evaluation, etc.

Business education components are those courses that are offered by business education students in Nigerian universities and colleges irrespective of areas of specialization. (Atsu, et al, 2021). This may either be an option in business education accounting, marketing, secretarial studies or office management department of an institution. It is worthy to note that the development of curriculum and course of study be determined by their purpose and content. Esene (2018) suggested that business education curriculum content should be comprehensive and varied in nature and scope, providing an understanding of the business world, ability to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills, correction of subjects, individualization of instructions, prevention of dropouts, constant review, provision of entry into the jobs, and acceleration of all levels, desirable equipment's for maximum productivity. Iseniyi (2009) stated that the present situation of curriculum of business education is outdated, theoretically based, no correlation of subjects, as a result of none uniformity in the courses taught had given birth to vocational business education curriculum content not meeting the need of the society.

Conceptual Review:

Curriculum

Curriculum implies the various activities and experiences organized for the learner to enable him develop all his potentialities. These constitute the basic components of the lifelong race. Ementa and Alonta (2021) noted that curriculum is a vehicle through which the school strives to achieve educational objectives. It is the life wire of a school programme and it is a track that prepares students for their future life. They went further to say that, in school and colleges, curriculum is the heart of any educational endeavour, as it determines what and how educational content should be taught. Gulsah and Berna (2021) described curriculum as the constitution of education that directs an education system and defines the individuals to be raised in the society. They further elaborated that curriculum decisions offer important clues that will affect entire teaching-learning process. In line with this, Mulenga (2018) defined curriculum as the planned and guided learning experiences and intended learning outcomes, formulated through the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience under the auspices of the school, for the learner's continuous and wilful growth in personal-social competence. Gulsah and Berna (2021) described curriculum as the constitution of education that directs an education system and defines the individuals to be raised in the society. They further elaborated that curriculum decisions offer important clues that will affect entire teaching-learning process. In line with this,

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Several authors have observed that curriculum is the official document used in the school or any formal educational setting that prepares the learner and serves as guidance for a facilitator of learning that is why the purpose of curriculum planning and development is to design a programme which will be used for educating learners of the school. To further elaborate on the subject of curriculum, Ementa and Alonta (2021) in Okagbare emphasises that curriculum is the tool that guides the content of education system. Hence, curriculum is a vital instrument of any educational reform and policies that direct how knowledge and skills will be impacted to the learners. According to them, functional education, business education inclusive can only be attained through formal education in which curriculum serves as a pivots to which goals and objectives of education can be achieved.

Business Education

Business education means many things to many people. Some people think that business education refers to those business subjects taught at the secondary school level, like shorthand, typewriting, principles of accounts, and so on. While to other people, business education is the same as any education for entrance into the world of business given at any educational level, which could be formal or informal. Ementa and Alonta (2021) opined that business education is that type of education that inculcates in its recipients attitude, knowledge, skills, and values that is required in the business world. That is to say that business education is a means of producing healthy, literate, and self-reliant citizens that would create wealth for human development thereby resulting in sustainable nation's development at large.

Azuka and Nwosu (2018) defined business education as an aspect of vocational education which is concerned with the preparation of skilled manpower. It is a form of education training or retraining which is directed towards developing the learner to become productive in a paid employment or in self-employment in business. It is therefore the bedrock in which a country's socio-economic, technological and cultural advancement must be built. Similarly, Okoye (2013) defined business education as an education programme that orientates students in: art of business making (marketing), typing and shorthand skills (now computer appreciation, operation and ICT skills), service delivery, secretarial jobs, stenography, account clerking, office information system and management. Azuka and Nwosu (2018) further describe the concepts of business education as a programme of studies which comprises four parts; creating awareness in occupations, preparing youths for work in business occupation, preparing people to become better citizens and consumer of goods and services, and preparing business teachers.

For simpler understanding, business education means education for business which inculcates youths with the training of skills for vocations and also furnishes them with the relevant information and competencies required of them both in business office, clerical occupation, business policy analysis and education which is aimed at preparing

students on how and when to buy goods for a profitable outcome, when to make best sales, etc.

Importance of Curriculum Uniformity of Business Education in Tertiary Institutions.

Curriculum uniformity is of significantly important at tertiary institutions level in Nigeria. Njoku (2019) stated that there are variations in the curricular for business education programmes at the university, polytechnic, and colleges of education levels. Among the universities that offer business education programmes, there are still minor variations in curricular. These variations in some cases have reflected in the names given to business education and programmes department of the institution. She further noted that, these differences in curricular determine what is taught and therefore, the quality of teachers that are produced. The importance of uniformity of business education programme at the tertiary institution level is numerous to mention. Business education professionals design each curriculum with specific educational purpose in mind. The ultimate goals of business education curriculum uniformity are to improve students' learning and competencies required of them as business education graduates.

Curriculum uniformity in business education will also help to achieve and make sure that the learning goals are aligned and complement each other from one stage of learning to the next one. If business education curriculum is not in uniform and it did not take prior uniform knowledge from secondary school into account, it can create real problems for the students in the tertiary institutions. These problems include, students who may wish to transfer from one tertiary institution to another cannot because of this disparity of course content and quality of training an individual graduate of business education will be based on institution and not based on programme.

Uniformity of business education curriculum in tertiary institution will enhance the quality of business education teachers that will be produced and even the acceptability of business education students from different part of the world. It will also make it possible for undergraduates to do change of institution hence the curriculum through which the individual was before has the same course content like the one he/she want to change to.

Factors That Affect Curriculum Uniformity in Business Education Programme at Tertiary Institutions.

There are several factors that affect the curriculum uniformity in business education programme at tertiary institutions in Nigeria; this paper identified them to include the followings:

- ❖ Not being able to identify the needs of students. There is no proper needs analysis, which involves the collection and analysis of data as it relates to the students. The need analysis data should include what the students already know and what they need to know to be proficient in a particular area or skill. It may include information about learner perceptions, strengths and weakness.
- ❖ Not being able to create a clear list of learning outcomes and learning goals. There is no proper focus on the intended purpose of the curriculum and because of this,

it does not allow professional business educators to plan instructions that can achieve the describe results.

- ❖ Not being able to identify constraints areas; business education curriculum uniformity is not achieved because the constraints that will impact the business education curriculum were not properly identified. For instance, constraints like time seems to appear common but. There are only few hours in a week for teaching business education in each semester. If there is not enough time to deliver all the instructions that has been planned in a curriculum, it will affect the learning outcomes.
- ❖ Not identifying uniform instructional methods: professional business educators have not been able to identify particular instructional methods that are to be used during course delivery and how they will work with students learning styles. If the instructional methods are not uniformly conducive to the students, the uniformity of the curriculum will be altered accordingly.
- ❖ Lack of proper evaluation methods: A proper method of evaluation that will be used at the end and during the school year to assess students learning outcome have not been properly established to measure the uniformity. Thus, if proper method of evaluating the student learning outcome is not established, the uniformity of the curriculum becomes immeasurable.

Conclusion

The need for curriculum uniformity in business education programme in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is significantly important to business educators and students. Improving students learning competencies required of business education graduates is the main objective of curriculum uniformity. This paper also noted that making sure that the learning goals are aligned and complement each other from one stage of learning to the next one is also of utmost priority of curriculum uniformity in business education programme in tertiary institutions. This paper addressed the importance of curriculum uniformity in tertiary institutions and factors that affect curriculum uniformity in business education programme at tertiary institutions were also highlighted.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions of this paper, the following recommendations are made:-

- ❖ Professional business educators should properly identify and address the needs of students in other to enhance effective curriculum uniformity.
- ❖ Government through its ministry of education, other relevant agencies, curriculum planners, and business education teachers should provide a clear list of learning goals and their expected learning outcomes, to enable business educators plan instructions that can achieve the desired results of curriculum uniformity in business education.
- ❖ Government and business education policy makers should join hands and draft out a defined proper method of evaluation that will be used at the end and during

business education school programme to assess the students, business educators and the curriculum to determine whether uniformity has been established or made.

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