



Innovation And Challenges Of Teaching And Learning In Business Education Programmes

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ABSTRACT

Advancement in technology is perceived as either objects of learning or vehicle for instruction in this technological era, hence the need for innovation in business education programmes. This paper defines innovation and enumerates the importance of adapting to innovation and the challenges faced when implementing the innovation in the process of teaching and learning. This is because business education, being skilled-oriented and employment-motivated needs proper teaching and practical understanding by students before graduation. It was recommended those lecturers who teach business courses in secondary, tertiary institutions and universities should be properly trained from time to time and that efforts should be made to have a resident maintenance officer or technical officer to constantly put the equipment in good order.

Keywords: Innovation, Technological, Employment-Motivated, Skilled-Oriented, Business Education

INTRODUCTION

As knowledge becomes a critical asset for firms and individuals in the new knowledge-based economy, the need for a systemic look at the dissemination of appropriate knowledge to those who would manage businesses cannot be over-emphasized. Hence, institutions and professions of all kinds are fast adapting to changing situations. Also the changing faces of professions in their mode of training and practice have been necessities by the dynamics of their operational environment. Innovation seems to be widely accepted in business education as it is the only way of survival in the technological world.

Innovation in business education is to ensure that the purpose and objectives of the programme are achieved. Any innovation in the business education programme must ensure that the programme is modified in order that it will be responsive to the needs of the students and the society at large. Ezeji (2001) defined innovation as a process which involves a lot of actions and re-actions involving certain questions relating to the persons making the change and reasons for the change, the user of the change and the timing of the change. Osuala (2004) posited that innovation is a new system or to modify an existing system. He also states that innovation might cover a wide range of events including curricular, teaching and learning methods, equipment, teachers training institutes and all kinds of non-formal and adult programmes. (Ozuruoke 2016) defined innovation as the introduction of something new, revolution, introduction of novelties, making changes. The answers to the above questions suggested that change is necessity; and that change is the only permanent thing in life. Emphasis has shifted from literacy education to occupational or utility education with a delivery system that relies on extensive use of equipment, since two decades. The National Policy on Education constitutes a significant exit from the original bookish education fashioned for Nigeria by colonial rulers. Business education which is variant of vocational and technical education has undergone a steady revolution offering, in order to make the curriculum worthwhile, relevant and appropriate to the needs, aspirations of the individuals and the

society at large. This paper is designed to examine the concepts of business education innovation and the challenges faced in adapting to the innovations.

Business Education Programmes

Business education is a career development and specialized programme in which its innovation must ensure that the programme is modified to suit the society. Business education is defined according to (Popham, 1975) as education which prepares students for entry into and advancement in jobs within business and preparing them to handle their own business affairs and function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. Aina (1996) defines business education as the sum total of the knowledge, skill and attitude that are required for the successful promotion and administering of a business enterprise. This means that the goal of business education is the production of manpower that will process the requisite knowledge, skills and attitude for harnessing other resources and bringing them into co-operative relationship, yielding the goods and services demanded by society, for satisfaction of their want and needs. Tonne opined that business education is a type of training which helps in achieving all business ideas and render more efficient service and advance their present level. In education for business, business education is vocational for all majors which for education about business, is general education for all.

Creativity and Innovation

In today's world, it is more important than ever to be creative and innovative. That means thinking in new ways and being open to completely different ways of seeing the world. It is important to discuss innovation along with creativity. Just as individuals differ in their ability to translate their creative talents into results, organization differ in their ability to translate the talents of their members into new products, processes, or service. To enable their organizations to use creativity most effectively, managers need to be aware of this process of innovation in organization and to take steps to encourage this process. Creative in organization involves three steps: idea generation, problem solving or idea development, and implementation (Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert,).

Innovation

A number of countries across the globe are achieving sustainable breakthroughs due to their commitment to implementation of functional education. These landmark achievements have consequently made their youths to lead a useful, productive and satisfying life. The productive capacities of youths in terms of creative ideas and innovative behaviors have been the key of their economic transformation. This implies that creative ideas and innovative abilities are the lynchpin upon which the sustainable development of countries across the globe is built (Edokpolor & Muritala 2015). Creativity according to Certo and Certo (2006) is the ability to generate original ideas or new perspectives existing ideas. Innovation on the other hand is the process of taking a creative idea and turning it into a useful product, service, or work method. When new ideas are implemented into the organization, innovation takes place. Innovation is the process of applying new idea to the implementation of organizational processes, products or services. Two types of innovation identified by Lussier (1997) are – product innovation which is new things and process innovation which is new way of doing things.

On the other hand, Innovation is the introduction of something new, reevaluation, introduction of novelties, making of changes. Innovation is a significant effort for the creation of a new system or to modify an existing system. In education, innovation covers a wide range of events including curriculum, teaching and learning methods, equipment, teachers, training institutes and all kinds of non-formal and adult programmes. Innovation is a process which involves a lot of actions and re-actions. It also involved certain questions that are related to the user of the change and timing of the change, because change is a necessity. The only permanent thing in life is change.

Innovation in Business Education

Business education programmes must be reviewed from time to time to meet the changing needs of the individual and the society at large. The rate of development of a nation depends on the quality of skills of its labour force. The products of school constitute very critical inputs in production in quest for economic and national development. In the 20th century, new ways of doing things evolved. The methods of processing information changed with the advent of information technology (IT). It was discovered that business education will not achieve any relevance if students are trained for the office of the 70ths. Therefore to achieve its relevance in today's world of work, it must move with tide. In other to have a smooth transition from the classroom to the world of work, students must be taught with up-to-date equipment and they must be furnished with current information. This business education is out to do, hence the innovation in business education programmes.

The need for innovation in business education

The Nigeria philosophy of education stressed on the need for functional education to be emphasized. The promotion of a sustainable progressive united Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN). To this end, Ozuruke (2016) stated that school programmes especially business education need to be relevant, comprehensive and practically oriented while interest and ability should determine the students individual direction in education pursuit all through Nigeria nations. The new policy had serious influence on the development of business education which is an umbrella programme that encapsulates business education which is tailored towards inculcating into students positive attitudes towards career and business choice in the business world, with many innovations and changes that attract challenges. These changes leads to challenges in teaching/learning of the programme, because of the need to make adequate provisions at this level for graduate who may opt for career in business office environment. There is therefore the need for business education teachers/lecturers to develop competencies in the use of new office technology both at secondary and tertiary levels of education system. Uma (2016) opined that, today the ability to innovate has become a core and sought after in business competency. In spite of challenges faced in adapting to innovation in business education, innovation is an ideal concept that deserves special attention in all business education courses. This is because innovation is cross-functional that requires understanding and integration of key concepts from different business functions into a cohesive whole. This ability to think holistically is the foundation of all business education programmes which challenges students to integrate complex concepts from multiple business functions and to execute transformational ideas by graduates of business education programme.

In the light of the present technological era, the business education programme needs innovation; and this leads to challenges in the teaching and learning because it leaves much to be desired in meeting up with the present computer-networking age (Ezeji 2001).

How to be innovative

It is one thing to understand innovation as a concept and its importance. It is another to be innovative. How can we now teach students to become innovative, to recognize untapped opportunities and the successfully execute innovation ideas; (Uma 2016). In spite of these challenges that are faced in teaching and learning of business education courses, innovation is still an ideal concept that deceives special attention in all strategic management courses. This is because innovation is cross-functional and requires understanding and integrating key concepts from different business functions into a cohesive whole. The ability to think holistically is the foundation of business education programme, which challenges students to integrate complex concepts from multiple business functions and to execute transformational ideas by building meaningful system, structures, processes and principles.

Challenges of teaching and learning in business education

Anyone that has gone through formal schooling must be familiar with the term “**Teaching**”. According to Clark and Starr (1970:4), teaching is an attempt to help people acquire some skills, attitude, knowledge, ideas or appreciation. Clark (1995) sees teaching as the interaction between a teacher and students under the teacher’s responsibility in order to bring about the expected change in the student’s behavior. Different authors defined Learning and teaching in different ways while learning is defined as the acquisition of new information, knowledge, skills or dispositions through study, instruction or practice. Awotua-Efebo (2007) defined learning as active process that leads to a change within individual due to acquisition of skills, knowledge and/or attitudes. The effort to improve the teaching / learning process is a continuous one. It is this effort that leads to the various innovations in the teaching/learning process (Ughamadu & Okoye 1998). The purpose of innovation in the teaching and learning process in business education programmes is to promote learning in students when appropriately utilized and to discover student’s talents and potentials, and probably know the area to develop. Technology in business education is mainly manifested in the use of various types of machines and equipment in different business occupations. This however brought about innovation in business education programmes. The business teacher sees technology as something new that need to be learnt, object of instruction, the functions and operations which should mastered and explained to the students.

Challenges of innovation in Business Education

Challenges are what are interesting and encourages a person to try hard. They are what make life interesting, and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful. A lot of innovations have been introduced into the nation’s education system over the past two decades by successive governments; for example the, introduction of 6:3:3:4 system of education. According to (Gbamanja 1977) who state that this system of education is a failure from the government, educational administration and the general public. Incidentally these efforts have failed to produce the desired result due to poor implementation. In most cases these innovations exist only in blue print and are never implemented.

Another area which is closely linked with poor implementation is the cost of education. It should not be left for government alone because it is expensive. But, commitment and participation is lacking in our business education programme, all concerned, the labor unions, commerce and industry, local communities and anyone else, and even the government that initiates the programme should be fully involved. In addition to this problem is the issue of corruption. Anytime a new programme is introduced, Nigerians who are assigned to pursue its implementation turns it into money sharing exercise. If they are told to supply equipment, they will rather supply refurbished ones than go for new and qualitative ones, take example of 6:3:3:4 that was proposed and initiated by the government (Gbamanga (1977). Innovation is all about technologies added to the old ways of doing anything, especially carrying out office work.

Technology in business education

Technology refers to the systematic application of scientific or other organized knowledge to practical tasks. It is the scientific use of energy and materials to create products required by society. It is the tools of our work and could be defined in the very narrow sense of machine. Technology in business mainly manifested in the use of various types of machines and equipment in different business occupations. The business educator sees technology in business as an object of instruction, the functions and operations of which should be mastered and explained to the students. The students learn to operate the machines, and to understand its workings and uses. The obvious manifestation of technology is in the use of machines. This is where the challenges of teaching and learning in innovations come to play.

Another area of challenge is teaching of the courses in business education after innovation. The lecturers who teach these courses are not trained on the use of the machines and equipment, instead selection is based on godfathers and who you know. Even the ETF training, instead of selecting lecturers, administrative staffs are selected to attend; knowing very well that most of the lecturers were not trained

with this modern equipment as at the time they were in school, hence innovation affects teaching and learning.

Electricity is another area of challenge to innovation in business education. The name of the programme is changed from secretarial studies to business education in the universities and colleges of education and office technology and management in the polytechnics due to the advent of technologies in the offices. Almost all offices are mechanized, and work done by computers and other technological gadget. These technologies require constant electricity and power supply. But in our environment, electricity is a major problem. How then can we implement or adapt to the innovation in teaching and learning? Teaching and learning environment is one of the challenges of innovation. One basic requirement of education is that teaching/learning environment should be a replica of the working environment. This is why model offices, office practice, language and computer laboratories are indispensable for business education/office technology and management department. Nanassey (1977) stated that adequate equipment is a necessity for an effective business education programme.

Maintenance is one of the challenges of innovation in business education programmes in Nigeria because, since students and learners ought to be exposed to those machines, the rate of breakdown is bound to be high. Maintenance culture is non-existent in most of these schools. Efforts should be made to have a resident maintenance officers or technical officer to constantly put the equipment in good order. Where this is not possible, it will be necessary to have a retainer ship contract with an organization. This enables repairs to be carried out on equipment and machines regularly. Unfortunately, there are no spare parts since the equipments are new, and repair/service specialists. The consumables may also be very expensive for many institutions.

Challenges of pedagogy also affect innovation; this is because as technology continues to advance, we must learn to use it wisely to motivate, instruct, and change students. One of the problems is the responsibility of having practical knowledge of the new tools or gadgets in the business world, so as to be able to teach the students appropriately, and the other new gadgets or tools specially designed as teaching aid. The second problem is that, there are advances in technology for business as well as for education. The lecturers face the task of mastering these two sets of technologies. With the speed of change in technology, the challenging is enormous.

CONCLUSION

The world is on the lane with technology as both drivers, conductors and co-passengers have adjusted, having fastened their seat belts Nwosu (2003). Oke (2003); stated that it is therefore very obvious that the challenges offered by developments in technology gives us the opportunity to be dynamic and innovative in the delivery of business education programmes. As information and communication technology and globalization change the geography of business, so must business education curriculum adapt to meet with those challenges. More so when the students are to be transited from school to work environments, they need to be technologically trained so as to meet the demand of the office in the discharge of their duties. This is why the challenges of innovation in teaching and learning in business education programmes must be properly looked into to avoid poor performance in the work place after graduation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Short term training programmes should be organized for trainer in specific skills areas – a sort of “training the trainers” programme.
- The issue of vocational centres should be looked into as a major innovation in business education.
- The cost of education is rising as the days go by, therefore education should not be left in the hands of government alone to manage.
- All concerned should be made to participate fully in its funding and management.
- Government should enact laws which will compel all concerned to play their roles to ensure the implementation of education policies.

- Efforts should be made to have a resident maintenance officer or technical officer to constantly put the equipment in good order always.

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