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### Interrogating the Place of Public Administrators in Business Education Advancement in Nigeria from Bird's-eye Perspective

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#### Abstract

Business education is an incomparable tool for national and human capital development in Nigeria. As such, it is a major responsibility of the public administrators to pay proper attention to the sector for the purpose of ensuring qualitative human capital development in the country. This paper discusses the place of public administrators in business education advancement in Nigeria from bird's-eye perspective. Data for the study were documentarily sourced through newspaper publications, textbooks, government

publications and internet materials. At the end, the study calls for adequate funding for acquiring quality training facilities, decent teachers' salaries and welfare. This is because fair wages motivate teachers to do their job on a high-quality level. Also, there should be regular payments of teachers' salaries. This will attract qualified and dedicated teachers to schools and will change the attitude of young people towards business education in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Bird's-eye Perspective, Business Education, Human Capital Development, National Development, Public Administrators

#### 1. Introduction

Business education is a viable instrument for human socio-economic development. And as such, it is one of the basic criteria to measure the growth and development of any nation (Anthony, 2001) <sup>[1]</sup>. More so, business education promotes the ideologies of nations. Similarly, abstract education that does not serve the politics of a given clan does not exist in the world today. Formal school system has become an important component for the political system to implant its ideology on the youth. Education in Nigeria is an instrument for effecting development. It therefore seeks to fulfill that role the government has stated for the benefit of all citizens in the country (National Policy on Education FRN, 2004). Educational goals are always clearly set out in terms of their relevance to the needs of the individual and those of the society, in consonance with the realities of our environment and the modern world.

Sadly, the level, quality and standard of education in Nigeria has witnessed a geometric drop in the past two decades and this unfortunate trend has made Nigeria the leading country of origin of students from Africa migrating to other parts of the world in search of quality education. It is against this light that the present study discusses the place of public administrators in business education advancement in Nigeria from bird's-eye perspective.

#### 2. The Concept of Education

The concept of education is derived from amalgamation of two Latin words Educare and Educatum. Educare means to bring up and Educatum denotes the art of teaching and training. The concept of education is a very broad one. As such, it has enjoyed considerable attention both in the humanities and the science disciplines. It will be expedient to quickly say that education is not just literacy as believed by some people. The ability to read and write does not translate to education. Of course, "the ability to read and write is a fundamental aspect of the educational institution. Illiteracy shuts a person almost completely out of the goings-on in his society (Gboyega, 2000:128).

The explanation on illiteracy as Gboyega mentioned above is critical to an overall understanding of education. That a person can read and write does not imply that he has clear comprehension and possesses the ability to apply what he has read. That a person can speak his lingua franca effortlessly does not mean that he is educated in a pragmatic sense. Then, what is education? It has become increasingly difficult to define education. As remarked by Babarinde (1995), the difficulty in proffering a univocal definition stems from the fact that all definitions that have been offered tended to be inadequate because they always leave some vital information out (Babarinde 1995:36). Writing from the same perspective, R. S. Peters notes that:

It is no longer necessary nor desirable to define education. Education forms a family of ideas united by a complicated network of similarities which overlap and crisscross. Due to this, philosophers of education simply suggest some criteria or conditions that should be present before an activity or programme could legitimately attract the label of education (Peter, 1967:82).

In the words of Okoorosaye-Orubite (2019), education is a social creation, designed to meet the specific needs of the society at any particular point in time. Its form, content, methodology and clientele are determined by the society. Nzewu (1985) sees education to play a role of preparing or nurturing individuals to live in society and thus being able to perform specific functions for society. Vikoo (2016) aptly describe education as an interaction between a teacher and a student under the teacher's responsibility in order to bring about the expected change in the student's behaviour. O'connor (1966) also noted that educational system of any society is a more or less elaborate mechanism design by society to instill in individuals certain skills or attitude that are judge to be useful and desirable in that society. In a related development, Adelowo (2010) conceptualised education as an enterprise which sets out to instill values, attitude and skills in members of the society. This was aptly supported by Pauley and Buseri (2019), that see education as a socializing agent that equips all its beneficiaries with the necessary tools such as knowledge, skills, attitude, cultural values, language and social skills to enable them conform to the desires/demand of their society. To crown it all, the definition of education provided by Nwala is still relevant. For Nwala (1985),

Education whether formal or informal, is the recognised method whereby a person acquire most of his ideas, beliefs and attitude: in short his knowledge, skill and manners necessary, not only to combat the hazards and problem of life. And to secure the needs of. But also to fit into the company of his fellow human being (P.242).

### 3. Conceptual View of Business Education

Business education according to Osuala E.C. (1989), is an essential part of the preparation of youth for life and living. In 2004, Osuala gave another definition as a programme of instruction which consists of two parts (1) Office education, a vocational programme of office careers through initial, refresher and upgrading education and (2) General business 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.

For Njoku (2006), business education is an educational programme that equips an individual with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, attitude and value that would enable him/her operate in the environment he/she finds himself/herself. More recent definitions of business education continue to emerge: Jimoh-Kadiri and Bupo (2011) described business education as the transfer of pedagogical and business competencies necessary for teaching business attitudes, concepts, skills and knowledge. Okoye and Ashibogwu (2018) defined Business education as that aspect of educational training which an individual receives with the primary motive of enabling him to acquire adequate attitudes, concepts, knowledge, understanding and skills in business activities for vocational usage in careers as an administrator, manager or teacher wherever he may find himself in the business world.

### 4. Origin of Business Education

The earliest form of business education according to Osuala, Popham (1975) and Njoku (1990) as well as most authors was the apprenticeship training. At that time an individual had to learn a trade under another person who had the skill for the trade, or who was experienced in a particular area. These were craft, bookkeeping, farming, and sales, etc. The period of training varied from one trade to another. Sometimes the length of time was based on how fast the apprentice could learn the skill. For instance, sole traders were able to take apprentices to assist in the sale of wears through the learning of how it was done. Today, this type of skill is carried and acquired through apprenticeship training. As time passed the apprentice became free and was either a salesman or bookkeeper. In some cases, the apprentice paid for the period of training but where it was not possible, the family of the apprentice was required to mortgage land or any valuable property. At the end of the training it was an option put forward to the apprentice whether to remain with his master and be paid a token sum, which may be complimented with material items. The second option was that of the freed – apprentice to establish his own business and have his own business and have his own apprentice. If the first option was chosen, the master was obliged to feed him and provide him with routine help.

In all he was still responsible to the master and must operate within the rules stated by his master.. As time went on, businesses started growing, Popham (1975) stated that more people were needed in businesses and the idea of restricting the training to certain places was not achieving much and itinerant tutors started travelling around the country (USA) giving instruction in book keeping and penmanship. People started appreciating the need for business skills and grammar schools started including book keeping, penmanship and commercial arithmetic in their curricula as a result of demands for commercial training. This gave business education a place in the formal setting. In the USA, the first education law passed in America, the Old Deluder Satan Act of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, set specific requirements for masters to teach apprentices academic as well as vocational skills. During the colonial period the colonies frequently cared for orphans, poor children, and delinquents by indenturing them to serve apprenticeships. As apprenticeship declined, other institutions developed to care for these youngsters. By the mid- 1880s vocational

education in the form of industrial education was synonymous with institutional programs for these youth. The children of defeated Native American leaders were sent to the Carlisle Pennsylvania Indian School, and the curriculum was job training.

### 5. Factors Militating against Business Education in Nigeria

1. **Poor preparation:** Experts in the education sector has been able to identify poor preparation of students for an examination, and lack of self-confidence as one of the factors militating against business education in Nigeria.
2. Poor attitude of both teachers and students to the teaching and learning process. Teaching and learning ought to be a complementary process but sometimes, due to moral laxity the teacher may not be able to teach inspiring to motivate the students to learn which is capable of crippling the education sectors.
3. **Poor teachers welfare:** Nigerian teachers are not motivated to produce their maximum productivity. They are not only poorly paid but cannot measure up with their counterpart in other areas. Perhaps, they are waiting for their reward in heaven as the society may say. Sometimes, the teachers do not receive their regular promotions in addition to the poor salary they receive (Nnazor, 2005)<sup>[12]</sup>.
4. **Poor Planning:** A dearth of statistic on students' enrolment, number of teachers, their qualifications and demographic trends, statistics on buildings and other learning facilities are all inadequate at present. All these are capable of stalling planning (Ezimah, 2010).
5. **Irregular payment of teachers' salary:** Often times, teachers in some states do not receive salary on time or as at when due. They are not regularly promoted on regular bases. This could affect the morale of teachers (Onyenemezu, 2008).
6. **High cost of education:** The cost of education in Nigeria is going on an alarming rate. Income of some parents could not enable their ward attain quality education or attend standard schools. Some that manage to finish from primary or secondary school could not further or acquire tertiary education (Osuji, 1984).
7. **Lack of dependable infrastructural facilities and amenities:** Quite a good number of Nigerian schools in Nigeria lack facilities or equipment. This range from students' learning in dilapidated building hostel, recreational centers, workshop etc to lack of instructional materials for teaching and learning.
8. **Inadequate budgetary allocation/ under funding:** Nigeria is one of the country that is yet to allocate 26 percent of her budgetary allocation to education as recommended by the United Nations (UNESCO). This goes a long way to affect education in the country. One of the major problems facing Nigeria education is under funding.
9. **Teachers are not well supervised and monitored in some states:** Where regular inspectors by inspectorate is lacking, some teachers may branch off into quick money generating activities such as farming, butchering, petty-trading, etc. even during school hours (Ojo, 2011)<sup>[17]</sup>.
10. **Poor management of education:** Management of education in Nigeria at all levels may continue to suffer

from ineffectiveness until policy prescriptions are passed as Act of the national assembly through the provision of legal backings. Sometimes, there exist educational conflict between the roles of federal, state and local government on the management of public schools.

11. **Poverty and fall in Standard:** Acquisition of Education knowledge is supposed to help us fight against-poverty, ignorance and disease. The process of acquiring this well desired knowledge has gradually turned into money spinning venture for many of those in dire need of the knowledge and skill. It is now a source of exploitation from the service seekers with little or no consideration for quality of service rendered and facilities on ground, and made an offer for the highest bidder.
12. **Politicization of education:** Most attempts at educational reforms fail to succeed partly due to disparate political ideologies by leaders. Lack of continuity also exist from one administration to the other. In the area of accreditations, some schools that did not meet up the standard are allowed to operate too.
13. **Value place on paper qualification:** Many Nigerians have misplaced value on qualifications of candidates in the society. By so doing, some of the student resort to getting the certificate through various means and at all cost. Some do take to examination malpractice or certificate forgery.
14. **Poor Funding:** The gross underfunding of the educational sector in the country in general and the neglect of the maintenance of the physical facilities; Instructional and living conditions have deteriorated in many o schools; classrooms blocks, libraries and laboratories are nothing to write home about, all leading to declining academic standards.

### 6. Concept of public administration

Ocean of definitions have been put forth to properly define the term "Public Administration" but so far, no precise or specific definition has been given to this term. Walker sees Public Administration as "The work which the government does to give effect to a law".

Negro and Negro, summarize the meaning of Public Administration thus:

"A cooperative group effort in a public setting, all three branches of government executive legislative and judiciary and their interrelationship, the important roles in the formulation of public policy and thus a part of the political process, More important than, and also different in significant ways from private administration and closely associated with numerous private group and individuals in providing services to the community".

### 7. Public administration and business education

The effect of the public administration on business education is of concern because the potential impact of business education on public administration is significant. In other words, the relationship between the two is a reciprocal one and the extent to which public administration takes place depends on the compatibility between the two systems. The type of public administration is important in determining the nature of its impact on the business

education process. In many ways, the differences in education between capitalist and socialist regimes, developed and less developed countries and rural and urban societies are due to the effects of the public administration in practice.

Furthermore, the importance of public Administration on business education has tremendously increased with increase in-state activities. The state is no longer regarded as a preserver of the status quo. The centuries-old nation of the police state which was to be responsible only for the maintenance of law and order and the policy of non-interference in the day-to-day activities has completely lost its relevance. The modern state has undertaken the new role of an accelerator of economic and social change as well as a prime mover and stimulator of national development.

With this change in the ends of a modern state, the purposes of public Administration have also assumed a different dimension and orientation. Its functions have enormously increased in number, variety and complexity and its methodology has grown from the trial-and-error stage into an orderly discipline with an organised, ever-increasing body of knowledge and experience. Today, we see the great bulk of administrative departments coming into being. For instance, there are employment exchanges, rationing offices, government mints, agriculture departments, industries departments, department of foreign relations, etc which affect almost every citizen in one way or the other. What does all this indicate? The administrator's position within an establishment or organisation is therefore strategic and pivotal.

It is true to say that the place of administration has come to be recognized in every sector of human endeavour as being the keystone to the success and indeed to the very existence of the enterprise. Being concerned with the planning, coordination, supervision and control of the enterprise or establishment with which it is involved, the science of administration appears to have become an essential instrument in the uplifting of human welfare.

### 8. Conclusion and recommendations

The fundamental step towards reviving business education in Nigeria lies in the hands of the public administrators. This means that necessary steps need to be taken in order to restructure and save the sector in order to get the desired results. The study call for adequate funding for acquiring quality training facilities, decent teachers' salaries and welfare. This is because fair wages motivate teachers to do their job on a high-quality level. Also, there should be regular payments of teachers' salaries. This will attract qualified and dedicated teachers to schools and will change the attitude of young people towards business education in Nigeria. Proper training of teachers with current and up to date materials and technology also will improve the condition of business education system in Nigeria. And necessary vetting measures should be taken to make sure that only qualified teachers are employed.

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