

Chapter 16

Business Management Education in African Context

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ABSTRACT

The search for means of attaining a height in development by African countries and possibly be enlisted among the committee of developed nations of the world remains an unending task. Most African countries have therefore adopted education as a veritable instrument for influencing the anticipated development, especially in the wake of global economic trends. In compliance with these economic trends and emerging needs, emphasis is laid on Vocational Technical Education (VTE), also referred to as Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), within the domain of business education. This chapter examines the environment of business education and business education pedagogy in Africa. The author adopts both historical and analytical approaches and attempts a critique of business education in Africa, with corresponding strategies for improvement.

INTRODUCTION

African countries, like other countries in other parts of the world have adopted education as a veritable instrument ‘par excellence’ for influencing national development. The educational approach to national development is prompted by decades of staggering development despite abundant natural resources these countries are endowed with. Therefore, the search for educational system, policies and programs that could bring the much needed development becomes an issue. Until recently the emphasis on the educational system of African countries was on Science and Technology, invari-

ably due to the shift in manually-operated tasks to the use of machines and later automation in factories and offices. Again, production of goods formed greater proportion of the economy. Today, emphasis is on information economy. In effect, the present shift in the nature of industrialized economies has made the transition from initial education to working life increasingly difficult for youths. Again, the global labor market is increasingly complex with the shift from goods-producing to service-sector work; coupled with an increase in the use of computer-based technologies in the workplace. Thus, the need for an educational program that could match pace with these changes

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is most recommended. The business education is unarguably a solution to Africa's many social problems which arise because of the changes described above especially, its attendant's risks of unemployment, poverty, low productivity and under-development. For any educational program to meet the challenge of unemployment currently at its chronic stage in Africa, such program should make for self-reliant skills.

The business education represents a broad field of study (classified under Vocational Education in the formal education system and often described as Vocational Training in the informal education setting) which offers to every individual an opportunity to develop functional skills, abilities and understandings necessary to handle competently his personal business affairs and occupational life. Daughtrey (1965) said that business education has a two-fold philosophy:

- Business education offers to every individual an opportunity to develop those skills, abilities, and understandings that will enable him to handle competently his personal business affairs; to develop an understanding of the vocational opportunities available in the broad field of business; and to assume his citizenship responsibilities through enlightened participation, understanding and, appreciation of the enterprise system of any nation.
- It offers to the student who wishes to pursue a career in business those skills, abilities, and understandings that will enable him to enter, perform and progress in a business occupation after graduation from school and provides him with the occupational intelligence to enable him to fit into and find job satisfaction in the labor force of our complex and dynamic economy.

Similarly, Osuala (2009) noted that business education is a program of instruction which consists of two parts:

- **Office Education:** A vocational education program for office careers through initial, refresher, and upgrading education.
- **General Business Education:** A program meant 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.

Okon (2011) posits that business education program is one of the products of government's constant quest for the type of education needed to achieve economic prosperity in Nigeria. In the university, the program is designed primarily to prepare competent and professionally qualified business educators who are capable of promoting and enriching business education at all levels of the educational system, in the public service, organized private sector and for self-reliance.

The achievement of the lofty goals and objectives of business education for Africa's renaissance in a globalized world cannot be met unless there is a paradigm shift in the aged-long education for manpower training for workforce demand of African society to education for training to acquire self-reliant skills since office occupation is almost not available owing to large population and machine-driven task performance. Secondly, school environment in most African countries lacks the substance for enhancing the acquisition of practical skills for competencies required for self-reliance. Thirdly, there are generally poor pedagogical approaches due to ill-motivation of teachers, outdated reading materials, among others. Fourthly, management of business schools is viewed as ineffective partly due to lack of professional skills, poor leadership and low funding of education and Business Education in particular. Although government is the driving force in educational development of most African countries, there is room for private ownership and operation of schools, probably to enhance access, a situation that has degenerated into quality and quantity dilemma. Top African Business Schools are few,

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