INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN BUSINESS EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract
The quality of educational process largely depends upon the quality of business education. Business education is concerned with equipping the individuals with skills and competencies required for participation in the business world. Indeed, it is an intricate, exacting and a very challenging one. Challenges in educational system have no permanent and fixed answers because of the changeable nature of human society. The business education in the 21st century will have to deal with a world different from that of 20th century in respect of pedagogical and technological advancement. So, no business education programme can prepare teachers or students for all situations that they will encounter. Business education have to make the final choices from among many alternatives. Therefore, it is imperative for business education to constantly reevaluate their choices. This can be achieved through introducing innovative ideas and practices in business education. Since teachers are of central importance in improving the quality of education; hence, the introduction of innovative practices in teacher education is of utmost importance. This conceptual paper is designed to elicit discussion on innovative practices in business education. The paper will focus on innovative practices in business education in the 21st century.

Key Words: Business Education, Innovative practices, E-learning, constructivism, Computer – based Assessment

INTRODUCTION
The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of the citizens depends upon the quality of education system and the quality of education depends upon the combined efforts of planners, educationists and administrators, however, the most significant factor is the quality of the business education. This means that excellent and efficient business education can change the fate of the nation.

According to Igboke (2000:1), business education is a dynamic field of study geared towards preparing youths and adults for and about business. It is a preparation for a career in business when instruction is designed to prepare youths and adults for actual practice in the world of business. On the other hand, education about business involves preparation of youths and adults for intelligent and effective consumption of economic goods and services offered to society in our free enterprise economy. Business education enhances the acquisition of skills, knowledge and competences which makes the recipient/beneficiary proficient. Business education in the twenty-first century is necessarily an exercise in globalization, where cultural knowledge, proficiency to communicate, and business acumen intersect.

Innovation means the ability to think beyond the boundaries and create something which is different from that which already exists. Without innovations, no progress is possible. No innovation or change can be implemented without business educators’ awareness, involvement and commitment. Business educations have to be innovative and their grooming has to start from their training institutions. For having innovative business education, we have to reconstruct our educational system. Reconstruction of educational system started in India from the beginning of independence and efforts to improve business education can be traced back to that period. Innovation is the generation and application of new ideas and skills to produce new products, processes and services that improve economic and social prosperity. The challenges and opportunities of globalization and technological development have led to a strengthened emphasis on innovation as a key driver for sustainable economic development, and on the nature and drivers of innovation. No society can prosper and flourish without business education. Ancient India is a perfect example of it. Which were considered to be the most prosperous society not just because of our enormous wealth but because of our high quality of education (Mettha & Sharma, 2012).
Education systems have evolved over time and have been set up in a particular context for particular purposes. To enhance the contribution of business education to innovation, business education programme must undergo changes to become more innovative themselves, taking various factors into account such as structure, resources, stakeholder involvement in learning environments, teaching pedagogy and learning methodology.

CONCEPT OF BUSINESS EDUCATION

Business education is education for business or training in business skills which are required for use in business offices, clerical occupations and business policy analysis (Ulinfun, 1985). It is that aspect of the educational process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge. According to Anao (1986), business education is an educational process or context which has primary aim of the preparation of people for roles in enterprises; such roles could be as employee, entrepreneur/employer or simply as self-employed.

A critical examination of the above definitions of business education shows that certain things in common are discovered, which are as follows:

1. Business education is concerned with equipping the individuals with skills and competencies required for participation in the business world.
2. These skills may be for personal use, such as enabling the individuals to be good consumers of the products of the business enterprises and
3. The skills may be for entry into the business community as employer or employee.

Despite all debates, more definitions of business education still manifest. For examples Anyaduba (1986) saw business education as concerned with the education of the individual for business and about business: the former focusing on those who need career in business and the later for all students in the entire school system irrespective of their career aspirations. However, according to Oyedele (1985), business education is worthwhile as preparation for many professions, such as civil servants, accountants, administrators, lawyers, and business teachers. It could be looked at as an activity, which is carried out by all teachers of business subjects: all business administrators and executives (public and private) who further the principles and practice of business and trainers in business and industry.

Business education can also be referred to as the pedagogical and business competencies necessary for teaching business attitudes, concepts, skills and knowledge. It could simply be defined as that aspect of educational or training process which an individual receives with the primary motive of enabling him acquire adequate attitudes, concepts, knowledge, understanding and skills in business activities for his personal or for vocational usage, for career as an administrator or manager or teacher, wherever he many find himself in the business world. This implies that business education is a component of general education, and where general education educates on about business; business education educates one for business. It is education for vocational preparation in business. It is an occupational banking and finance personnel, personnel and administrative officer and manager, secretarial and production personnel and general management. It also includes teacher education, which prepares students to be business educators, or business teacher.

The tertiary level of education in Nigeria, the philosophy of business education is to make the students understand the concept and philosophy of the national policy on education because of its importance in national development. It is based on this premise that Ubulom (1999) listed the objectives of business education as follows:

a) To make available to all students the opportunities to explore and learn about world of business and the possible interests and potential careers it has to offer.
b) To help develop in all students the ability to choose discriminatory and to use wisely the goods and services that business has to offer
c) To assist in developing an intelligent understanding on the art of all students of the various occupations to be found in the world of business
d) To develop in practical ways an understanding and an appreciation of the need for his personal use.
f) To prepare students to enter into and follow business as a career
g) To prepare students to perform business activities common to many professional areas.
h) To prepare students for more effective study in the field of business
i) To prepare students to become business teachers.
CONCEPT OF INNOVATION

Innovation is defined as incremental, radical, and revolutionary changes in thinking, products, processes, or organization (Wikipedia, 2014). In the organization context, innovation may be linked to performance and growth through improvement inefficiency, productivity, quality, competitive positioning, etc. Innovation is also viewed as intentionally bringing into existence something new that can be sustained and repeated and which has some value or utility (Selman n.d). According to Fagerberg (2004), Innovation is typically understood as the successful introduction of something new and useful. It appears people equate innovation with change.

Innovative and its manifestations and attempts have been visible in all spheres of education system and practice. Information and communication technology (ICT) in education has brought lots of technological changes and innovations. Innovations in term of teaching and learning, open distance learning, blended learning, collaboration learning and student centre learning. Computer aided learning not only used as an instructional material but also as a tool and learning facilitator. Technologies are keys to transforming the learning environment. Oftentimes, technology is “bolted on” and not integral to enhancing and assessing learning within business schools. Business schools need access to technology for all students and teachers in order to support anytime, anywhere, learning, personalization and 21st century skills (Microsoft).

Innovation attempts to introduce student centre, problem-based learning. An innovation is an implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), a new process, a new marketing method or anew organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations” (INSEAD, 2011: 4).

Three basic types of innovation:

• Innovation as novelty: refers fundamentally to novelty as consequence of innovation that has practical implementations, bringing an added value to the consumer.
• Innovation as change: conveys to inventions that results in transformations, diffusions, and ultimately change.
• Innovation as advantage: in the world of business, innovation refers to improvements that yield competitive advantages. This type of innovation can also include a social dimension in terms of innovative advances.

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

The following are the innovative practices in business education:

A Innovative Pedagogical Teaching Techniques: In the era of technology, education scenario has changed rapidly; teachers are facing difficulties to perform. There is high pressure from every point of corner to bring reforms. After technology evaluation, there has been lot of competition, access to internet, search engines, social networking websites, electronic gadget and changing lifestyle. The knowledge of information is available at a mouse click. This is the time to realize that the student community no longer has to depend upon teacher for acquiring knowledge that is why academicians report poor attendance and placement for the business students. This is the time to develop new and innovative teaching pedagogies. Keeping this in view, several changes have to be taken into consideration like education of business in terms of increased coverage of syllabus, best infrastructure, open education resources (i.e. database sites), rich themes in curricula, industry based, society based, research based syllabi, classroom instructions, Field experience, E-learning, individual projects, teaching language (English), guest lectures, case method, workshops, seminars, live projects, interactive lectures, projects presentations, tutorials, periodic class tests, management games, film reviews, field surveys, grooming sessions, business lab, book reviews, social projects, mentoring, observation, newspapers & magazines, TV channels, internet, role pays, group discussions, simulation, social drama and passive note taking mode to active participation and so on and implementation of measurement parameters for achievement of quality assessment etc.

Business education should inculcate these skills sets in their pedagogy. In addition even overall development of the student i.e. conceptual knowledge and personality development. Therefore business schools need to see that their pedagogy teaching should ignite students to perform these skills after their graduation.

i) Leadership oriented skills
   a) Vision of the leader, pedagogy should give inner inspiration to dream visionary ideas for their organizational growth.
   b) Passion for vision accomplishments, in other words pedagogy should teach the students to keep their passion in such a way so that they can develop positive attitude and win to win approach in all levels of the their position in organizations.
c) Leader should be able to travel long path to reach for their organizations objectivities.

d) Leader should know how to handle failure and success, in other words students discover new insights about themselves; how they analyze their organizations needs and how best they can contribute to the success of their organizations.

e) Leader should learn to take courageous decisions, in this connection students should develop their interpersonal leadership style to take best decisions, and this decision should contribute to the success of their team, department and organizations. In addition business schools pedagogy should mold their personality in such a way that, they should carry these leadership skills for lifelong.

Utilization of On-Line and Blended Course Delivery: Especially for ever-increasing numbers of non-traditional students, traditional teaching methods such as three weekly daytime lectures are not viable options. Creating flexible course designs that combine on-line and in-person instruction has advantages for both students and institutions. Students can study at times and places that fit within their schedules and institutions can accommodate more students, share instructors, and support student learning outside of regular school hours. Some colleges and universities are offering “flipped” course designs: they archive video lectures that can be reviewed off-campus, and class time is spent in engaged learning activities, group projects, and individual student attention from instructors.

E-learning Environment: The Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia (2012) identified some quality classroom delivery to include: Computer in the classroom, Class web site, Class blogs and wikis, Wireless Classroom Microphone, Mobile Devices and Interactive Whiteboard. These technologies interact with the teacher in a friendly manner as to motivate students into learning achievement. Also other technologies geared towards enhancing learning achievement of students are now available. These are in hardware and software forms and include: learning software in different areas of business, iPod, CD ROMs, Modems, Laser printers, YouTube software, Digital cameras, Digital scanners, (e-How 2012).

   The electronic environment now in vogue has necessitated the need for electronic teaching infrastructure. A prominent tool is the smart board which commands respect as it eases the use of multimedia and greater interactivity. A significant and unique feature of the smart board is that it allows teachers or instructors to make illustrations of those business concepts that hitherto were difficult to be illustrated.

   Constructivism is a theory that believed strongly that scientific knowledge should be personally constructed and reconstructed by the learner based on his /her prior knowledge or experiences (Mandor, 2002). Constructivism posits that reality is internal, and knowledge is constructed. Constructivists believe that, since learning involves constructing one’s own knowledge, instruction centers on helping learners to actively invent individual meaning from experience (Dede, 2008). According to Von Glasers field (2001), constructivism indicates that the learner interprets a reality based on his experiences and interactions with his environment. Therefore, the teacher should play the role of a midwife in the birth of knowledge as opposed to being mechanics of knowledge transfer. As Dabbagh describes, Constructivist theories of learning assume that meaning is imposed by the individual rather than existing in the world independently. People construct new knowledge and understandings based on what they already know and believe, which is shaped by their developmental level, their prior experiences, and their socio-cultural background and context.

   Use of Power Point Strategy: It is a type strategy which slide presentation software. It is used especially in large classes and courses geared towards information exchange rather than skill development. Some of the benefit of using power point is that it engages multiple learning styles, increases visual impact and audience focus, it is also used to enrich curriculum with interdisciplinarity and also foster interactive between student and teacher, student to student with media. It’s used to present colorful text and images for business education programme using simple animation and sounds.

   Student-Centered Learning: Technology has the capacity to promote and encourage the transformation of education from a very teacher directed enterprise to one which supports more student-centered models. Evidence of this today is manifested in:
   · The proliferation of capability, competency and outcomes focused curricula
   · Moves towards problem-based learning
   · Increased use of the Web as an information source, Internet users are able to choose the experts from whom they will learn
The use of ICT in educational settings, by itself acts as a catalyst for change in this domain. ICTs by their very nature are tools that encourage and support independent learning. Students using ICTs for learning purposes become immersed in the process of learning and as more and more students use computers as information sources and cognitive tools (e.g. Reeves & Jonassen, 1996), the influence of the technology on supporting how students learn will continue to increase

**Computer-Based Assessment:** It’s increasingly being used to motivate business education students to learn, enable them to practice disciplinary skills and abilities, broaden the range of knowledge assessed and increase opportunities for feedback.

**Interactive White Board (IP Board):** It is an easy-to-use interactive board. It can engage both the audience and the learners. It uses an electric pen with which you can control the computer, write or draw on the board directly. It is useful for trainers, teachers, presenters, and for meeting participants’ expectations, for delivery of lectures, workshop activities. It equally facilitates exchange of information in a more interactive and efficient way. It is easy to use, stable and durable. It is multilingual, ‘eco-friendly’ and has free software update. It can be used by both the teacher and the students in the classroom. It works with computer (laptop) and projector and can turn the classroom teaching into an interactive experience, engaging learners, encouraging active participation and thus enhance learning interaction. It encourages interactive teaching. It can equally be used for boardroom interactive discussion or remove interaction in a training room. The IP board has mouse function, writing and drawing function, supplementary tools and handwriting recognition. It can also replay, save and print. It also has a remote interaction function.

**Audio Teleconferencing:** This is a distance education technology that overcomes the on-way limitation of the radio. This is an extension of a basic telephone that permits instruction and interaction between individuals or groups at two or more locations. By using a speakerphone or more sophisticated equipment, Members of the audience can both hear and be heard. It allows true, live, two-way interaction between two or more people physically separated. Audio teleconferencing is a popular way of conducting meetings or simple instructional sessions where the time and cost of travel cannot be justified. A Literature teacher might use it for the students to interact with one another. In the same vein, a Foreign-language teacher might use it to permit students to interact with a native speaker of the language. It is an audio-only medium. There is not visual element.

**RESISTING FACTORS IN INNOVATION**

Although there are so many innovative practices existing in business Education Programme in Nigeria, still there are some resisting factors in our education system which prevents the business education institution from being innovative and they are-

1. **Lack of Physical facilities and Funds** - Majority of colleges suffer from lack of facilities in terms of space, equipment and personnel. Consequently, they have not been able to adopt innovations. For want of these facilities, many creative ideas are shelved.

2. **Lack of Diffusion of Innovations among business educators** - Most of the business education institutions is poor and indifferent towards the professional growth of their business educators. Many of the business educators are ignorant of the new trends in their area of studies due to lack of diffusion of new ideas among them.

3. **Lack of Service** - Due to administrative difficulties, business educators are not able to try, adopt and maintain innovations in business education institution. For any new experimentation, facilities are not usually provided by the administrators.

4. **Lack of Support** - It is unfortunate that business educators have not been able to adopt innovations due to noncooperation of practicing schools. The schools are not always willing to extend their facilities to the Journal of Education and Practice business educators for trying out new ideas because they do not want any disturbances in their daily routine.

5. **Rigid framework** - It is found that the rigid system of syllabus framing and theory respectively are responsible for the continuance of the traditional practices in teacher education Programme. The present examination system under a rigid framework is a big stumbling block in the process of innovation.

6. **Lack of Expertise of the staff** - Majority of tertiary business education institutions are manned by business educators who have not been exposed to the functioning of institutions inside or outside the country. Moreover, it is found that due to lack of expertise of the staff members, innovations have not been diffused in the training institution.
7. **Lack of Research Orientation** - A vast majority of business educators have not yet developed research mindedness. Whatever Programme and practices have been adopted in the training institutions, they have been adopted on commonsense basis not on research findings.

8. **Interpersonal Relationship Crisis** - Business educators feel that there is a lack of cooperation among members of the staff. There are professional rivalries among co-workers and there is no initiative from Business educators for creative works. It appears that lack of interpersonal relationship is yet another factor preventing the spread of innovation in the training institutions.

9. **Decision making by external agencies** - Business educators simply follow the decisions taken outside by the university and government authorities for the adoption of innovations in their business training institutions. Business educators lose initiative and desire to venture innovation even in the areas which fall within their purview such as methods of teaching, supervision and guidance to student teachers.

**SUGGESTIONS**

The above observations clearly indicate that business education programme at tertiary level needs to be examined critically in terms of its innovativeness. Here are some suggestions which can be used to overcome these problems:

- Identification of the innovative research could be done if all the Departments of business education Country wide contribute in this area. They may periodically produce the Research Abstracts of the Studies conducted in their respective Departments, which may be made available on the World Wide Web.
- Every business educator may be given Unique Identification Number. It will facilitate Manpower planning in business education.
- There should be networking amongst all the business education Institutions to learn from the innovative practices of each other.
- Efforts should be made to realize wholistic business education by integrating various skills, such as, microteaching, info-savvy, techno-pedagogic, life skills in the various business education Programs. Along with cognitive development there should be adequate focus on emotional maturity, psycho-motor development, health and environment, and inter-disciplinary development.
- It is imperative to strengthen Vocational education in almost all the domains of Vocational Education, such as, agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, servicing of the electric and electronic appliances. Innovative approaches need to be evolved.
- Physical facilities and funds should be adequately provided to the institutions by the government, local bodies and organizations.

**CONCLUSION**

To meet the challenges of the new millennium, business education in Nigeria needs a tremendous change. The business educators need intensive training in various aspects related to new innovations. The above stated problems are challenging and strategies to overcome these problems are the need of the hour. Therefore colleges and university department of business education should take immediate action for making business education programme innovative.

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165


