Review

Trends in business teacher education in Nigeria

Chris C. Chukwurah

Department of Vocational and Special Education, University of Calabar, Calabar, Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria.
E-mail: Churac2006@yahoo.com. Tel: 08034715757.

Accepted 20 May, 2013

Basically, the result of a diligent and successful research work contributes significantly to some already existing body of knowledge. Therefore, it is on the basis of this that researches are conducted in various fields of human endeavour to either validate or invalidate previously conducted works. Education generally has undergone series of microscopic transformation over the years. Thus, business teacher education which is a component of general education has equally experienced a series of evolutionary trends over the years. It is therefore, the aim of the researcher to bring to fore the various trends or dynamics that have affected vocational business teacher education in Nigeria. The researcher traced the historical evolution of colonial education spanning through pre and post independence periods as well as, business education as an aspect of colonial Education. In order to do this, various educational encyclopedia and publications were consulted and cited in the work. A little digression was also made in attempting to compare the obtainability of business education programme in Nigeria with a few developed countries of the world. Problems were identified and recommendations made.

Key words. Business Teacher Education, Colonial Education, Business Education and General Education

INTRODUCTION

The concept of education is a controversial one which has engaged the attention of educational philosophers for centuries. While not attempting to enter into that controversy, it is also basically agreed that each age and generation and nation must redefine for itself and purpose what education is and what it must be doing. Universally, education is a life-long process through which individuals acquire relevant knowledge and value which enable them to become useful to themselves and the society in which they are domiciled (Akinpelu, 1981). Education is usually targeted at the total development of the individual which is the main thrust of humanism. Whatever it may be, education as a process would involve the effort of a person, called the teacher, imparting, or trying to impart knowledge, skills, information, values, attitudes or whatever, to another person or group of people assumed to be relatively inexperienced and unskilled in a manner that is generally acceptable. Education is a gradual process of acquiring skills and habits that make one fit into his society and thereby become responsible to himself and the entire community. Thus, the primary concern of all societies, whether literate or illiterate, civilized or uncivilized is providing the necessary and appropriate orientation for their young members not only to fit into the life of the society but also to ensure that they can grapple with the problems of life, always cope with the ever changing society and at the same time, grow into adult members of the society. This orientation is often given or provided through the process of education.

Since education is a process consciously pursued to give orientation to the young of the society to fit them into the social life of the society, all societies set their own educational goals and design means by which to achieve them. The ancient Greeks for example, aimed at producing mentally balanced and physically healthy citizens for their own system of education. For the Romans on the other hand, education was to help produce good soldiers and orators. In Nigeria, before independence, education was tailored along colonial lines that saw nothing better for the people with various practical skills to carry out different tasks in government, industrial and commercial establishments.

These felt needs gave birth to the inauguration of various educational conferences and commissions charged with the responsibility of fashioning out a sound educational philosophy for the country. According to Ehiametalor (1990), for over seventy years of education
in Nigeria, not much progress had been made in trying to make education more meaningful.

As a result of lack of direction on the part of the colonialists, and because of the concern of the Missionaries, the Phelps-stokes Commission was appointed in the 1920s to make recommendations on how education could be re-directed. The commission recommended that:

‘Education should be adapted to the needs of the people as a first requisite of school activities and that technical and vocational training should be carried out under supervision’.

The Phelps-stokes recommendations led to the development of various technical colleges across the continent.

Asquith and Elliot commission

There were two separate commissions assigned with the responsibility to determine the higher educational needs of Africans. The recommendations of these commissions led to the establishment of the first time in Nigeria higher educational institutions designated as "Polytechnics". These polytechnics were established at Ibadan, Enugu, Kaduna and Lagos (Ehiametalor, 1990).

Ashby commission

Ashby commission was appointed in 1959 tended to bridge the gap between the need for technical and administrative officers. The commission stated that “there is clearly a dearth both in the public service and in the business community of trained secretaries, book-keepers and accountants to fill clerical and junior administrative posts” (Osuala, 1990).

Obviously individuals need business knowledge to help them participate successfully in business as producers and intelligent consumers of goods and services as employment requirements are changing due to technological advancement in the world of works.

TRENDS OF BUSINESS TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Teaching, despite its importance, has remained a lovely profession in the world over, and throughout history; yet, the desire to find effective and qualified teachers has persisted. Twenty-four centuries ago, Plato raised the all-important question of how a law can be promulgated to assure effectively trained teachers. The Romans adopted Greek educational ideas and concerns about the qualifications and plight of teachers. In 100 AD, Juvenal in Aina (1982) observed that “much was required of teachers but they were held in little esteem and that their rewards were slight”. Throughout the Greek and Roman periods, a kind of contempt seemed to exist with attendant negative consequences on the teaching profession.

Here in Nigeria, in (1969) at the conference on Higher Level Teacher Training (Lagos) lamented the progressive loss of qualified teachers to other businesses. It went further to say that:

‘The general manpower shortage which made it difficult to interest talented people in teaching coupled with poor conditions of services has worsened the recruitment situations’.

The Ashby Report of 1960 said that the professional training of teachers is not the most serious of the problems confronting Nigeria but much more serious are the difficulties of securing enough teachers with sufficient education. The commission lamented the constant migration of teachers away from teaching in such a manner that teaching may come to be looked upon as a sort of preparation for positions in other sectors of employment.

Indeed, spirited efforts have been made to reverse the negative image which society has labeled on teachers with little or no effort. Professor Biobaku in (Aina, 1982: 49) has once advocated the need to reinvest teaching with its true majesty as a noble profession. The Ashby Commission recommended improved conditions of service in order to confer stability on the teaching profession. The Federal Government apparently frustrated at one stage, almost resigned its hope of
arresting the problem when (NERC, 1980) it felt that “many teachers are uncommitted and would leave the profession at the slightest opportunity”.

It is however, on record that the Federal Government of Nigeria has supported teacher education more than any Government in Africa. It is in view of the recognition of teacher education that the National Policy on Education (1981: 36) emphasized that teacher education will continue to remain free while the quantitative output would be stepped up. Yet, the problem remained intractable as the needs continued to grow qualitatively and quantitatively especially in the wake of Universal Basic Education (UBE) the 6-3-3-4 and now 9-3-4 educational systems. Business teacher education programme have gone through many changes in Nigeria and other countries of the world since the turn of the century.

ERA OF COLONIAL BUSINESS EDUCATION

The main purpose of pre-colonial education was to induct the young African into his society and family living. The system of education was to train the youth for social responsibility; job orientation, political participation and spiritual and moral values (Fafunwa, 1991). The family was seen as the basis for learning about society and those things that were acceptable to the public.

Trades such as weaving, carving, blacksmithing and iron works practiced. As time moved, the educational climate changed as a result of social, economic and political pressures. The major forces within the educational picture included the industrial revolution in Europe in the 1820s and 1830s (Nolan, 1958), the American Revolution of 1776, the expansion of the rail road in 1870s and 1880s (Nolan, 1958). These factors contributed to the rapid growth in business education, which resulted in abundance of goods and services.

The aspects of business were neither readily nor easily understood by the public. Hence, confusion was rapidly settling in with people feeling an urgent need for sufficient knowledge and skill in business education so that they could participate successfully as members of this “new society”. To achieve this goal, parents and other pressure groups were demanding that courses other than writing, book-keeping and arithmetic be offered with perfection of the typewriter and other machines. In the early 1870s, the interest in business education increased significantly (Finch and Callhoun, 1970).

During the early 1900s, according to Davis and Oladunjoye (1997), business teachers received their training in private business schools and formal schools. The formal schools were teacher training institutions that offered a two year programme in liberal arts. Granduands of these schools who wanted to qualify as business teachers had to go to private business schools to learn shorthand, typewriting and book-keeping. Tonne and Nanassy (1970) maintained that virtually business teachers acquired their preparation in private business colleges and formal schools.

They went further to say that for the business teacher to meet the standard; they were required to spend at least one half of the time studying general education. The other half of the time was spent studying courses such as introduction to Business Economics, Geography, Consumer Education and Business Organization.

However, the colonial government in Nigeria did very little to get itself involved in business teacher education prior to 1912 when Lord Lugard took over the administration (Tonne and Nanassy, 1970: 16). Lugard regarded the training of teachers as an important task. In his proposal which became the basis of the 1916 Education Ordinance, he laid the foundation which stimulated the source of supply of qualified teachers. He introduced the provision of grants-in-aid to training institutions and boarding schools.

POST-INDEPENDENCE BUSINESS TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

In spite of the fact that adequate attention was not given to business education, the Yaba Higher College was established in 1932 to train Nigerian teachers who would replace European teachers in the Secondary Schools and teacher training colleges.

The Officially recorded history of business teacher education in Nigeria according to Davis and Oladunjoye (1997: 16) dates back to the late 1950s. In 1958, the Government of Western Nigeria decided to upgrade their programmes in business education and asked the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for assistance. As a result, Ohio University in cooperation with the Ministry of Education for the Western Nigeria coordinated a business education programme in Ibadan.

This was made up of two years education beyond high school which was required in order for a teacher to secure Grade Certification. By 1965, the business teacher training had evolved into a three-year programme which provided the graduating teacher with certification higher than Grade 1, but lower than a University degree. Indeed, the first university in Nigeria to graduate a total of two majors was the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1966. This programme of business education was however interrupted during the Civil War, but was immediately resumed in full force at the end of the hostilities. The Federal Ministry of Education with the help of the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) opened the National Teacher’s College, Yaba, Lagos in 1967 with the sole aim of preparing technical and business teachers.

In 1967, the National Technical Teacher’s College was established at Gombe (then, Bauchi State) and now, Gombe State. In addition, some colleges of technology
and polytechnics were established with departments for business education/business studies. The Ahmadu Bello University also felt the need for business education when they initiated the programme in 1976/1977 sessions. The 1976/1977 prospectus for Business Teacher Education in the Department of Education of the University states:

‘The business teacher education programme is established to prepare competent business teachers who are ‘capable of preparing and enriching business education programmes in the secondary and certain levels of post secondary institutions in the country’ (Davis and Oladunjoye, 1978: 17).

The University of Ilorin which was established in 1975 opened the Department of Business and Vocational Education in September, 1980. This was followed by the University of Science and technology.

Business teacher education programme in Nigeria is virtually incorporating new courses that will lead to the adaptation of utilization of modern technologies. This is evidenced in most institutions that offer business education programme. Such courses like computer application, word processing, information technology and office technology etc are being gradually introduced through programme reviews.

Business activities have increased tremendously in Nigeria since independence and especially since the private enterprises promotion Degree of 1973. The need to supply better work force for these activities in Nigeria arose and highlighted the need to strengthen business teacher education programmes. As consumers, Nigerians need increased business knowledge in order that they may select wisely from among vast quantities of goods and services.

There has also been constant increase in interest and investment in securities as a result of the indigenization decree of 1974 futuristic enough to see the long range implication of such considerations as: modern practices in Management Sciences, strategies for implementing change, emerging education policies, economic trends and societal influences.

The aforementioned problem further resulted to the poor training received by the business education teachers in these institutions. Business education programme is a very expensive programme that requires huge amount of funds, but Nigerian Government pays little or no attention at all to this programme in terms of revenue allocation.

At present, the training arrangements for business teachers in Nigeria are concentrated mainly on three specialist centres namely; Colleges of Education and Polytechnics. Colleges of education in the country have the department of business education and all Polytechnics and sixteen Universities in Nigeria have the department of business education (JAMB BROCHURE, 1999).

The training/courses provided by these institutions led to three types of certificates namely; ‘Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), Nigeria Technical Teachers Certificate (NTTC) and a bachelor’s degree which is frequently a B.Ed., but occasionally, a B.Sc. (Ed) as is awarded by the University of Calabar. In Nigeria, the Post-graduate degree programme in business teacher education is offered at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and some other Universities in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

Partly because of the newness of business teacher education and partly because of the problems enunciated as earlier mentioned, the mission of business education has not been clearly defined in the new National Policy on Education and neither has it been in the Government subsequent white paper and the implementation strategies as contained in the Blue Print.

The preparation of business education teachers at all levels must be a major concern to us. The Nigeria Association of Business Educators (NABE) should initiate a well-designed accreditation policy; one that is based upon proven need and validated by research to continuously monitor the conditions under which business education teachers are being certificated; only if we perform this monumental task that we can realize an effective and professionally inclined programme of business teacher education to serve an increasingly complex educational pattern.

We also know that effective business teacher education demands a co-operative approach involving those in education and business practitioners. There is therefore, no need for the groups to join to develop one model business teacher preparation programmes at all levels. The group could also consider what changes are desirable in the present structure of courses. Leadership in these and other directions is certainly a current challenge to NABE.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made in line with the study:

1. There should be a broader business education programme at the high school level in Nigeria.
2. The content of business teacher education curriculum should be updated to include courses that will enhance the acquisition of modern skills.
3. Nigerians should be encouraged to write textbooks in the area of business education.
4. A Certification Board should be set up to test graduands of business education programmes before taking teaching jobs.
5. Departments of business education in Nigerian institutions should become members of National and international Business Education Associations so that they can receive journals on current information on trends in business education.

6. Nigerian Government should allocate enough funds to the institutions offering business education for procurement of equipment and facilities.

7. All universities offering business education programme should establish a post-graduate programme in business education to enhance professionalism.

REFERENCES


