

Effectiveness of Business Education Professionalism in Improving the Quality of Education

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Abstract: *This article discusses effectiveness of business education professionalism in improving the quality of education. The past year has witnessed an outpouring of concern that business education may be headed in the wrong direction. However, scholars differed widely in their analysis of the problem and what should be done about it. Various authors have presented interesting and provocative views about the nature of present challenges in business education.*

An examination of the history of higher education suggests that the path away from professionalism has not resulted primarily from proactive strategizing on the part of management educators. The study covers how to perform work amid a discourse of professionalism, effectiveness of business education professionalism, problems affecting quality educators in business education programmes, and strategies for improving business education professionalism. Although much of the research on organizational fields has examined processes by which organizations within fields came to resemble each other over time, observers also have noted that fields are often in flux and do not necessarily stabilize. It was recommended that business educators should adequately prepare and equip her students with sound professional abilities as it concern teaching ability to enable them expertly impart sound Business Education knowledge.

Keywords: *Effectiveness, business education, professionalism, improving, quality of education*

I. Introduction

Education is an essential process in human development. It is different from schooling. Education is defined as the act or process of educating or applying discipline on the mind or a process of character training. It is a dynamic instrument of change. Education is expected to affect or condition the social behaviour of the person being educated. Education is a life-long process which is always used to imply a positive state of mind. Business education is the foundation upon which students build an awareness of business and an understanding of business concept. Business is the process by which individuals, organisations and societies interact to improve their economic wellbeing through the exchange of products, services and ideas. The ability to make individual decisions based on choice is essential to this process.

Business education according to Trumbach, Payne, and Walsh (2023), is a process of instructing a person about what happens during business transactions in offices, banks, markets and anywhere money changes hands. It is also a type of education that helps someone to learn facts, acquire skills, develop abilities, solve problems and be able to have business like attitudes useful for success in business situation. The concept of business education had evolved over time. This is evident in the different definitions offered by various authors and researchers in trying to make clear the meaning of business education. Pocol, Stanca, Dabija, Pop, and Mişcoiu (2022) defined business education as a course that prepares students for entry in advancement of jobs within business, and prepares them to handle their own business affairs to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. Similarly, business education encompasses

knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed by all citizens in order to effectively manage their personal businesses and economic system. Business education is an embodiment of vocational knowledge and skills needed for employment and advancement in a broad range of business careers. In other words, business education means education for business or training skills which is required in business offices, clerical occupation and business policy analysis.

Bratianu, Hadad and Bejinaru (2020) noted that business education is an integral part of vocational and technical education. It is a form of vocational education that is directed towards developing the learner to become productive in teaching, paid employment and self-employment. James, and Casidy (2018) postulated that this type of vocational education prepares learners for gainful employment and sustainable livelihood. He went further to say that business education plays significant role in the economic development by providing knowledge and skills to the learners thereby enabling them to adequately impart knowledge into others and handle sophisticated office technologies and information systems. The goal of business education is primarily to produce competent, skillful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work (Tarigan & Dimiyati, 2021; Sinaga, Jaya, & Hasibuan, 2020). Therefore colleges of education felt that it was safer to respond to the demands of the market, which had an insatiable appetite for applied skills but not necessarily all skills that professionals ought to have.

As a result, the practical and applied skills education approach that business schools followed may have influenced business students' professional attitudes. For that reason, in this study, the professionalism framework was selected to evaluate business students' professional attitudes and readiness as they graduate from college. Scholars identified common characteristics among professionals that include the following: (a) expertise that professionals develop through extensive education and training; (b) a "social-trustee" element, that compels individuals to focus on the public good and restrain from actions of selfinterest; and (c) autonomy which manifests when professionals commit to independent judgment guided by special knowledge (Kumar, Kumar, Palvia & Verma, 2019). These precursors are indicative of the professional attitudes that business students possess as they graduate from college and enter their professional careers.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Performing Work amid a Discourse of Professionalism

Increasingly, the value and meaning of work(er) have come to be defined by notions of professionalism, where work is highly specialized and dependent upon prescribed performances of fitness and commitment (Hidayah & Herviana, 2019). Although most often invoked 'as if it were a neutral, self-evident descriptor', professionalism 'indexes a set of communicative and stylistic expectations' about what type of work(er) is valuable in our society (Carlson, 2018). Over time, professionalism has evolved to refer more generally to work marked by (1) a clear division of labor, (2) training and expertise, and (3) exclusivity that is the basis of a social order. The exclusivity that marks professional work as distinct is wholly dependent upon the contrast of professionalism with nonprofessional 'Others'—jobs not requiring particular specialization, certification, or a code of conduct—even as these qualifications are created by the very groups to which they apply. Nonprofessional 'Others' are brought into relief to create the boundaries of a professional domain and necessarily exist outside those boundaries (Kopnina, 2019).

In such a system, occupations are valued 'not on the grounds of innate merit, but on claims about merit'—the result of occupational branding efforts that manufacture ownership of work through the setting of standards, acceptable practices, and scope of expertise. But claims

to professionalism, like occupational identity, require a concerted effort across contexts and among various stakeholders. What is taken-for-granted actually requires ongoing maintenance of a particular occupational brand. Business education is one such example of a 'professionalization project.' Only after management was first taken up as an academic pursuit, did management schools agree upon and endorse a specific curriculum and accrediting body to gain legitimacy by establishing themselves as a 'profession' (Tanjung & Daulay, 2019). Today, even among jobs that are exclusive of the professions by their very nature, professionalism remains a powerful resource for negotiating a particular occupational brand or identity. In the absence of accreditation or specialized training and autonomy, nonprofessional occupations adopt certain standards of professionalism and ask workers to perform accordingly to establish legitimacy.

Just as occupations are 'continually under construction, beckoning stakeholders to imbue them with meaning', so too is the performance of worker. As work has become more specialized and organizational control more distributed, 'it is precisely employees' sense of self and identity that becomes the 'contested terrain' on which the dynamics of workplace control gets played out'. Workers become enterprising subjects who exert great individual effort to perform as professionals. Workers take it upon themselves to accrue certifications, increase productivity, and take up formal dress and bodily comportment befitting of professional workers (Ivars, Fernández, Llinares & Choy, 2018). Ultimately, these performances of professionalism eclipse the work itself, (re)producing the invisibility of nonprofessional work in ways that justify lower compensation and a lack of respect and value in our society.

2.2 Effectiveness of Business Education Professionalism

Profession is simply a job or vocation at which someone works and for which they have undergone training. It is what individuals do to earn a living after a period of training particularly in a formal education level. A profession is an occupation founded upon specialized educational training in a recognized tertiary institution. It is a type of job that requires and obtained through advanced educational training. Profession is a vocation, occupation, job practice that requires mastery of a complex set of knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes, values, and ethics through formal education and practical experience. Similarly Profession an occupation that is dependent upon specialized intellectual study and training for the provision of skilled service to other member of society; government, non-governmental agencies for a definite fee or salary (Kakeeto, Mugagga, & Bisaso, 2020). Habibi, Bigdeli, Sohrabi, and Ebadi (2022) stated that a profession is an occupation whose basic responsibility, public status and expertise are continually strengthened by specialized education and training within a specific period of time.

It is a body of experts that provides a special service and exemplary leadership of harmonious survival of their community based on their accumulated knowledge, skills and wisdom (Mulyadi, 2021). Profession in taxonomic approach was seen as possessing of a diverse range of characteristics differentiating them from other occupations. These characteristics centrally encompassed knowledge and expertise as well as others such as playing a positive part in the society. The emphasis is that taxonomic contributor gave to knowledge and expertise was based on the fact that professions typically had a stronger formal knowledge and higher educational base on training than other occupations (Bajada & Trayler, 2013).

The issue of knowing and classifying who is business educator has been a controversial one. The complexities of this issue emanates from the versatile nature of the course business. The effort to have enough hands in teaching of the various areas of the course results in bringing people from other discipline into the business area. A business educator must have broad knowledge in all the major

components of business. Having knowledge in a single aspect of the course does not generally qualify one to be a business educator in other words, a business educator must be knowledgeable in general education, general business subjects, secretarial components, marketing and distribution education subjects, professional education, accounting, teaching and industrial work experience. The business educator is worried and concerned about making business education recognised and accepted, imbibe changes where necessary, giving quality business education, identify problems and offer solution to them.

According to Suganda, Nasution, and Halim (2023), business education professionalism maintain the confidence of their students and parents; professional authority and composure in all educational settings, they know their students well enough to be able to modify content when needed, they know their content well, they build authentic relationships with their students and students parents and business education professionalism are discerning toward the pedagogy that comes their way. Business education professionalism is necessary for the long-term success of a business, whether it's a big corporation or small business. Employee interactions and relationships with customers are of vital importance to ensure that company goals and objectives are met. A professional work place attitude and appearance allow employees to take pride in their work and improve worker performance. Managers who behave professionally set an appropriate example by encouraging their people to conduct themselves in a manner that supports company-wide success. Effective business education professionalism promotes the following:

Boundaries: Although it can be challenging to establish boundaries in personal relationships, it is essential to establish boundaries in the workplace. Everyone has a role to play in an organization. Business education professionalism helps separate business from the personal; it keeps relationships limited to the business context at hand. Business education professionalism in the work place establishes boundaries between what is considered appropriate office behavior and what is not (Ferguson & Dougherty, 2022). While most managers support an enjoyable and vibrant work environment, limits must be put in place to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings. Workers who conduct themselves professionally steer clear of crossing the line with their conversations and other interactions with co-workers, superiors and clients.

Personal Improvement: A business environment in which employees dress and operate professionally is more conducive for success. For example, professional dress codes are understood to support career development and personal growth in the work place. That's because workers who dress and act professionally feel better about themselves and are encouraged to perform better for their clients.

Duty: A professional works in her employer's or client's interests. She may not always agree with decisions or enjoy what she's doing but in order to do right by the person engaging her services, she does her job ably. If a professional doesn't like her work or agree with her employers, she should probably consider a new job. However, the idea is to always act ethically by taking fiduciary duties and loyalties seriously.

Accountability: Companies that interact directly with clients are obligated to provide the best services possible and present their company in the best possible light. Business education professionalism counts when providing written information to clients. Professionally written company reports, business plans or other correspondence help businesses remain accountable

with their level of service. The impression given in the paperwork submitted is important in enforcing the right impression about your business.

Respect: Taking the high road can be a challenge. Those practicing business education professionalism always strive to keep their personal feelings in check and show respect, even to those who are disrespectful or rude. Business education professionalism establishes respect for authority figures, clients and co-workers. Maintaining a professional demeanor limits gossip and inappropriate personal conversations that could be considered disrespectful. Keeping a professional attitude with clients who behave inappropriately demonstrates the level of respect an employee has for the customer and the business partnership. Conflicts are less likely to arise in a professional business environment (Krämer & Langmann, 2020). Workers who respect each others' boundaries and conduct themselves professionally rarely have disagreements that cannot be resolved efficiently. Business education professionalism also benefits diverse environments in which business people and their clients have several different perspectives and opinions. Professional behavior helps business people avoid offending members of different cultures or backgrounds.

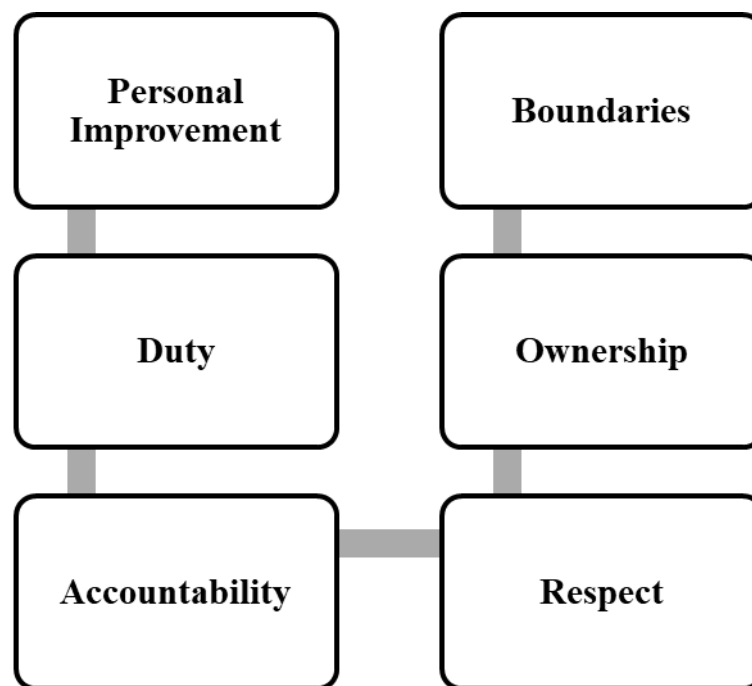


Figure 1. Effectiveness of business education professionalism

Ownership: People respect someone who takes pride in her work. Whether she's shining shoes or running a multinational corporation, someone who values business education professionalism does the best work she can at all times. Dedication, integrity and responsibility are elements of business education professionalism that make a person successful in her field. By taking ownership of their roles and duties, professionals make names for themselves and usually find promotion, opportunities and repeat business come easily to them.

2.3 Understanding Quality Education

Quality education is one that focuses on the social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive development of each student regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or geographic location. NICEF (2000) provides a very comprehensive definition of quality

education that includes healthy learners who are well-nourished, are ready to participate and learn, whose learning is supported by their families and communities; healthy, safe, and supportive environments; content that includes the foregoing elements and peace; inclusive child-centered processes that are facilitated by competent self-driven teachers; and actual outcomes that encompass life-supportive knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education (equity) and positive participation in society (Arif & Yuhdi, 2020). Particularly critical (for sustainability) is UNICEF's statement that effective and appropriate stimulation in a child's early years influences the brain development and is necessary for emotional regulation, arousal, and behavioral management (Flores-Vivar, & García-Peñalvo, 2023).

In 2012, the United Nations for the first time included 'Quality Education' in their Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Further, education in modern times is highly influenced and dependent on Information and Communication Technology which has paved the way for students to attain school education (Maruti, Maskurin, & Saputra, 2021). Quality education not only prepares a student for a job but also develops the overall personality of an individual. In the case of children, it aims at their complete upbringing where morals and ethics are taught as part of the curriculum to help them live a healthy lifestyle.

2.4 Problems affecting Quality Educators in Business Education Programmes

Despite the growth of Business education programmes in Nigerian colleges of education, still suffer different institutional as well as governmental problems. Thus majority of them cannot follow the international standards of business education. The institutional problems of business education includes lack of highly qualified business education professionalism specialised in different business areas, lack of link between industry and academia, lack of facilities for good quality in business education research, lack of corporate leadership, no standardised performance evaluation system of teacher's promotion, lecturers approach to students in tertiary institutions (Lambert, & Rennie, 2021). The problems from government side include inadequate government investment, politicised curricula in educational sector, corruption in educational sector, inadequate classroom for learning and examinations. The brief description of problems both from institutional as well as government side is given below.

Lack of highly qualified business education professionalism: Through the government of Nigeria has fixed considerable budget for tertiary institutions throughout the country but still the business education programme faces the shortage of highly qualified professional business educators have not only strong academic background in business and commerce but also have experience in corporate sector, so that they can give the real image of business education to students.

Lack of linkage between industry and academia: In Nigeria there is lack of linkage between industry and academia and this is really a serious problem hampering the performance of business education that the students should also learn practical techniques and should build skills related to commerce, trade and industry for which they have to practically visit the business sites and locations. If there are fewer linkages between industry and academia then they will not be able to get practical exposure.

Lack of facilities for good quality research and presence of work load among business educators: In order to overcome the gap between theory and practice, there is a need of quality research. But in the business education in Nigeria especially in the private sector there

are no facilities for doing good quality research; there are no properly maintained libraries, with non updated data bases and no extra remunerations for researchers. Furthermore, teachers are given too many courses in each semester, which perceived by teaching as extra burden which ultimately hampers their teaching effectiveness (Saragih & Ananda, 2019).

Lack standardised performance evaluation system: The lack of standardised evaluation system has demoralising effects on the academic staff. The public sector colleges of education follow the old annual confidential report technique, in which the performance of teachers is evaluated on annual basis by their boss and this evaluated is one sided in such way that no feedback is given to the teachers. Often this evaluation is used for promotion of teachers and is not used for teaching improvement and quality enhancement purposes.

Lack of lecturers' approach to students in colleges of education: Another amazing problems leading to the production of poor quality graduates in Nigeria is the lecturers approach to students. It is unfortunate that the lecturers who suppose to render a helping hands in the production of good quality graduate now constituting nuisance in national educational system because they are only interested in money and fail to commit to memory that their activities today determined the progress and downfall of national development in future. No interest for lecture, they see their lecturing duty as the second chance duty, the lecturers approach to inculcate knowledge, skill in students had failed instead they contrive more hazard in national educational system, they enhance the students illegalities. A lecturer in one of the colleges of education announced to students secretly after exams. Any student who needs 'A' will pay N4000, is not a good impression. With this, some students will relax after all I will pay N4000 and get at least 'A' and the act is only jeopardizing the school system but also the nation because from there the students learn bribing and corruption which is now common in the country. Some lecturers demand for canal knowledge of a girl in order to award her pass mark, with this, compel that student to commit fornication which can stimulate the student to develop sexual intensity. That means Nigerian tertiary institutions are not only producing poor quality graduates but also burglars and prostitutes.

Lack of government investment: The government of Nigeria has increased budget for education sector of the country, but still it is considered that the government investment in education sector is low. Furthermore, over 95% of educational budget is spent on salaries and office expenses and lesser amount is left for research and development. Inadequate classroom for learning and examinations constitutes downfall in our education, some students are not comfortable when learning in school. Congestion in the hall during examination gives exam malpractice and with exam malpractice, quack students get access to graduate from school, without that, poor quality graduates will not be found in the labour market because they cannot leave the school until they qualified (Sugito, & Atmojo, 2021).

2.5 Strategies for improving business education professionalism

Business education professionalism can increase morale, improve job satisfaction and even help to attract and retain students. To increase business education professionalism, business education students must understand the expectations. Model the expected behavior to encourage improved attitudes and actions.

Set Professional Parameters: Establish professional expectations throughout all levels of training. Create a formal dress code and describe how students and lecturers should be addressed by phone, email and in person. Add a section to training education student handbook that addresses business education professionalism and cover it during orientation and subsequent student training. Include a category in the performance evaluations that discuss business education professionalism in appearance, attitude and business interactions.

Encourage Respect: Respect, in a professional sense, includes the language and approach used when interacting with others in the workplace. Don't tolerate gossip, interruptions, rude or abusive language or behaviors. Help student problem-solve through mediation and conflict resolution techniques. If a student displays a lack of respect for a lecturer's ideas or work product, or behaves in an inappropriate manner with a student or prospect, counsel that individual and develop a plan of action for improving behaviors.

Role Play: Host training sessions in which you demonstrate professional and unprofessional attitudes, acts and behaviors. Involve student in the process so they have a first-hand look at best practices in the professional arena. Include a question-and-answer session following the role-playing activity to go more in-depth about what transpired. This gives an opportunity to discuss school policy and corporate image.

Invite Student Input: Invite business education students to participate in group brainstorming sessions on how to increase business education professionalism in the workplace. This approach gives students a vested interest in the process and allows them to contribute thoughts, ideas and suggestions. Create an in-house team of volunteers to vet ideas and come back to the group with a plan of action for implementing new approaches.

Explain Impact of Business education professionalism: Provide business education students with feedback about their levels of business education professionalism and explain how different actions help or hurt the school. For example, a sales person who laces conversations with four-letter words makes the school appear unrefined, while a manager who attends a presentation in a t-shirt and jeans can give the business a lazy image. When student understand how their actions impact the business -- and therefore their jobs -- it can change their attitudes.

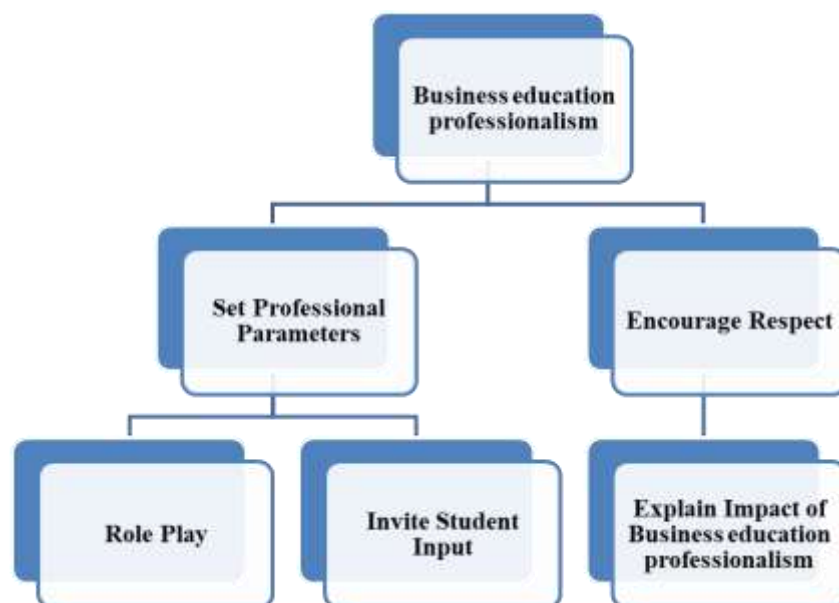


Figure 2. Strategies for improving business education professionalism

III. Results and Discussion

The results showed that value and meaning of work are increasingly defined by professionalism, emphasizing specialization and prescribed performances. Professionalism creates a division between professional and nonprofessional work, with the former being exclusive and valued. Previous studies have shown that personal and professional experience are shaped through upbringing, education, and practical engagements, which allowed gathering of valuable knowledge in relevant fields. Drawing from these experiences, professionals have gained a broad understanding of relevant professional concepts and principles, which can be applied and generalized to various situations (Sari & Lubis, 2022; Kozhevnikov, 2022). Furthermore, occupational safety and branding efforts shape perceptions of merit and ownership, requiring ongoing maintenance (Marbun, 2020; Waluyo, 2022). Therefore, professionalism remains influential even in nonprofessional occupations, shaping worker performance and identity. This focus on professionalism overshadows the actual work, leading to undervaluation and invisibility of nonprofessional work, justifying lower compensation and lack of respect.

The study also highlighted the importance of professionalism in business education. It was shown that a profession is a specialized occupation that requires advanced education and training. In a related study, Znaidi and Sabir (2019) compared advanced education and reported that Education is the main impetus of social orders. Business educators need broad knowledge in various aspects of business and must maintain professionalism to gain recognition and provide quality education. The review showed that professionalism in business education promotes boundaries, personal improvement, duty, accountability, respect, and ownership. Similarly, Carlson (2018) suggested that professionalism establishes appropriate behavior, enhances personal growth, ensures ethical conduct, maintains accountability, fosters respect, and encourages dedication and responsibility. Professionalism contributes to the long-term success of businesses and improves employee performance and relationships.

Quality education was identified as a holistic approach that encompasses the development of students in various dimensions. It focuses on social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive growth, regardless of gender, race, socioeconomic status, or location. It involves healthy learners in supportive environments, child-centered processes facilitated by competent teachers, and outcomes aligned with national education goals. Early stimulation plays a crucial role in brain development and emotional regulation. Quality education was recognized by Flores-Vivar, and García-Peñalvo (2023) as an important goal in sustainable development and incorporates technology while nurturing students' personalities and values.

The study pointed out that business education programs in Nigerian colleges of education face institutional and governmental challenges. Institutional problems include a lack of highly qualified business education professionals, limited industry-academia linkages, insufficient research facilities, heavy workloads for educators, and a lack of standardized performance evaluation. Governmental issues include inadequate investment, politicized curricula, corruption, and inadequate classrooms. These problems contribute to the production of poor quality graduates and hinder the development of the education system (Tanjung, & Daulay, 2019). Promoting business education professionalism involves setting expectations, establishing professional parameters, encouraging respect, role-playing scenarios, inviting student input, and explaining the impact of professionalism. These strategies aim to improve attitudes, behaviors, and interactions, increase morale, job satisfaction, and attract and retain students, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of business education.

IV. Conclusion

Business education is an important type of professional education which aims at preparing managers, competent lecturers and executives for the future. The roots of modern business education in Nigeria can be traced back to the education system introduced by British a century ago. It has passed through different stages of growth in such way that in the beginning of 21st century it has experienced big changes. The present paper concludes that the existing business education system has the abilities and potentials for improvements, yet the system is reluctant to implement changes because of prevalent lethargic behaviour in the market place. There are other impediments like absence of proper reward and appraisal system for school, lack of guidance for school and students, less facilities for research, ever changing educational policies, fewer linkages between industry and academia, corruption, school shortage, etc which doesn't allow the smooth and steady functioning of the business education system in Nigeria.

The business education programme in Nigeria can be improved through taking effective planned initiatives like making a strong link between colleges and allowing nationwide accessibility of education through introduction of diverse programme, training teachers according to existing educational needs, allocating proper budget to research and devising proper mechanism for teachers evaluation and compensation. This should be done by keeping in mind not only the local requirement of business education as well as also keep in mind the international standard about the business education. It is concluded that professionalization in Business Education greatly influence the development of students professional abilities as it concerns teaching and management abilities since Business Education programme encompasses teaching and business activities. Professionalization in Business Education indeed has made or rather equipped the students with professional abilities in areas of teaching and managing business outfits as they were adequately prepared by professional business educators while undergoing training.

Recommendations

- Consequent upon the findings and conclusion arrived at the study recommends that;
- Business educators should adequately prepare and equip her students with sound professional abilities as it concern teaching ability to enable them expertly impart sound Business Education knowledge.
 - Business educators should adequately develop her students management abilities to enable them manage human and material resources in organizations and any other business outfits under their care.
 - Business educators should not deviate from the core abilities in Business Education programme in order to produce competent manpower both in schools as teachers and organizations as managers.
 - Management of universities should endeavour to always hire professionals of Business Education so that they will maintain and uphold Business Education core values and impart appropriately in the students.
 - There should be a strong institutional supervision mechanism to regularly supervise the teaching and learning of business education towards quality assurance.
 - Funding of business education should be improved by school owners and donor agencies to ensure quality of the program.
 - The colleges of education in Nigeria should try to establish partnership with business sector in such way that they should provide a pool of well trained and talented personnel to business sector and in return ask for investment in the colleges. In such way only

business education sector will be provided a source of fund but also strong linkages will be formed between business sector and academia.

- Only qualified and competent business educators should be recruited into the business education programmes to teach in order to avoid half- baked graduates in our country.

One sided lecturer should not be employed as business education is not meant for all comers or interlopers. Since there has been a downward trend in the quality of business education graduates, it suffices to say that the quality of teaching these graduates received while in school is below standard and has reflected in their inability to function effectively in corporate environment. In the light of the above, and the need to produce quality business education graduates authors and researchers through training and retraining of business education lecturers on modern corporate governance practices like transparency and accountability, the legal and regulatory environment, appropriate risk management measures, information flows and the responsibility of senior management and the board of directors. These lecturers can be trained through organisation of seminars, conferences and professional courses in corporate governance. Administrator of business education programme should integrate the study of business ethics courses in the business curriculum.

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