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Introduction

The accomplishment of anything worthwhile in education and other circles depends on the accomplishment of its objectives and aims (Glenn 1). The business economics curriculum provides the blueprint through which students and teachers accomplish their educational goals. In simpler terms, the business economics curriculum provides an educational structure to propel students, administrators and teachers towards a sense of business academic progression.

When analyzed comprehensively, the business economics curriculum provides administrators with a dynamic and comprehensive program to guide the learning activities of existing and prospective students (Glenn 1). On a much broader platform, administrators in colleges and universities have consistently used different educational curricula to attract students (Glenn 1). Teachers have also been observed to use business economic curricula to assess their students' performance and progress in their educational activities.

In fact, for student progression, the curriculum has often been used to evaluate student performance to determine whether a student is fit to progress to a higher educational level or not. This therefore means that in the absence of the business economic curriculum, teachers can never be sure whether they have really imparted the right knowledge for students to move from one level of education to another. The importance of a business economics curriculum however cuts both ways (teachers-students) because students also need the curriculum to determine the academic requirements

of a given course. Without the guidance of the curriculum, students can be confused in a maze of academic courses (which would not lead them towards any given direction). In a deeper sense, in the absence of a business economics curriculum, students cannot even be sure that they are undertaking the right subjects to attain a business degree or diploma. Comprehensively, the business economics curriculum gives a sense of order and structure in the way things are done in the educational setting. The importance of a well articulate business economics curriculum can therefore not be overemphasized.

However, in developing the right business economics curriculum, a number of considerations ought to be factored in. This is important because the development of a holistic curriculum normally goes beyond pooling together a number of academically required business subjects and teaching them to the students (Glenn 1). Factors such as student learning needs, teacher needs, administrator needs, progression in the educational field and community perception ought to be factored into the development of the curriculum. The development of a comprehensive business curriculum therefore implies factoring in the input of educational stakeholders, such that, business students can be able to meet the needs of the general community. Glenn affirms that " A curriculum prepares an individual with the knowledge to be successful, confident and responsible citizens" (5). In light of these considerations, this study seeks to critically analyze the business economics curriculum with the aim of identifying a controversy in the development of the curriculum. However, before this is done, an analysis of who sets the standards of the curriculum, how the curriculum is enforced

and the penalties awarded for breaking curriculum rules will be established. Lastly, this study will provide an ethical dilemma relating to the given curriculum as the last part of the study.

Background Information of Courses in Business Economic Major

Business economics has also been fronted as appropriate for students who want to develop a comprehensive approach to various economic, corporate and legal issues affecting the society. This paves the way for many students who want to become economic or legal consultants to have an easy time in doing so. However, the ability of the business economics curriculum to hone the skills of such future professionals is in question because of its failure to impart analytical skills among students. From this observation, it is essential to note that the curriculum is rather sloppy in encompassing important analytical skills that students need to apply in the practical business environment. Most of the courses or subjects undertaken under the business economics curriculum are normally taught in the most basic ways; meaning that not much detail or knowledge is imparted to the students.

Rather, students gain an abstract understanding of the concepts to be studied. This creates more problems in real-life application of practical business and economic concepts because many students are forced to develop a shallow understanding of core courses so that they can only meet the course's academic requirements. The dynamism of the subjects studied under the business economics major is one area of concern in the development of student analytical skills because only basic and fundamental ideas regarding the various subjects are communicated to the students.

For example, a number of subjects such as finance, marketing, and management are comprehensively taught, but few of them go deeper into explaining the underlying issues behind the basic skills students need to learn in the course. Consequently, many students experience a lot of challenges applying analytical skills in the various subject areas, but more so, many experience insurmountable challenges in gaining the skills in the first place. The business economics curriculum can therefore be equated to surface learning which is based on nothing more than the memorization of concepts to achieve academic requirements. Arbor (10) notes that this learning method is normally based on replication or reproduction among students because students often replicate what they have been taught or have read from books, without reflecting on the meaning and purpose of their learning. Arbor (10) also identifies that students who continuously get exposed to an abstract learning concept are unable to relate their learning experiences with real life experiences and in the same manner, such students will be unable to develop a critical approach to handling various real-life issues that pertains to their area of study. Since much of surface learning is inappropriate for many students, Arbor (11) recommends that learning curriculums should be designed in the context of letting students understand the meaning of the concepts to be studied, and in helping students relate new ideas developed from reading studied materials and relating them to past concepts. He also recommends that curriculums should be centered on helping students to organize the content of their study to help them develop a stronger sense of responsibility for the research they undertake (within the framework of the curriculum).

Curriculum Structure

Normally, business economics curricula provide a number of academics options for students to pursue under the Business Economics major. More comprehensively, the business economics major has been developed by building on existing economic theories and quantitative skills which can be used in comprehending a number of economic issues plaguing the world in the 21st century (Brearley 1). In the curriculum, students are required to take one communication focus course then undertake the upper division communication proficiency course, which contributes 3 points (in its entirety) to the overall course grading system.

The communication focus and writing proficiency courses can be undertaken as part of the CBE or as part of the elective courses to be done under the curriculum (the elective courses are to be deliberated upon between the students and one faculty member).

Curriculum Standards

The business economics curriculum standards are important in ensuring the standards of education are maintained. Basically, the state maintains such standards through a state-developed assessment criterion which ensures high standards of education are maintained throughout the country. Most states across the country ensure schools and universities uphold high curriculum standards (Tienken & Wilson 1). The standards set in the educational curriculum specifically define what the students ought to have learnt at the end of the study and what they ought to have learnt to do by the time they are through with the curriculum. However, states authorities do not mandate specific strategies or pedagogies which are to be used by <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-things-are-done-in-the-educational/>

universities because they don't have such mandate at the local district level (Tienken & Wilson 2).

However, the standards set do not have an assessment criterion to evaluate instructors' ability to carry out an effective assessment on students' performance. This poses a problem because instructors are normally faced with the problem of correctly knowing how to use assessment tools or how to design assessment criteria to evaluate the way students fair in the course of curriculum implementation (Tienken & Wilson 2). More importantly, there is an inherent danger that different instructors use different assessment criteria within their locality; such that, the evaluation criterion used by instructors within a given educational setting differs from another. This creates a lot of inconsistencies in the manner curriculum assessment is done. A good remedy to this problem could be obtained from adopting state test standards, curriculum framework, sample questions, educational research and other educational assessment criteria used in the development of the curriculum, so that an unbiased and comprehensive educational curriculum is developed (as opposed to an unregulated and possibly irregular curriculum evaluation criterion). This is important because a limited understanding on the above educational curriculum parameters may cause a problem on the curriculum design and implementation criteria.

This type of recommendation is in tandem with recommendations advanced by Black and Wiliam (139) who note that educational standards can be extensively improved if the curriculum contents communicated in the classroom setting is altered for the better.

Curriculum Enforcement

It is expected that throughout the implementation of the curriculum, all students must be present. However, no general attendance guidelines are in place to control or monitor student attendance, but instructors generally require all students to be in class when the classes are in session. This requirement is especially emphasized when there ought to be a seminar, or discussion group engagement as part the curriculum study. However, students who continuously fail to show up in class (in an excessive degree) are bound to face a number of academic penalties including cut restrictions. This penalty may be applied in a given course or in a number of them. If a student still persists in absenting himself or herself from classes (without the knowledge of the dean or any other administrative officer), then he or she is liable to be dismissed from the course without any credits. Such recommendations may be made by the instructors, departmental head, or the residential college dean because these officers have the powers to do so (Yale College 3).

If the curriculum is not followed to the latter, academic warnings maybe issued to students to persuade them to provide satisfactory work that meets the expectation of the curriculum and academic requirements in general. Students who fail to pass all the courses which they have been warned against may face expulsion from the academic program (strictly based on academic grounds). These types of warnings may be issued regardless of the number of credits a student may have accumulated in the given semester. Academic warnings are normally issued if a student fails to earn at least two credits in each course within the entire curriculum; if a student gets at least

two fails in any given semester (or in two successive semesters) and if a student has failed at least two courses.

Normally, the academic registrar is supposed to issue students with the necessary warnings when any of the above situations are experienced. This ought to be in written form because comprehensively, it encompasses the academic warning. However, students who fail to meet the above academic requirements still regard themselves as warned, even if such written warnings is not communicated.

Focus on Theories

From the above observations, it is not strange to note that the business economics curriculum is based on mathematical concepts and existing business theories as opposed imparting critical, practical and analytical skills for the students to have a holistic learning experience.

This sort of learning design has created many problems to students who want to cut a mark above the rest in the corporate world because they essentially lack the corporate analytical skills needed in the practical business environment. This fact arises out of the premise that many students have only been exposed to theories and abstract concepts about business and economics. A lot of information about how such theories and concepts need to be applied in the real world therefore lacks among many of the students. This kind of learning approach is potentially dangerous and career-threatening to most students because they are denied the opportunity to develop their thinking skills. Honeyman (5) observes that a lack of practical and analytical skills in the current century may be quite disastrous for many

students because the 21st century (and many more centuries to come) are characterized by increased conflicts; meaning that there is a strong need for students to develop conflict resolution skills, through the development of analytical skills.

With regards to this assertion, Honeyman (7) explains that: “ But if, as I believe, this new knowledge could significantly affect many people’s ability to resolve their disputes in better ways, relying primarily on formal teaching of enrolled students is grossly inefficient. This implies that some twenty years will elapse before those students arrive at positions of authority. By then, they will be operating on theories that have since been significantly developed, or become entirely obsolete”. Research studies done by the Hewlett Theory centre (cited in Honeyman 7) have also reinforced the above assertions by noting that when analyzed in the context of dispute resolution, many solutions developed using theoretical means amounted to impressive results (on paper), but in practical aspects, the solutions developed seemed rather disconnected with the realities of practice. This observation exposes the fragility that students have, in tackling practical issues in the real business and economic context. It therefore comes as no surprise that many students are motivated to cheat in their academic papers, just so they attain the required academic grades because they are motivated by reproducing studied materials to pass given subjects.

Unfortunately, many of them do get away with such academic offences because the business economics curriculum does not have any assessment criteria which evaluate the development of the students’ analytical skills.

Many of the students who complete their degrees through the business

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economics curriculum are therefore released into the job market when they are still raw (with regards to their analytical skills).

Satisfaction Level of Employers about the Analytical Skill of Their Employees

Employers are primarily motivated by the intrigues of the business environment.

This ultimately defines their employee expectations because they need personnel who can be of value to the underpinnings of the business environment. When deeply analyzed, the business environment has been more complex and volatile than in previous times, and in this regard, many employers nowadays look for people who can work best in this type of environment, and more importantly, those who can provide real life solutions to problems evidenced in the turbulent business environment. Analytical skills become one of the most desired skills among employers. The failure of the business economics curriculum to impart proper analytical skills among students therefore does a lot of injustice to the students because a majority of them fail to meet the employee threshold expected of professionals by today's employers. This potentially reduces their marketability in the job market and therefore, many students are likely to experience high levels of unemployment. In fact, in today's global environment, many employees would rather outsource employees from more appropriate sources around the globe than to employ people who are not as competitive as they should be. In relation to this observation, Electric Club (95) notes that many employees today are after people who have a high attention to detail.

In other words, he exposes the fact that many employers are after people who can effectively handle logistics and those who can effectively carry out and plan an event (among other duties that require a strong command of analytical skills). The business economics curriculum therefore fails to prepare students for such kind of job market underpinnings.

Ethical Considerations

The business economics curriculum has done a lot to empower students develop a comprehensive business foresight to deal with most global corporate and economic problems.

This comes from the fact that the curriculum relies a lot on economic theories and mathematical skills which to a great extent represents the theoretical part of business economics studies. The biggest problem observed in the curriculum is that through the great reliance on economic theories and mathematical approaches, students have not developed comprehensive analytical skills required in the business environment. A lack of analytical skills has consistently caused students to lack important corporate skills such as the lack of visualization, analytical, articulate and simple problem solving skills that can be used to remedy problems (which require the use of simple pieces of information regarding a given issue) (Hancock 8).

Moreover, students have been hindered from developing logical thought observed through designing and testing solutions that can be applied to solve a given business or economic problem. The importance of analytical skills in the real business environment cannot therefore be overemphasized

because the world has become very demanding and more firms nowadays require professionals who can formulate and design various solutions to given business problems. For example, a business requiring a marketing manager needs a candidate who can keenly scrutinize a given piece of advertisement and identify any existent inconsistencies requiring correction.

A failure of the business economic curriculum to accommodate these analytical skills, to a large extent characterizes the immense condemnation surrounding the business economic curriculum. However, the biggest loser in using an ineffective curriculum is the students themselves because they fail to achieve high levels of marketability which consequently causes a number of them to be unemployed or receive poor pay in the long-run. This fact can be evidenced through the growing trend among most businesses to include an analytical section in interviews that expects candidates to identify a problem within a given business context and provide possible solutions to solve it (Noddings 54). Candidates who fail to meet this evaluation criterion are normally disqualified from further evaluation because their value to a given company is minimized through the lack of analytical skills.

The use of an ineffective business curriculum also affects businesses because they are faced with an eminent lack of analytic professionals who cannot come up with viable solutions to keep up with the changing nature of business and economic problems. In coming up with a long-term solution to solve the failures of the business economics curriculum, it is important for the university to include certain important learning areas in the educational curriculum that will ensure students develop the right analytical skills in the business environment. Firstly, it is important for some of the courses to be <https://assignbuster.com/introduction-things-are-done-in-the-educational/>

designed around enabling students develop the ability to question. The ability to question specifically revolves around developing the student's ability to ask the right type of questions, and more deeply, how the questions ought to be asked. This will be the first step towards enabling students develop analytical skills.

Secondly, the curriculum should enable critiquing and reviewing exercises where students critique the work of other students and ask questions that will help improve their work. For example, the curriculum can include areas where students read a given text, ask questions and later develop their own independent opinions about the given study. In developing a more articulate critiquing exercise, the curriculum should provide a breakdown of the critique exercise; possibly into a number of steps. Thirdly, the curriculum should provide students with necessary skills in problem solving which ultimately develops their ability to be critical thinkers.

In honing this skill, the curriculum should include a lot of exercises where problematic areas are included in various courses so that students can employ tactful thinking in solving them. Fourthly, the curriculum should be developed in a manner that enables the writer become a reflective learner. In defining what students ought to learn as part of this skill, How To affirms that " Reflective thought involves the ability to acquire facts, understand ideas and arguments, apply methodological principles, analyze and evaluate information and ultimately produce conclusions. This includes the ability to question and solve problems by linking previous ideas, knowledge and experiences with present knowledge ideas and experiences" (12).

The educational curriculum should therefore be designed along these lines but How To (15) notes that its results should be expected over time. These recommendations are likely to improve the business economics curriculum.

Conclusion

This study identifies that the business economics curriculum has a number of strengths and weaknesses. Its strengths come from the fact that it observes strict adherence to guidelines because there are stiff penalties and implementation standards that are upheld by the departmental officers and the state educational department. The fact that the curriculum was developed in consideration of the state's curriculum development guidelines also poses another advantage to the appropriateness of the curriculum in imparting knowledge to students. However, In terms of enabling students develop the right analytical skills needed in today's business world; the business economic curriculum leaves a lot to be desired. In this regard, the business economics curriculum does not effectively prepare students to deal with real life practicalities in the business and economics environment.

Attention is hereby made on the lack of the curriculum to effectively impart analytical skills to the students. In this regard, this study proposes that the curriculum should include courses which are designed to impart analytical skills to the students. Most importantly, the curriculum fails to include programs or courses that empower students to develop strong analytical skills including the ability to question; the ability to become a reflective learner; the ability to solve problems and the ability to critique and review existing problems. These issues abound, this study proposes that these factors be included in the curriculum because collectively, they define proper

analytical skills needed in the business world. Honing these skills will also enable students deal with existing dynamics in the business and social context. Comprehensively, these dynamics define the business economics curriculum.

Works Cited

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