



Preparing Students to Acquire Employable Skills for the Job Market: Perceptions of Teachers and Students about the Effectiveness of the Senior High School Business Management Curriculum

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Abstract

The paper assessed the perceptions of teachers and students with regard to the effectiveness of the Business Management curriculum in Senior High School (SHS) in Ghana. The cross-sectional survey design was employed for the study where the views of 351 students and 30 teachers were sought concerning the potential of the current business management curriculum in preparing students to acquire employable skills. Students and teachers from ten (10) public senior high schools in the Kumasi Metropolis were involved in the study. The ten (10) schools comprised three (3) male SHS, three (3) female SHS and four (4) co-educational (mixed) SHS. A multi-stage sampling procedure and a census technique were used to select respondents who were involved in the study. Questionnaire was the main instrument that was used to collect data. There were two sets of questionnaires (questionnaire for teachers and questionnaire for students). Meanwhile, standard deviation and percentages were the statistical tools that were used for the analysis of data. It emerged from the results that interest in the course, perceived job opportunities in the subject, good mathematics background and perceived ease of subject matter were among the factors that influence students' decision to choose business as a programme of study in SHS. The study also revealed both teachers and students disagreed with the fact that the nature and content of business management course equipped students with knowledge and skills of dealing with problems in the community in which they would be expected to work after school. The study therefore recommends that stakeholders in edu-

cation (such as the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service) should consider making huge investments in business education programmes to enable proper training of business students to acquire the needed skills and competencies to create more jobs which will help in reducing the rate of unemployment in Ghana. Furthermore, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) which is responsible to develop and review school curriculum should consider the review of the business management curriculum to tailor the content to meet employment requirements in the country.

Subject Areas

Education Administration, Educational Technology, Higher Education, Teaching and Learning Technologies

Keywords

Business Management, Employable Skills, Perception of Students and Teacher, Senior High School

1. Introduction

Business, as a course of study, is practical in nature and a fast-changing discipline. It is something people do, and how it is done today is a result of a long history of marginal changes. It is also a response to new commercial and legal developments over the centuries with the most rapid progress in the last few years. Business Education in the Secondary School has become an integral part of the whole process of general education. Business Education is both vocational and social in nature (Crews & Dickerson, 1977) [1]. Scott and Sarkees-Wircenski (1996), also assert that business education is vocational in nature. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, also known as the Vocational Act of 1917, defines vocational education as “any programme designed to fit individuals for gainful employment in business and office occupations” (Scott & Sarkees-Wircenski, 1996, p. 122) [2].

The Ontario Curriculum (2006) [3] also affirmed that Business Education is vocational in nature. The Ontario Curriculum further explains that courses in Business Studies prepare students for employment in diverse areas such as retailing, management, small business and professional career. Thus, Business Education is a key factor that is importantly provided for exploratory courses at the secondary school and career guidance, which helps students imagine opportunities available to them in the world of work. For many years, Business Education has been defined as the course at the secondary level that prepares students for business world. The advent of Business Education in America occurred when the Plymouth Colony hired a school teacher to teach reading, writing, and casting of accounts. Signs of early school-to-work initiatives were evident as students who wanted commerce or business career left school to work as an apprentice. Bookkeeping was the earliest business course taught in public schools, being of-

ferred in Boston in 1709, in New York City in 1731, and in Philadelphia in 1733 (Nanassy, Malsbary & Tonner, 1977) [4].

The primary mission of Business Education Curriculum is to provide instruction for and about business (Lambrecht, 2002) [5]. In the past, courses such as Accounting, Data Processing, Economics, Shorthand, Typing, Basic Business, Business Law, Business Math, Office Procedures and Business Communication were taught as a part of the Business Education Curriculum. Many of these courses continue to be taught, but the content and technology aspects have changed drastically. Common Business Educational courses now include Computerized Accounting, Business Management, Business Law, Economics, Entrepreneurship, International Business, and many others. Today, a much more integrated approach is taken to ensure business skills at many levels throughout the curriculum. The emphasis is on development of concepts, attitudes and appreciation of business. According to O'Kelley (2000) [6], there are two major objectives of Business Education. One is to prepare students for immediate jobs through courses like Accounting, Typing, and Business Management, which will enable them to become aware of the fundamental business and clerical work at higher levels. Another objective is to make students intelligent users of the services of business by acquainting them with fundamental principles. Since the world is constantly changing, our schools should adjust to meet those needs and this can be attained through quality education.

The fundamental purpose of the Business Management Programme is to provide students with knowledge, skills and attitudes to achieve success in high school, workplace, post-secondary education or training, and daily life (Lambrecht, 2002) [5]. Business Management programme in Ghanaian SHS curriculum is designed to enable students:

- 1) recognize the main functional areas of Business Management.
- 2) acquire basic principles and techniques for managing a profitable business enterprise.
- 3) develop skills for solving business problems and minimizing business risks.
- 4) acquire the capability for developing a sound financial basis for business.
- 5) develop appropriate attitudes and the necessary ethics for modern business.
- 6) develop the capability for generating ideas for the creation of new business.
- 7) develop an interest in business as a career option.

The objectives are in line with the general business studies goal in a global sense (MoE, 2008) [7].

Second cycle institutions all over the world are expected to serve as agents of change. They are expected to diagnose national or societal needs and problems, and fashion out solutions to them. They are, therefore, expected to be capable of changing their methods of learning to reflect the changing problems, needs and aspirations of the nation in which they find themselves. Where they are unable to quickly respond to the needs and aspirations of the nation, they face crises of relevance at that point. Since society changes, the Business Management Curriculum should be responsive to it. A curriculum that does not embody the

process of a continuous search for change is bound to become irrelevant, out-moded, and therefore of little use (Oliva, 1992) [8].

The main rationale of Business Management programme in Ghanaian SHS curriculum is to educate students who can manage the scarce resources of the economy effectively and efficiently. A healthy economy and an improved standard of living depend on efficient and purposeful management of resources for the production of goods and services. Without an efficient management system, no organization can achieve any meaningful growth to be able to contribute financially and socially to its owner(s), staff and the nation in general (MoE, 2008) [7]. One of the major goals of Ghana's economic development is to improve the management capability towards the improvement of the standard of living of its people. Business Management programme intends to acquaint students with knowledge of principles and procedures in business, and skills that are necessary for a successful business career (MoE, 2008) [7].

Notwithstanding the aforementioned importance of Business Management programme in the Ghanaian SHS, there is a public outcry that the quality of secondary education has been sacrificed for quantity. By implication, it is being suggested that the products of secondary school education nowadays do not meet the performance expectations of the tertiary institutions and employers. Bedford (2000) [9] opined that, "some second cycle institutions resemble old-fashioned factories turning out a standard, out-of-date, product-people with skills but no originality, with an ability to remember and repeat rather than to reflect and create, parrots more than true professionals" (p. 95). The elements of urgency and relevance of the outputs of second cycle institutions are still a missing link in the content organization, as well as the delivery process and evaluation procedures within the curriculum. Generally, it appears there is a decline in enrollment of students into Business Education programmes in Senior High Schools in Ghana over the past two decades. A number of factors can be attributed to the reduction of enrollment in Business Education programmes. Could it be that the Business Education curriculum does not adequately prepare students for future prospects? The study therefore sought to conduct a review of the SHS Business Management programme in Ghana to ascertain its effectiveness in preparing students to possess employable skills for future endeavours.

2. Conceptual Framework

The study was informed by the Stufflebeam (1987) [10] CIPP model for evaluating curriculum. The mnemonics (CIPP) in Stufflebeam model refers to Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP). Evaluation as decision making concerns itself with providing information to aid decision making in respect of curriculum planning, design and implementation. Thus, the central concern of this approach is on identifying and meeting the informational needs of managerial decision makers (Worthen & Sanders, 1987) [11]. Lewy as cited in Adentwi (2005) [12] was of the view that the assumption underlying this approach is the belief

that evaluation is worthwhile only if its results affect future action. Decision making evaluation supports evaluation of every component of an educational programme as it operates, grows or changes. It stresses the timely use of feedback information by decision makers. The rationale for the decision making evaluation is that, evaluation of information is an essential part of good decision making.

According to the CIPP evaluation checklist (Stufflebeam, 2007) [13], these four parts of an evaluation respectively ask: What needs to be done? How should it be done? Is it being done? Did it succeed? In the evaluation checklist, the “Did it succeed?” or product evaluation is divided into impact, effectiveness, sustainability and transportability. These four product evaluation sub-parts ask the following questions. 1) Were the right beneficiaries reached? 2) Were their needs met? 3) Were the gains for the beneficiaries sustained? 4) Did the processes that produced the gains prove transportable and adaptable for effective use in other settings? The CIPP model’s main theme is that evaluation’s most important purpose is not to prove but to improve (Stufflebeam, 2007) [13]. According to the American Evaluation Association (2004) [14], the concept of evaluation underlying the CIPP model is that evaluation should assess and report an entity’s merit (*i.e.* its quality), worth (in meeting the needs of targeted beneficiaries), probity (its integrity, honesty and freedom from graft, fraud and abuse) and significance (its importance beyond the entity’s setting or time frame) and should present lesson learned.

The CIPP model is based on a definition of evaluation as, “the process of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives” (Gardner, 2010: p. 580) [15]. University of California at Los Angeles cited in Gardner (2010) [15] also defined evaluation as “the process of ascertaining the areas of concern, selecting appropriate information, collecting and analyzing information in order to report summary data useful to decision-makers in selecting among alternatives” (p. 580). Thus, the CIPP model provides a systematic way of looking at many different aspects of the curriculum a guide for learning which integrates the philosophy and orientation of a training programme, expected learning outcomes, key content, methodology and evaluation for the teaching and learning process (Stufflebeam, 2007) [13].

The essence of the CIPP model is an institutionalized feedback mechanism which provides for a continuous assessment of decision-information needs and the obtaining and providing of information to meet those needs. According to Gardner (2010) [15] four of the basic assumptions underlying the CIPP model have been stated by Stufflebeam as follows:

- 1) Evaluation is performed in the service of decision making, hence, it should provide information which is useful to decision makers.
- 2) Evaluation is cyclic, continuing process and, therefore, must be implemented through systematic programme.
- 3) Evaluation process includes three main steps of delineating, obtaining and providing. These steps provide the basis for a methodology of evaluation.

4) Delineating and providing steps in evaluation process are interface activities requiring collaboration between the evaluator and decision making, while the obtaining step is largely a technical activity which is executed mainly by the evaluator.

Another basic concept underlying the CIPP model is that different types of decisions require different types of information input. The four main components of the CIPP model as depicted in **Figure 1** below.

2.1. Context Evaluation

Is an evaluation of the extent to which the goals and objectives of the programme match the assessed needs of the court and assist decision makers in the determination of objectives. Stufflebeam (1987) [10] asserts that in context evaluation the conditions under which the programme began are evaluated for the purpose of planning programmes. Some of the issues that the context evaluation focused on include; the relation of the course to other courses, adequacy of time, the need for the course and the course relevance to job needs among others. Business management as a subject has relations with subjects like Economics, Cost Accounting and this enables transfer of learning on the part of students. On the need for the course, a healthy economy depends on the efficient and purposeful management of resources for the production of goods and services. Thus, the courses in Business Management develop a Business Management culture in students, which is vital for promoting economic growth and help to manage scarce resources efficiently and effectively (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2008) [7]. According to Ontario Curriculum (2006) [3], on the issue of the course relevance to job needs, students acquire skills and knowledge on personal management, interpersonal skills and career development in Business Management which prepare students for success in their working life. Further, Business Management prepares student for employment in areas such as retailing, management, small business, government service and professional career.

2.2. Input Evaluation

Stufflebeam (1987) [10] explain input evaluation as an evaluation of the extent to which the activities, strategies and procedures of the programme support the established goals and objectives and clarify decisions regarding the different ways resources might be used to achieve project goals. Stufflebeam further state that input evaluation provides information for administrators to structure the resources in place and what plan seems to facilitate the design of the programme.

2.3. Process Evaluation

Is an evaluation of how the programme is implemented and carried out and provides periodic feedback to the persons responsible for decision during implementation. Stufflebeam (1987) [10] is of the view that, process evaluation helps implementers and administrators to make decision on the implementation

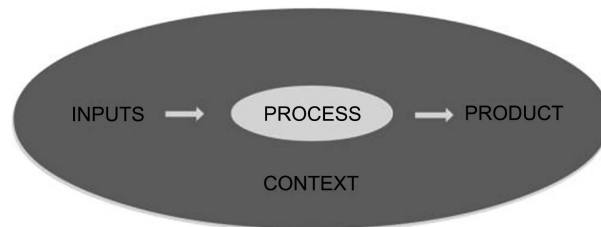


Figure 1. Components of CIPP model.

of programmes by evaluating the events which occur during the operation of a programme to determine how well the plan is being implemented, what barriers are there, ascertain its success and what revisions are needed.

2.4. Product Evaluation

Is an evaluation of the impact and outcomes of the programme for the purpose of assessing and interpreting project attainments, whether at the end of a project cycle or at intermediate points through its life, as they relate to decisions regarding whether the activity should be continued, modified, terminated or repeated. The purpose of product evaluation is to measure, interpret, and judge the extent to which programme improvement efforts have achieved their short-term and long-term goals. A product evaluation also examines both the intended and unintended consequences of improvement efforts (Stufflebeam, 1987) [10].

2.5. Impact Evaluation

Assesses a programme's reach to the target audience.

2.6. Effectiveness Evaluation

Assesses the quality and significance of outcomes.

2.7. Sustainability Evaluation

Assesses the extent to which a programme's contributions are institutionalized successfully and continued overtime.

2.8. Transportability Evaluation

Assesses the extent to which a programme has (or could be) successfully adapted and applied elsewhere.

As many international co-operation embark on educational projects across the world, evaluation has become very crucial especially for the purpose of planning and improving projects and for ensuring accountability to win the support and understanding of the public to realize more effective and efficient co-operation. For example, Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) advocate for an evaluation mode on five criteria,

2.8.1. Relevance

Verify whether programme objective matches the development policy and the needs of recipient.

2.8.2. Effectiveness

Verify the relationship between the degree of achievement of purpose and output.

2.8.3. Efficiency

Verify the productivity of input and output in measuring how the input turned into output.

2.8.4. Impact

Verify the effect either positive or negative of implementing the project. It may also be either intentional or unintentional.

2.8.5. Sustainability

Verify whether the benefit of the project will be sustained for a long period of time after the co-operation ends (World Bank, 1995) [16].

Stufflebeam (1987) [10] opined that, process evaluation serves as recycling decisions by evaluating the results or outcomes of a programme to determine what results are obtained, how well needs are addressed and what should be done after the programme has run its course. Finch and Crunkilton (1993) [17] contend that in order to achieve effectiveness or efficiency of a course of study or programme, evaluation has to be conducted on all the four elements as stated by Stufflebeam CIPP model. Finch *et al.* (1993) [17] claim that evaluation should start from the programme initiative through the follow-up stage and should therefore form part of a course or programme. The study is guided by the importance of using an evaluation model that takes into account the objectives of programme and at the same time information that will guide administrators and stakeholders in taking rational decisions about improving the implementation of the Business Management programme.

3. Method and Data Analysis

The cross-sectional survey design was considered appropriate for the study. According to Ampiah (2004) [18], choosing one method or the other for research work should be guided by two main questions. “What kinds of information are relevant?” and “What kinds of methods are relevant for the particular topic under investigation?” (p. 82). The cross-sectional research design is a type of descriptive survey that allows information to be collected from a predetermined population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000) [19]. Johnson and Christensen (2008) [20] also explain that “in cross-sectional research, data are collected from the research participants at a single point in time or during a single, relatively brief time period” (p. 373). The major advantage of cross-sectional survey according to Johnson and Christensen (2008) [20] is that data can be collected on many

different kinds of people in relatively short period of time. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) [19] added that cross-sectional survey has the potential of providing a lot of useful information from the subjects of study.

Mitchell and Jolley (2004) [21] also affirmed that cross-sectional survey is more economical because it makes it possible for many subjects to be studied at the same time. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2004) [22], a cross-sectional survey produces snapshots of population at a particular point in time and the description of the population is inferred from what is found in the sample. Nworgu (2006) [23] also noted that cross-sectional survey makes it possible for many subjects to be studied at a time. The decision to employ the cross-sectional survey for this study was informed by the fact that it was deemed appropriate in ascertaining the effectiveness of the Business Management Curriculum in SHS.

The population of the study comprised of SHS Business Management teachers and students within the Kumasi metropolis. Specifically, students and teachers from ten (10) public Senior High Schools in the Kumasi Metropolis were involved in the study. The ten (10) schools comprised three (3) male SHS, three (3) female SHS and four (4) co-educational (mixed) SHS. The sample size of teachers and students who were involved in the study comprised 30 Business Management teachers and 351 students in the selected Senior High Schools.

On the issue of sample size, Osuala (1982) [24] opines that the nature of the population, type of sampling design and the degree of precision the researcher wants need to be considered before determining the appropriate size. Cohen *et al.*, (2004) [22] also affirmed that “there is no clear cut answer, for the correct sample size depends on the purpose of the study and the nature of the population under scrutiny” (p. 93). The justification of the sample size used in the study was informed by Krejcie and Morgan cited in Cohen *et al.*, (2004) [22]. Krejcie and Morgan (as cited in Cohen *et al.* 2004) [25] observed that if the population size is 3500 then the appropriate sample size should be 346. In this study, the total number of students from the ten (10) SHS was 3498 and therefore we approximated the population to 3500 which gave an appropriate sample size of students to be 351. Out of 351 students 212 (60.4%) were males whereas 139 (39.6%) were females.

A multi-stage sampling procedure and a census technique were used. The Business Management students and teachers were selected from schools that were willing to be involved in the study. In using this technique, first, a list of schools from the Kumasi Metropolitan Office of the Ghana Education Service was obtained. From the list, schools which offer Business Management as a programme of study were selected. The next stage involved clustering of Senior High Schools in the Kumasi Metropolis into male, female and mixed schools. The sample frame or list of the students in each of the school was obtained from Kumasi Metropolis Education Directorate. The students were further clustered into males and females in each school and this was done to ensure gender representativeness. On the part of teachers, all of them were used for the study be-

cause of their relatively small number.

Questionnaire was the main instrument that was used to collect data to answer the two research questions: 1) *what informed students choice of business management as a programme of study in senior high school?* 2) *what are the perceived effectiveness of the business management curriculum in preparing students for employable skills?* There were two sets of questionnaires (questionnaire for teachers and questionnaire for students). The questionnaire was made up of both open-ended and close-ended questions with five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for Strongly Agree, 2 for Agree, 3 for Uncertain, 4 for Disagree and 5 for Strongly Disagree. The questionnaires were self-designed and therefore were given to experts in the field to determine their validity after which they were pilot-tested using a total sample of 90 students and 6 teachers in three SHS (Toase Senior High, Nkwawie Senior High and Technical School and Mpasietia Senior High and Technical School) in the Nkwawie District in the Ashanti Region. Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.72 and 0.65 were obtained for students and teachers respectively and were considered to be appropriate for the study (Ampiah, 2004 [18]; Cohen *et al.*, 2004 [22]). The data gathered from the study were analyzed based on the research question that was formulated to guide the study. The returned questionnaires were sorted, categorized and coded with the assistance of Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS). Mean, standard deviation, and percentages were the statistical tools that were used for that analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Students' Reasons for Choosing Business as a Course of Study

The first question that needed to be answered in the study was what influence students in their selection of business as a programme of study in SHS. In order to address the question, the responses for choosing business as a course of study were put into the following categories: *I am interested, it is my aim or ambition, it is easy, my background (good in related subjects) and job prospects*. It emerged that the main reason why students selected business as a course of study was that, they had good background in other business-related subjects (like Accounting, Costing among others). Thus, 25% of the students stated that they were good in other business-related subjects. Further, 20.1% of the students indicated that the course is easy. Furthermore, 20% of the students stated that they selected business as a course of study because of the job prospects associated with it. Additionally, 18% and 17% of the students specified that it was their area of interest and their aim or ambition respectively. **Figure 2** below presents the responses of students as they indicated their reasons for the selection of business as a programme of study.

4.2. Perceived Effectiveness of the Business Management Curriculum in Preparing Students for Employable Skills

The second research question sought to seek the views of both students and

teachers on the nature of business management curriculum at the senior high school with regard to its potential of preparing students for employable skills. Both students and teachers indicated the extent to which they agree to some general views on the nature of business management. **Table 1** below presents students' view on the nature of business management curriculum. It can be observed from **Table 1** that, the statement: the course teaches students to understand clearly the challenges of real-world situation had a mean of 2.5. Whereas 50.1% of the students agreed to the above statement, 27.9% were uncertain; however, 22.0% disagreed to it. On the statement the course broadens the scope of students and makes them understand issues relating to business profession, the majority 85.2% with a (mean of 1.9) of the students agreed to the statement. Moreover, as 64.4% of the students indicated that the course exposes students to the challenges of real-world situation, 22.8% disagreed, whereas 12.8% were uncertain with a mean of 2.4.

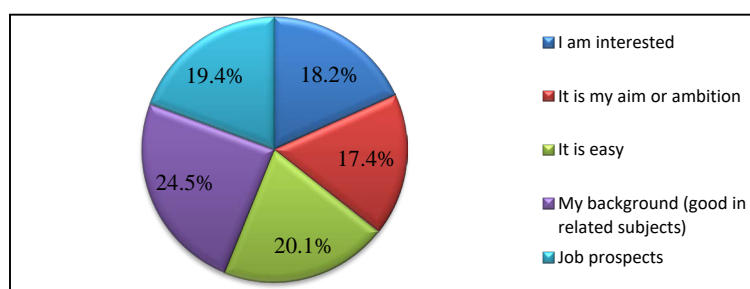


Figure 2. Students' reasons for choosing business as a course of study.

Table 1. Students' view on the nature of business management (N = 351).

| Statement | SA % | A % | U % | D % | SD % | Mean* | Std. dev. |
|---|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------|--------------|
| The course teaches students to understand clearly the challenges of real-world situation. | 29.6 | 20.5 | 27.9 | 11.7 | 10.3 | 2.5 | 1.3 |
| The course helps students to acquire the basic knowledge in business management. | 48.4 | 21.9 | 20.2 | 4.3 | 5.1 | 1.9 | 1.1 |
| The course develops in students' positive attitudes towards the management profession. | 49.6 | 25.4 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 9.7 | 2.0 | 1.3 |
| The course exposes students to the challenges of real-world situation. | 25.1 | 39.3 | 12.8 | 14.8 | 8.0 | 2.4 | 1.2 |
| The course broadens the scope of students and makes them understand issues relating to business profession. | 38.2 | 47.0 | 6.0 | 1.1 | 7.7 | 1.9 | 1.1 |
| The course produces competent students who can handle or manage scarce resources of the society. | 43.3 | 35.6 | 8.8 | 2.3 | 10.0 | 2.0 | 1.2 |
| The course equips students with knowledge and skills of dealing with problems in the community in which they will be working. | 39.3 | 28.2 | 7.4 | 13.7 | 11.4 | 2.3 | 1.4 |

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Uncertain, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree. *Scale (Mean): 1 - 1.9 = Strongly Agree; 2.0 - 2.9 = Agree; 3.0 - 3.9 = Uncertain; 4.0 - 4.9 = Disagree; 5.0 = Strongly Disagree.

It can be deduced from **Table 1** that majority of students 75% agreed to the statement that the course develops in student's positive attitudes towards the management profession. However, the students were hesitant about the statement the course equips students with knowledge and skills of dealing with problems in the community in which they will be working as 67.5% agreed, 25.1% disagreed with 7.4% uncertain. Even though students agree that the course helps students to acquire the basic knowledge in business management 70.3%, they refuted the assertion that, the course exposes students to the challenges of real-world situation 22.8%. Moreover, about 78.9% indicated that the course produces competent students who can handle or manage scarce resources of the society.

Similarly, teachers' views were sought concerning the nature of business management and the views of 30 teachers who responded to the questionnaires administered are presented in **Table 2**. The evidence from **Table 2** indicates that teachers who participated in the study suggested that proper course organization should be done. This was in line with the opinion of Oliva (1992) [8] that a curriculum which does not embody a continuous search for change is bound to become irrelevant, outmoded and of little use. This implies that there is the need for business management curriculum to be responsive to the changes in the contemporary world. This assertion was made based on the analysis of the perceptions of the teachers about the nature of business management.

Table 2. Teachers' perception on the nature of business management (N = 30).

| Statement | SA % | A % | U % | D % | SD % | Mean* | Std. dev. |
|---|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------|--------------|
| The course teaches students to understand clearly the challenges of real-world situation. | 16.7 | 36.7 | 20.0 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 2.7 | 1.3 |
| The course helps students to acquire the basic knowledge in business management. | 10.0 | 23.3 | 30. | 26.7 | 10. | 3.0 | 1.2 |
| The course develops in students' positive attitudes towards the management profession. | 20.0 | 40.0 | 13.3 | 13.3 | 13.4 | 2.6 | 1.5 |
| The course exposes students to the challenges of real-world situation. | 10.0 | 6.7 | 13.3 | 36.7 | 33.3 | 2.9 | 1.3 |
| The course broadens the scope of students and makes them understand issues relating to business profession. | 13.3 | 13.3 | 26.7 | 20 | 26.7 | 3.3 | 1.4 |
| The course produces competent students who can handle or manage scarce resources of the society. | 10.0 | 30.0 | 20.0 | 23.3 | 16.7 | 3.8 | 1.3 |
| The course equips students with knowledge and skills of dealing with problems in the community in which they will be working. | 16.7 | 13.3 | 26.7 | 16.7 | 26.7 | 2.6 | 1.5 |

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Uncertain, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree. *Scale (Mean): 1 - 1.9 = Strongly Agree; 2.0 - 2.9 = Agree; 3.0 - 3.9 = Uncertain; 4.0 - 4.9 = Disagree; 5.0 = Strongly Disagree.

For instance, on the statement: the course helps students to acquire the basic knowledge in business management had a mean of 3.0; whereas 36.7% of the teachers disagreed to the statement 33.3% of the teachers on the other hand agreed to it. Again, 40% of the teachers agreed and disagreed respectively to the statement: the course produces competent students who can handle or manage scarce resources of the society and this resulted in a high mean of 3.8. Furthermore, 43.4% of teachers disagreed to the statement that, the course equips students with knowledge and skills of dealing with problems in the communities in which they are expected to work after school. In all, an average mean of 2.6 was recorded with 30.0% of the teachers agreeing to the above statement. Finally, **Table 2** revealed that, the teachers again disagreed that the course broadens the scope of students and makes them understand issues relating to business profession. This is because that statement had an average mean of 3.3 with 46.7% of the teachers who disagreed to the statement whilst 26% agreed to it as 20% were uncertain.

Teachers and students were further asked to express their views about the content of the business management syllabus. The results from the data collected indicate general perception among students and teachers that business management unlike accounting and other business-related subjects is difficult. **Table 3** shows business management students' perception on the content of the business management syllabus. It can be seen from **Table 3** that majority of students 81.5% of the students indicated that the course shapes students' perceptions of the profession, the aptitudes and skills needed for successful careers in management with a low mean of 1.9. Whereas 57.2% of the students agreed to the statement that "some aspects of business management curriculum are very important than others," 61.0% of the students stated that they were offering the programme because of the prestige attached to the profession. On the statement, business management have positive impact on the students; 78.1% of the students agreed to it, whereas 8.6% of the students disagreed with a mean of 1.9. Again, 49.0% of the students agreed to the statement that "I am offering this programme because of the job prospects" but 24.2% of the students disagreed to the statement resulting in a mean of 2.6.

Table 4 also shows teachers perception of the content of the business management syllabus. It can be observed from **Table 4** that as 40% of the teachers agree to the statement: "some aspects of business management curriculum are very important than others," 40% of the teachers disagree, whereas 20% of the teachers were uncertain; the above statement had an average mean of 3.1. Even though 40% of the teachers agree to the statement that business management reflects the current trends that are accepted in the business world, 50% of the teachers disagree, whereas 10% of the teachers were uncertain with an average mean of 3.2. Moreover, 46.7% of the teachers affirmed to the statement: "the course shapes students' perceptions of the profession, the aptitudes and skills needed for successful careers in management" however, 50% of the teachers refuted the statement.

Table 3. Students' perception about the content of business management syllabus.

| Statement | SA % | A % | U % | D % | SD % | Mean* | Std. dev. |
|--|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------|-----------|
| Some aspects of business management curriculum are very important than others. | 18.5 | 38.7 | 18.8 | 6.6 | 17.4 | 2.7 | 1.3 |
| Students possess good managerial skills when they graduate. | 38.2 | 28.8 | 16.5 | 6.6 | 9.9 | 2.2 | 1.3 |
| The course shapes students' perceptions of the profession, the aptitudes and skills needed for successful careers in management. | 42.5 | 39.0 | 9.1 | 2.0 | 7.4 | 1.9 | 1.1 |
| Business management has positive impact on the students. | 43.9 | 34.2 | 13.4 | 0.9 | 7.7 | 1.9 | 1.1 |
| The course shapes students' perceptions of the profession, the aptitudes and skills needed for successful careers in management. | 42.5 | 39.0 | 9.1 | 2.0 | 7.4 | 1.9 | 1.1 |
| I am offering this programme because of the job prospects. | 22.8 | 26.2 | 26.8 | 12.5 | 11.7 | 2.6 | 1.3 |
| I am offering this programme because of the personal interest I have in the subject matter | 27.4 | 27.9 | 10.5 | 21.9 | 12.3 | 2.6 | 1.4 |
| I am offering this programme because the subject matter is easy | 14.5 | 33.6 | 12.0 | 18.8 | 21.1 | 3.0 | 1.4 |
| I am offering this programme because of the prestige attached to the profession. | 33.1 | 27.9 | 24.8 | 10.8 | 5.4 | 2.3 | 1.2 |

Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Uncertain, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree. *Scale (Mean): 1 - 1.9 = Strongly Agree; 2.0 - 2.9 = Agree; 3.0 - 3.9 = Uncertain; 4.0 - 4.9 = Disagree; 5.0 = Strongly Disagree.

Table 4. Teachers' perception about the content of the business management syllabus (N = 351).

| Statement | SA % | A % | U % | D % | SD % | Mean* | Std. dev. |
|--|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|-------|-----------|
| Some aspects of business management curriculum are very important than others. | 10.0 | 30.0 | 20.0 | 23.3 | 16.7 | 3.1 | 1.3 |
| Students possess good managerial skills when they graduate. | 23.3 | 33.3 | 16.7 | 10.0 | 16.7 | 2.6 | 1.4 |
| The course shapes students' perceptions of the profession, the aptitudes and skills needed for successful careers in management. | 26.7 | 20.0 | 3.3 | 20.0 | 30.0 | 3.1 | 1.7 |
| Topics in the business management syllabus are insufficient. | 13.3 | 40.0 | 13.3 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 2.8 | 1.3 |
| Business management reflects the current trends that are accepted in the business world | 13.3 | 26.7 | 10.0 | 23.3 | 26.7 | 3.2 | 1.5 |

Note: SA = strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Uncertain, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree. *Scale (Mean): 1 - 1.9 = Strongly Agree; 2.0 - 2.9 = Agree; 3.0 - 3.9 = Uncertain; 4.0 - 4.9 = Disagree; 5.0 = Strongly Disagree.

5. Discussions

The focus of the study was to assess the perception of both teachers and students concerning the effectiveness of business management syllabus in preparing students for employable skills. In the first place, students were asked to indicate their motivation for choosing business as a programme of study in senior high school. This was followed by the perceptions of teachers and students concerning the nature and content of business management syllabus with respect to its potential of preparing students to acquire employable skills for the job market. Generally, analysis of data collected through the use of questionnaire for teachers and students revealed that there are several reasons or factors that affect students' choice of Business Management as a programme at the senior high school level. Among such factors that influence students' decision to select business as a programme of study in senior high school include: 1) Interest in the course; 2) Perceived job opportunities in the subject; 3) Their good mathematics background and 4) Ease of subject matter. This finding from the study corroborates the earlier findings of Walstrom *et al.* (2008) [26], when they found their study that job prospects, prestige of profession, and ease of subject matter to students among others are several relevant factors regarding students' career choice.

Another major finding that emerged from the study revealed that both teachers and students disagreed with the fact that the nature and content of business management course equips students with knowledge and skills for dealing with problems in the community in which they would be expected to work after school. This assertion by teachers and students refutes what the Ontario Curriculum (2006) [3] said on business education that, engaging in business education involves studying individuals, communities and organizations, assessing their needs and problems and generating solutions. However, the views of teachers and students with regard to the current status of business management course are in line with many more studies that were conducted in the past. For instance, Porter and McKibbin's (1988) [27] established that business deplored graduates' lack of soft skills, including Managerial Skills. More or less, the same conclusions have been reached in many other studies conducted later on (Wardrope, 2002 [28]; McPherson, 1998 [29]). Numerous articles (for example, Buckley, 1989 [30]; Thompson & Smith, 1992 [31]) suggest that Business schools are failing to help students develop the needed competencies and skills. These facts confirm the criticism that business schools are facing regarding failure to help groom students with the required skills and competencies essential to the new workplace; yet, the efforts to overcome this failure have proved fruitful only to a limited extent. Gustafson *et al.*, (1993) [32] opined that, Business Curriculum must reflect the current trends that are acceptable in the business world since business educators attach to their subject success in the place of work.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Among many reasons that influence students' decision to study business as a

programme in senior high school was the job prospect that students attach to business programme. This implies that students expect business management curriculums to prepare them adequately to acquire the needed skills and competencies that employers would require for employment. It is therefore imperative for teachers who teach business management to reconsider the approach and strategies they employ in teaching students in order to prepare students to possess employable skills. Again, since students have the perception that unlimited career opportunities exist after studying business programme, teachers need to create more awareness of numerous jobs that students can create for themselves in order to reduce the unemployment rate in the country.

The study recommends that stakeholders in education (such as the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service) should consider making huge investments in business education programmes to enable proper training of business students to acquire the needed skills and competencies to create more jobs which will help in reducing the rate of unemployment in Ghana. Furthermore, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) which is responsible to develop and review school curriculum should consider the review of the business management curriculum to tailor the content to meet employment requirements in the country.

7. Limitations of the Study

The survey status of the study reveals information relative to the prevailing conditions in a specific set of circumstances. As information was gathered through the use of questionnaire, the usual weaknesses which accompanied the use of the instrument were present. These weaknesses include: bias, incompleteness, variability in response, mechanical limitations or make-up, non-response errors, lack of clarity in definitions, ambiguities or inappropriate wording, limited responses and briefness. The period for collecting data met with the inter-school and college athletic competition which made it difficult to meet teachers and students in some of the schools. In addition, the sample used for the study was taken from one geographical area, hence will be tentative and cannot be generalized. Although these limitations were encountered, they will have no effect on the study since we took steps to minimize their impact on the study.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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