

YOUTH OVERSEAS EMIGRATION IN NIGERIA: BUSINESS EDUCATION TO THE RESCUE

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Abstract

The tide of overseas emigration has become a popular phenomenon in Nigeria. This is a situation where citizens of country leave his or country to abode in another. Many active Nigerians are dreaming of moving out of the country to seek greener pastures as a result of unemployment poverty, insecurity, infrastructural deficit, poor standard of living among others. The dimension of emigration in Nigeria is becoming worrisome and taking toll on the economy. This situation calls for urgent attention. The study discusses causes of emigration and how business education could be used to stem the tides of overseas emigration in Nigeria. Descriptive research design was used to carry out the study. The population for the study comprised 1,509 Batch A, B & C 2023 national youth corps members in Egbeda Local Government Area of Oyo State and Business Educators in Oyo State. Sample for the study consists of one hundred (150) youth corps members and thirty (30) Business Educators purposively selected for the study. The instrument used for the study was two structured questionnaires designed to elicit response from the respondents. The reliability coefficient obtained for the instruments was 0.78 and 0.80. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyse the research questions while t-test statistic was used for the three hypotheses formulated. Findings from the study revealed that Nigerian youths emigrate due to, unemployment, insecurity, poverty and harsh economic environment. The study concludes that there is a compelling need to reduce the rate of citizens' emigration to the acceptable global standard. The study recommends among others, that all other stakeholders must unite in confronting the menace of overseas emigration through establishment of appropriate platforms for youth employment and empowerment.

Key Words: Youth, Overseas, Emigration, Business Education.

Introduction

Youth emigration has become an issue of national discuss in Nigerian over some time. The issue of overseas emigration is an issue that is denying Nigeria the contributions of her formidable and intelligent working population to national development. Many graduates and workers in all sectors of the economy are anticipating emigration due to harsh economic condition in the country. Despite this condition, emigration of active population is not in the best interest of any nation. Oyeshola (2022) define migration as the process of a short or long-term relocation of a person from his or her place of primary residence to another, in pursuit of better

living conditions, reunion with family, and further studies among other reasons. Migration is a phenomenon that is constantly and radically evolving (Manchala, 2014).

According to Feyisetan (2013), people migrate in different ways and for different reasons. Some people migrate with ease and confidence; these people include ambassadors, employees working both locally and internationally, and individuals who travel for conferences, vacations, or official business. Some are forced to relocate abroad due to war, natural disasters including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, famines, epidemics, or being banished as a punishment for an offense. People may decide to migrate in search of social, economic, or political protection. It is important to remember that migration commonly happen across large distances, such across nations. Internal migration is distinct from international migration. People who migrate within their own country to live in another region are known as internal migrants. Internal migration could be as a result of urbanization and suburbanization or seasonal migration of people, which is mostly connected to tourism and agriculture. International migrants are people who leave their country to live in another country. Both the nations of origin and the countries of destination may experience advantages and disadvantages of migration. Emigration may help to meet labor shortages in destination nations, both for skilled and unskilled labor. Remittances are payments sent to friends and family in the country of origin that boost economic growth through higher consumption. On the other side, as the brightest young brains go abroad for school and work, "brain drain" undermines developing economies (Capuano & Marfouk, 2013; Kekana, 2018; O'Toole, 2018).

Large numbers of youths in Nigeria are migrating to other countries as a result of unemployment, poor economic condition in the country and educational purposes. Youth unemployment rate in Nigeria is reported at 42.5 per cent in 2020, with underemployment rate at 22.8 per cent (National Bureau of Statistics Nigeria, 2022). Among the 35,364 international students from Sub-Saharan Africa studying in the United States, 11,000 are from Nigeria (Ogundare, 2018). The mass departure of skilled professionals, popularly referred to as the "Japa" phenomenon, poses significant concerns regarding brain drain, loss of human capital, and national development stagnation (Akinyemi & Ofem, 2022). Several factors contribute to this trend while economic hardship remains a major driver, with youth unemployment reaching an alarming 33.3% in 2021 (NBS, 2021). Many graduates and skilled professionals find it difficult to secure well-paying jobs, pushing them to consider relocation to countries with better employment opportunities. Additionally, insecurity; including terrorism, kidnappings and ethnic conflicts has made the Nigerian environment less conducive to career and business development (Ojo & Bamidele, 2021). The deteriorating state of education, poor access to healthcare, and an unstable political climate further exacerbate the push factors driving emigration. While migration can have benefits such as remittances and global exposure, the mass exodus of Nigerian youth has negative long-term implications. A brain drain deprives Nigeria of its brightest minds, reducing productivity, innovation, and overall economic growth. Moreover, illegal migration exposes youth to risks such as human trafficking, labor exploitation, and deportation (Achieng & El Fadil, 2020).

The rate of youth emigration in Nigeria is alarming and unacceptable, hence the need to stem the tide. One of the effective ways to correct this anomaly is through quality business education. According to Igbokwe (2012), business education as a component of the general educational curriculum offers students the knowledge, abilities, skills, and attitudes necessary to function in the business sector as manufacturers or buyers of products and services. Adequate skill development programmes are offered by business education, providing the recipients with

the necessary skills they need to become employable and owners of their own businesses. In line with this, Aina (2018) maintained that recipients of business education programmes are expected to acquire many business skills that are adequate for self-reliance and self-employment.

Also, Afolabi (2021) submitted that business education curriculum includes financial literacy, which helps youth make informed financial decisions and reducing dependency on limited job opportunities (Afolabi, 2021). In addition, business education programs equip students with knowledge of business planning, marketing strategies, and financial management, enabling them to start and sustain their own businesses (Eze & Okonkwo, 2019). Considering the effects of youth overseas emigration it is obvious that urgent steps are required to curtail it. Consequently, this study focused the causes of youth overseas emigration and how business education can help in stemming the tide.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, many people are migrating overseas based on factors such as; unemployment, underemployment, job security, desire for better living conditions, prospecting for higher pay, education, escaping harsh economic conditions and better working environment among others. Opinion leaders and researchers have confirmed that Nigerians are relocating abroad in large numbers. This situation has become an issue of national discourse and quite embarrassing to a blessed country like Nigeria. The decision of many youths and skilled Nigerians to live and work in other nations call for serious concern. Most sectors of the economy are now finding it difficult to recruit professionals and where such professionals are employed, they relocate abroad within short period. High labour turnover usually has negative effects on businesses and nations which underscore the need for curtailing it through proactive actions. The consequence of abnormal emigration is that it could lead to underdevelopment and socio-economic crises because the future and survival of any nation depends on its youthful and working population. This study investigated the causes of overseas emigration by Nigerian youths and determined the business education skills that should be imparted to the youths through business education to stem the tide.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the causes of youth overseas emigration?
2. What are the Business Education skills needed by youth to stem the tide of overseas emigration?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of both male and female youth corps members on the causes of youth overseas emigration.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of both male and female business educators on the Business Education skills needed by youths to stem the tide of youth overseas emigration.

Methodology

The researcher adopted a descriptive survey design. The area of the study is Oyo State, Nigeria. The population for this study comprised 1,509 Batch A, B & C 2023 National Youth Corps Members in Egbeda Local Government Area of Oyo State and Business Educators in Oyo State. The sample for the study consists of 150 National Youth Corps Members and 30 business educators purposively selected. The instrument used for the study was two structured questionnaires designed to elicit response from the respondents. One questionnaire was used to obtain responses from youth corps members while the other was used to collect data from Business Educators. The instrument was on 4-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree – 4, Agree – 3, Disagree – 2 and Strongly Disagree – 1. The reliability coefficient for the instruments was 0.78 and 0.81. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was that mean of 2.50 and above was regarded as “Agree” while mean below 2.50 was regarded as “Disagree”.

Results

Research Question 1:

1. What are the causes of youth overseas emigration?

Table 1: Mean score of respondents on the causes of youth overseas emigration.

S/N	Item Statement	X ₁ n ₁ =80	SD ₁	X ₂ n ₂ =70	SD ₂	XG	SDG	Decision
1	Employment reasons (job opportunities, higher)	3.88	0.51	3.77	0.63	3.83	0.57	Agree
2	Political reasons (conflict, persecution)	2.83	0.57	2.76	0.71	2.80	0.64	Agree
3	Social reasons (to join family)	2.50	0.69	2.66	0.58	2.58	0.64	Agree
4	Environmental reasons (natural disasters, climate change)	2.55	0.58	3.20	0.67	2.88	0.63	Agree
5	Better education system	3.90	0.72	3.87	0.58	3.89	0.65	Agree
6	To improve living standards	3.75	0.81	3.82	0.65	3.79	0.73	Agree
7	To seek better opportunities	2.91	0.82	2.89	0.53	2.90	0.68	Agree
8	To escape political persecution	2.55	0.54	2.62	0.65	2.59	0.60	Agree
9	To access better healthcare	2.67	1.02	3.08	0.76	2.88	0.89	Agree

10	To seek new experiences	2.94	0.59	3.55	0.86	3.25	0.73	Agree
	Grand Mean/Standard Deviation	3.05	0.69	3.22	0.66	3.14	0.67	Agree

Key: X= Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 1 reveals that the respondents agreed to items 1-10 having mean score above 2.50. The response shows that employment, education and improved living conditions were three major causes of youth emigration to foreign countries.

Research Question 2:

What are the Business Education skills needed by youth to stem the tide of overseas emigration?

Table 2: Mean score of respondents on the Business Education skills needed by youths to stem the tide of overseas emigration in Nigeria.

S/N	Item Statement	X ₁ n ₁ =14	SD ₁	X ₂ n ₂ =16	SD ₂	XG	SDG	Decision
1	E-mail marketing skills	3.45	0.80	3.50	0.84	3.48	0.82	Agree
2	Social media marketing skills	2.90	0.67	2.66	0.75	2.78	0.71	Agree
3	Search engine marketing skills	3.60	0.74	3.84	0.77	3.72	0.76	Agree
4	Content marketing skills	2.72	0.50	3.15	0.83	2.94	0.67	Agree
5	Pay-per-click marketing skills	2.80	0.72	3.50	0.58	3.15	0.65	Agree
6	Video creation marketing skills	3.05	0.84	3.01	0.82	3.03	0.83	Agree
7	Data base marketing skills	3.51	0.89	2.75	0.76	3.13	0.83	Agree
8	Spreadsheet computing skill	3.75	0.66	3.06	0.85	3.41	0.76	Agree
9	Use of accounting software packages	2.68	0.09	3.14	0.85	2.91	0.47	Agree
10	Innovative skills	3.82	0.69	3.52	0.87	3.67	0.78	Agree
11	Creativity skills	3.50	0.54	3.44	0.88	3.47	0.71	Agree
12	Communication skills	2.69	0.83	2.67	0.82	2.68	0.83	Agree
13	Problem-solving skills	2.87	0.76	3.06	0.69	2.97	0.73	Agree
14	Investment management skills	3.11	0.65	3.30	0.78	3.21	0.72	Agree
15	Risks taking skills	3.54	0.55	2.67	0.95	3.11	0.75	Agree

16	Feasibility study skills	2.78	0.81	2.72	0.84	2.75	0.83	Agree
17	Market analysis skills	2.66	0.62	3.45	0.66	3.06	0.64	Agree
18	Financial literacy	2.60	0.88	2.87	0.64	2.74	0.76	Agree
19	Financial Management skills	2.91	0.72	3.03	0.74	2.97	0.73	Agree
Grand Mean/Standard Deviation		3.10	0.68	3.12	0.79	3.11	0.73	Agree

Key: X= Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 2 shows that respondents agreed to all the 16 items with mean ranging from 2.74 to 3.48. Pay-per-click marketing skills, data base marketing skills, market analysis skills, risks taking skills, investment management skills, problem-solving skills, creativity skills, innovative skills, spreadsheet computing skill, data base marketing skills, email marketing skills and search engine marketing skills were rated strongly agree. The result indicates that Business Education skills are needed to stem the tide of overseas emigration by Nigerian youth. The grand mean of 3.11 supported this.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of female and male youth corps members on the causes of youth overseas emigration.

Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis of the opinion of female and male youth corps members on the causes of youth overseas emigration.

Group	N	X	SD	Df	P	t-Cal	t-Critical	Decision
Female	80	3.05	0.69	148	0.05	0.64	1.96	Not significant
Male	70	3.22	0.66					

Key: N = No. of Respondents, X = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Df = Degree of Freedom, P = Level of Significance, t-Cal= t-calculated, t-Critical (table).

The result in Table 3 reveals that the t-calculated value of 0.64 is less than the t-critical table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 148 degree of freedom. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of female and male business educators on the business education skills needed by youths to stem the tide of overseas emigration in Nigeria.

Table 4: Summary of t-test analysis of the opinion of female and male business educators on the Business Education skills needed by youths to stem the tide of overseas emigration in Nigeria.

Group	N	X	SD	Df	P	t-Cal	t-Critical	Decision
Female	14	3.14	0.75	28	0.05	0.35	1.70	Not significant
Male	16	3.15	0.72					

The result in Table 3 reveals that the t-calculated value of 0.35 is less than the t-critical table value of 1.70 at 0.05 level of significance and 28 degree of freedom. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

Discussion of Findings

Findings on research question one revealed that employment, education and improved living conditions were three major causes of youth emigration to foreign countries. The findings of this study are in agreement with Inegbedion (2022) who asserted that high rate of unemployment is the main reason for some Nigerian youths who are leaving the country to find job opportunities in Europe and Northern America. She also added that high inflation rate due to weak exchange rate of naira is another factor causing youth emigration in Nigeria. Ikuteyijo (2020) in his study also submitted that the major push factors for youth desire for emigration are unemployment rate and economic trends in Nigeria.

Findings on research question two shows that business education skills are strongly needed for stemming the tide of youth overseas emigration. This study concurs with the study of Egberi & Alabi (2023) which confirmed that entrepreneurial and digital skills are needed by youth to improve their employability and make self-reliance. The findings of this study further agreed with Mordi (2023) who affirmed that digital accounting and digital marketing skills are required by business education graduates for self-employment and paid employment in the digital era. The findings on hypotheses tested in this study shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female youth corps members on the causes of overseas emigration by Nigerian youths. Also, the findings revealed no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the business education skills needed by Nigerian youths to curb overseas emigration.

Conclusion

Emigration is a common decision being embarked upon by individuals in countries all over the world. However, it becomes a problem when a significant per cent of active population and professionals migrate in droves due to educational pursuit, harsh economic condition, unemployment and underemployment among others. There is a compelling need to reduce the rate of youth emigration to the acceptable global standard. To stem the tide of youth overseas emigration, employment opportunities should be made available to youths. Business Education has the capacity to provide succor to the youths through impartation of entrepreneurial, marketing, accounting and digital skills. This paper believes that the challenges of overseas youth emigration are surmountable if given adequate attention.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government at all levels should prioritize employment generation through meaningful partnership with the private sector.
2. Business education skills in accounting, marketing, office technology management and entrepreneurship should be further strengthened in the curriculum with emphasis on practical and case study.
3. Entrepreneurial skills acquisition center should be established in department of business education in all educational institutions in order to equip graduates for job creation.
4. Conducive working environment should be created by employers and government agencies for professional in order to ensure job satisfaction which will reduce labour turnover and emigration.

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