



Integrating Entrepreneurship Education in Geography Curriculum: A Strategy for Enhancing the Employment Potentials of Geography Graduates in Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to forge a strategy of improving the employment potentials of Geography graduates in Nigeria. The specific aim is to integrate entrepreneurship Education into Geography curriculum. This is achieved by examining the content, scope and relevance of Geography Education Curriculum vis-à-vis Entrepreneurship education. Descriptive research methodology was adopted in the study. The study population is Geography graduates of 2011 to 2015. The sample size of the study was 600 graduates, randomly selected from six universities. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire. The collected data was analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The study established that the high rate of graduate unemployment among Geography graduates is caused by the absence of entrepreneurship training in Geography Education. The integration of Entrepreneurship Education into Geography Education is therefore advocated.

Key words: Geography curriculum, Entrepreneurship education, Geography graduates and employment potentials.

Introduction

Graduate unemployment is rising rapidly every day in Nigeria. Many youths are being stranded for lack of jobs after graduation. They roam the streets in search of never existing “white collar jobs”. Graduates of some disciplines including Geography seem to be worst hit by the unemployment saga. Many geography graduates who are not employed in government agencies find it difficult to adjust to self-employment and therefore remain unemployed. The unemployment of Geography graduates could be attributed to lack of entrepreneurial skills which would have propelled them to kick-start their own businesses. Unfortunately, the Geography curriculum seems to be deficient in entrepreneurial skills development. The absence of entrepreneurial concepts in Geography tend to deny the graduates of geography the opportunity of harnessing their employment potentials for self-employment, hence many have remained unemployed. The population of unemployed geography graduates has continued to soar from year to years even when such graduates have been equipped with basic knowledge and skills in geography which supposed to make them self-reliant (Dare, 2008). The question is why are most Geographers

unemployed in Nigeria? This could be explained by the fact that geography curriculum is tailored towards producing job seekers and not job creators (Peter and Patime, 2016). In other words, geography curriculum does not seem to impart appropriate skills, abilities and attitudes that would have enhance employment potentials of the learners.

The high rate of unemployment among geography graduates calls for the examination of geography curriculum. The curriculum content of geography tends to be deficient in entrepreneurship concepts (Isike and Ovekaemo, 2008). The curriculum placed more emphasis on theories derived from physical, economic, urban and regional geography, respectively than on entrepreneurship skills. Such curriculum can only prepare the students towards white collar jobs and not self-employment. It follows that an average geography graduate would think of government employment and less of self-employment on graduation (Dare 2008). This is because the education they have acquired did not equip them with innovative skills that would help them to harness the various career opportunities opened to geography graduates in the private and public sectors.

The purpose of this paper is to seek for ways of improving the employment potentials of geography graduates in Nigeria. The objective is to identify the strategy of enhancing the employment of geography graduates. This is achieved by examining the concept of entrepreneurship, the concept and scope of geography, the integration of entrepreneurship education into geography curriculum. A study that seeks to improve the employment status of any given group of people is significant, especially, in the face of the rising unemployment. The study provides a strategy towards addressing unemployment and consequently stems the tides of the increasing crime rates and youth restiveness. It is therefore assumed that this will stimulate curriculum reforms in Geography.

The Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship as a concept is said to be education tailored towards producing a self-reliant man. It is an education program that is geared toward building capacity in the learner so as to be productive members of the society. Akanbi, (2002) and Ogunomi and Oginni, (2013) opined that it is education aimed at developing in the learner traits such as innovativeness, ingenuity, resourcefulness and endurance. Such traits are supposed to regulate the learner's choice of actions when confronted with problems. It therefore follows that Entrepreneurship Education is meant to enable the learner overcome the problems confronting the society including unemployment and business challenges irrespective of the learners discipline. The purpose of entrepreneurship education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education is to give training and imparts necessary skills to the individuals who shall be self-reliant economically. In other words, it is the

education that prepares learners to lead, rather than to follow and to operate within a global parameter rather than within a parochial perspective (Uthman, 2005). The recipient of Entrepreneurship Education ought to exhibit and uphold basic values rather than hoping for the “fast buck” by adding value to the market place and invest in innovative technology and human resources (Olowokure, 2006).

Entrepreneurship education according to Wilson (2008) seeks to provide the learner with knowledge, skills and motivation that would encourage entrepreneurial success in varieties of settings. World Bank (1996) cited in Agbamu, (2007) summarized what entrepreneurship education is all about by stating that it seeks to discover how best the graduates can convert their education to productive ventures. This implies that entrepreneurship education ought to produce innovative persons who are equipped with ideas and abilities that would enable them convert the knowledge and skills acquired in their various training programs into productive ventures. This also implies that entrepreneurship education is not restricted to a particular field or study, but opened to all disciplines including geography. The various explanation given to the meaning of entrepreneurship point to the fact that the products of entrepreneurship training are entrepreneurs who by their training acquired are supposed to kick start business concerns by mobilizing the available factors of production. In other words, an entrepreneur is one who is capable of putting a new form of industry or business on its feet, takes risk/uncertainty and other inevitable contingencies emanating from the business ventures. Risk taking and resourcefulness of an entrepreneur is not restricted to particular professions. Other professionals including geographers can be trained in risk management, and other concepts in entrepreneurship in order to be self-reliant.

It therefore follows that an entrepreneur is an individual with the right motivation, energy and managerial ability to building a venture by his own effort (Uthman, 2005). Such a person may not wait for government to provide a job for him; rather he creates job opportunities for people. This is why Ajani and Ayelotan, (2011) describe an entrepreneur as an innovator capable of introducing new products, opening new market, discovering new sources of raw materials and organizing a new industry. The role of the entrepreneur is summarized by Adewoye, (2015) to include pace-setter and risk bearer who craft strategies, hence, he plays a pioneering role.

Olowokure (2006) emphasizing the relevance of entrepreneurship education argued that it is education needed primarily to reduce the prevalence of unemployment and job-seeking syndrome in the contemporary society. It is that education needed to enable the recipient response appropriately to emerging societal problems. Uthman (2005) listed the relevance of entrepreneurship education to include; training and imparting skills that lead to production of goods and services, production of entrepreneurs and skilled personnel, provision of technical knowledge and vocational skills needed in different sectors of the economy and provision of

employment opportunities thus making people to be self-reliant. FRN (2004) simplified the relevance of entrepreneurship education to mean the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies that would enable individuals to live and contribute to the society.

The content and scope of geography tends to focus more on the basic concepts and theories in physical geography (Climatology, geomorphology, hydrology etc.), human geography (settlement geography, urban geography, population geography etc.) and regional geography. Even Economic Geography tends to lacks basic themes in entrepreneurship education. Concepts such as risk bearing, risk management, marketing principles, financial reporting and business proposal writing are lacking in geography curriculum. The absence of these entrepreneurship concepts in geography education denies the geography graduates the opportunity of acquiring entrepreneurial skills that would enhance self-reliance. The effect of this training is the inability of the products to convert what they have learnt into realities of the time (Akpoveta and Agbomah, 2009; Adeyemi & Adu, 2012; Adebowale, 2012).

This questions the functionality of geography education in Nigeria. The functionality of geography can only be authenticated if the recipients of geography education are self-reliant. Geography as a course of study has a very broad curriculum designed to expose the learner to various life endeavors. Geography students are often exposed to skills and knowledge in geomorphology, climatology, hydrology, demography, transportation, tourism, cartography, map interpretation and analysis, aerial photography and remote sensing, geographic information system (GIS), urban and regional planning, resource management and evaluation and economic geography, survey and architecture. This implies that Geography graduates ought to have wide range of employment outlets. But this is not the case as many geographers are denied employment in many places. This situation is traceable to the non-acquisition of appropriate entrepreneurial skills to kick start business concerns. The Geography curriculum presently has little or no component of Entrepreneurship Education; hence there is complete absence of entrepreneurial training. This has limited the opportunity of acquiring skills that would have exposed Geography Education graduates or recipients' from acquiring entrepreneurial skills required to kick start a business. No wonder, Abdullahi, (2012) argued that Geographers merely seek for employment instead of generating employment. This calls for a probe on the functionality of Geography Education in Nigeria.

Concept and Scope of Geography

Geography simply means the description of the earth however, Alimba, Momodu, Abba & Bello, (2010) posited that the meaning of Geography varies from one geographer to another.

Different authorities define geography according to their areas of specializations. An outline of a few definitions of geography highlights the disciplines as follows; the study of the position of physical features, cities, countries and continents (Alonge, Ige and Osagiobare, 2014). This definition portrays geography as a science of location concerned with compiling facts such as the highest mountain, longest river, the largest city, the largest producer of some products etc. in the world. This perception of geography limits the discipline to a more encyclopaedia of facts that are memorized by learners (Atughonu, 2007)

Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, (2010) defined Geography as the study of the unique character of places on the earth surface. This definition emphasized the concern for the quality and potential resources of regions. Ayeduse, (2011) echoed this definition and argued that geography is concern with facts about the wealth of continents, way of life, occupation, man's interaction with the environment, the impact of the environment on man and about international relations and globalization. Egai, (2009) explained Geography as environmental science which studies all systems of air, land, water, energy and life in relation to man that is the Ecosystem.

The different definitions of Geography notwithstanding the discipline, is said to be concerned with seeking to discover the spatial relationship of the physical features and man. In the view of Ekpiken & Ukpabio, (2015) geography is perceived as the study of the different phenomena causally related in different parts of the earth surface. Etuk, Etukdor-Eyo & Ekpo, (2009) in a simplified version stated that geography is concern with "what", "where", "why" and "what of it". It can be concluded that geography is very difficult to define. The boundaries of the discipline cannot be appropriately defined. It is concerned with all activities that occur on the earth surface. No wonder, geography is described as "jack of all trade and master of none". The content and scope of geography can best be explained by the four traditions of the discipline that is spatial analysis, regional analysis, man-land and the earth science traditions. These traditions expressed the contents of geography to include, the study of the inter-relationship between the physical environment, the economy and society within the context of the changing environment. It is concern with how distance, direction, position, and human behavior affect spatial interactions among the occupants in space. In studying the spatial interactions, it focuses on making predictions of emerging patterns of settlements, population, soils, and water and mans' behaviour. The scope of geography is best explained by listing all the branches. They include settlement geography, population geography, economic geography, climatology, biogeography, hydrology, geomorphology, regional geography etc. The broad scope of geography makes it difficult to define where geography stops and where other disciplines begin. This is made more difficult by the fact that most of the concepts and theories in geography are borrowed from other disciplines such as Sociology, Demography, Economics, Biology, Physics etc. No wonder Preston James in Ihebereme, (2006) queried the frontiers of Geography.

The purpose of geography is said to be as diverse as its scope and content. The purpose of geography as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) is to provide skills and knowledge for problem solving; to identify and analyze spatial interactions and interpret them in line with life situations, to make observations and predictions of spatial patterns for future planning. The purpose can only be achieved if our training institutions are able to equip learners with skills and abilities of investigating, describing and providing solutions to problems of the society. In other words, the essence of geography education is specifically to equip students with skills and knowledge needed to tackle environmental and societal problems. This may be satisfied by a geography curriculum that provides the students with opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills, right attitudes and behavior that can stimulate understanding of the changing environmental, socio-cultural, economic and political situations (Isike and Ovekaemo, 2008).

It is doubtful if the purpose of geography as enshrined in the Nigerian National Policy on Education has been fully achieved in the midst of high unemployment rate among geography graduates. Geography Education Curriculum was designed to produce self-reliant graduates who would not wait for only “white collar” jobs but generate self-employment. Today, many geography graduates are scrambling for non-existent jobs in government agencies, whereas the wide scope of the discipline can be harnessed towards self-employment. The integration of entrepreneurship education into geography curriculum would enable learners to acquire skills which would make them self-reliant and economically viable. It is in the aforementioned preposition that this question has been raised as to who can convert the skills acquired from the various branches of Geography into entrepreneurial ventures and generate employment for other people having gotten the singular privilege of being trained as a graduate of Geography?.

Research Methodology

Descriptive research methodology is adopted for this study. This approach provided a platform for operationalizing the variables and to examine the relationship of the dependent and independent variables. The independent variable is entrepreneurial skills and the dependent variable is employment. The study population was geography graduates. A designed questionnaire to elicit responses on employment status and entrepreneurial skills acquisition was used as instrument for data collection.

A sample size of 600 respondents who are Geography graduates were used for the study. This was obtained through simple random sampling. The population of the study was geography graduates of 2011 to 2015. The respondents were selected when they were in the final year and accordingly monitored through their phone numbers. The respondents were randomly selected using their matriculation registers as sampling frame. One university was selected from each Geo-

political zone. Twenty students were accordingly selected from each graduating set of 2011 to 2015 in each university. They were monitored and questionnaire mailed to them accordingly through SMS and e-mail. The questionnaire solicited information on employment and reasons for unemployment. The collected data was analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), correlation analysis and simple percentages were used in explaining the result.

Results and Discussion

The result of the study were presented as follows; the hypothesis that stated that there is no significant variation in the employment of geography graduates with entrepreneurial skills and those without entrepreneurial skills was tested and the result was presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Relationship between employment and possession of entrepreneurial skills

Model	R	R-Square (R ²)	Adjusted E-Square	STD Error of Estimate	
1	.854	0.924	.847	.25972	
A predictor (constant) Entrepreneurial Skills					
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Square	DF	Mean square	F	Sig. F
Regression	6284.365	2	20.310	201.08	.000 ^a
Residual	45.803	1090	.072		
Total	330.168	1092			

a. Predictor (constant) Entrepreneurial Skill

b. Dependent variable: Graduate Employment

Result of Table 1 showed that the calculated F-value is 201.08 while the critical value (3.2 degree of freedom) at 0.05 level of significant is 4.37. In view of this result, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) which states that Geography graduates who possess entrepreneurial skills have more employment opportunities than those without entrepreneurial skills was accepted. When the data was further subjected to correlation analysis; the result of the analysis conducted at 0.05 level of significance showed F-ratio of 201.08, correlation coefficient (R) of 0.924 and coefficient of determination of 0.85, implying that acquisition of entrepreneurial skills account for 85% of Geography graduates employment.

The above result was substantiated by a national survey conducted to establish places where geographers are employed. The result in Table 2 revealed that about 39.0% Geography graduates are engaged in teaching which does not require entrepreneurial skills while only 6.83% are employed in government and private agencies. The other 11.20% are self-employed while 34.36% are unemployed. Table 2 further showed that very small number representing 8.70% are employed in government ministries and agencies while the private sector engaged only 6.83%.

Table 2: Geography Graduates Employment by Sector 2015

S/N	Sector/Department	No. of Graduates	% (Percentage)
1	Teaching	234	39.00
2	Government Ministry and Agencies	52	8.70
3	Private sector	41	6.83
4	Self-Employment	67	11.20
5	Unemployment	206	34.36
	Total	600	100.00

The implication of this result is that geography graduates are mostly employed in agencies and organizations where specialized skills are not required. This explains why geographers are employed in the field of teaching. The small number of geographers involved in self-employments is explained by the fact that many do not possess entrepreneurial skills which will propel them to starting a business and become entrepreneurs. It therefore follows that those who cannot be absorbed by government and private agencies or engage themselves in a business concern will remain unemployed. This explains the observed high rates of unemployment among Geography graduates in Nigeria. The result of the study revealed that entrepreneurial skills acquisition by geography graduates will enhance their employment. It follows that geography graduates without entrepreneurial skills would find it difficult to gain employment. This may explain why about 36.80% are employed in the teaching sector, while the private sector where specialize skills are demanded employed only 6.88% geography graduates.

The high unemployment rate of 34.37% could be explained by the fact that most geography graduates are by their training not equipped with entrepreneurial skills that would have enabled them to kick-start their businesses and become entrepreneurs who can create jobs. Geography as a robust discipline has a lot of employment out-lets which if properly harnessed can provide employment for many geography graduates. The integration of entrepreneurial education into geography curriculum would make geographers to be more innovative, resourceful and aggressive in harnessing geography skills and knowledge into productive ventures that would create more jobs for the citizens. It therefore follows that acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by Geography students would increase the employability of geography graduates in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The employment of geography graduates into government and private agencies in Nigeria is low. Many Geographers are employed in sectors where specialized skills are less demanded, no wonder many are employed in the teaching sectors. Graduates of Geography education are not

equipped with entrepreneurial skills which will endear them to self-employment. The non-acquisition of entrepreneurial skills tends to limit the employability of most geography graduates. No wonder the rate of unemployment of Geography graduates continue to grow from year to years. The employability of Geography graduates could be promoted if entrepreneurship education is integrated into geography curriculum. Such curriculum would increase the employment channels of Geography graduates in Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Geography curriculum should be reviewed to incorporate components of entrepreneurship education such as business financing, business plan development, business proposal writing, risk management among others. Such concepts may be accommodated in Economic Geography. Alternatively, entrepreneurship education should be introduced as a compulsory course for geography students.
2. Training in geography should include a period of internship as it is done in Engineering and Law professions. This would provide opportunity for specialized training and acquisition of skills demanded in the labour market. It is only when geography is accorded this status that employers would be disposed to making geographers work in right places.
3. Appropriate skill acquisition strategies should be adopted in geography education to enhance the employability of geography graduates.
4. Employment outlets for geography graduates should be properly harnessed and appropriate entrepreneurial skills be developed in line with the outlets to enhance employment opportunities.

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