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## Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Library and Information Science (LIS) Professionals: A Remedy for graduate unemployment in Nigeria

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### Abstract

*The paper Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Library and Information Science (LIS) Professionals: A Remedy for graduate unemployment in Nigeria unveils some of the entrepreneurship opportunities that could help LIS graduates to remain gainfully employed in the faces of unemployment especially in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship has become an integral component of all levels education and now acts as catalysts of transformation. The major highlights of the paper includes: Entrepreneurship as a concept, entrepreneurship education, benefits of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship education available to library and information science graduates in Nigeria and factors limiting the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian library schools. The paper argued that entrepreneurship education in library and information science will not deliver its dividends if efforts are not made to ensure that the programme is practical oriented and it will be difficult for graduates of library and information science to secure self-employment. The paper recommends, among other things, that workshops and laboratories in Nigerian library schools be upgraded to acceptable standard with necessary facilities put in place, re-orientation of students, acquisition of ICT skills by lecturers and retraining of lecturers in library schools on entrepreneurship. The methodology of the paper is non-empirical*

**Keywords:** *Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, Library and Information Science, Unemployment*

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## **Introduction**

In Nigeria today the population is growing speedily, unemployment rate is rising astronomically while job opportunities are getting leaner. Unemployment and unemployable graduates have become a serious challenge to educators, educationist and the Nigerian government. The rate of unemployment is increasing everyday with limited job opportunities to absorb thousands of graduates being produced yearly from our tertiary institutions. According to Anyanwu, et al (2013), millions of graduates are being pushed into the labour market annually from our tertiary institutions without adequate and corresponding job opportunities to match this turn out. In order to curb this menace Federal government directed institutions of higher learning to incorporate entrepreneurship education into their academic programmes, in which LIS programme is not an exception. Entrepreneurship is an increasingly vital trend in our contemporary society. The recent fall in crude oil price in Nigeria and the fall of naira in the money market have forced many companies to lay off their workers thereby adding much pressure to the labour market. Considering the above situation, entrepreneurship appears to be the ideal means to create job. In most countries of the world, entrepreneurship has come to be the major source of employment (Ogueri, 2017). This is as a result of the high rate of global unemployment especially in developing countries like Nigeria, where many companies continue to engage in massive downsizing campaigns, dramatically cutting the number of employees on their payrolls (Scarborough, 2014). Designing and implementing courses in entrepreneurship can answer a major societal and international need to train enterprising and dynamic individuals to use and develop the professional knowledge they gain from university in a practical context, for their own benefit and for the advancement of their profession and society (Kristiansson and Jochumsen, 2015). In the same vein, Alakbarov, (2010) stated that nations that have embraced entrepreneurship have made good progress in addressing the problem of unemployment, and achieved impressive results. The skills to become an entrepreneur can be gained in schools through the study on entrepreneurship education. Therefore entrepreneurship education has become crucial in LIS programme to help train and equip LIS professionals with skills needed for self reliance and productive life.

Entrepreneurship education is an inevitable strategy for inculcating an entrepreneurial culture and orientation in a nation, creating employment, raising

individual incomes, transforming communities and enhancing national economic development. Issa, M'Bashire & Saka (2012) stated that improved and sustainable global economic development depend on the strong entrepreneurship education; that is why schools in developed countries provide such entrepreneurship education for life-long training to students as well as learning a trade that is essential for self-employment and self-reliance. Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings (Ismail, Rak & Omar, 2011). It is a programme that equips students with entrepreneurial skills that will enable them create and develop enterprise in various areas (Ewubare, 2010). The emphasis here is that the programme has a way of shifting the focus of students from paid employment to self-employment. This will drastically reduce Nigeria's teeming population plagued with unemployment. It, therefore, seeks to provide students with skills, knowledge and motivation, and as well effect attitudinal changes, necessary to encourage self-reliance through involvement in entrepreneurial activities. It is viewed as a new approach in imparting knowledge and knowhow to students. Similarly, Refaat, (2009) opined that entrepreneurship education is made up of kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds. It can also be seen as a lifelong learning process. It is any educational activity or programme that promotes an understanding of how to start a business. According to Ekankumo & Kemebaradikumo (2011), entrepreneurship education is the type of education designed to change the orientation and attitude of the recipients and the process will equip LIS graduates with the skills to start up businesses after graduation.

Library and information science as a discipline is designed to produce information professional that will competently serve different stakeholders for development. The graduates of library and information science otherwise known as LIS professionals ought to be empowered through practical entrepreneurial skills. The graduates-to-be are expected to draw from the various entrepreneurial well of knowledge and be repositioned for job creation. Library and information science graduates need to be given core entrepreneurial trainings in relation to library and information services so that, at graduation, they can become independent instead of looking for white-collar jobs.

## **Entrepreneurship as a Concept**

Entrepreneurship as a concept has to be explained for us to comprehend fully the concept of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship has to do with the characteristics individuals display in working to achieve goals (Akpomi, 2008). Entrepreneurship is globally accepted to be critical to economic growth and development in an emerging economy such as ours and it is a veritable tool for the improvement of the life and quality of citizens in any nation (Idogho & Ainabor, 2011).

Entrepreneurship according to Eke, Igwesi & Orji (2011) is a programme that inculcates creative, innovative, productive and managerial skills needed in business enterprises for self-reliance and national development. Therefore, it is a vital factor for economic growth and job creation. It also implies the ability to be prepared to risk personal energy and financial resources to achieve unpredictable results. In other words, it is the results of a discipline, systematic process of applying creativity and innovation to the needs and opportunities in the market place.

Fundamental to entrepreneurship is innovation, which translates to new methods of production, new markets, or the setting up of new organization or the breaking up of an existing one (Ejiogu & Nwajiuba, 2012). In other words, entrepreneurship is not just skill acquisition for acquisition's sake; rather it is an acquisition of skills and ideas for the sake of creating employment for one's self and also for others.

## **Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship education is an integral part of general education aimed at preparing individuals for self employment, occupational fields, and effective participation in the world of work (Ejiogu & Nwajiuba, 2012). Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings (Ismail, Rak & Omar, 2011). It is viewed as a new approach in imparting knowledge and knowhow to students. Entrepreneurship education is made up of kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds (Refaat, 2009). Entrepreneurship education is a lifelong learning process. It is any educational activity or program that promotes an understanding

of how to start a business. According to Ekankumo & Kemebaradikumo (2011), entrepreneurship education is the type of education designed to change the orientation and attitude of the recipients and the process will equip them with the skills.

Entrepreneurship education was introduced into the educational system of Nigeria with a view of restructuring the system in order to reshape both the system and the individual that at the long run it will reduce unemployment, which according to Eke, Igwesi and Orji (2011) has been an economic quagmire and social ill that has eaten deep into the economy of the nation.

The underlying truth behind entrepreneurship education is that it was developed to prepare youth and adults to succeed in an entrepreneurial economy. Entrepreneurship education according to Eke, Igwesi & Orji (2011) is a pragmatic and viable approach for stimulating national development and fostering rapid transformation for the nation. Entrepreneurship education to them seeks to provide students with knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings.

Entrepreneurship education is made up of all kinds of experience that give the students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds (Refaat, 2009). According to Ejiogu & Nwajiuba (2012), it is an integral part of general education aimed at preparing individuals for self-employment, occupational fields, and effective participation in the world of work. It is a way of alleviating poverty. It is a new approach in imparting knowledge and know-how to students (Ismail, Eh Rak & Che Omar, 2011). Amoor (2008) sees entrepreneurship education as an education programme that provides the students with the knowledge, skills, motivation needed to start up a small scale business. Entrepreneurship education therefore is a strategic way of tackling the unemployment scourge beclouding Nigeria. Students will benefit from entrepreneurship education because they will become aware of occupational choices that are available in small business management and entrepreneurship.

However, the entrepreneurship education offered at the present in Nigerian as observed by Ifedili & Ofoegbu (2011) seems to lack good management and acceptable content. Though this has not been established by any empirical study,

one may be tempted to agree with them considering the fact that with the introduction of entrepreneurship education, the rate of unemployed youths is still high. Entrepreneurship education was introduced to library and information science with a view to stem the scenario whereby many librarians remained unemployed after graduation. The cardinal objective of entrepreneurship education is to equip students with skills that would enable them to be self-employed and create employment for graduates of Library and Information science. It is disheartening to observe that despite the introduction of entrepreneurship education in library and information science many graduates remain unemployed and this clearly points to the fact that the objective of the course has been defeated. As pointed out by Ekpoh & Edet (2011) entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is still at its infancy. While most Nigerian universities have initiated the programme, little research is available to assess its impact and also to confirm if a relationship exists between students taking course in entrepreneur and their intention of becoming entrepreneurs.

The objectives of entrepreneurship education have variously been stated. Akinseinde (2011) opined that entrepreneurship education provides meaningful education for youth which could make them self-reliant and subsequently encourage them to derive profit from it. In the view of Akinbode (2009), entrepreneurship education produces graduates with sufficient training to make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities and provide graduates with training in risk management to alleviate and minimize uncertainty.

### **Benefits of Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship education promotes innovation or rather introduces new products or services and market strategies to the students to become outstanding entrepreneurs (Amoor, 2008). It prepares individuals to create and successfully operate a business enterprise, it will equip library and information science graduates with diversified knowledge and creative abilities to initiate, establish and run business that will contribute to national development. Entrepreneurship education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviour, skills and attributes, it is an effective method for bridging the gap between science and the market place, creating new

enterprise; it helps to develop innovation skills in young people (Anyanwu, Oduagwu, Ossai-Onah and Amaechi, 2013).

**Entrepreneurship Educational Opportunities: Available to Library and Information Science Graduates in Nigeria.** Ekuoye (2007) and Igbeka (2008) identify some businesses LIS professionals can do to include:

1. **Book Publishing and Trading:** Librarians and information professionals can venture into the publishing industry business where there are a lot of things to do. One can become a publisher, an editor, a reference book critic, children's books reviewer, do promotion-marketing books in libraries or own a bookshop. (Ekuoye, 2007)
2. **Email Publishing, Web Publishing and Desktop Publishing:** LIS professionals can venture into e-mail publishing, web publishing, and desktop publishing.

**Email publishing:** E-mail publishing, also known as newsletter publishing, is used mainly by readers who receive news items, articles and short newsletters in their e-mail box.

**Web publishing:** Most companies and businesses have their own websites and most media companies provide large amount of web-based content. It is important that one goes for training in the different types of publishing discussed above especially if one is going to embark on this type of information business.

**Desktop publishing:** Desktop publishing is a generic term for systems which can accept keyed input and or scanned graphics to a microcomputer, make-up pages with varying degrees of flexibility and graphical facility and output, be compatible with laser printers or other high quality output device, and use industry standard type fonts, among others.

3. **Production and Sale of Library Equipment:** Production of library equipment is another option available to students of library and information science. Graduates in library science can be involved in the production of audio visual equipment, catalogue cards, metal shelf, bookstands, etc. used in library and information centres.

4. **Establishing and Maintaining Libraries for Organisations:** Library and



information professionals can delve into establishing and maintaining libraries for organizations. It could be a traditional print library or electronic library. (Ojedokun, 2000).

5. **Information Brokerage and Consultancy Services:** Graduates in library and information science can be involved in information brokerage and consultancy service whereby they will be re-packaging information for clients for a fee. (Issa, M'Bashir and Saka, 2012)
6. **Bookselling Business:** Graduates of library and information science can be involved in book selling business. With the knowledge of librarianship they are better disposed to serve the various libraries by supplying books to them and as well liaise with management of tertiary institution to sell books to their students.
7. **Organisation of a Private Library:** This is another job an information scientist can do to earn some money. Many scholars have a lot of books, documents and journals especially after their retirement which they can organize into a library.
8. **Compilation of Directories:** Compilation of directories is another entrepreneurial opportunity that library and information professionals can delve into as entrepreneurs. There is so much that needs to be compiled. There can be "Who is Who" in virtually anything, profession, village, organisation, etc. The telephone directory is a wonderful tool.
9. **Compilation of Bibliographies:** This involves the compilation of bibliographic details of a given discipline, subject or topic for a given target audience. LIS professionals, as entrepreneurs can earn sustainable income through publishing of subject and trade bibliographies.
10. **Information Services to the visuallyimpaired:** The library and information professionals can propose to some authors whose books are making good sale or whose materials are a must for some courses to have it on tape. Once the agreement is made, the LIS professional can begin to sell the tapes to the visually impaired or sell to Visually Impaired Libraries and clients.
11. **Indexing and Abstracting Services:** Indexing and abstracting services is an entrepreneurial opportunity that LIS professionals can venture into as a



business enterprise. It is common knowledge that the final stage in the production of many documents such as books, technical manuals and other learning resources, whether print or non-print, is the compilation of the index. The job of the indexer is to analyse the text so that users can find information on a particular topic, return to passage initially read, scan the index to see what the document is about and find out how particular themes or ideas are developed.

- 12. Operation of Business Centres and Cyber Café Business:** Graduates of library science can take the option of running a business centre where computer related activities such as typesetting, computer training, graphic designs and photocopying services amongst others can be carried out.

### **Factors Limiting the Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Library Schools**

- 1. Nonchalant Attitude of Students:** As rightly pointed out by Ifedili and Ofoegbu (2011), there seems to be no seriousness among many students in participation in the course as many of them see the course as one of those unnecessary courses imposed on them to fulfill graduation requirements.
- 2. Lack of Functional Workshop and Laboratories:** Most of the Nigerian library schools lack functional workshop and laboratories. A visit to these laboratories will reveal that Nigerian library schools lacks the standing locus to teach entrepreneurship when in actual sense the workshops that exist cannot encourage effective teaching of core courses like cataloguing and classification how much more entrepreneurship education. We must call a spade a spade if at all we are sincere in the movement along the line of entrepreneurship. The poor state of infrastructural facilities is nothing to write home about especially in this ICT driven age. If entrepreneurship education must take its proper place, then heads of library schools have to go back and work out modalities of ensuring that our library schools are re-invigorated.
- 3. Lack OF ICT Skills:-** In this digital age, where virtually every sector of human endeavor is ICT driven, It goes to mean that lack of ICT skills is a limiting factor to effective integration of entrepreneurship education into library and information science. The practical approach to book

publishing in traditional and electronic environment is not possible without basic ICT skills. Since most teachers teaching entrepreneurship lack the basic ICT skills, do we expect a magic to make the students acquire these skills, if it happens, then it must be an “entrepreneurial miracle”.

4. **Unavailability of Lecturers that are Entrepreneurial Conscious:** Most lecturers in the university and polytechnics are not entrepreneurial conscious and this apparently affects their mode of teaching and we don't expect such lecturers to impart the right knowledge to the student. These ugly trends do affect the overall objective of entrepreneurship education
5. **Unavailability of Funds:** Behind any successful project is availability of finance. For entrepreneurship education to be fully integrated into the educational system and achieve its objective, then funds ought to be available. The laboratories found in our tertiary institutions can only be upgraded if funds are available. When the various bodies and stakeholders find it extremely difficult to release funds, one will wonder how the library schools will manufacture the necessary equipment needed to impart the right skills to the students.

### **Conclusion**

Entrepreneurship education is a game changer for unemployed graduates of Library and information Science, especially in this period of economic meltdown in Nigeria. Library and Information science education should see the need of ensuring full implementation of these entrepreneurship education opportunities listed above which could enable LIS graduates to become gainfully employed as well as employers of labour. Nevertheless, the future of Nigeria as a nation would be turned around for sustainable development if the challenges associated with entrepreneurship opportunities for LIS graduates are properly addressed

### **Recommendations**

In view of the challenges identified, the following recommendations were made:

- a. **Upgrading of Workshops and Laboratories in Library Schools:** if the objectives of entrepreneurship education is to be achieved and sustained, it becomes imperative that the laboratories and workshops in library schools in Nigeria should be upgraded by installing modern ICT

facilities in them as well as ensuring that the necessary equipment needed for entrepreneurship education is put in place. There is no way we can use the same equipment used in training older librarians to train the new generation librarians and expect them to create jobs, it is practically impossible.

- b. *Re-orientation of Students in Library Schools:*** the students in library schools should be given proper orientation to enlighten them on the need for entrepreneurship education. They ought to be made to understand that the course is not just like any other borrowed course or general course, rather it is a course that will empower them to be self-reliant after graduation. It is only when the students understand it this way that they can take the course serious.
- c. *Acquisition of ICT Skills by Lecturers in Library Schools:*** Lecturers in Nigerian library schools should be sent on ICT Trainings/Workshop that will enable them to acquire the basic ICT skills that will empower them to teach entrepreneurship effectively.
- d. *Retraining of Lecturers in Library Schools on Entrepreneurship:*** the lecturers in library schools should be sent on training in relation to entrepreneurship education as this will reposition them to impart the entrepreneurial knowledge to the students. Diversifying the field of librarianship by employing lecturers from other fields of study that is related to librarianship. For example information science, computer science, cyber space, archives, etc
- e. *Provision of Funds:*** the various bodies and stakeholders in our educational system such as the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board of Technical Education (NBTE) as well as the parent institutions should ensure that adequate funds are released to the library schools because it is the availability of funds that will determine the acquisition of relevant equipment as well as training and re-training of the lecturers

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