

## **ENHANCING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AND PRACTICES OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROFESSIONALS THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND WEALTH CREATION**

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### **Abstract**

There has been notable decline in world economies which has great negative impact on employment opportunities to the citizens. This has manifested in unemployment among different careers, practices and professionals including the library and information science professionals. In spite of this, there are untapped or hidden opportunities that can be harnessed to enhance the practices and revenue generation base for library and information science professionals. The paper uses the conceptual method to describe and adopt entrepreneurship education and wealth creation as strong alternatives to library and information science professionals to salvage and regain balance in the dynamic economic wheel. The paper also identified some economic activities through which LIS professionals can create wealth to include printing and publishing, authorship and creative writing, book trade and, library equipment manufacture and supplies, software and database creation, information brokerage, indexing and abstracting services, cataloguing and classification of libraries, document delivery, digitization of library and information materials, journal, magazine and online publishing and so on. Similarly, it posited that skills acquisition necessary for successful entrepreneurship and wealth creation for LIS professionals include personal skills, management skills, information technology skills, organization skill, etc. Related studies also revealed a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and wealth creation among unemployed LIS graduates in Nigeria. The study recommended that Nigeria will become a great nation if strategies for effective application of entrepreneurship skills for wealth creation are included in school curriculum at all levels.

***Key words: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial education, Library and information science professionals, skills acquisition and wealth creation.***

### **Introduction**

Library and Information Science and indeed library and information services are basically concerned with the provision and dissemination of information to library users. Both are concerned with the acquisition and organization of information sources. Bassey and Achibong (2005) see library science

and service as the scientific study and application of the acquired professional skills of the librarian in the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval and dissemination of the information as they are contained in the various media of communication. Presently, the teaching of library and information science and the provision of library and information services have gone beyond the documentation of information sources and the provision of information. This is because; current information era is influenced by the general economic hardship, increasing global unemployment, economic recession, industrial crises among others. It is therefore necessary and of utmost importance for the Library and information science professionals to be equipped with entrepreneurship skills to widen their career opportunities, improve productivity, self-employability and wealth sustenance in this information driven age. Hence, acquisition and utilization of entrepreneurial education is among the options through which the problem of unemployment, joblessness and poverty among Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals can be properly addressed.

Library professionals generally, according to Atterbury and Finnell, (2009), often lack prior training in entrepreneurship education. This is so because as Edewor and Omosor (2012) stated, libraries are not profit oriented systems whose main reason for existence is to serve its users rather than financial benefits, therefore did not instill business consciousness among their graduates at the beginning. Consequently, library professionals need to be trained on business ideas and entrepreneurial activities with associated elements of financial risk and potential financial gain. Due to the present economic recession, the dwindling employment rate, the collapse of industries and massive retrenchment of workforce, there is now more emphasis on the enhancement and development of entrepreneurship education for wealth creation and self-sufficiency. However, the arrival of the

information age where information provision is an ever increasing vital commercial activity and the new increasing technological advancement, bringing with it the hitherto disparate activities in information supply, has led to a change in the role of libraries and library professionals (Norris, 2007). Libraries as well as academic library professionals have to take the lead in the promotion of entrepreneurship education; this will go a long way in helping the undergraduate and postgraduate students to have basic knowledge and skills on entrepreneurship. According to Yacom (2011), academic libraries are institutions that are established to take care of the information need of students, lecturers, researchers and other community of scholar to move the nation forward.

One major way librarians play significant role is by sourcing for information for the development of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Hence, Nigeria education system is not yet suitable enough to meet the manpower and employment needs of the nation occasioned by the growing unemployment rate in the country. This development can be expressed by the high population of unemployed youths graduating from both secondary schools and tertiary institutions that roam the streets without employment. The question is: are there windows of opportunities available for them to make use of? If yes how will they get access to information that will lead them to such opportunities, that is where the significant role of librarians comes to play? Entrepreneurship is the backbone of industrial development in any nation. Libraries and librarians have a major role to play in promoting entrepreneurship among their professionals which will go a long way in reducing unemployment rate in Nigeria. The libraries also play a major role in the manpower development of any nation by providing high and middle level manpower for the acceleration of social, economic and political advancement of a nation. The focus of the paper therefore is to explore the benefits of entrepreneurship education, skills acquisition as veritable

means of wealth creation that will enhance career opportunities for library and information science professionals towards reducing unemployment in the country.

### **Concept of Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship has been defined in different ways by different authors. Egboh (2009), defined entrepreneurship as a process of creating values by putting together a unique package of resources to exploit an opportunity to create wealth by bringing together resources in new ways to start a venture that benefits the customer and rewards the producers for their innovations. Entrepreneurship, according to Hisrich and Peters, (2002) is a process of creating something new that is of value, by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence. Entrepreneurship, according to Eke, Igwesi and Orji (2011) is a process that inculcates, creative, innovative, productive and managerial skills needed in business enterprise for self-reliance and national development. Similarly, entrepreneurship, Ejiogu and Nwajiuba (2012) stated is innovation that translates to new methods of production, new markets, or the setting of a new organization or the breaking up of an existing one into new forms.

Entrepreneurship according to Stevenson and Gumper (2002) is a process through which individuals pursue opportunities, fulfilling needs and wants through innovation together with the attendant risks. According to Akinawo (2020) entrepreneurship is about innovation, creativity, dynamism, resourcefulness, self-motivation, risk taking, endurance, and ingenuity among others. The concept of entrepreneurship therefore provides that certain features that can be identified as a guide in providing a

clear appreciation of the requirements for successful entrepreneurship as an employment generation approach. Such features include: Identification of innate needs and wants, Idea conceptualization, Creativity and innovation, Risk-taking, Ability to organize and coordinate resources and team spirit and leadership Akinnawo, (2020). Horsfall (2017) noted that entrepreneurship is a difficult task which requires risk taking, dedication, innovation and creativity.

An entrepreneur therefore is the one who always search for change, is creative, risk-taking, and exploits an opportunity to create new products. An entrepreneur as opined by Anyanwu, Amadi and Oparaku (2011), is one who takes risks by making investments in business opportunities with the aim of generating income from the risk by making maximum profits as the reward of the risk taking. From the various definitions stated entrepreneurship is the most effective method for bridging the gap between science and the market place, creating new enterprises and bridging new products and services, to the market. This implies that entrepreneurship is hinged on skill acquisition and ideas, creation of goods and services relevant to the needs of the people for the purpose of creating employment for oneself, the entrepreneur, and for others. It is a concept or idea that is beneficial to library and information science professionals.

### **Concept of Entrepreneurship Education and Wealth Creation**

Entrepreneurship education is a lifelong learning process, an educational activity or program that promotes an understanding of how to start a business. Accordingly, Agu in Ekankumo and Kemebaradikumo (2011), entrepreneurship education is the type of education designed to change the orientation and attitude of students and the process that will equip them with the skills. Similarly, Ejiogu

and Nwajiuba, (2012) stated that entrepreneurship education is an important part of general education aimed at preparing individuals and library professionals for self-employment, occupational skills, and effective participation in the world of work upon graduation. Entrepreneurial education distinguishes itself from other aspects of business curricula by emphasizing the notion of an entrepreneurial perspective that can be learned through theoretical and practical training (Kuratko and Hodgetts, 2004). It is a business oriented entrepreneurship education that gives its clients the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds (Refaat, 2009). Amoor (2008) stated that entrepreneurial education will provide the library professionals with the opportunities to identify and develop a wide variety of skills and attributes that will be highly utilized for creating and shaping their future by experiencing both business and work environment.

Wealth creation on the other hand refers to economic growth and better standard of living of the individual, family or state (Dada, 2005). He further stated that wealth creation requires empowerment a process which gives people power over the different social, economic, cultural and political forces which govern their lives. The aim of empowerment, according to him is to create true wealth and involve the people in all aspects of governance. Any wealth creation initiative, must boost the human capital elements such as knowledge, skills, and health, of the society. Heller (2003) defines wealth creation in terms of income generation which is the creation of assets, both in terms of physical and human capital.

Entrepreneurship education and wealth creation therefore seek to equip the library professionals with the necessary knowledge, skills and motivation to launch into entrepreneurial ventures in different settings, achieve success and create wealth. All that is required of information professionals is continuous

self-development in skills acquisition for high competencies and a world class performance in the discharge of their responsibilities. Chukwunonyelum (2008) opines that we are in an information age where information is not just power, but fashion, money and even a prerequisite for survival. So, there will be no limitation to an abundance of wealth creation from information products and services, because people will always need information for effective running of every sector in every field.

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 so that in the future, it will enhance employment opportunities. Entrepreneurship education and wealth creation, therefore, is a strategic way of tackling the unemployment scourge affecting the country. In the view of Refaat, (2009) library professionals will gain immensely from entrepreneurship education because they will become aware of occupational choices that are available in small business management and entrepreneurship.

### **Objectives and Benefits of Entrepreneurship Education**

The increasing rate of unemployment among the youths in Nigeria has made entrepreneurship development a necessity at all levels of education. This will help alleviate poverty and engage the unemployed youths into productive activities. This is probably among the reasons why the Federal Government of Nigeria through the National Universities Commission (NUC) introduced entrepreneurship into the nation's educational system. Students therefore must embrace entrepreneurship as a means to self-reliance, economic growth, employment generation and poverty reduction.

The objectives and benefits of entrepreneurship education includes but not limited to the following: Entrepreneurship education fosters wealth creation and creates employment opportunities among the youths. it inculcates into the undergraduates the zeal to be self employed, and become future

entrepreneurs after graduation; it creates awareness among the students about the world of business and endless opportunities to create wealth and be self reliant after graduation. Furthermore, entrepreneurship education reduces social vices in the society as engaged mind rarely have time to engage in unlawful activities. It enables the utilization of available human and material resources for wealth creation and poverty alleviation. Entrepreneurship education helps students to appreciate various skills needed to engage in starting a small business enterprise.

### **Entrepreneurial Opportunities for LIS Professionals to Create Wealth**

Some business enterprises allied to the library that Library and information graduates can engage in include but not limited to:

**Printing and publishing:** These are lucrative business allied to library services. Library and information science professionals can engage in printing and publishing business because one may not have to own a press before engaging in printing. One can also establish contact with writers, publish theses works and earn commission from the author and the printer. Publishing can be effectively carried out online presently.

**Authorship and creative writing:** LIS professionals can venture into creative writing especially literature, biographies, children's picture books. The proliferation of private schools and the rising population of pupils and students give good opportunity for people with flair in creativity and writing.

**Book trade and vending:** This is another business venture that is related to the library profession. Many librarians are known to have engaged in the business of book trade and vending. Every school at various levels needs print and non-print materials in the school library. It is a worthwhile venture for LIS

professionals to embrace and make a living out of. ABIC Books Ltd based in Enugu is owned by a librarian.

**Library equipment manufacture and supplies:** The equipment and supplies are essential for libraries. Library and information professionals can also engage in constructing and supply of library equipments to libraries, administrative offices and private organization. Career enhancement and wealth creation are increased through these ventures. The founder and Chief Executive Officer of NONCONI Ventures Ltd, a library equipment manufacture, is a librarian.

**Private library and book club:** Some librarians have engaged in private library establishment on their own or in partnership with Non-governmental organization as means of disseminating information and research. This is commendable as some individuals utilize their resources and space for reading and research. Revenue is generated and in most cases sponsorship and linkage overseas are established.

**Library software and database services:** This is a modern online business for LIS professionals. Library software creation can best be achieved with persons trained in the library and information services. This is applicable to database hosting for libraries, information centers and institutions.

**Counseling Services:** Counseling service is an important aspect of growth in the society. Librarians are often consulted for counseling services especially for students and mainly on issues relating to life planning, job opportunities, vocations, skill acquisitions, career trajectory, job markets and possible trainings (Saibakumo, 2021). The counseling services also create an avenue through the provision of the right materials for the student to make preparations for their career exams (Holcomb, Dunford and Idowu, 2019). This thus creates an extra pathway for employment and wealth creation for LIS professionals.

**Magazines and Online Publications:** Magazines as well as other online publications can be a source of revenue for librarians. The magazines can be supplied to libraries, private bodies and institutions or host online. This in turn creates revenue for the author.

**Documentation Service:** Accessing research materials are vital in various libraries. Here, documents are offered by librarians to students and researchers mainly electronically through the subscription request of the clientele to enhance reading and research and hence offer an opportunity for librarians to generate wealth.

**Information/ Data Broker:** This is wildly perceived as entrepreneurial since people depend on it to make a living. Librarians can thus broker these information services for the required clients. Akintola (2006) identified some of these services and they include smart enquiries, the use of the internet, engaging in photocopy services, abstracting and so on. Uhegbu (2007) identified these services as business services since they involve charges and this creates room for cash inflow.

**Knowledge Management Services:** Knowledge management is also a vital aspect of academic libraries. It tends to enhance a collective method of identification, capture, evaluation as well as retrieval of the necessary details of an author's knowledge bank according to Durham, cited in UsmanAminu, &Hussaini, (2017). This also is another avenue for LIS professionals to generate wealth.

Other avenues by which LIS professionals can generate funds include the following:

- Book indexing and abstracting
- Book bindery services
- Commercial biography
- Business centre services

- Consultancy and research services
- Digitization/digital publishing
- Editing service
- Library automation services
- Marketing and advertising Agencies
- Conservation and preservation of library resources
- Services to special users
- Web developer

### **Entrepreneurial skills needed by Library and Information Science Professionals**

Entrepreneurs must possess the required skills and knowledge to succeed in any business venture of their choice. According to Uzuegbu (2013), it is very vital to note that traditional roles are no longer frequent in the array of entrepreneurial careers now open to information professionals. As a result of this, different competencies, skills and graduate qualities are needed for entrepreneurship. Omekwu (2009) stated that if library and information professionals do not acquire skills, other professionals from other disciplines like computer science and engineering will step into their core areas of work specialization and take their opportunities. This also means that for librarians to play their role in enhancing or promoting entrepreneurship, they must possess basic skills and knowledge about entrepreneurship and the role it plays in enhancing entrepreneurship as a means of increasing employment rate in Nigeria. In this regard, Uzuegbu (2013) further opined that skills have become both generic and multidisciplinary in the digital age. Cross disciplinary qualifications imply that some people without a basic background in librarianship may acquire basic information management skills either by

further training or lessons from work experiences that will spur them into alternative business enterprises. On the strength of the above, Ugwu and Ezeani (2012) posited that library and information science professionals should strive to improve on their overall skills through the acquisition of various forms of ICT skills and develop entrepreneurial culture and mindset in order to render quality services in the library to their users, achieve self-employment and remain relevant. Thus, some professional and managerial skills are required for successful entrepreneurship as highlighted in Ugwu and Ezeani (2012) among others include personal entrepreneurial skills, good management skills, information and communication technology skills, information literacy skill, organizational delegation of duties as well as knowledge of risk bearing and reward.

### **Personal entrepreneurial skills**

There should be personal entrepreneurial skills to be acquired by individuals at all levels of the educational system so that the skills acquired should be a base to fall upon before stepping into the next level. Therefore, LIS professionals must exercise a high degree of control and discipline; risk bearing, innovativeness, ability to adapt and manage change easily, persistence and visionary leadership. The combination of many of these skills with the right support ensures that ideas do not just remain as day dreams but become real viable businesses.

### **Good Entrepreneurship management skills**

Some entrepreneurs are quiet, very intelligent and hardworking, while others are more outgoing and flamboyant. The key to being a successful entrepreneur lies in the ability to take an idea and then through the process of innovation, develop it in such a way that it becomes a marketable venture or service. For instance, to start a business that creates mobile games, one must possess a special

knowledge in mobile technology, the gaming industry, game design, mobile app marketing or programming.

### **Information and communication technology skills**

This involves training and educating library staff, students and academic staff on the information and communication technology skills so as to impact entrepreneurship skills and knowledge to students through the use of Information technology. Elonye and Uzuegbu (2013) asserted that library and information science professionals easily fit in when they adapt to change to improve their information technology skills through information communication technology competencies. They are also of the opinion that new ideas and innovations are created out of information sourcing, procession and dissemination thereby enhancing and promoting their mindset to achieve self-employment in a country where there is high unemployment rate upon graduation.

### **Information literacy skills**

The library need to train their staff and students to develop high literacy skills which will facilitate the effective assistance librarians render to students in sourcing for information for library users. These have to do with the ability to locate information efficiently and effectively, assess information critically and competently, and use information accurately and creatively. This can be achieved through curriculum development, on the job training, workshops and conferences within and outside.

### **Organization and Delegation of Duties**

While many new businesses start as a sole trade, successful entrepreneurship is characterised by quick, stable and consistent growth. This means hiring other people to do specific jobs. For this reason,

entrepreneurship requires extensive organisation and delegation of tasks to different individuals. It is important for entrepreneurs to pay close attention to everything that goes on in their companies as it grow, but if they want their companies to succeed, they must learn to hire the right people for the right jobs and let them do their jobs with minimal interference from management.

### **Risk bearing and Rewards**

Entrepreneurship involves risk taking. Kwakpovwe (2017) stated that risk takers are the changers of the world. The assessment of this risk equals to the amount of time and the value of money one invested in the business. However, this risk is related directly to the rewards involved.

An entrepreneur who invests in a franchise pays for someone else's business plan and receives a respectable income, while an entrepreneur who undertakes ground breaking innovations, risks everything on an assumption that something revolutionary will work in the market. If such a assumption fails, he can lose everything. However, if he is right he can suddenly become extremely wealthy. Moreover, other studies such as Eke-okpala and Ihejirika, (2012); Crumpton and Bird, (2019) identified some other entrepreneurial skills such as ability to manage loans, consistency, ability to learn fast, marketing and advocacy, effective communications, working with diverse individuals, service-oriented, fund raising, building relationships, problem solving among others. Similarly, Butt and Ahmadu (2022) listed other entrepreneurial skills such as project management, consistency and commitment, working with technologies, value assessment, innovativeness and decision making among.

### **Benefits of Entrepreneurship Education and Wealth Creation to LIS Professionals**

Entrepreneurship education and wealth creation has the potential benefits to library and information science practitioners in many ways. These include:

1. Entrepreneurship education helps to create employment opportunities thereby reducing unemployment and poverty among library and information science professionals
2. It widens and increases the scope of employment and market for library and information science professionals.
3. It helps to develop innovative skills and productivity level of young librarians
4. Entrepreneurship helps to identify, harness and develop managerial capabilities of entrepreneurs among librarians
5. Entrepreneurship education and wealth creation promotes innovation by introducing products and market strategies to library and information science professionals.
6. It creates opportunity and consciousness among library and information science professionals to be self employed and be self-reliant
7. Entrepreneurship education and wealth creates awareness of job opportunities beyond the routine library environment.
8. Entrepreneurship education offers library and information science professionals opportunity to realize and engage in worthwhile ventures incidental to library job.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

Indeed the world has witnessed economic decline which affects all economies. In developing countries like Nigeria, the resultant effects are humongous and includes high rate of unemployment, crimes and other social vices. Incidentally, the large number of graduates and graduating students annually greatly outnumbers job opportunities. It has been greatly recommended that the academic curriculum be reviewed to include entrepreneurship education which will chart a new avenue for wealth

creation, increase self-employment and reduce dependence on government for employment. Entrepreneurship requires skills acquisitions which are not far-fetched. In the same vein, business activities that are allied to the library are numerous and profitable if dedicatedly ventured into. It is the opinion of this paper that the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the nation's school curriculum will go a long way to create opportunities for self-employment thereby curbing unemployment, poverty and crime in the country. In conclusion, it is evident that numerous economic activities allied to the library job that can fetch money to LIS professionals exist. Students should be encouraged to venture into entrepreneurship for self-reliance and wealth creation to overcome unemployment. The commitment and passion for entrepreneurship will lead to employment generation, economic growth, wealth creation and poverty reduction.

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