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# **Entrepreneurship Education as Tool for Economic Growth: The Roles of Information Centres in Nigeria**

by

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## **Abstract**

*Entrepreneurship education has been embraced by almost all the developed countries so it is important to develop the spirit and culture of entrepreneurship education also in the developing countries. Entrepreneurship education is the type of education that shapes people's mindset and also provides the skills and knowledge that one requires to develop an entrepreneurial culture. Entrepreneurship education should be available to all university students regardless of their courses through the provision of its information resources in the library and information centres for economic growth.*

**Key Words: Entrepreneurship Education, Economic Growth, Information Centres, Nigeria**

## **Introduction**

Education has always been canvassed as one of the most visible ways out of poverty but this assertion is becoming invalid with the increasing number of unemployed university graduates. It is now obvious that except the citizenry is exposed to the right education, unemployment would remain unabated. One of the ways of ensuring that education assists in addressing national and global unemployment is by incorporating entrepreneurship education into the curriculum (Obeta, Uchejeso and Philemon, 2020).

Olubamise, et al (2007) in Ubogu (2022) opined that Nigeria is one of the few nations in the world blessed with abundant mineral wealth, an entrepreneurial population and a productive agricultural base. By virtue of its size, population location, it is well positioned to be the hub of economic activities in Africa. Entrepreneurship education is an opportunity to use the private sector (entrepreneurs) to drive economic development and bridge the wealth divide. Garavan and O'Connell (1994), Dana, (1995) in Beetsch and Ahima (2012) in their contributions maintain that entrepreneurship is often used for developing enterprising people and inculcating an attitude of self-reliance using appropriate learning processes.

Garavan and O'Connell (1994), Dana, (1995) in Beetsch and Ahima (2012) expressed that in Nigeria before the advent of colonial government, unemployment was a rare phenomenon because the people were highly entrepreneurial and productively engaged. This entrepreneurial engagement is prevalent in western, northern and the eastern part of Nigeria. It is on record that Yoruba and Hausa ethnic groups are great entrepreneurs in pre and post independent Nigeria. The Igbo ethnic group particularly is recognized internationally for its culture of entrepreneurship and enterprise development. Thus, information centres of modern days in

Nigeria should provide entrepreneurial information for Nigerian citizenry for the culture of entrepreneurship.

## **Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is the creation or extraction of economic value. With this definition, entrepreneurship is viewed as change, generally entailing risk beyond what is normally encountered in starting a business, which may include other values than simply economic ones.

An entrepreneur is an individual who creates and/or invests in one or more businesses, bearing most of the risks and enjoying most of the rewards. The process of setting up a business is known as entrepreneurship. The entrepreneur is commonly seen as an innovator, a source of new ideas, goods, services, and business/or procedures (Wikipedia,2022).

In the field of economics, the term entrepreneur is used for an entity which has the ability to translate inventions or technologies into products and services. In this sense, entrepreneurship describes activities on the part of both established firms and new businesses (Wikipedia,2022) .

As an academic field, entrepreneurship accommodates different schools of thought. It has been studied within disciplines such as management, economics, sociology and economic history, Library and Information Science, etc. Some view entrepreneurship as allocation to the entrepreneur. These scholars tend to focus on what the entrepreneur does and what traits that an entrepreneur has. This is sometimes referred to as the functionalistic approach to entrepreneurship. Others deviate from the individualistic perspective to turn the spotlight on *the* entrepreneurial process and immerse in the interplay between agency and context. This approach is sometimes referred to as the processing approach, or the contextual turn/approach to entrepreneurship (Wikipedia,2022).

Early-19th-century French economist Jean-Baptiste Say provided a broad definition of entrepreneurship, saying that it shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield. Entrepreneurs create something new, something different—they change or transmute values. Regardless of the firm size, big or small, they can take part in entrepreneurship opportunities.

The opportunity to become an entrepreneur requires four criteria. First, there must be opportunities or situations to recombine resources to generate profit. Second, entrepreneurship requires differences between people, such as preferential access to certain individuals or the ability to recognize information about opportunities. Third, taking risk is a necessity. Fourth, the entrepreneurial process requires the organization of people and resources. An entrepreneur uses their time, energy, and resources into creating value for others. They are rewarded for this effort monetarily and therefore both the consumer of the value created and the entrepreneur are benefitted (Wikipedia,2022).

Summarily, Salami (2011) as cited in Adamu (2015) sees entrepreneurship as a process by which individuals pursue economic opportunities. The entrepreneur is seen as an actor, innovator or a developer of business technology. He is also a person who owns or controls a business through which income is gained. An entrepreneur is a person who in a bid to survive makes profit from his/her own business. Dawodu (2005), Onwukwe (2008) in Iwu and Nzeako (2012) observed that entrepreneurship enhances economic development, creates jobs opportunities, transforms traditional industries, and stimulates investment and increase per capital income and output. As rightly described, the importance of entrepreneurship education is capable of reducing poverty in a population and empowering the disadvantaged segment of the population. What then is entrepreneurship education?

## **Entrepreneurship Education**

Salami (2011) as cited in Adamu (2015) explained that entrepreneurship education has been embraced by almost all the developed countries so it is important to develop the spirit and culture of entrepreneurship education also in the developing countries. Entrepreneurship education is the type of education that shapes people's mindset and also provide the skills and knowledge that one requires to develop an entrepreneurial culture. Entrepreneurship education should be available to all university students regardless of their courses.

In order to enhance competitive advantage, it is important to introduce entrepreneurial education into existing education since education is internationally accepted as an index of development. The relationships between education and development have since been established and are mutual. Alberti, Sciascia and Poli (2004) in Adamu (2015) defined entrepreneurship education as the structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurship competencies which in turn refer to the concepts, skills and mental awareness used by individuals during the process of starting and developing their growth oriented ventures. Entrepreneurship education goal is to promote creativity, innovation and self-employment by developing personal attributes and skills that form the basis of an entrepreneurial mindset and behavior. According to Babalola and Abifarin (n.d), the highlight of skills required by Information entrepreneurs is given below. The list is not exhaustive:

- **Technical knowledge and Training:** In today's web avalanche of information, the information specialist is more and more the key to information in a digital format. To be proficient in technology and computer is essential to being a successful librarian or information professional.

- Organisational and evaluation skills: The ability to multitask and juggle different jobs is a major part of the reference information' repertoire. Often information specialists are asked to perform many tasks, from assistance in the search for information for patrons to ordering or discarding library materials, to preparing presentations about the library for the community or a board of directors. Without organisational skills, a librarian or information professional would falter under the amount of and different types of work they had. Along with the ability to multi task and organise within the workings of the information specialists as a whole, comes the organisational and evaluation skills that come with working one on one with a user seeking to answer a specific question.
- Marketing /Interpersonal skills: it is very important for librarians and other information professionals to be able to communicate with users who come to search for information. They should be able to relate well with other colleagues far and near and even with their employers. As for library patrons, the reference interview is a key to any successful interaction between a reference librarian or information scientist and a user. This interview enables a librarian or information scientist to glean what the user wants, and in what form they want it.
- Managing money: A library and information professional who wants to succeed must talk about money always. He/She should learn to spend money wisely. He must not be a waster.
- Public speaking: A library and information science professional who is afraid of talking in public would find it difficult to succeed as an entrepreneur. Therefore he/she needs public speaking skills.



- **Managing Time:** No time must be wasted. For one to succeed as an entrepreneur in library and information science profession, one must value, keep and protect time.
- **Risk taking:** This is an important skill that an entrepreneur in library and information profession must develop. He/she must develop the ability of taking risk, managing risk and making profit at the end of the risk. Any entrepreneur who cannot take risk will find it difficult to succeed.
- **Learning:** Learning is an important entrepreneurial skill that all Information professionals must adopt. Learning new skills in information and communication technology (ICT) in this information driven world is compulsory. Other new skills that are necessary should be made seamless as much as possible to daily routine. Learning is part of Life. Learning is growth. All information professionals should avail themselves of the learning potentials that are provided by technology world and other media of learning.
- **Hard work:** Any library and information science professional that desires success in his/her entrepreneurial business must be hard working. No short-cut to success than hard work.
- **Currency and Information Smart:** Information professionals that will break through in an entrepreneurial activity must be current with happenings in the world of business. He must be prudent and smart with information.
- **Innovation and Creativity:** Innovative and creative minded library and information science professional would generate new ideas, solve current

problems in the information world and possibly create customer friendly information products.

### **Entrepreneurship Education for Economic Growth**

Entrepreneurship Education is needed for the economic growth of a nation. The growth of the economy of a nation cannot be experienced without the education of its citizenry. Thus, the roles of entrepreneurship in the economic growth of a nation as expressed by Iwu and Nzeako (2012) are:

1. It supports Economic and Facilities Linkages: No business exists alone without contacting other organizations or enterprises for one thing or other. The various sectors of the economy seem to be interrelated in the areas of production, distribution and preservation. Entrepreneurship education provides the needed local manpower, technical knowledge and services needed to operate and maintain facilities for constant production.
2. It trains on Rural Saving Mobilization: Entrepreneurship education helps in the establishment of community banks is a policy to help to mobilize rural savings for economic uses. These savings help to boost economic activities in rural areas.
3. It teaches the Utilization of Local Resources and Raw Materials by which the establishment of small business has helped to mop up the local agricultural products because these enterprises make use of the products for local manufacturing and this help to check waste.
4. It helps in the generation of Employment Opportunities. Thereby, all the small and medium scale business generates more employment opportunities than most big enterprises. Many people depend on their business for their employment and may employ others to assist them.

5. It assists in the stimulation of indigenous entrepreneurship development. As such, the experience and skill gained in small business help in the operation and management of big business.

6. It helps in the modification of traditional industries. The development of indigenous and local industries and technologies may be achieved through entrepreneurship education. Countries like Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea and so on gained substantial improvement in their local and traditional industries through indigenous entrepreneurship education.

### **Roles of Information Centres and Libraries in Economic Growth through Entrepreneurship Education**

Knowledge is essentially crucial in one's everyday living. A man's decision in life is informed by the level of knowledge one acquires. A more knowledgeable person tends to make a better or quality decision than others with lesser knowledge. It is not in doubt that the level of knowledge and intelligence one acquires puts him in a relative advantage over the others and puts him in a more relative position in life. Furthermore, knowledge and skills help one cope with the challenges experienced in one's daily life. The encountered challenges and demands necessitate responsive actions from one and the quality of the response tends to depend on what one knows about the encountered challenges and demands placed on him. For one to have a better knowledge of posed challenges encountered and demanded, one has to carefully observe, critically think about what confronts him. The body of knowledge generated through this process which include concepts, laws, principles, theories and facts about how the world we live in function is embedded in library and information centres (Ogar, 2015).

Krushan (1982) in Ogar (2015) opined that there is a strong correlation between library and entrepreneurship education, they constitute significant components in teaching and learning in entrepreneurship education. Thus, the library provides the relevant resources in various formats to sustain teaching and learning by students and teachers in a classroom setting. The quality of teaching by teachers and high academic performance by students depend significantly on the availability and utilization of library resources to meet users' needs. It can therefore be argued that, the quality of workforce responsible for teaching/ learning, learning and research can significantly impact positively on the quality of education. Therefore, Library could be described as the collection of book and non-book materials that are carefully selected, organized, arranged, and retrieved and disseminated to meet the various needs of library users for entrepreneurship education. It is also viewed as a repository of knowledge upon which learning, teaching and research depend entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, Alu, (2007) in Adamu (2015) asserted that, in order to reduce the persistent socio- economic problems especially unemployment among graduates and high incidence of poverty in the country, Nigeria, the need for entrepreneurship education arose. Calls have been made for reorientation among students and their teachers who believe in being employed rather than seeking self-employment after graduation have been made. Government is playing a greater role in providing the necessary atmosphere and policy frame work for success in this direction through information provision to its citizenry. While students are in the university they should acquire the necessary skills and training through entrepreneurship educational materials available in library and information centres to identify an exploitable opportunity for economic development.

Alu, (2007) in Adamu (2015) opined that to develop entrepreneurship which is a means of providing employment and a powerful weapon of fighting poverty in the country, Nigeria, there is need to be transformed economically and create appropriate human resource space through entrepreneurship education. This human resource space is to have ideal educational environment for producing individuals with the mindset of self-reliance, creativity and high productivity in order to cope with the 21<sup>st</sup> century world of work.

### **Challenges Associated with Entrepreneurship Education for Economic Growth in Information Centres and Libraries**

Entrepreneurship Education could play a vital role in equipping individual with necessary intellectual capacity, skills and right type of work habit and attitude to be able to create jobs for the growth of the Nigeria economy. However, what is quite essential is the extent to which the entrepreneurship education programme can be implemented to realize these goals. The programme is confronted with a lot of challenges which brought a setback in the attainment of its objectives. These challenges have not enable Nigerians to enjoy the benefits of this programme as expected. This limits the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs) in Nigeria. Some of the challenges have been pointed out by eminent scholars such as Gana (2000), Aiyeduso (2004), Osuala (2004), Goyin et al. (2019) in (Obeta, Uchejeso and Philemon, 2020) and they include:

1. Poor funding of library and information centres by government and Non-governmental organizations.
2. Poor or ineffective planning, supervision, and evaluation of the entrepreneurship programme in library and information centres across the board.

3. Inadequate teaching materials, equipment and infrastructural facilities in Nigerian libraries.
4. The challenges posed on globalization, information and communication technology (ICT) have effect on curriculum, methodology, facilities, staff and equipment of library and information centres.
5. Shortage of competent resource persons to teach entrepreneurship studies in various educational institutions.
6. Inadequate motivation for available teaching and non-teaching information staff which affects staff efficiency, retention, creativity and initiative.
7. Emphasis are on information materials which centers on theoretical knowledge rather than practical knowledge due to lack of entrepreneurship education authors.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Rather than pursuing shadow or looking for job opportunities where none exist, library and information centres should be inward looking and avail themselves of a plethora of entrepreneurial information geared towards total economic emancipation for users. To stem the tide of youth restiveness in Nigeria which is an aftermath of unemployment, the federal and state governments have order the immediate intuition and practice of entrepreneurial education in all tertiary institutions in the country. Some state governments have gone ahead of the federal government to re-introduce and rejuvenate vocational and entrepreneurial programmes into their respective secondary school programmes as it used to be in the olden days (Babalola and Abifarin, n.d). Thus, library and information centres should be ready to acquire and disseminate information resources on entrepreneurship education to students, scholars and teachers for the economic growth of the country, Nigeria

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