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ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AND THE CHILD: ONE WAY THE LIBRARIAN CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is considered as *sin qua non* to the well being of an individual, most especially in a developing economy like Nigeria where unemployment and quest for white Collar jobs is on the increase. It then becomes necessary to inculcate the entrepreneurial spirit from the cradle. As a child cannot walk immediately the child is born, so will an individual who does not have the necessary entrepreneurial skills at childhood stage cannot or may find it difficult to be self employed at adult stage. At teething stage, little attention is paid to the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. Librarians have a role to play in this. The paper explained how libraries can make a difference; the authors explored different programmes and services the librarians can put in place to develop entrepreneurial skills in children. In the course of this, challenges such as lack of awareness on the role of library by the populace, poor funding and lack of legislation were discovered. The paper concludes with a call for joint efforts of the stakeholders in making legislation and funding school and public libraries in a manner that through their services and programmes, the spirit and skill of entrepreneurship will be inculcated to children early in life.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, library programme, entrepreneurial skills, children, libraries

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa with a high level of unemployment, this may be responsible for youth restiveness, kidnapping, cyber crimes and other vices that has been threatening the peace and progress of the Nigerian citizen .This situation called for a more radical way of getting the youth gainfully employed so that they will be useful to themselves their family and to the society at large. This is better done through entrepreneurship and there cannot be such, if entrepreneurial skills are not in them early in life. (lynch,2006) noted that before birth that the first seeds of literacy skills are planted as a growing fetus hears the sounds of its uterine environment and those of the outside world, as it hears the rhythms of its mother's heartbeat, her voice and conversations. If a fetus can respond to its mother's feelings, acquiring some literacy skills right there in the womb, it means that imbibing the skills of Entrepreneurship can start very early in life.

Childhood is very sensitive, there are some early literacy skills that begin to develop at birth ,these are phonological sensitivity, ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words, which is a child's interest in and enjoyment of books, narrative skills and letter knowledge .Piaget argues that one of the best ways for a child to learn is when a child is forced to expand his existing schemas to match overwhelming evidence from the environment .Also, the new brain research has reinforced the need for stimulation ,change, challenge, involvement and meaningful learning. Dike (2010) noted that learning is the goal of education and that teachers can even teach without learning taking place. Skills are the essential learning tools which includes literacy. Oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving and the basic learning content in cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains required for human beings to survive,

to develop their full capacities, to make informed decisions. These assertions depicts that basic education is concerned with empowerment and to be empowered is to be entrepreneurial.

Entrepreneurship, a word that comes from 13th century verb entrepreneur” means any attempt at starting a venture creation so as to earn money. According to Nwoye (2010), it encompasses the efforts to use resources to implement innovative ideas, which in turn generates superior returns that will result in wealth creation. It is imperative to note that the success of an entrepreneur depends on the wealth of entrepreneurial skills possessed by the entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurial skills therefore are those attributes that can help the entrepreneur achieve his or her goal, such skills are better acquired right from childhood and the library and the Librarians have roles to play in bringing this to fruition. According to American library Association ALA (2018) “Librarians know something about everything” The librarian can do this through a combination of resources and services carefully selected to achieve this goal. The philosophy guiding using the library for inculcating entrepreneurial skills lies in their services and some of the effect of these services could lead a child to self discovery .A child identifies himself in the characters and circumstances he sees mirrored before him. It is expected that with time a child develops creativity through facets of activities showcased in the library. This paper therefore explores how the library can make a difference. How the library can imbibe entrepreneurial skills in children.

Concept of entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has long been considered a significant factor for socioeconomic growth and development because it provides job opportunities, offers a variety of consumer goods and services, and generally increases national prosperity and competitiveness. Entrepreneurship centers itself on a vision, a vision that allows the entrepreneur to see beyond the confines of

resource constraints and identify opportunities missed by others. Entrepreneurs are typically described as individuals who perceive a vision, commit themselves to that vision, and almost single handedly carry the vision to its successful implementation. The need for entrepreneurship skills for children can never be over emphasized for it focus on daily practices and self-paced advancements to improve children's math and reading skills. Libraries are, arguably institutions, committed to giving everyone the opportunity to learn, grow and develop. Indeed, they often have an explicit mandate to work with individuals and groups whom, under a purely economic logic, would simply be neglected.

Personal experience has shown that entrepreneurship entails having the spirit, attitude or qualities of an entrepreneur and being enterprising. It is an entity which has the ability to find and act upon opportunities to translate inventions or technologies into products and services: the entrepreneur is able to recognize the commercial potential of the invention and organize the capital, talent, and other resources that turn an invention into a commercially viable innovation. Rahmati, (2010) defines an entrepreneur as an individual who undertakes the creation, organization, ownership, and risk of a for-profit or not-for-profit business/venture across career clusters. Entrepreneurs are typically described as individuals who perceive a vision, commit themselves to that vision, and almost single handedly carry the vision to its successful implementation. Gibb(, 2009) states that the traditional economist's view of the entrepreneur is as an opportunity seeker, someone who combines the factors of production in an innovative manner and who seeks out and exploits opportunities and gaps in the market. He clearly stated that entrepreneurial motivations represent a complex and somewhat ethereal weave of psychological, social and economic factors that appear to present a certain research challenge. The three factors most often studied in relation to entrepreneurs are:

- Psychological influences
- Personal characteristics
- Effects of previous experience on the individual

The psychological profiles are a determinate of organizational success due to their influence on other variables such as innovation, proactive behavior or risk taking. (Entrialgo et. al, 2000, P146) This is clear from the specific organizational strategies for entrepreneurship and the individual traits and characteristics of entrepreneurs. He also believes that the decision to act entrepreneurially occur as a result of interactions among organizational characteristics, individual characteristics, and some kind of precipitating event. The precipitating event provides the impetus to behave entrepreneurially when other conditions are conducive to such behavior. The researcher observed that it can also be determined by whether the difference between those individuals who successfully start a business and those who give up is attributable to the nature of the opportunity, to the commitment and expectations of the nascent entrepreneur or to the level of resource availability in the external environment. Rae, (2012) is also of the opinion that developing an entrepreneurial spirit and concentrating on flexibility, innovation and growth and creating entrepreneurs within the society requires providing adequate educational infrastructure, executive commitment and promoting the spirit of entrepreneurships. He emphasized that most successful entrepreneurs have developed a certain set of skills that have helped them reach their goals. While you definitely need nerve and patience to launch and run a new business, you also need to focus on nurturing these critical skills that are integral to your future success in very important ways.

Entrepreneurial skills and the child

A child is referred to as a young person who do not have the maturity and understanding to make important decisions. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has for its purposes identified childhood as that stage of life experienced by any person between birth and fifteen years. Article 1 of the 1989 United Nations convention on the rights of the child states that a child is any person under the age of eighteen. According to Koren (2010) articulating the UN convention said that children have right to participate in making decisions on issues that concerns them. Children cannot actively participate in making such decisions if they lack skills, such skills like literacy skills and entrepreneurial skills.

Entrepreneurial skill according to INNO-Grips (2011) can be categorized into three viz;

- Personal characteristics.
- Interpersonal skills.
- Critical and creative thinking skills

Personal characteristics deals with the examination of the person's attributes, values, and beliefs. Does the person in question have the mindset that's typical of successful entrepreneurs and is the person an optimist thinker? Optimism is truly an asset, and it will help get you through the tough times that many entrepreneurs experience as they find a business model that works for them. Personal characteristics also involved vision to easily see where things can be improved and the ability to quickly grasp the big picture and explain to others. Kelley, Bosma, & Amorós, (2010) in their research found that creating a compelling vision of the future, and inspiring other people's initiative as part of the personal characteristics will also help in instinctively start problem solving or business improvement projects.

Interpersonal skills: As a successful entrepreneur, you will have to work closely with people to be able to build great relationships with people that know better than you do. An

entrepreneur, have to depend on others to get beyond a very early stage in your business or your career chosen there's just too much to do all on your own. Mentorship is very essential in this stage and the entrepreneur needs to possess the mentee skills in order to work effectively with his or her mentor. In work of Gibb, (2010) communication skills are also required to be competent with all kinds of communications. He emphasized that the entrepreneur needs to be able to communicate well to sell his or her vision of the future to investors, potential clients, team members, and more. Listening skills, personal relations and negotiations will make or break an entrepreneur if he is not skilled in active and empathetic listener, emotionally intelligent and negotiator.

Critical and creative thinking skills: As an entrepreneur, you need to come up with fresh ideas, and make good decisions about opportunities and potential projects. Many people think that you are either born creative or you are not. However, creativity is a skill that you can develop if you invest the time and effort for you to be able to see situations from a variety of perspectives and come up with original ideas (Haugh, 2007). He is of the opinion that well skilled in problem solving, goal setting, planning and recognizing opportunities will help the entrepreneur come up with sound solutions to the problems of cause and effect analysis to create plans to take advantage of the opportunities identified.

In addition to these skills other characteristics of an entrepreneur as outlined by Nwoye(2009) are decision making, opportunity recognition ,risk taking ,creativity, innovation improvement, facing challenges, organization, initiative ,management growth potential, business drive and business secrecy. In all, to be a successful entrepreneur ,one must understand self, and have desire to be independent, have ability to explore situations, such a person can turn a hobby into a business venture and then be rational and orderly in order to bring it to fruition. All these

skills cannot be developed once, it needs to start from the cradle and libraries with their resources and services can inculcate and prepare these qualities in children. Entrepreneurship incorporate a wide expanse of skills, thought process, intentions and actual behaviors in an entrepreneurial world (Gibb, 2013). Children learn through participation and observation, there is need to imbibe these entrepreneurial skills in a more practical way and the library is capable of doing it.

Library programs that can enhance entrepreneurial skills in children

There are library programmes which practiced overtime improves entrepreneurial skills in children. One of these programmes is project work. Project work is an extended and independent learning activity based on a given topic and resulting in a documentation or presentation. While giving the project to children, topics in the school curriculum can be shared to children and may be asked to collect data through interview, pictures and then form an album while documenting results. Dike and Ajogwu (2011) carried out a study on this and discovered that by mere participation in project work, skills such as language and communication skills, independent and critical thinking skills, documentation skills develops in children. Children learn by doing and when allowed to participate in project work it allows for some initiatives and ability to think outside the box.

Another activity the library does is creative writing and comic book writing. A practical approach at children's centre library with children during vacation programmes has proved that children can become better entrepreneurs in this aspect. A child can make money through making comics, Mccloud (2014) noted, that comics is a medium of expression like movies or prose that can communicate a wealth of ideas and emotions, Howe (2011) noted that comics offers a combination of reading and visual stimulation which encourages reading skills. Kuhltha

(2010) noted that there is need to go beyond hearing to read to reading to learn, children need to understand stories and create theirs. Library can also organize visit by important personalities such as authors of bestselling books. In such, there are talks and practical sessions, this brings about interest in writing a book on their own. Totemeyer (2011) reported how such visits promoted “Readathon” and spurs in children creativity.

Apart from reading activities, a planned story hour with children helps a lot in imbibing entrepreneurial skills in children, children need to know about other people, their culture, they need to understand that people have feelings and also learn how to appreciate and condemn bad things. This can only be achieved through participation in storytelling. Story hour has gone beyond traditional forms of telling it to telling it in school libraries, public libraries, classrooms, homes and villages . According to Dike and Ajogwu (2010) participation in story hour stimulates imagination and creativity in children. It brings about development of language, visual literacy linking the affective and cognitive domain. It brings about culture affirmation, moral , emotional development socialization and values in children. Stories of other people in other land, broadens the horizons of knowledge in children.

The libraries during vacation programmes can organize programmes such as art and craft, sewing, bread making, soap and detergent making, bakery and cookery such activities when learnt can become a vocation for them when they grow up. Other activities are Debate clubs, book review clubs, Drama, Essay competitions can bring about good communication skills in children. An entrepreneur need communication skills in other to negotiate with people as the case arises Presently in this 19th century Digital literacy is emphasized, libraries bring in computer programmes and children learn a lot of packages that enable them fit in as 21st century

learners. since most resources are in digital forms and school libraries have keyed in teaching digital literacy skills so that children can use resources in digital format.

The modern education philosophy advocates for lifelong learning, it focuses on the learner rather than teacher oriented learning. In other words, education does not just end with the inculcation of subject matter, rather it should be such that is encouraging initiative, creativity and engagement of the child. Such life expectancy of education is easily fostered by the library such as school library, public library and other media resource centers meant for children.

The library does these by expansion of resources used in teaching children, providing rich filled environment for independent learning, stimulating research and independent study by providing a wide variety of materials, providing opportunities for further pleasurable reading and use of materials other than prescribed classroom textbooks. Libraries according to Dike et al (2011) are places of freedom, which fosters information literacy skills in children, information literacy is very crucial for successful entrepreneurship spirit, this is because it deals with the ability to access, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources(Doyle,1994).Knowledge changes overtime ,so also individual needs and circumstances, therefore one needs to recognize a need or problem as it comes by and figure out how to locate, evaluate and use it

Children's educational program: Libraries especially in western world organizes educational programs where all tutors are certified, having undergone an intensive training program on one-to-one tutoring methods and test-prep strategies. Nicholls, (2006b) in his study *An Exploration of Social Entrepreneurship in the Entrepreneurship Era* found that libraries do organize educational programs for children to equip them on creative thinking and skills while growing up. Totemeyer (2011) describes the activities of the Namibian Children's Book forum which is aimed at promoting reading, such activities like the "Readathon" which started small in

1998 and became a National movement after 14 years with almost all schools participating. The activities showcased were writing of stories, poetry and dramas, art and crafts, drama performances, debates, tongue twister competition, telling stories from oral sources .talks by different personalities and Authors of Famous books. Such activities promotes innovative spirit, creativity, career making and the desire to exploit opportunities before them.

Home tutoring allows tutoring services to take place at the student's home, library, and school or after-school facility. The startup costs are lower and subjects vary from the core three (reading, writing and arithmetic) to entrepreneur skills, hand works, foreign languages, computers and music. Bibliotherapy could be one those programmes the library can institute in order to bring about physical, emotional and psychological balance in children. Olajide(2013) investigated the use of Bibliotherapy by counselors in school and found a low level use of bibliotherapy in schools and therefore suggested that it could be a library based programme which could be playfully used on children while in the library.

Libraries provide child care centers that will start from infant to inculcate sound moral, social, & socio economic values to the children. Kutzhanova, Lyons, & Lichtenstein, (2009) on their work Skill-Based Development of Entrepreneurs and the Role of Personal and Peer Group Coaching in Enterprise Development observed that library school is a year-round educational facility for children from six weeks to six years old, and it includes after-school and summer programs for older elementary school students. Each school is a licensed childcare facility and staff members are trained in Early Childhood Education or Childhood Development. Children's development/fitness program: this is created by a grade-school teacher with physical education, psychology and motor development degrees, The Little Gym offers programs for infants through age 12. Its non-competitive curriculum, which focuses on improving motor skills while also

enhancing emotion, intellectual and social skills, includes karate, dance, cheerleading, and gymnastics and sports skills. Individualized instruction for students: library schools also offers instruction for K-12 students on math, reading, writing, and study skills with the guarantee that, after 32 hours of tutoring, the student's skills for creating, monitoring and updating lesson plan will improve at least one full grade level. Libraries and librarians can indeed make a difference but there are challenges in Nigeria.

Problems associated with rendering library services to children

The Nigerian populace is filled with people of diverse interest. Such interests determine what children get. Certain right of the child are not adequately payed attention, such right is the UN convention on the rights of the child (1989) article 12 stated that every child have right to education, right to participate in decision making process affecting his or her life and to influence decisions taken on his or her behalf within the family, in the school or in the community. All states have ratified this. The question is, are all children given these rights in Nigeria,? Are all children mentally and emotionally ready to participate? Koren (2011) explored how these human right relate to education and libraries. The problems associated with rendering library services to children are summarized thus:

- a) Lack of awareness on the role of library
- b) Lack of legislation
- c) Non-advertisement of the post of librarians in primary and secondary schools. A lot of studies have discovered these problems as the major problems affecting libraries meant for children such authors as Dike(2010), Ngwuchukwu (2013) and Onyebuchi (2010)

Recommendations

Having seen what the library can do to promote entrepreneurship, it becomes imperative to develop libraries for such participation. Such recommendations are:

- 1) Need for legislation – Legislators should pass a law that mandates all schools to have libraries and then money should be voted into it and there should be supervisory roles.
- 2) Professional associations should go into awareness campaigns to educate the populace on the need for libraries.
- 3) Teachers should be trained on library use skills and encouraged to use resources in library
- 4) Government should advertise the post of librarian in schools so that there will be qualified librarians in libraries
- 5) There is need to include library periods in the school curriculum.
- 6) There is need to teach library studies in colleges of education and faculties of education.

Conclusion

Given the current economic challenges facing many countries across the globe, the notion of encouraging greater entrepreneurial activity has become a prominent goal for many national governments. The aim of entrepreneurship education and training should be to develop entrepreneurial capacities and mindsets that benefit economies by fostering creativity, innovation and self-employment. Children are leaders of tomorrow, and for any nation to be economic driven, it has to invest more on children. Arguably, differences in access to and use of information arguably explain a large share of the differences in wealth we see between countries today. The growing understanding that the most effective services that respond to the needs of their users are those which take account of local specificities as the role of libraries. Libraries has vital role of providing access to information materials and services that will enhance entrepreneurial skills among children for self development and contributes to nation building.

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