

Repositioning Library and Information Science Graduates in Nigeria for Self-Employment through Entrepreneurship Education

Emmanuel Uwazie ANYANWU

Department of Library & Information Science
Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Owerri, Imo State.

Emmanuel A. ODUAGWU

Department of Library & Information Science,
Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Owerri, Imo State

Oyemike Victor OSSAI-ONAH

Virtual Library / ICT Unit, Library Division
Federal Polytechnic, Nekede, Owerri, Imo State

Nkechi M. AMAECHI, Mrs

Serials management Unit
Federal university of Technology Library, Owerri, Imo State.
aric2005consult@yahoo.com. 08033600494

Abstract

The paper is centred on repositioning Library and Information Science graduates in Nigeria for self-employment through entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship has become an integral component of tertiary education and now acts as catalysts of transformation. The major highlights of the paper includes: rationale for repositioning library and information graduates for self-employment. Entrepreneurship as a concept, entrepreneurship education, benefits of entrepreneurship education, self-employment opportunities 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 in library schools, acquisition of ICT skills by lecturers in library schools and retraining of lecturers in library schools on entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Library and Information Science, Graduates, Self-Employment, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, Nigeria

Introduction

Library and information science education plays a significant role in the educational achievement of any nation. The field of library and information science (LIS) is undergoing immense transformation and this has affected the landscape of library and information service parlance. In our contemporary society, where education has become the hub upon which economic development rotate, the place of library and information services cannot be ignored. Library and Information science programme is designed to assist students in the development of a wide range of technical skills in both library and media services that can lead to or enhance employment in the library field and other related industries. Library and Information science graduates are expected to possess entrepreneurship skills in order to be relevant in the new information arena within which to apply the entrepreneurial skills.

We are living in a complex and hybrid information environment that is highly competitive and as such the graduates of library and information science ought to be fully equipped with the entrepreneurial skill that will empower them to reposition themselves in the society where unemployment is almost if not becoming a norm. Library Information science education in Nigeria today cannot be relevant without effective preparation of new generation of librarians to effectively use the new information and technology in their professional practices (Edegbo, 2011). Library schools according to Aina & Moahi (1999) are expected to impart the necessary library and information skills to their students so that after graduation, the graduates can be expected to function effectively in libraries and other information related work settings with minimal supervision.

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 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 employable instead of looking for white-collar jobs. In these era of rise entrepreneurship education has become a necessity. As noted by Combes et al (2011), new graduates are key stakeholders in Library and Information Science (LIS) and Library and Information Management (LIM), if this assertion is anything to go by, it implies that the graduates-to-be should be adequately repositioned in theory and practical knowledge of the profession and as well be trained to be entrepreneurial in mind and reasoning as this is the only way through which unemployment can be reduced drastically.

Unemployment is now an economic problem in our contemporary society. Millions of graduates are being pushed into the labour market on yearly basis from our tertiary institutions without adequate and corresponding job opportunities to match this turn out. This scenario has eaten deep into the fabric of our society that the need to curb this menace is now a necessity. This must have informed why NUC and NBTE decided to introduce entrepreneurship education into our educational system. Nigeria as a nation no longer has ready-made jobs waiting for the large graduates' churned out every year from the various institutions. In the face of this ugly scenario, it is pertinent that library and information science (LIS) graduates are expected to possess the requisite entrepreneurial skills that will enable them to fit approximately into the labour force.

The world in the 21st century is witnessing a wave of entrepreneurship happening with more and more people looking for self-empowerment and business ownership (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010). This age according to Bygrave (2003) is an entrepreneurial age and entrepreneurs are driving a revolution that is transforming and renewing economies worldwide. In other words, entrepreneurship is now a key driver of our economy. Entrepreneurship as noted by Inegbenebor (2005) in the last three decades has emerged as an area of study by economists, sociologists, anthropologists and management scientists and has developed worldwide as an academic discipline. Entrepreneurship is indispensable for economic and social development of Nigerian (Ojukwu, 1999). Today, entrepreneurial activities have become the bedrock of every nation's industrialization. No wonder, Egbuonu (2010) pointed out that people are now willing to be creative and innovative and to identify, establish and run their own ventures instead of waiting for government alone to provide jobs for everybody. This clearly points to the fact that entrepreneurial development is a catalyst for economic, social and industrial development. As pointed out by Oteh (2009), Entrepreneurship has been a powerful engine of economic growth and wealth creation, and is crucial for improving the quality, number and verity of employment opportunities for the people.

Rationale for Repositioning Library and Information Graduates for Self-Employment

The following are the rationale for repositioning library and information science graduates through entrepreneurship education.

- Entrepreneurship education will provide library and Information science graduate the additional skills that will empower them to transform their ideas into visible business.
- It will empower the graduates to create jobs for themselves.
- Entrepreneurship education according to Amoor (2008) when integrated into the curriculum of Nigerian universities will create a motivation into the students to dream big dreams of business ownership and work hard to make things happen.

- Entrepreneurship and small business has been acknowledged as a fundamental component of economic growth and health (Plumly et al, 2008).
- Since Nigeria is driving towards entrepreneurial economy, library and information science graduates needs to be repositioned through entrepreneurship education for them to succeed.

Entrepreneurship education as introduced in tertiary institutions in Nigeria by the Nigerian Federal government is expected to inculcate in students the practical skills and experience needed to be self-employed and to be self-reliant, through the management of small-scale businesses (Idogho & Ainabor, 2011). Entrepreneurship is therefore aimed at reducing the rate of unemployment among university graduates.

Entrepreneurship as a Concept

Entrepreneurship as a concept has to be explained for us to comprehend fully the concept of entrepreneurship education. Definitions of entrepreneurship are dependent on whose perspective is being considered (Stokes, Wilson & Mador, 2010). Entrepreneurship according to Drucker (1985), rest on a theory of economy and society. It is also seen as fundamentally important part of modern economic and social life (Stokes, Wilson & Mador, 2010). Entrepreneurship has to do with the characteristics individual 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).

Hisrich and Peters (2002) defines entrepreneurship as the process of creating something new 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 programme that inculcates creative, innovative, productive and managerial skills needed in business enterprises for self-reliance and national development. Entrepreneurship therefore is a crucial ingredient towards economic growth and job creation (Marshall and Samuel, 2006).

Entrepreneurship therefore 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 translate to a new methods of production, new markets, or the setting up of a new organization or the breaking up of an existing one (Ejiogu & Nwajiuba, 2012). In other words, entrepreneurship is not just skill acquisition for acquisition sake; rather it is an acquisition of skills and ideas for the sake of creating employment for one's self and also for others. The process of entrepreneurship as seen from the various concepts shows that it starts from the point of generating business ideas to ensure that end product yields profit as output.

According to Duru (2011), 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. Entrepreneurship therefore is not just about creation of goods, creation of services relevant to the needs of the people is also part of entrepreneurship.

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). They view it as a new approach in imparting knowledge and knowhow to students. Entrepreneurship education is made up of kinds of experiences that gives 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 Agu (2006) in 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. To them, it is a method for 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. In the view of Kanu (2001), 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 presently given 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 on the high side.

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 these clearing 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.

Benefits of Entrepreneurship education

The following are the benefits of Entrepreneurship education:

- i. It promotes innovation or rather introduces new products or services and market strategies to the students to become outstanding entrepreneurship (Amoor, 2008).
- ii. It prepares individuals to create and successfully operate a business enterprise.
- iii. 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.
- iv. Entrepreneurship education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit, of entrepreneurial behaviour, skills and attributes.
- v. It is an effective method for bridging the gap between science and the market place, creating new enterprise.
- vi. It helps to develop innovation skills in young people.

Self-Employment Opportunities Available to Library and Information Science Graduates in Nigeria

There are many self-employment options available to library and information science students as an entrepreneur. They are as follows:

1. **Publishing:** The publishing sector is a viable option for library and information science graduate. With proper entrepreneurship education, the graduates of library and information will be better disposed to undertake ventures in publishing.
2. **Development of Computer Software:** Graduates of library and information science can take the option of developing computer software that will be used specifically for specific tasks in libraries and information centres.
3. **Production and Sale of Library Equipment's:** 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 audio visual equipment, catalogue cards, metal shelf, bookstands e.t.c use in library and information centres
4. **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.
5. **Bookselling Business:** Graduates in 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.
6. **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. The option of running a cyber café business is also available to him.
7. **Computer Maintenance:** This is another option available to graduates in library science. Knowledge of computer maintenance puts the graduate in a position to be self-employed

Factors Limiting the Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Library Schools

1. **Non-challant Attitude of Student:** As rightly pointed out by Ifedili and Ofoegbu (2011), there seems to be no seriousness among many students in the participation of the course as many of them see the course as one of those unnecessary courses imposed on them to fulfil graduation requirements.
2. **Lack of Functional Workshop and Laboratories:-** Most of the Nigerian library schools lacks of 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 workshop that exist cannot empower 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 wind of entrepreneurship. The poor state of infrastructural facilities is nothing to write home about especially in this ICT driven age. If entrepreneurship education must takes its proper place, then heads of library schools has to go back and work out modalities of ensuring that our library school 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 to 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 lacks the basis 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. This ugly trend do affect the overall objective of entrepreneurship education
5. **Unavailability of Fund:** Behind any successful project is availability of finance. For entrepreneurship education to be fully integrated into the educational system and achieve its objective, then finance ought to be available. The laboratories found in our tertiary institution can only be upgraded if the fund is 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

No society in our contemporary world can achieve meaning progress without taking cognizance of the role of entrepreneurship, since the would-be graduate are expected to acquire necessary skills that will enable them to meet the needs of society. Entrepreneurship education plays a significant role in unemployment reduction and economic development. Library and Information science education should see the need of ensuring full implementation of entrepreneurship education in the training of library and Information practitioners not just in theory but in practice. Full implementation of entrepreneurship will make much of what they learnt in theory to be real when the necessary mechanism are put in place.

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. If the integration of entrepreneurship education to the training of librarians is not adequately implemented, it becomes difficult for graduates of library and Information science to secure self-employment, let alone creating job for others, in which case is like going back to square one. Efforts therefore should be made to ensure that the necessary equipment (facilities) are put in places, qualified teachers with practical knowledge are absorbed into the system, then and only than we can move from the non-entrepreneurship era to the entrepreneurship age.

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 repositioned them to impart the entrepreneurial knowledge to the students.
- e. **Provision of Funds:** the various bodies 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 release to the library schools because it is the availability of fund that will determine the acquisition of relevant equipment as well as training and re-training of the lecturers.

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