

The Library and Information Science Graduates Unemployment and Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is the process of designing, learning and running a new business. It has been defined as the capacity and willingness to develop, organize and manage a business venture along with any of its risks in order to make profit. This paper examines entrepreneurship education as a means of reducing unemployment and checking other social vices in Nigeria. It specifically dwells on the Library and Information science graduate and the various opportunities available in that profession which can be tapped by the graduates to become entrepreneurs. The skills needed by the information professional to succeed in this digital were professional and interpersonal skills. The paper assesses the entrepreneurial curricula of two universities and advocates the provision of infrastructural facilities and allocation of more learning period for the curricula to be more meaningful. It recommends that government should provide a better enabling environment and possibly encourage graduates who intend to start up a business with grants or loan facilities. The paper concludes that entrepreneurship education can check the level of unemployment if it is encouraged in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Education, Graduates, Information professionals, Unemployment*

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Introduction

With a population of 185, 398, 757 as at March, 2016 according to the United Nations estimates, Nigeria is the most populous black nation in the world. The population of the country is equivalent to 2.48% of the total world population. As of 2019, the projected population was over 200.96 million and she ranked the 7th most populous nation. Over the years, universities, polytechnics and colleges of education and other tertiary institutions have turned out graduates of various disciplines into the labour market. Unfortunately, the labour market is unable to absorb even a quarter of the population. In December 2014, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) recorded that 56 percent of Nigerian youths are unemployed. At the international scene, the entry of Brazil, Russia, India and China referred to as the BRIC countries into the global market economy has doubled the size of the global workforce and dramatically changed its demographic profile. The resultant effect has been massive unemployment, youth restiveness and various crimes of very high magnitude witnessed within the Nigerian education community. Major factors identified as causes of unemployment include: epileptic power supply, poor quality of education, lack of skills, and corruption. As observed by Etim (2015), one of the major responsibilities of any government is the provision of economic empowerment as evidenced in the gainful engagement of people of various academic qualifications whose idleness constitutes a real danger to the survival of both the society and the government. This situation represents a strong challenge in an era in which governments across the globe have realized and acknowledged their inability to provide gainfully paid employment for all persons willing to work. Identified reasons include dwindling government revenue; inadequate training received by job seekers which makes them unemployable; and the fact that products of educational institutions are ill-prepared for self-employment. It is against this background that it is hoped that entrepreneurship education can give succour in checking the level of unemployment in Nigeria.

Unemployment scenario in Nigeria

A person is regarded as employed if he/she is engaged in the production of goods and services, thereby contributing to the GDP in a legitimate manner which is a component of the national accounts and receives some form or amount of compensation for the activity. The National Bureau of statistics (NBS) recently disclosed that the nation's

unemployment rate in the second Quarter of 2015 was 8.2% from 7.5%. Recent statistics show that unemployment rates have been on the increase. Available statistics from NBS (2019) indicate that unemployment rates rose to 23.1% in Q3 2018 from 18.8% in Q3 2017. The bureau explained that the economically active population or working age, comprising persons within the range of age 15 to 64 increased to 103.5 million from the second quarter up from 102.8 million in the first quarter of 2015. According to NBS report, the economically active or working age population (15 – 64 years of age) increased from 111.1 million in Q3, 2017 to 115.5 million in Q3, 2018. In computing the unemployment rate, the total population is divided into labour force (currently active) and non labour force (not currently active). The labour force population covers all persons aged 15 to 64 years. The definition of unemployment therefore covers persons (aged 15–64) who during the reference period were currently available for work, actively seeking for work but were without work.

What is Entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurship is the process of designing, learning and running a new business, i.e., starting up a business offering a product, process or services. It has been defined as the capacity and willingness to develop, organize and manage a business venture along with any of its risks in order to make a profit. The entrepreneur is “a person who organizes and manages any enterprise, especially a business usually with considerable initiative and risk. The Commission Communication (2006) defined entrepreneurship education as the individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. Entrepreneurship education supports everyone in day to day life at home and in society, makes employees more aware of the context of their work and better able to seize opportunities, and provides a foundation for entrepreneurs and enabling a social and commercial activity.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2008) maintains that entrepreneurship education is made up of all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds. It goes beyond business creation. It is about increasing student's ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes. It is also seen by UNESCO as

education and training which allows students to develop and use their creativity and to take initiatives, responsibility and risks. To Lee & Wong (2008) entrepreneurship education is a catalyst for economic development and job creation in any society. The above views show that entrepreneurship education by its scope, nature and characteristics is a rebranding of education culture to guarantee a comprehensive educational system re-engineering arising from the obvious deficiencies of the existing education system. It is aimed at equipping the students with requisite skills and capacities needed to set up a successful business, and manage it to achieve the purpose for which it was established.

Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) (1998) defines entrepreneurship as “the process of using initiative to transform business concepts to new venture, diversify existing ventures or enterprise to high growing venture potentials. Entrepreneurship can be defined as the creation and running of one's own business”. In 2007, Kiratko and Hdgetts developed an integrated definition of entrepreneurship that acknowledges the critical factors needed to excel as an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship education, according to them, is:

a **dynamic Process** of vision, change and creation which requires an application of energy and passion towards the **creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions**. Essential ingredients include the willingness to take calculated risk – in time, equity and career; the ability to **formulate an effective venture team**; the creative skill **marshal the needed resources**; the fundamental skill of building a **social business plan** and the vision to recognize opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction and confusion.

According to Uzuegbu and Nwosu (2014), entrepreneurship education enables the student who has gone through the programme to sharpen their imagination and develop the critical thinking ability required to identify practical and income-generating solutions to real-life problems. Entrepreneurship education prepares the beneficiaries to become entrepreneurs, wealth creators and employers of labour.

A good entrepreneurship education programme must have a good mix of theory and practice. Its successful implementation must involve the larger community. It should not limit the students' learning experience to a particular subject area. Rather, it should be multi-disciplinary in nature in order to provide the learner the diverse experiences needed to succeed in the contemporary business environment. This should include the students' core discipline, fund-raising skills, opportunity identification and venture management.

The goals of entrepreneurship education are to:

1. identify and solve problems being critical and creative thinking.
2. work effectively with others as a proactive team member and cultivate the ability to resolve conflict.
3. organize and manage one self and one's activities.
4. Collect analyze, organize and critically evaluate information (to make decisions that must be carried through).
5. communicate and negotiate effectively.
6. reflect on experiences and explore various strategies for effective learning.
7. become curious leading to reduce to experiment and innovate (being never satisfy with the status quo.
8. consider self-employment as a viable option upon graduation from their institution.

Business Environment in the 21st century

The business environment in the 21st century is fast changing as a result of changes in technology and training demands. According to Etim (2015), the 21st century businesses and entrepreneurship are being reconstructed from within and without by persuasive technology. New ways of designing and managing businesses, new business models are inevitable, corporate behaviour towards society, customers and employees is increasingly coming under scrutiny. Financial crises have sharpened the idea that unethical and unsustainable behaviour is an external cost that should not be paid by the public. Etim (2015) has noted that the following challenges are posed in the business environment:

- Polarized distribution of wealth
- Globalization
- New technologies

- Diversity and complexity
- De-intermediation
- Legislation changes
- Corporate governance structure
- Population demographics, Risk and uncertainty, Terrorism, Pandemics, e.g. Ebola, Bird flu, Zika virus
- Natural environmental changes

These challenges in the business environment have given rise to emerging consumer trends in the 21st century like:

1. Anxiety - stress in management
2. Connectedness - one event experienced by more people
3. Mobility - people access anything, anytime, anywhere
4. Convergence - blurring of industries, markets and brands
5. Authenticity - growing interest in authentic products
6. Multiple personalities - people fake identities

Entrepreneurship Education in the Nigerian Education System

According to Enu (2012), a national crisis exists in Nigerian public education and that is why Soludo (2006) wrote that Nigeria's educational system was “down and out” as the university system was characterized more by the days of strikes and lockouts rather than days in classrooms. The lawlessness and a culture of impunity, fostered by decades of militarization and bad governance, prevailed at all levels. Aside this, entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is very new. According to Etim (2015), it was introduced in Nigeria in 2007 and has therefore not gained enough grounds in the country's educational system.

Entrepreneurship Education in the LIS

The knowledge economy (k-economy) is now by far the fastest growing sector worldwide ahead of oil, solid minerals, agriculture and even industrialization. At the driver's seat in the k-economy are Science, Technology and Innovation (ST v&I) in truism widely depicted in the following quote by Philip Emeagwali (2006), “that those who create new knowledge are producing wealth while those who consume it are producing poverty”.

Classical examples are the Asian Tigers (Japan, Hong Kong, South

Korea, Singapore and Indonesia) and now the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) vis-à-vis most of the African/Asian continents. Information is also now valued as a crucial commodity. According to Saleem, Shabana and Batcha (2013) information should be ranked as a fifth need of human in ranking after air, water, food and shelter. The above re-emphasises the importance of information in the current dispensation and those who are custodians of this essential commodity.

Zurkowski (1984) has depicted the information industry in terms of eight segments:

Information Content Business

1. Content Services: news agencies, libraries, databases, information brokers
2. Content Packages: books, newspapers, films, records, tapes, videos
3. Facilitation Services: data processing, timesharing, networking

Information Technology Businesses

4. Information Technologies: computers, office equipment, printing and graphics
5. Integrating Technologies: packet switching, modems, switchboards and digital switching
6. Communications Technologies: radio, televisions, telephones and transmission systems
7. Communications Channels: mail, telephone, telegraph, satellites
8. Broadcast Channels: radio and television networks, multipoint distribution service.

The introduction of information communication technologies (ICT) in recent years has brought changes to some of the above even though the basic principles remain the same. Entrepreneurship opportunity in the LIS profession is any occasion in which products and services are tendered by means of new discovery or by virtue of innovations that culminate in transforming the landscape of LIS services. The evolution and integration of ICT in library service have resulted in creation of various entrepreneurial opportunities for LIS professionals. These

include: Library Equipment Business, Printing and Publishing Business, Information Brokerage Business, Indexing and abstracting services, Library Consultancy Business, Book vendor/Stationary Business, ICT business, Reprography and bindery Business, Cyber cafe and business centre, Information marketing.

Ajeemsha and Madhusudhan (2012) summarize the basic library management skills required for a library professional to include: (i) Effective communication skills; (ii) Resource building skills, (iii) Technical skills (iv) Leadership skills (v) Decision making skills (vi) Time management skills (vii) Public relations skills (viii) Preservation skills and (ix) Information and Communication Skills.

The authors further highlighted the major professional and personal competencies of new era librarians as follows:

Professional Competencies

- has expert knowledge of the content of information resources, including the ability to critically evaluate and filter them
- has specialized subject knowledge appropriate to the business of the organization or client
- develops and manages convenient, accessible and cost-effective information services that are aligned with the strategic directions of the organization
- provides excellent instruction and support for library and information service users
- assesses information needs and designs and markets value-added information services and products to meet identified needs
- uses appropriate information technology to acquire, organize and disseminate information
- uses appropriate business and management approaches to communicate the importance of information services to senior management
- develops specialized information products for use inside or outside the organization or by individual clients
- evaluates the outcomes of information use and conducts research related to the solution of information management problems
- continually improves information services in response to the

- changing needs
- is an effective member of the senior management team and a consultant to the organization on information issues
- **Personal Competencies**
- committed to service excellence
- seeks out challenges and sees new opportunities both inside and outside the library
- sees the big picture
- creates an environment of mutual respect and trust
- has effective communications skills
- works well with others in a team
- provides leadership
- plans, prioritizes and focuses on what is critical
- committed to lifelong learning and personal career planning
- have personal business skills and creates new opportunities
- recognizes the value of professional networking and solidarity
- is flexible and positive in a time of continuing change

Assessing the LIS curriculum

According to Etim (2015) the entrepreneurship education policy was introduced in the Nigerian universities system in 2007 by the National Universities Commission (NUC) to address the level of unemployment among graduates of Nigerian universities by preparing them to set up private businesses after graduation. The success of this introduction can best be ascertained by conducting a research on Nigerian graduates who are self-employed and running viable and stable businesses of their own. In the light of this, it is necessary to assess the content and execution of the LIS entrepreneurial education policy as exemplified in two universities in the south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria.

University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

The University of Uyo introduces Entrepreneurial Studies as GST 211 and GST 221 in the General Studies programme. Both are 2 credit hours:

GST 211: Entrepreneurial Studies I (2 credits)

Students are made to understand the distinction between entrepreneurship and small business. They will be exposed to the characteristics and types of entrepreneurs. To be able to engender

entrepreneurship interests in students. This course treats idea-generation, opportunity recognition, the process of creating new businesses as well as how to write aspects of entrepreneurship, including statutory requirements, policy documents, various phases of small business development, as well as applicable operational procedures.

GST 221: Entrepreneurial Studies II (2credits)

Entrepreneurial Studies II examines entrepreneurial management. Realizing the need for finance in any business venture, the second component of the course is exclusively on practical management, finance, accounting and environmental factors, as well as marketing strategies within the context of entrepreneurship. Students are required to apply on different ventures the principles and strategies taught in the first part of the course.

In year four, Information Entrepreneurship is taught as LIS 429. It also is a 2-credit hour course.

LIS 429: Information Entrepreneurship (2 credits)

Information as a commodity; exploration of various avenues where the library and information science graduate can apply the knowledge acquired to secure employment as well as be self-employed. It is a strategy of establishing and sustaining fee-based information services by the graduate as well as libraries; marketing. Students are expected to apply the knowledge acquired to specific information business.

University of Calabar, Cross River State

In the University of Calabar, Entrepreneurship Education is taught from year III as Entrepreneurship Education I (Theory) GSS 301 and Entrepreneurship Education II (Practical) GSS 302. Both are 2 credit hours courses. A description of the course content was not given in the handbook for GSS 301 and GSS 302. Entrepreneurship in Information Service LIS 460 is described as concepts of entrepreneurship and their application to the management of libraries.

Challenges to Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

In spite of its relevance, entrepreneurship education, particularly in LIS Schools, contends with several constraints. In Nigeria, some of the factors associated with lack of successful entrepreneurship education as

analyzed by Issa, Uzuegbu and Nwosu (2014) are:

1. Housing of Entrepreneurial Courses

Most Universities (as stipulated by NUC) house the course under the schools of General Studies. Besides the logical problems of coordinating the programme in the entire university, this approach does not allow in-depth treatment of the various topics as related to different vocations and skills.

2. Limited Time for Learning

General Studies courses are most often allotted insufficient time which negatively impacts on the quality and depth of the lectures. This limitation severely undermines the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education.

3. Inadequate Learning Facilities

Almost all studies on education in Nigeria identify near-absence of the basic facilities required for effective teaching and learning in tertiary institutions (EtorAkpama, Akpan and Etor 2009). In the midst of a dearth of adequate vital teaching resources, not much entrepreneurial skills can be demonstrated.

4. Shortage of Competent Resource Persons

There is a dearth of experts in entrepreneurial studies. Most faculty members handling courses in entrepreneurship have little or no experience and have not gone through the process of initiating a successful business of their own. Any educator who has not undergone the process of entrepreneurship development procedure and is running a viable enterprise is not qualified to teach entrepreneurship.

5. Gaps in the Entrepreneurship Curriculum

Some institutions showcase courses in entrepreneurial studies whose objective, structure and content are inadequate and not practically oriented. The intensity of the course should be such that at graduation, a graduate is already self-employed specializing in a preferred skill.

6. Lack of Seriousness by Students

Students do not seem to grasp the importance of the entrepreneurship education courses. This is evidenced by a noticeable lack of seriousness among students who categorize the course as another unnecessary requirement imposed on them to satisfy graduation requirements. It is only after graduation and being unemployed for several years that the realities of state of Nigeria stare them on the face.

In addition to the factors that have been enumerated above, the Nigerian federal government through the various agencies such as National Universities Commission (NUC) and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) will need to come up with policies leading to revision of curricula and entrenchment of entrepreneurship programmes.

The Way Forward

The way forward for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is for Nigerian graduates to drop the idea of going to school with the expectation of coming to look for white collar jobs. Nigerian graduates must begin to see and accept that tertiary institutions' education is a basic necessity needed to help them succeed in their future endeavour after leaving school. There must be sincere desire backed up by adequate planning (while in school) to establish an entrepreneurship outfit either related to the graduate's area of discipline or in other areas in which skills have been acquired over the years. In this regard government must encourage those with such initiatives to be able to take off and stabilize. This can be done through the provision of take-off grants or loans with strong collateral from relatives of the beneficiaries.

Government may also provide enabling environment by ensuring that basic infrastructures (electricity, pipe-borne water etc.) as well as ensure that such entrepreneur are given reduced tax on items imported for use as raw materials at least for a period of five years. To get the attention of graduates in this area would require a more detailed and practical entrepreneurial training curriculum designed to achieve this purpose.

Conclusion

This paper has given a background on the Nigerian unemployment situation and the need to design an entrepreneurial curriculum that can assist Nigerian graduates to develop skills and competencies that can

assist them establish business initiatives on graduation. Recommendations were made on how government can assist and encourage graduates establish outfit shortly after graduation.

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