

Full Length Research

Entrepreneurship Education for Economic Development among Library and information Science Students in the 21st Century in Nigerian Universities: A Nexus

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In this knowledge economy and digital age, there is a need for wealth-building ventures as government jobs or employment in industries and companies are scarce globally compared to the numbers of millions of graduates and professionals in the labour market at the national and international levels. Thus, entrepreneurship is a key, crucial and deciding factor for employment and economic growth. This should span into all fields where pieces of training and retraining will be offered on entrepreneurship which boils down to integrating it into the curriculum of all disciplines, library and information science inclusive. Hence, there should be a nexus between Library and Information Science Students in Nigerian Library Schools and entrepreneurship whereby they will be adequately trained on the subject for relevance and sustainability in the 21st century to ensure balanced economic development and growth for national security.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Economic Development, Library and Information Science Students, 21st Century, Nigerian Universities

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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship Education for Economic Development and Library and Information Science Students in 21st Century in Nigerian Universities: A Nexus

Entrepreneurship is a critical field in the 21st century, emphasizing creativity and innovation to address the decline of white-collar job opportunities. As economic structures shift toward self-reliance and technological advancements, it has become imperative for educational institutions to integrate entrepreneurial skills into their

curricula. The field of Library and Information Science (LIS) is no exception to this evolution. The intersection of LIS and entrepreneurship education is essential to equip students with the necessary competencies to navigate the digital and knowledge economy while ensuring inclusiveness in professional practice.

Aguolu & Aguolu (2000) in Imabong (2023) assert that librarianship is a growing profession, adaptable to various specializations. If Nigerian information professionals receive adequate human resource training and focus, they can efficiently handle emerging services in the information sector. However, achieving this requires

significant modifications to the LIS curriculum. Such changes necessitate substantial capital investment in library schools to acquire modern infrastructure for effective teaching and research. Furthermore, the evolution of LIS education could give rise to new subfields, much like mass communication emerged from library and information studies. Information broking, digital archiving, and knowledge management are potential entrepreneurial opportunities within LIS.

The term 'entrepreneur' has its origins in the French verb 'entreprendre,' meaning 'to undertake' or 'to begin something.' Over the centuries, the concept of entrepreneurship has evolved, adapting to economic demands and societal transformations. Hisrich (1986) in Ngwuchukwu & Onyebuchi (2022) traces the historical development of entrepreneurship from Marco Polo's ventures in establishing trade routes to the Far East, through the Middle Ages where entrepreneurship was associated with managing large projects without assuming risks, to the 17th century when risk-taking became central to entrepreneurial endeavours. Richard Cantillon, an economist, was one of the first to define an entrepreneur as a risk-taker operating under uncertainties, thus introducing the term into academic discourse.

The Industrial Revolution of the 19th century further redefined entrepreneurship, as individuals like Jean Baptiste popularized the concept by emphasizing the role of entrepreneurs in reallocating resources for economic productivity. This period saw industrialization driven by the need for innovation and efficiency, with figures like Thomas Edison and Eli Whitney pioneering technological advancements through private capital investments. The notion that an entrepreneur does not necessarily need money to establish an enterprise but rather ideas and resourcefulness became prevalent (Ngwuchukwu & Onyebuchi, 2022).

In the 19th and 20th centuries, entrepreneurship was viewed from an economic perspective, with entrepreneurs seen as individuals who assume risks for personal gain. Rosnah (2012) in Ngwuchukwu and Onyebuchi (2022) note that entrepreneurship in this era involved ingenuity, innovation, and strategic organization. This period witnessed the emergence of influential entrepreneurs such as Andrew Carnegie, who revolutionized industrial production without inventing new products but through the refinement of existing technologies. The 20th century also saw the contributions of Joseph Schumpeter, often regarded as the father of modern entrepreneurship. Schumpeter (1934) described an entrepreneur as one who drives structural changes and economic growth by introducing new products, processes, markets, or enterprises.

Given the transformative power of entrepreneurship, integrating it into LIS education is crucial for fostering economic development in Nigerian universities. The LIS curriculum must incorporate entrepreneurial skills to

enable graduates to create self-sustaining opportunities within the digital and knowledge economy. By bridging the gap between traditional library functions and entrepreneurial ventures such as information consulting, digital asset management, and research commercialization, LIS graduates can position themselves as key players in the modern economic landscape.

The nexus between entrepreneurship education and LIS in Nigerian universities is indispensable in the 21st century. As job markets become increasingly competitive and reliant on technological advancements, LIS students must acquire entrepreneurial competencies to remain relevant. This integration will not only enhance employability but also contribute to economic growth through innovative information services. Therefore, strategic curriculum reforms and investments in entrepreneurial training within LIS education are imperative for sustainable professional development and economic advancement in Nigeria.

21st Century Entrepreneurship Education for Economic Development

Entrepreneurship education is a process aimed at providing learners with entrepreneurial spirit, knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. The objectives of entrepreneurship education are very clear. Functional education aims at empowering learners to create employment opportunities by equipping them with specific skills for self-employment, independence and economic development. It creates all kinds of skills and experiences that give learners the ability to access, as well as transform opportunities within and outside their society. The concept of entrepreneurship education goes beyond business creation. It includes improving the ability of students to anticipate and respond to social changes and economic development.

Nigerian educational system is a colonial heritage and as such, does not have much consideration for Entrepreneurship Education. The colonial education was designed to assist colonial masters in breaking the communication gap between them and Nigerians. Emphasis was placed on producing clerical and administrative officers, teachers, clergy and other liberal arts graduates who would facilitate the Westernization process. The post-independence governments did not do much to restructure our education curriculum right from the primary, secondary the tertiary stages (Ahiauzu and Emmanuel 2022). Dana (2001) in Ahiauzu and Emmanuel (2022), notes that our educational institutions, few as they were, remained factories for producing white collar jobbers with no special profession nor were entrepreneurial skills envisaged in the educational system.

Okojie, (2009)) in Ahiauzu and Emmanuel (2022), The Federal Government, being worried by the high level of unemployment, deteriorating per capita income, and youth agitation in various parts of the country, directed all tertiary institutions in the country to run Entrepreneurship Studies as a compulsory course for all students irrespective of their disciplines with effect from 2007/2008 academic session. Although the Federal Government made Entrepreneurship Education compulsory, some universities have yet to commence it with a degree of seriousness. By making Entrepreneurship Studies compulsory, the government is aiming at producing opportunity or knowledge-based entrepreneurs who are expected to be critical growth drivers of our economy. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that Entrepreneurship Education is still in its infancy in Nigerian universities, the fact remains that one of the LIS goals in Education is the development of entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates. The essence of it all is for LIS professionals to demonstrate entrepreneurial capabilities in their offerings, targeted at training graduates who would be job creators rather than employment seekers for economic and national development.

Entrepreneurship Skills for LIS Students

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 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. 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. The 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 behaviour. According to Babalola and Abifarin (n.d), as cited in Adamu (2015), 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 computers 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 on one with a user seeking to answer a specific question.
- **Marketing /Interpersonal skills:** librarians and other information professionals need 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 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 the library and information science profession, one must value, keep and protect time.
- **Risk-taking:** This is an important skill that an entrepreneur in the library and information profession must develop. He/she must develop the ability to take risks, manage risks and make a profit at the end of the risk. Any entrepreneur who cannot take risks 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 the technology world and other media of

learning.

- **Hard work:** Any library and information science professional who desires success in his/her entrepreneurial business must be hard working. No shortcut to success other 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 professionals would generate new ideas, solve current problems in the information world and possibly create customer-friendly information products. Entrepreneurship Education for Economic

Entrepreneurship Education and Library and Information Science Curriculum

We are in a generation where the future is uncertain. In the words of Emmanuel (2020) in Ahiauzu and Emmanuel (2022), the world has never needed students and graduates who want to make a difference than it is today. This is because the world belongs to creators and innovators, "The Entrepreneur". According to Davis (2015), Shane and Venkataraman (2000) as cited in Ahiauzu and Emmanuel (2022), entrepreneurship is the creation and running of one's own business. It was emphasized that it is a "nexus" that involves entrepreneurial individuals seizing and exploiting lucrative opportunities: "The field involves the study of sources of opportunities; the processes of discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities; and the set of individuals who discover, evaluate, and exploit them". Entrepreneurship, therefore, can be seen as a process that leads to discovery.

Pittaway & Cope (2003); Emmanuel (2021) in Ahiauzu and Emmanuel (2022), described an entrepreneur as someone who commercializes his or her innovation while in her work concluded that an entrepreneur is:

- A person who identifies business opportunities that will fill gaps in the market
- A person who undertakes the risk of starting a new business venture.
- A person who creates a firm, which aggregates capital and labour to produce goods or services for profit.
- One who is an important driver of economic growth and innovation.

Librarians are increasingly encouraged to be entrepreneurs. An entrepreneur is skilled in the use of available resources to create something new which can sustain the individual or provide him with a means of livelihood. The inclusion of Entrepreneurship Education in the curriculum of Library and Information Science is

meant to increase innovation and creativity levels in students so that at the end of their study in the institution they will be able to provide for themselves a means of living, create job opportunities for others, add value to lives, communities and also, assist in the development of the nation.

Many reasons have been pointed out to justify the inclusion of Entrepreneurship Education in the LIS curriculum. According to Paul (2005) in Ahiauzu and Emmanuel (2022), Entrepreneurship Education stands to achieve the following objectives:

- Offers functional skills for LIS graduates that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant;
- Provide them with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities;
- Catalyzes economic growth and development;
- Offers LIS graduates with adequate training in risk management to make certain bearings feasible;
- Reduce high rate of poverty;
- Employment generation;
- Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium-sized businesses;
- Inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults that will enable them to persist in any business venture they may embark on;
- Create a smooth transition from a traditional to a modern industrial economy.

In Nigeria, the overcrowded job market is forcing thousands of graduates into unemployment and its associated consequences of kidnapping, drug addiction, youth restiveness and a generally poor standard of living. This has made it imperative that graduates be equipped with the skills that are required to achieve self-reliance. With appropriate skills, LIS students as information professionals will be at the vanguard of information generation and reaping its employment opportunities in libraries, companies and corporate organizations.

Bedford, Donley and Lensenmayer, (2015) in Abdullahi, Barkindo & Chioma (2021) The schools of LIS in Nigeria are part and parcel of the economic transformation process of the country. Transformation and improvement in society influence what librarians do, how they work, where they work, how they are perceived and what competencies they need to succeed in the information and knowledge environment. The LIS schools are responsible for imparting skills and competencies to their students for survival in the 21st-century knowledge economy. For this reason, therefore, they must deliver what librarianship as a profession signifies and advocate shaping the future entrepreneurship life of their students or perhaps having a source of acquiring the basic means of livelihood after graduation. This responsibility is an essential avenue of encouraging the students to develop

interest and participate in entrepreneurship as an economic development strategy and equally ensure best practices. According to the International Institute for Educational Planning (2006); Onuma, 2016 and Akinboade, 2014) in Abdullahi, Barkindo & Chioma (2021) skills development together with other social protection measures can certainly constitute a powerful tool for poverty reduction. Hence, the LIS skills and competencies are vital components that can help build human capital for the realization of entrepreneurship in Nigeria thereby alleviating poverty and other social vices. In 2006 the Federal Government of Nigeria directed all the Higher Institutions of Learning to introduce Entrepreneurship Education as a compulsory course for all students irrespective of area of specialization. This effort according to Yahya (2011) in Abdullahi, Barkindo & Chioma (2021) aims to foster an entrepreneurship culture among students, address the problem of growing graduate unemployment and employment, generate and manage knowledge and other competencies for building the requisite entrepreneurial human capital for national development.

Yahya further expanded that, LIS is key to the development of Higher Educational Institutions in Nigeria as they develop gradually towards addressing the country's development agenda. Therefore, the LIS education must of necessity derive its contents from the philosophy of Nigeria's National Policy on Education as follows:

- 1) Acquisition, development and inculcation of proper value-oriented for the survival of the individual and society.
- 2) Development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to ensure good and proper understanding and appreciation of the environment.
- 3) Skills acquisition for useful life and society.

Interestingly, entrepreneurship and innovation are vital factors of development in the 21st century and have reached clear status within LIS education. Haruna (2011) as stated in Abdullahi, Barkindo & Chioma (2021) considered entrepreneurship education in LIS to be instructions given or knowledge imparted to a group or group of persons to develop their careers in librarianship to be business-oriented or self-employed. It aims at developing skills acquisition among students and encouraging them to be self-employed like their counterparts in developed nations. By inference, entrepreneurship education develops enterprising people and inculcates an attitude of self-reliance, using appropriate learning processes. Going by this, therefore, many LIS schools are now incorporating entrepreneurship skills into their curriculum. In the present time, there is an interesting debate on the role of Nigerian LIS schools in preparing their students for the tasks required by the information economy.

Abdullahi (2014) asserted in Abdullahi, Barkindo & Chioma (2021) that the country needs innovative LIS graduates who can utilize information and knowledge to produce goods and services or high-quality creativity and output to compete satisfactorily at both national and global marketplaces. Entrepreneurship and innovation activities demand hard work and creative output among LIS graduates in Nigeria. Certainly, LIS education will provide modern techniques for improving performance in a workplace or business situation in the 21st century.

Entrepreneurship and Library and Information Science (Infopreneurship)

Infopreneurship refers to the entrepreneurial pursuit of creating, marketing, and selling information products or services (Edison OS, n.d). Driving Changes and Growth In Nigeria LIS graduates can serve as agents of economic growth and change. Having acquired the LIS training, a graduate can move to start an innovative venture at a small medium or 7 big enterprise level defending the adequacy of the resources involved. Innovation is a technique of transforming an idea or invention into a good or service which can produce value which customers will pay (Business Dictionary, 2014) in Abdullahi, Barkindo & Chioma (2021). It also involves the purposeful use of information, imagination and initiative in getting greater or different values from resources by including all the methods by which new ideas are generated and transformed into useful products. , a venture is an enterprise or initiative whether small, medium or big aims at providing products and services to customers to make a profit. From the foregoing, innovative ventures in LIS can refer to establishing an information and document delivery enterprise to serve a variety of clients. It can be an information brokerage firm, consultancy outlet, publishing and book trade or any related agency that delivers fee-based information resources and services. Innovative ventures having entrepreneurship potentialities in LIS are many.

Igbeka (2008) in Abdullahi, Barkindo & Chioma (2021) enumerated work of LIS entrepreneurs in Nigeria as follows: Indexing services, Abstracting services, Retrospective conservation, Cataloging and classification, Literature Reviews, Online literature search, Print searches for clients, Private library services, bookshop and interlibrary loan, Packaging information, Editing and publishing, Developing hyper media-products, Translation, Marketing management, Organizing seminars, conferences and workshops, Presentations, Creating databases and website design. Besides, there are several other areas of revenue generation in LIS that meet the requirement of Nigeria's economic development as pointed out below by Malumfashi (2011) in Abdullahi, Barkindo & Chioma (2021) like Service to Special Group, Compilation, Bindery and Lamination Services, Newspaper

Distribution, Internet Café Services, Facility and Event Management, Short Message Service (SMS) and Stationery Store Services. Also, Obinyan (n.d) added to the list of the services of LIS entrepreneur as Databases design and management, Information retrieval services/metadata mining, Programming, Bibliometrics, Information audit, Systems analysis and design, Skills acquisition in programming, Electronic resources acquisition and management, Managerial studies, Document procurement services, Publishing and printing using POD facilities.

Role of library schools in entrepreneurial development of LIS Students

The Nigerian educational system faces significant challenges, including youth restiveness, armed robbery, prostitution, kidnapping, cattle rustling, drug abuse, oil bunkering, and insurgency. These social issues are often linked to unemployment resulting from a lack of necessary skills among youths, both during their education and within institutions. Ehirneme and Ekpeyong (2012), as cited in Musa and Tsafe (2019), revealed that a majority of Nigerian graduates who completed the mandatory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in the last five years are unemployed.

Ekere and Ekere (2012), also cited in Musa and Tsafe (2019), posited that this situation reflects a failure of the nation's educational system and highlights a mismatch between the education received by Nigerian graduates and the needs of government agencies, private industries, and other employers. In response, the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Board of Technical Education (NBTE) have introduced entrepreneurial education into the curricula of all higher institutions in Nigeria.

For Library and Information Science (LIS) students, integrating entrepreneurship education is crucial. This integration equips them with the skills needed to navigate the evolving digital and knowledge economies, ensuring their relevance in the 21st century. Aguolu and Aguolu (2000), as referenced in Imabong (2023), emphasized that librarianship is a growing profession, adaptable to various areas within the field. With adequate training and focus, Nigerian information professionals can handle diverse services, necessitating significant changes in the LIS curriculum. These changes require substantial capital investment in library schools to acquire relevant infrastructure for effective teaching and research. Information brokering, for instance, has emerged as a viable entrepreneurial opportunity within the LIS field.

Entrepreneurship, derived from the 13th-century French verb 'entreprendre,' meaning 'to undertake,' involves pursuing opportunities and initiating new ventures. Hisrich (1986), as cited in Ngwuchukwu and Onyebuchi (2022), traced the origin of entrepreneurship to figures like Marco Polo, who established trade routes

to the Far East, defining entrepreneurs as intermediaries or 'go-betweens.' In the context of LIS, entrepreneurship involves generating ideas, recognizing opportunities, and implementing innovative business concepts to meet information needs.

Rosnah (2012), also cited in Ngwuchukwu and Onyebuchi (2022), noted that in the 19th and 20th centuries, entrepreneurs were viewed from an economic perspective as individuals who organize and operate enterprises for personal gain, assuming the risks associated with their ventures. In the 21st century, entrepreneurship is characterized by structural changes and economic growth, aligning with Schumpeter's (1934) view of entrepreneurs as innovators introducing new products or processes and identifying new markets.

Integrating entrepreneurship education into LIS programs prepares graduates for self-employment and equips them with the skills to create value in the information economy. This approach addresses the unemployment crisis by fostering self-reliance and contributing to sustainable economic development. Ogwo (2022) emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships in job creation, highlighting that the government alone cannot address the employment challenges.

The role of library schools in the entrepreneurship development of LIS students is pivotal. By systematically incorporating entrepreneurship education into their curricula, these institutions can produce graduates who are not only information professionals but also innovative entrepreneurs capable of contributing significantly to economic development in Nigeria.

Challenges to Entrepreneurship Education among LIS Students

- Lack of functional workshops and laboratories. Most of the Nigerian library schools lack functional entrepreneurship workshops and laboratories.
- Seminars, conferences and workshops are not conducted regularly by LIS schools in Nigerian Universities.
- The Nigerian Association of LIS Entrepreneurs under the umbrella of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) is not available.
- Scarcity of Textbook on LIS Entrepreneurship
- The LIS schools in Nigerian Universities do not reinforce practice-based teaching and learning of entrepreneurship (Abdullahi, Barkindo & Chioma, 2021)

CONCLUSION

In this knowledge economy and digital age, there is a need for wealth-building ventures as government jobs or employment in industries and companies are scarce

globally compared to the numbers of millions of graduates and professionals in the labour market at the national and international levels. Thus, entrepreneurship is a key, crucial and deciding factor for employment and economic growth. This should span into all fields where pieces of training and retraining will be offered on entrepreneurship which boils down to integrating it into the curriculum of all disciplines, library and information science inclusive. Hence, there should be a nexus between Library and Information Science Students in Nigerian Library Schools and entrepreneurship whereby they will be adequately trained on the subject for relevance and sustainability in the 21st century to ensure balanced economic development and growth for national security.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The government should provide functional workshops and laboratories in Nigerian library schools for functional entrepreneurship training and retraining. The entrepreneurial education should not just be theory-based but students should be exposed to practical aspects of the course to see for themselves a real situation. Library and information science is a discipline designed to produce information professionals that will completely serve different stakeholders for development. The graduates of library and information science need to be empowered through practical entrepreneurship skills. They ought to be given core entrepreneurship training concerning library and information services so that upon graduation, they can become self-employed and self-reliant instead of depending wholly on paid jobs. That is to say, the potential graduates should be adequately trained in theory and practical knowledge of the profession as well as entrepreneurship skills so that upon graduation they will be self-employed (Tondo & Ugba, 2023).
- Seminars, conferences and workshops should be conducted regularly by LIS schools in Nigerian Universities for current skill development and knowledge updates.
- The Nigerian Association of LIS Entrepreneurs under the umbrella of the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) should be created to bring LIS entrepreneurs together to share ideas on a national platform.
- Modern Textbooks on LIS entrepreneurship should be written by LIS lecturers that specialize in infopreneurship and international ones should be imported from foreign countries.
- A well-rounded and unified curriculum should be provided to ensure standards and professionalism for LIS entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

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