

LIBRARY USE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria is faced with many economic challenges. The Federal Government has identified entrepreneurship education as one of the tools to combat these challenges. This paper, therefore, assess the significant roles played by libraries in the development of entrepreneurship education in the country, as evidenced by related literature. It begins by identifying objectives of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, as well as importance and history of Entrepreneurship Education in the country. Important roles that use of library plays as identified by the paper are organization and transmission of recorded knowledge relating to the subject matter and also, provision of access to multi-media resources. Furthermore, the paper highlights challenges facing library use in relation to the development of entrepreneurship education in the country and also suggests way forward, which include: adequate funding for provision of related materials; training of library personnel; and corporation among stakeholders involved in entrepreneurship education, among others.

Introduction

Nigeria is faced with several macroeconomic issues such as increasing level of unemployment, high incidence of poverty, slow economic growth rate, insurgency, kidnappings, armed robbery, child trafficking, and high level corruption, etc. For any economy to grow, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) must not only improve or increase but it must do so on a consistent and predictive basis. With increased economic activities, economic growth and development would rise, improving the quality of lives of the citizenry in return (United Nations, 2022).

Entrepreneurship appears to be the most critical national need today for Nigeria. It presents a major tool to increase economic activities. Without it, there can be no meaningful and sustainable wealth creation, no employment generation and hence no economic growth and development. Entrepreneurship is a catalyst for SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) sector promotion which accounts for a significant proportion of small businesses and employment generation in Nigeria.

A library is a place where knowledge, information and other human records in their print and non-print (such as audio-visuals, microforms and computer programmes) formats are professionally acquired, processed and made available for use (Tondo, 2015). It is a place for storing knowledge under a system that facilitates identification and retrieval (Onwuchekwa and Jegede, 2011). It is the responsibility of the library to acquire recorded knowledge and organize it in such a way that it will be accessible to intending users. As a repository of recorded knowledge, the library has very important role to play in entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is actually concerned with the identification of gaps and business opportunities in one's immediate environment and bringing together the necessary resources in an innovative way to fill these gaps and in the process gaining personal rewards (which may or may not be for profit motives). The three main concepts in entrepreneurship are evaluating opportunities, securing resources, and growing and sustaining the enterprise.

Entrepreneurship, according to Omolayo (2016) is the act of starting a company, arranging business deals and taking risks in order to make a profit through the education skills acquired. To him, entrepreneurship can be described as “the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and coupling these with management and organizational skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and create wealth. In the same vein, Nwangwu (2007) opined that entrepreneurship is a process of bringing together the factors of production, which include land, labour and capital so as to provide a product or service for public consumption. However, the operational definition of entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of a person or persons to acquire educational skills to explore and exploit investment opportunities, establish and manage a successful business enterprise.

An individual can become an entrepreneur through: self-establishment; taking over already existing business; inherited business venture and franchisement. Any individual can become an entrepreneur through any of these means. Furthermore, any person who has the zeal and ability to discover and evaluate opportunities, generate resources and takes steps towards taking advantage of such opportunities can become an entrepreneur.

History of Entrepreneur Development in Nigeria

Entrepreneurship started when people produced more products than needed, as such they had to exchange these surpluses for instance, if a black smith produced more hoes than he needed, he exchanged the surplus he had with what he had not but needs, may be, he need some

yams or cocoyam, he would look for someone who need his products to exchange with. By this way, producers came to realize that they can concentrate in their areas of production to produce more and then exchange with what they need. So through this exchange to products, entrepreneurship started. A typical Nigeria entrepreneur is a self made man who might be said to have strong will to succeed; he might engage the services of others, like friends, mates, in-laws etc, to help him in his work of production. Through this way, Nigerian in the olden days engaged in entrepreneurship. Early entrepreneurship is characterized with production or manufacturing in which case producer most often started with small capital, most of it from his own saving. It also started with trade by barter even before the advent of any form of money.

Modern entrepreneurship in Nigeria started with the coming of the colonial masters, who brought in their wears and made Nigerian their middle men. In this way, modern entrepreneurs were engaged in retail trade or sole proprietorship. One of the major factors which have in many ways discouraged the flow of entrepreneurship development in Nigeria is the value system brought by formal education. For many decades people had the opportunity of being employed in the civil service, because those days the economic was large enough to absorb people into the prestigious occupation, all Nigerians with some form of formal education.

Need for Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is a catalyst for economic growth. Policies are being put in place stating that it should be encouraged at all levels of education, which will lead to producing enterprising graduates and eventually enterprise formation (Praag, 2011). Governments' push for

entrepreneurship is to enable graduates to create new ventures which will in turn create jobs and invariably reduce unemployment. Matlay (2011) found that graduates are now favourably looking at entrepreneurship as a career path as it offers them an alternative path to putting their creative and innovative capabilities to use. Matlay also found that students' who took entrepreneurship courses whilst at university, got their first jobs more easily by putting to use knowledge gained from entrepreneurship education; employers spotted competencies that had been developed and considered them valuable.

Government expectations on the positive impact of teaching entrepreneurship and universities becoming entrepreneurial to their economies are evidenced by a few universities who have carried out surveys to extract and validate this information. Using a survey of alumni and other data as of 2016, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) graduates had created 25,800 enterprises worldwide, employing over 3.3 million people with estimated sales of \$2 trillion. Of this figure, 6,900 companies with a turnover of about \$164 billion are located in Massachusetts, which is about 26% of all the companies in Massachusetts (Robert, 2016). (Rowe, 2010). Charney (2000) in their study of the Berger Entrepreneurship program observed that students who had undergone entrepreneurship when compared to others who had not, were three times more likely to participate in starting a business venture and be self- employed; they were better remunerated; their companies had five times the sales and employment growth; and they were more involved in new product development.

Nilsson (2012); corroborated the two schools of thought which are that, entrepreneurship can be taught and that it cannot be taught; they identified science as that which can be taught with ease using the various pedagogic tools while art is that which cannot be taught because it is believed to be trait related and experiential. Jack (2019) further stated that entrepreneurship is closer to an art than science due to the idiosyncratic nature of each venture. The Nilsson (2012) study went beyond the inert belief of intention which is the aspiration to set up a business, to studying those actually setting up companies and had previously undergone entrepreneurship education; the study found that those that had undergone entrepreneurship education and had intention established more companies when compared to the control group who had not undergone any entrepreneurship education.

Neck and Greene (2011) stressed that entrepreneurship education has been the major driver of innovation and creativity in the past and will continue to remain so due to the need for entrepreneurs to create and spot opportunities in the midst of uncertainties in the society. In a study by Jones (2011) on an emerging/developing European Union country (Poland), they found that entrepreneurship education helped to foster the choice of wanting to become an entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurship education according to Paul (2016) is structured to achieve the following objectives:

- a. To offer functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.

- b. Provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
- c. To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.
- d. Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, to make certain bearing feasible.
- e. To reduce high rule of poverty.
- f. Create employment generation.
- g. Reduction in rural-urban migration.
- h. Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized businesses.
- i. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.
- j. Create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy.

Use of Library for Entrepreneurship Education

A library is a place where knowledge, information and other human records in their print and non-print (such as audio-visuals, microforms and computer programmes) formats are professionally acquired, processed and made available for use (Ogbonna, 2015). It is a place for storing knowledge under a system that facilitates identification and retrieval (Chiegbu, 2013). As a repository of recorded knowledge, the library has very important role to play in entrepreneurship education.

First, it organizes knowledge. It is the responsibility of the library to acquire recorded knowledge and organize it in such a way that it will be accessible to intending users. Edeka (2010) stated that organization of books and other information resources facilitates the grouping and maintenance of the library collection in a logical order. It makes for systematic management of universal knowledge into subjects, and bringing the same knowledge together in some degree of affinity.

The library is also charged with the responsibility of transmitting recorded knowledge. According to Ozioko (2015), the library is the principal instrument for conservation and transmission of recorded knowledge. It collects materials, published and unpublished, print and non-print, in all fields of knowledge, and stores them for use by clientele. Information can be stored in books, periodicals, technical reports, pamphlets, microforms, conference papers of learned societies and professional associations, machine readable databases, manuscripts, archival materials, and in many other formats (Ozioko, 2015). These materials are made accessible to users. Thus, the educational function of the library is inherent in its role as a disseminator of knowledge (Thompson, 2017).

Information materials on entrepreneurship are not left out in building library collection. Aspiring entrepreneurs need information about their businesses, like, how to raise initial capital, markets, customers, competitors, risks, challenges, etc. The library contains information resources that would enlighten would-be entrepreneurs in this regard.

On the other hand, the library has well trained information providers to assist prospective entrepreneurs in utilizing library resources. By virtue of their training, they know how to access and use information resources to answer users' questions, including business related databases and other business reference materials.

Being a multimedia resource centre, the library is expected to have all it takes to educate entrepreneurs. The problem is that sometimes, the library is not equipped to perform its functions. It is pertinent therefore, that the library is provided with relevant Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities, like the internet.

Challenges Associated with Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Universities

According to Amoor (2008), these challenges include lack of lecturers with practical entrepreneurial training and consciousness. Although lecturers' awareness of entrepreneurship education has grown in the last five years and attitudes towards the new curriculum has become more positive, majority of lecturers still do not know enough the aims, contents and work method of entrepreneurship education. Consequently, they may be unable to effectively impart the desired knowledge and entrepreneurial skills to their students.

The task of drawing up course content to be included in the curriculum of entrepreneurship-related education programme in Nigerian universities will require a very long educational process (Blenker, Dreisler, Færgemann, & Kjeldsen, 2008).

Entrepreneurship education is capital intensive and both lecturers and students need money to practice the theory of initiating, establishing and running enterprises. This undoubtedly constitute constraints which subsequently frustrate the integration of the entrepreneurship in academic programmes in Nigerian universities.

Brown (2012) highlighted nine basic factors that hinder entrepreneurship education in our universities in Nigeria. These are: poor knowledge based economy and low spirit of competition; poor enterprising culture; lack of entrepreneurship teachers, materials and equipment; unavailability of relevant funds; non-inclusion of entrepreneurship program in the general school curricula; poor societal attitude to technical and vocational education development; inadequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning in practical-related courses; insensitivity of government to enterprise creation and expansion strategy; poor planning and execution of processes of action.

Conclusion

Academic libraries provide various information resources for the development of entrepreneurship education which are: textbooks, reference materials such as dictionaries, business directories, encyclopedias, manuals, etc; serials such as magazines and newspapers; government documents such as statistical books and gazettes; e-resources such as internet and databases; and audio-visual materials on entrepreneurship etc. Furthermore, there are challenges

libraries faces on the development of entrepreneurship education. These include lack of fund, erratic power supply and lack of corporation by other library staff.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the followings are hereby recommended:

1. Adequate funding should be provided by the government to the library as lack of fund could be a major challenge to the provision of adequate entrepreneurship information resources.
2. Also, library management should provide a standby power supply for the development of entrepreneurship education in the library.
3. There is need for training and retraining of library personnel involved in the development of entrepreneurship education.
4. There should also be cooperation among the stakeholders involved in entrepreneurship education starting from the various departments to the entrepreneurship centre. Such cooperation or partnership could be in areas such as giving of assignments or class works to students that will make them use entrepreneurship information resources in the library.
5. The library should endeavour to procure more books, journals and subscribe to more electronic databases relating to entrepreneurship for the benefits of students and staff in institution.

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