



An Open Access Journal Available Online

Creating Entrepreneurial Possibilities in Library and Information Science: Remediating the Narrative of Unemployment

OKWU, Emmanuel¹ OPURUM, Augustine Chineme² & EKE, Prince Chibuzor³

Department of Library and Information Science, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education¹

Department of Library and Information Science, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education²

Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State³

emmanuel.okwu@iaue.edu.ng ¹ augustine.opurum@iaue.edu.ng ² prince.eke@fctomoku.edu.ng ³

Received: 19.5.2024 Accepted: 29.6.2024

Date of Publication: July 2024

Abstract: The paper explores creating entrepreneurial possibilities in Library and Information Science: remediating the unemployment narrative. It portrayed entrepreneurship as the engine house for economic advancement as it plays a vital role in the growth and development of society. It is a treasured instrument for creating wealth, jobs, poverty alleviation, and overall societal progress. There is an outright recognition that information is the chief commodity of the contemporary age and thus saleable. Librarians who market and approach information services with this perspective will unquestionably sell. It captured leadership and information literacy, among others, as skills required of entrepreneurs to function optimally. The entrepreneurial opportunities for remediating the issue of unemployment were excellently highlighted, including information brokerage, database brokerage, information system consultancy, and information organisation service, among others. The paper held that Library and Information Science professionals who venture into entrepreneurship often experience a lack of requisite information literacy skills, a lack of entrepreneurial spirit, an absence of technological literacy, access to market channels, and poor patronage as challenges. Therefore, it was recommended, among others, that library schools deliberately inculcate the culture of entrepreneurship in undergraduates as a remedy to the issue of unemployment among graduates.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Possibilities, Library and Information Science, Remedy, Unemployment

1. Introduction

In short, entrepreneurship has invaded every sphere of human society. It has become the engine house for economic advancement. Individuals and nations excelling in entrepreneurship are the most advanced, which makes entrepreneurship one of man's ultimate furnished assets. No nation can remedy the issue of unemployment if entrepreneurship is jettisoned. Entrepreneurship is now an increasing worldwide phenomenon that has attracted the attention of investigators. Khan, Salamzadeh, Shah, and Hussain (2021) opine that entrepreneurship has contributed to the nation's job creation and economic growth. It is viewed as a treasured tool for creating wealth and jobs. Corroborating this, Kulmie, Hussein, Abdi, Abdulle, and Adam (2023) insist that entrepreneurship is valuable for job creation, poverty alleviation, and overall societal progress. It remains an important concept in societal development and economic advancement. The importance of entrepreneurship brought about the directive by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2006 that all Institutions of Higher Learning should introduce

Entrepreneurship Education as a required course for all learners regardless of the area of specialisation of which library and information science is not an exemption.

The esteemed worth of Library and Information Science graduates in the 21st century cannot be underestimated due to the advent of the information economy. Today, information is valuable, as individuals and organisations cannot survive without it. Abdullahi (as cited in Abdullahi, Adamu, Mohammed & Mohammed, 2022) affirmed that many individuals and organisations increasingly accept the importance of information and knowledge for survival and invest much in information as a commodity. Individuals and organisations always need current, dependable, precise, and pertinent information for their day-to-day activities. These users may not have the time, skills, facilities, and resources required to do accurate searches and retrieve and evaluate information from various sources in and outside the library environment. On this premise, library and information science professionals with adequate information literacy and digital

skills are paid to search, generate, package, and deliver information for a fee (Abdullahi *et al.*, 2022).

Library and Information Science education has great economic importance in this information age. Librarians, as information managers, ought to see information as a veritable economic resource if they must excel in the 21st century. Information is a saleable commodity needed by citizens at all levels, and with the ongoing technological innovations today, its sourcing, processing, and dissemination have been made easy. In today's world, there has come to be an outright recognition that information is the chief commodity of the contemporary age. Librarians who market and approach information services with this perspective will unquestionably sell. Abdullahi *et al.* (2022) opine that the occupation of packaging and marketing information for income generation has come to stay in the Library and Information Science field. Library and information science professionals ought to be fully equipped with the necessary skills and strategies to remedy the unemployment narrative in society.

One possible explanation for the high unemployment rate among postsecondary graduates is a deficiency in entrepreneurial abilities. Ekpo (quoted in Onuma, 2016) succinctly stated that a Federal Ministry of Education study conducted between 2005 and 2010 revealed that seventy-one percent (71%) of graduate students from Nigerian universities and other post-secondary institutions have not found employment. It is disturbing to acknowledge that a greater percentage of unemployed youths in Nigeria are graduates of universities, colleges of education, and polytechnics who roam the street and in the labour markets looking for non-existent jobs as a result of a lack of entrepreneurial skills (Onuma, 2016). Lack of entrepreneurial skills remains a contributing factor to the problem of unemployment among graduates in Nigeria. With functional entrepreneurial skills among Library and Information Science professionals, the unemployment narrative will be remedied.

2. A Synopsis of Entrepreneurship

The concept of entrepreneurship has diverse meanings for various individuals due to the angle from which they perceive it, thereby having numerous definitions. Interestingly, the term originates from the French word "entrepreneur," meaning "undertake." By this, one can say that entrepreneurship is concerned with the ability of an individual or group to undertake actions capable of converting notions into reality for human satisfaction and profit making. It is the involvement of a person or group of people in creativity and taking risks to launch a business, see it through to completion, and profit from it. Entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged as a major force behind societal development and economic success. Ince, Kala, Akmaz, and Celik (2023) mentioned that it is a great driver for economic growth and development in every given society. The importance of entrepreneurship, which stands out with its feature of triggering growth, development, and change in society, has been increasing daily. In other words, entrepreneurship accepts growth, innovation, and change as central forces for economic growth and

development (Ince *et al.*, 2023). It is a careful course through which individuals or groups pursue opportunities. This course encompasses identifying, evaluating, and exploiting potential opportunities for innovation and growth (Kulmie, Hussein, Abdi, Abdulle and Adam, 2023). Entrepreneurship is initiated to build something out of nothing. According to Sikalieh, Mokaya, and Namusonge (quoted in Ince *et al.*, 2023), entrepreneurship is the driving force behind the creative enterprises that define the contemporary economy and the dynamic process of wealth growth for those who take on risks with their capital, time, and professional dedication. Although highly risky, entrepreneurship may be immensely rewarding as it promotes economic success, growth, and innovation. Entrepreneurship can contribute to graduate empowerment, job creation, economic growth, and poverty obliteration. Shefiu (2016) defined it as creating something valuable out of almost nothing and searching for opportunities to use the resources at hand best. Inspiring others to follow your idea demands commitment, passion, and vision. Entrepreneurship is the exact assessment of the wants in the market, seeing such an opportunity, and leveraging it for profit-making. It enables individuals to pursue and utilize opportunities for financial gain. It remains the engine house for economic progress.

An entrepreneur is an individual who can come up with a specific business idea and transform it into a viable business enterprise. He is required to create, organise and take the risk of a business enterprise. He aims to create and drive a satisfying system to transform his life and those around him. Ince *et al.* (2023) mentioned that He is willing to take risks, organises social and economic mechanisms, and eliminates imbalance by taking advantage of market opportunities. An entrepreneur is a self-confident and resourceful individual craving financial liberty and the creation of possible employment opportunities for mankind. Akhuesonkhan (cited in Shefiu, 2016) affirmed that an entrepreneur is a person who can recognise and evaluate business opportunities in the environment, gather resources to take advantage of the business opportunities and also initiate suitable action to ensure success. Innovative ideas, a risk-taking mindset, and the capacity to efficiently arrange and manage resources to transform concepts into a profitable business are often attributes of entrepreneurs. They play a vital role in driving economic growth and creating jobs by introducing new products and services. Shefiu (2016) opines that an entrepreneur is a visionary who carries out novel combinations, such as the following, to bring about changes in the market:

- I. He introduces new products,
- II. Introduces new production techniques,
- III. Opens up new markets,
- IV. Establishes new sources of supply for new components or materials and
- V. Re-organises an industry to make it more productive and efficient.

3. Skills Required of Library and Information Science Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs in Library and Information Science require the following skills to function optimally:

3.1 Leadership and Administrative Skills: These skills are crucial to developing any dynamic and productive enterprise in Library and Information Science. Leadership and administrative skills are a set of skills that facilitate effective performance within an establishment. Elonye and Uzuegbu (2013) affirmed that leadership and administrative skills involve financing, accounting, controlling, planning, goal-setting, decision-making, knowledge of records management principles, electronic bookkeeping, and human relations. These are indispensable in initiating and building a novel library and information science enterprise.

3.2 Tactical Skill: It includes strategic reasoning, which helps business owners create long-term plans and deliberate actions by pushing them to look beyond day-to-day operations. When this vision is realized, entrepreneurs will have a considerable advantage over their rivals as they can focus their actions and decisions more purposefully (Pepple and Enuoh, 2020). With tactical skills, operational entrepreneurs can create and implement suitable strategies to achieve their preset goals. These strategies help them outperform their competitors.

3.3 Relationship Skill: Under their work, entrepreneurs must deal with many people as they serve the public. They deal with clientele, workers, competitors, and other shareholders. For entrepreneurs, maintaining relationships with diverse groups of people is crucial as it provides them with access to resources and knowledge (Jenssen and Greve, cited in Pepple & Enuoh, 2020). Relationship skills enable entrepreneurs to advance in their endeavors. According to Barringer and Harrison (quoted in Pepple and Enuoh, 2020), this is consistent with the resource dependency theory, which postulates that entrepreneurs leverage their social connections to obtain the capital needed to start their businesses.

3.4 Technological Skill: Libraries in the 21st century is swiftly undergoing changes that call for information and communication technology (ICT) for effective services. To be relevant in this high-tech era of information, information professionals must adapt to the current system. Okwu and Oporum (2021) affirmed that technological skill comprises the librarian's capacity to consistently apply the right technological tools to manage, assess, develop, and deliver information that can respond to inquiries. Library and Information Science Entrepreneurs must possess this skill to render excellent services and make waves in this century.

3.5 Information Literacy Skill: This is another skill required of every Library and Information Science entrepreneur. Idoniboye-Obu and Oporum (2022), affirmed that information literacy refers to the ability to recognise when information is needed and to locate, assess, and successfully use this information. Entrepreneurs in Library and Information

Science who lack this skill cannot make progress in entrepreneurship. Elonye and Uzuegbu (2013) added that they ought to have a good savvy in the economics and marketing of information products and services, information processing, and organizing.

3.6 Internet Searching Expertise: Due to the introduction of ICT to information activities, several information carriers are now domiciled on the Internet, which requires certain skills to be accessed accurately. Internet searching expertise will help Library and Information Science entrepreneurs navigate, discover, and retrieve their desired information online, which they need to satisfy their customers.

3.7 Communication Skills: Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, to explain difficult information, negotiate contracts, and build partnerships with stakeholders are essential for entrepreneurs. It involves a variety of abilities that enable them to effectively convey thoughts, persuade customers, build relationships, and lead their ventures to success. By developing good communication skills, entrepreneurs can effectively navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship and drive their endeavors toward growth and success.

4. Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Library and Information Science

The entrepreneurial opportunities for remedying the issue of unemployment among Library and Information Science professionals are highlighted:

4.1 Information Brokerage: An information broker is a professional involved in information gathering and marketing services to satisfy customers' needs. Obuezie and Ogedoihu (2020) maintain that an information broker is an individual who gathers information for others as a professional business. He searches for information on a specific topic and delivers it to a buyer. This is done by accessing information databases to selectively provide information on a definite subject of interest to a specific individual or group. Information brokers depend on various information sources (print and non-print) to help them accomplish their tasks. This business requires little or no capital for one to kick off. Clients, especially researchers, will find this service useful and willing to pay for it (Obuezie & Ogedoihu, 2020).

4.2 Database Brokerage: A database broker provides the software, guidelines, and other equipment to access recommended databases. A database is a cluster or collection of information on a particular subject, stored online and made accessible and retrievable with electronic gadgets. Corroborating this, Akanwa and Udo-Anyanwu (2017) declared that a database is a collection of works, data, or other materials collected systematically, methodically, and individually accessible electronically. Databases benefit individuals and libraries as they help develop enormous, accurate, and reliable collections. Health InterNetwork Access to Research Initiative (HINARI), Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA), and Educational

Resources Information Center (ERIC) are examples of databases.

4.3 Information System Consultancy: This involves advising firms on efficiently using information technology (IT) to meet business goals. Consultants in this domain collaborate closely with clients to comprehend their unique requirements, obstacles, and objectives before suggesting ways to maximise their IT systems, processes, and infrastructure. Consultants at this level work on developing IT-based solutions to the problems of business processes and functions so that organisations run efficiently. The following are some of the most frequent tasks that consultants could work on: creating a library or resource; automating circulation services; implementing new technologies, like new library management software; developing institutional repositories; developing electronic theses and dissertations; developing open-source systems; and designing websites (Okojie & Ibrahim cited in Abdullahi *et al.*, 2022). Record automation, data analysis, publishing, and knowledge management consultancy are also part of the duties of a consultant.

4.4 Information Organisation Service: Information organisation is an academic discipline that deals with tasks like cataloging, categorisation, and document description that help create systems of representation and order for knowledge or information. Library and Information Science graduates can use this service for existing and new libraries or individuals desiring to establish libraries or organise their collections following universal codes.

4.5 Abstracting Service: An abstracting service is a service that provides a concise summary of publications (books, journals), often on a subject or group of related subjects. Library and Information Science graduates require this skill to flourish as entrepreneurs. Elonye and Uzuegbu (2013), stated that an abstract is an information device that helps to organise the literature of published information so that consultants can locate documents of interest easily. Hence, an ideal abstractor should have subject expertise, foreign language abilities, and information skills.

4.6 Library Establishment and Maintenance: Library and Information Science graduates can venture into establishing and maintaining libraries for individuals and organisations. Library establishment and maintenance is one of the fee-based services in Library and Information Science that require experience and professionalism. It entails selecting library equipment and resources, their acquisition, and appropriate setup. In setting up a library for organisations one must take cognisance of the users, their information needs, and the available funds.

4.7 Literature Searching: This is one of the entrepreneurial opportunities available for Library and Information Science graduates. This service is often provided to professionals, writers, or researchers desiring specific information on a given area of research interest. It is a service in which one selectively compiles information output or products on a given topic or field of study based on group or individual requests. It

entails thoroughly searching available literature (journal articles, books, official reports) to determine what is already known on a given problem and making it available.

4.8 Publishing and Printing: This is an activity or profession that involves the production and distribution of information resources in diverse formats. It is the process of turning a manuscript into an electronic or printed book for reading. Publishing is an entrepreneurial venture that entails creating, marketing, and distributing printed and non-printed information resources for public consumption. Printing is an economic business venture that can enrich Library and Information Science entrepreneurs if managed properly.

4.9 Indexing Service: An indexing service can assign document descriptors and access points. It analyses the content of documents and provides a guide to their information. Indexing service is an entrepreneurial opportunity that Library and Information Science professionals can venture into as a business enterprise. According to Elonye and Uzuegbu (2013), the indexer's responsibility is to analyse the text to help users locate information on a specific subject.

5. Challenges of Entrepreneurship for Library and Information Professionals

Entrepreneurship is not without challenges. A Library and Information Science professional who ventures into entrepreneurship is bound to face the following challenges:

5.1 Lack of Requisite Information Literacy Skill: This is the ability to identify when information is needed, where to locate the needed information, and how to assess and use the received information to meet the users' information needs (Idoniboye-Obu and Oporum, 2022). Some Library and Information Science graduates cannot recognize where and how to locate, evaluate, and effectively use the information to satisfy clients' needs. For librarians to meet the century's demands, they must be able to locate, retrieve, and use the needed information to satisfy clients' needs.

5.2 Lack of Entrepreneurial Spirit: Some library and information science professionals lack adequate entrepreneurial spirit that could enable them to establish an appropriate entrepreneurial venture in the information arena. Many of them prefer to wait and secure white-collar jobs that could earn them salaries and wages, leaving the venture at the mercy of people who are non-professionals (Abdullahi *et al.*, 2022). It remains interestingly true that some library and information science professionals have the skills required to become successful entrepreneurs but are afraid to go into entrepreneurship because they lack entrepreneurial spirit. Abdullahi *et al.* (2022) mentioned that those aspiring to be entrepreneurs face the problem of generating compelling business ideas. Not knowing how to generate ideas would breed frustration and make the aspiring entrepreneurs start an entrepreneurial venture similar to the one he has seen around his environment.

5.3 Absence of Technological Literacy: Technological literacy is the ability of the librarian to reliably use suitable

technological gadgets to resolve problems, manage, evaluate, and create or provide information capable of answering clients' queries. Most professional librarians lack the technological ability to effectively use gadgets in the 21st century (Okwu and Oporum, 2021)). There is a need for information professionals in this high-tech information era to follow the current system to remain pertinent.

5.4 Access to Market Channels: Potential customers lack awareness about the role of Library and Information Science entrepreneurs. Library and Information Science Entrepreneurs must choose the right channels to deliver their products and services. Abdullahi et al. (2022) affirmed that companies, government departments, banks, hospitals, individuals, and schools are some of the few customers that consume some of the products and services offered by Library and Information

Science professionals. Target customers purchase information products and utilize the services of Library and Information Science entrepreneurs to satisfy various demands at the workplace and sometimes individual needs.

5.5 Poor Patronage: This is a major challenge often faced by entrepreneurs worldwide. Lack of patronage of local products and services produced by fellow citizens is a problem. Most people prefer imported products and services over domestic ones, and entrepreneurship is not an exclusion. Abdullahi et al. (2022) mentioned that many library and information science experts considering profitable entrepreneurship have lost hope due to these unethical actions.

6. Conclusion

Entrepreneurship is a craggy venture. It is building something of value from practically nothing, the pursuit of opportunity using available resources. Truly, if it flourishes, the entrepreneur has every reason to ride the crown to self-fulfillment and pleasure. If it flops, opportunities exist to try again. Entrepreneurship requires vision, passion, and commitment to the task. Entrepreneurs in Library and Information Science can avoid failure by knowing the success and failure factors in entrepreneurship. Previous knowledge of these factors is a decent way to circumvent the pains of failure and the subsequent loss of resources. They must understand that entrepreneurship does not depend upon man or woman. It is an attitude of the mind and involves appropriate internal stimulus. Hence, there is a dire need for Library and Information Science entrepreneurs to motivate themselves because information is the paramount product of this age, and those who market information products and services with this perspective will unquestionably sell. Library and Information Science professionals should arm themselves with the skills, attitudes, and values essential for enhanced library services to cope with increasing entrepreneurial opportunities created by the emergence of the information economy. Today, individuals such as authors, researchers, professionals, and business outlets desire information as they understand that information is required for conducting and accomplishing their different operations as it brings about growth and progress.

Hence, Library and Information Science graduates must seize this opportunity.

7. Recommendations

To remedy the unemployment narrative and boost the spirit of entrepreneurship in Library and Information Science, the following were recommended:

I. To make use of the massive devices that make information distribution easier, Library and Information Science students should learn pertinent information literacy and internet search techniques;

II. Library schools should deliberately inculcate the culture of entrepreneurship into undergraduates as a remedy to the issue of unemployment among graduates.

III. In this technological age, librarians must ensure that they are adequately trained and retrained to initiate and manage technological tools, as this will enable them to remain relevant in this tech age.

IV. Nigerians should be encouraged to patronise products and services produced locally as this will encourage entrepreneurship among Library and Information Science professionals.

V. Library schools should reinforce practice-based teaching and learning as it will boost creativity and the use of new technologies among Library and Information Science students.

References

- Abdullahi, J., Barkindo, A., & Ezeabasili, C. A. (2021). Entrepreneurship education in library and information science: Fostering economic growth and development in Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/4728>
- Abdullahi, Z. M., Adamu, A. L. G., Mohammed, A. U., & Mohammed, I. (2022). Inforpreneurship: Opportunities and challenges for library and information science professionals in 21st century. *Asian Journal of Information Science and Technology*, 12(2), 22-28.
<https://doi.org/10.51983/ajist2022.12.2.3318>
- Akanwa, P. C., & Udo-Anyanwu, A. J. (2017). *Information resources in libraries*. Owerri: Supreme Publishers.
- Elonye, G. U., & Uzuegbu, C. P. (2013). Entrepreneurial opportunities for library and information science (LIS) professionals in contemporary society. *The Research Librarian*.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292906956>
- Idoniboye-Obu T. I., & Oporum, A. C. (2022). The 21st-century library: A tool for educational advancement in a changing society. *Zambia Journal of Library and Information*

Science, 6(1), 46-51.
<http://41.63.0.109/index.php/journal/article/view/80>

Ince, E., Kala, A., Akmaz, A., & Celik, R. (2023). A research to determine the effect of entrepreneurship attitude and education on entrepreneurial intention. *The Journal of High Technology Management Research*, 34(2).
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hitech.2023.100475>

Khan, R. U., Salamzadeh, Y., Shah, S. Z, A., & Hussain, M. (2021). Factors affecting women entrepreneurs' success: A study of small- and medium-sized enterprises in the emerging market of Pakistan. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-021-00145-9>

Kulmie, D. A., Hussein, M. S., Abdi, B. M., Abdulle, M. A., & Adam, M. A. (2023). Entrepreneurship training, job creation and youth empowerment. *Asian Social Science*, 19(6).

<https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v19n6p111>

Obuezie, A. C., & Ogedoihu, C. (2020). Academic women librarians' entrepreneurial skills acquisition for life after retirement in two selected academic libraries in Anambra State, Nigeria. *Library Research Journal*. 5(1), 15-24.

Okwu, E., & Opurum, A. C. (2021). Inadequate library services: A challenge to 21st-century education in a developing economy. *British Journal of Library and Information Management* 1(1), 39-44.
<https://dio.10.52589/BJLIM-NJ8CWGZF>

Onuma, N. (2016). Entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions: A remedy to graduates unemployment. *British Journal of Education*, 4(5), 16-28.

Pepple, G. M., & Enuoh, R. O. (2020). Entrepreneurial competencies: A required skill for business performance. *European Journal of Business and Innovation Research*, 8(3), 50-61.

Shefiu, R. (2016). Youth empowerment leveraging on entrepreneurship. *Continental J. Sustainable Development*, 7(1), 45-60.