

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND THE LIBRARY****BY****AGHAUCHE, E.E.****DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE****NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY,****AWKA****Abstract**

In this era of global economic meltdown and unemployment, entrepreneurship education becomes imperative. Entrepreneurship education, if acquired, enables a person to establish and run his own business. Owning and operating a business is a way of earning a living and becoming self-reliant. This is not without attendant risks, which may even lead to business failure. Acquiring necessary knowledge and skills will help any prospective entrepreneur withstand business risks or challenges. It is the view of this paper that the library has very important role to play in educating would-be entrepreneurs.

The essence of education is to prepare an individual for independent living by equipping him with necessary skills and knowledge. Education is given at different levels of human development. As spelt out in the Nigerian National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004), it is given at four levels, namely, early childhood/pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary. There are educational goals that are expected to be achieved at each of these levels. At pre-primary level, one of the goals of education is to inculcate in the child the spirit of inquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and playing with toys, etc; while at primary level it aims at, among others, giving the child the opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity; and, provide him with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trade and crafts of the locality. In the same vein, at secondary level, one of the broad objectives of education is to prepare the individual

for useful living within the society; while at the tertiary level, it is expected that education will enable the individual acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable the individual to be self-reliant and useful members of the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

From these objectives, it is obvious that a major focus of education is to enable the individual acquire knowledge and skills that would make him self-reliant, and that is vocational education.

**Importance of Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is an act of creating and managing business. It is an employment strategy that enables an individual to be self-employed. In that case, the individual operates as the employer, instead of being an employee. An entrepreneur is therefore one who establishes and runs a business of his own. Owning a business is not easy. It requires hard work to succeed, but when it succeeds, it is rewarding.

Small businesses play important role in the economic growth of some countries, like the United

States of America (U.S.A.). Many businesses in the U.S.A. are small and they contribute immensely to the economic development of the country. Barreto (2006) asserted that 99 percent of all American businesses are small, and that small businesses provide approximately 75 percent of the new jobs added to the U.S. economy each year. He also added that small businesses represent 99.7 percent of all employers; and that small businesses employ 50.1 percent of the private workforce.

Stressing further, he noted that small businesses broaden the base of participation in the society, create jobs, decentralize economic power, giving people a stake in the future and spur the kind of innovation that creates gains productivity, thereby creating local and even national prosperity. Americans believe that small business cultivates character and strengthens democracy (Conte, 2006).

Another aspect of the roles of small businesses is that of sustenance. They help to sustain people in difficult times. Conte (2006) stated that in economic downturns such as the Great Depression of the 1930's and the recessions of 1973-1975 and 1980-1982, many people who lost their jobs in larger companies formed their own businesses to stay afloat the hard times. Barreto (2006) equally said that when times are tough, it is small businesses that see people through to brighter days. In these days of no job, it is by going into small business or entrepreneurship that people, especially youths, can survive.

### **Entrepreneurship Education**

Owning a successful business is a way of earning a living and at the same time becoming self-reliant. This is however not without risk taking. Strauss (2006) quoting his father said "An entrepreneur is a person who takes risk with money to make money". Risk is inherent in entrepreneurship. This is why it is necessary that would-be entrepreneurs are made to know what they ought to do before establishing their own businesses.

Entrepreneurship education aims at providing the learner with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to encourage entrepreneurship. It involves enabling people learn business skills. With entrepreneurship education, one stands a better chance of managing business risks and challenges. One form of entrepreneurship education or the other is taught at all levels of education. It focuses on the realization of opportunities, like setting up a new business. It decreases the chances of business failure by stressing consistent and proven set of practices.

Entrepreneurship is more than mere creation of business. It embraces seeking opportunities, taking risks and ability to nurture an idea into reality. This is why entrepreneurship education provides people the potentials to create and manage businesses.

Some youths are interested in going into entrepreneurship, but they lack necessary information. This is what entrepreneurship education does. It prepares people, especially, youths to be responsible and enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs by bringing them into real life learning experiences where they can take risks, manage results, and learn from the outcomes. The ability to set goals, manage time, money and other resources are important entrepreneurship skills that would-be entrepreneurs are expected to acquire through entrepreneurship education.

The present systems of education in Nigeria tagged 6-3-3-4 made provision for entrepreneurship education. Ozor and Odubanwo (2009) stated that when the military introduced the 6-3-3-4 system; it was to give boost to technical and vocational aspect of education, described as the engine for economic growth. The 6-3-3-4 system of education stands for six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary three years of senior secondary and four years of tertiary education. The plan was that after three years or junior secondary, if a student is found to be inclined in technical/vocational education, he would be advised to go to technical college to complete his senior secondary.

The purpose of introducing this system of education has not been fully realized. According to Ozor and Odubanwo (2009) the 6-3-3-4 system of education did not work because when it was introduced there was a plan to establish more technical colleges to meet the population of those that may opt for that aspect of education, but this was not so; no new technical college was established, and the government also failed to fully equip the existing technical and vocational schools.

Worried by the absence of technical/vocational aspect of education, the Lagos state government undertook the renovation and equipping of the existing technical colleges in the state (Ozor and Odubanwo, 2009).

In this era of lack of white collar jobs, entrepreneurship education is a "sine qua non" in preparing youths to be self-employed and self-reliant. Since there is a re-awakening technical/vocational education, there is need for the government to equip technical schools with modern equipment and Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities, and employ qualified teachers. The teaching of entrepreneurship should not be restricted to technical colleges; rather, it should be slotted into the academic programmes of secondary and tertiary institutions.

### **The Library in 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, 2003). It is a place for storing knowledge under a system that facilitates identification and retrieval (Chigbu, 2003). 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. Edoka (2000)

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. All knowledge is divided into subjects and each subject is assigned a notation symbol so that all books on that subject have the same number (Ozioko, 2005): The essence of this is for easy identification and location of any information material in the library.

The library is also charged with the responsibility of transmitting recorded knowledge. According to Ozioko (2005) 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, 2005). 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, 1977). 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 rained 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 research questions. The library provides business related databases and other business reference materials.

Being a multimedia resource center, the library is expected to have all it takes to educate entrepreneurs. The problem is that sometimes, the

library is not well equipped to perform its functions. It is pertinent therefore, that the library is provided with relevant information resources, including Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities, like the internet.

### Conclusion

One of the ways of helping people to survive in the present global economic crisis is to make them become entrepreneurs who would establish and manage their own businesses. To be successful, prospective entrepreneurs need good information about their businesses. Experience has shown that lack of necessary information before setting up business has resulted to business failures. It is in the light of this that entrepreneurship education is a matter of necessity; to give adequate preparations to would-be entrepreneurs in their chosen vocations. According to Ozor and Odubanwo (2009) some countries like Singapore, Japan and India among others, believed much in technical education, and that may have informed why they are called the emerging economy of the world.

The library is an indispensable tool in any educational pursuit. As a multimedia resource centre, it has a lot to offer in entrepreneurship education. Its resources and services in formation delivery are capable of transferring needed knowledge and skills to potential entrepreneurs. It is therefore pertinent that the library be equipped with library resources including Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities.

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