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## Adoption of Entrepreneurship in Library Services as a Panacea for Economic and Sustainable Development

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**Abstract:** *In this study, entrepreneurship in library services as a panacea for economic and sustainable development was assessed, as well as commercialization skills in library services. The implications in practice and the need for entrepreneurship skills development through training and benefits of entrepreneurship and commercialization in library will be considered. Primary and Secondary data was collected for this study. The study adopted a field survey design with Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka used as the area of the study. Judgemental sampling was used with a questionnaire distributed to the sample staff of the library. Based on the survey, the adoption of entrepreneurship in library services was found to aid the further development of library services, librarians, and users. Its role of educating the public especially with the gradual enhancement of online library services have helped influence opinion makers and the public thus aiding economic decisions and sustaining development. The study recommends among others that the library administrators should be adequately trained to acquire these entrepreneurial skills to enable them market their products and services online so as to generate internal revenue that would complement whatever grants they may receive from the parent body and also, for economic and sustainable development of Nigeria.*

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, sustainable development, librarian, Library services.

### 1.0 Introduction

It has long-established that libraries have been custodians of knowledge and information resources. The acquisition, censorship or selection, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of information to the rightful users are the basic functions of the library practitioners. Originally, the use of library products and services was virtually free of charge, basically, Eje and Dushu (2018), expressed that library are mainly entrusted with a host of predetermined tasks like acquiring, organizing, preserving, retrieving and disseminating information to the user.

Furthermore, right from the inception of a traditional or manually operated library setting, the librarians have been, with one accord carrying out their assigned jobs in the library, by guiding the library users through locating the very material resources which they need on the shelf. But then, before any information users would be allowed to approach the shelf the library professional in charge must be consulted with by the users who would then show them the way to the catalogue cabinet which they can utilize to search for resources available in the library. To this end, Ekeokpala and Ihejinka (2012) noted that users are offered services in a traditional setting of a library after they must have probably approached a librarian.

Despite all the efforts the library staff are making to satisfy the patrons, the manually operated library has been encumbered with attendant problems and challenges that are attributable to the ineffectiveness in the management of the libraries; such as the problems of space, accessibility and preservation of collections; there are a lot of bottlenecks in attending to all the clientele that cluster or throng the library waiting to be served; the

attitude of some librarians which has always been known to be that of hushing library users; librarians want to be pushed to carry out their duties, for they do not see the need to render services as if it is their own business.

Moreover, librarians seem to be finding things very challenging on how to cater and fulfil the information users' demand in the barest minimum span of time, the worst of all is that the library management are solely and totally depend on the parent's body and other donors for their financial support which they use in the running of the libraries from year to year among others. On the above-mentioned assertion, Kalphatha and Akula (2014) stated that in the era of information explosion, the tremendous amount of information is being generated and transmitted from every corner of the world in the form of print materials, research articles, lectures, presentations video conferencing, technical reports, standard and patents (special documents obtained which permits one to sell a new product or invention). Adding that in the early stages of 20<sup>th</sup> century, libraries were facing the problems of how to cater and fulfill the users demand in minimum span of time. According to Ekokpala and Ihejinka (2012) indicated that the traditional library practice has been that of provision of information to library users within the library terrain (ground or place) and the service is void of the employ of certain skills that could boost the service.

From all said and done, it has been discovered from the literature review that the researcher underwent that our libraries are critically in the web of having a lot of redundancies among the library staff which will give rise to downsizing many of the library workforce. This deplorable or despicable scenario in the library industry is because of the innovation and integration of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the library setting. In view of this desperate incident, Olakunle (2017) noted that advances in technology have changed things globally especially in governance so much that the effective use of information technology makes a difference between success and failure. That the emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) also brings a change to the library functions and services. Adding that the response to the adoption and application to the new technology, the library is shifting from her old traditional role as a social agency for information generation, storage, retrieval, and dissemination to the modern electronic information systems. Hence, people do not come into libraries to get it or to use it. They obtain and use information at home in the office, in the dorm rooms and in restaurants. They use desktops and laptops, smartphones, and tablets. These and many other occurrences that exist in the library industry now have necessitated the adoption of entrepreneurship and commercialization of library products and services into the library sector so that people will develop more lively enthusiasm once again for coming to patronize the libraries for boasting our economic and sustainable development both in libraries and the nation at large.

### **1.1 Objective of the Study**

The study has the primary objective of determining the implications of entrepreneurship and commercialization in library services for economic development and sustainability.

### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

#### **Entrepreneurship and Commercialization Skills**

Entrepreneurship is the activity of setting up a business or businesses, taking on financial risks in the hope of profit. According to Nwabueze and Ebele (2019) asserted that the term entrepreneurship has been viewed from

different conceptual perspectives although all revolves around innovational creativity, competency, risk-taking, self-reliance and rewards. In a similar vein, Nwankwo and Unachukwu cited in Abiodun (2019) noted that entrepreneurship education prepares the receiver especially youths to be self-reliant, job creators and risk takers. Adding that entrepreneurship may be considered as the process through which an entrepreneur create, nurture and grow enterprises using a reasonable degree of initiative, skills and competencies necessary to transform change of opportunities thereby deriving personal satisfaction, monetary rewards and independence. At this juncture all we agitate to do is how to get the incumbent information practitioners to adopt this entrepreneurship and commercialization skills in the libraries since the Information and Communication Technology (ICT), has come to stay. To this end, Ekeokpala and Ihejinka cited in Abiodun (2019) indicated that in the library profession, entrepreneurship has not been quite topical except for tutorials in classes of which students neglect to put in practice. Adding that in the library profession, entrepreneurship is gaining grounds especially in the curriculum whereby university students are being taught entrepreneurial skills and the library profession. Moreover, the librarians and the undergraduate students are expected to become entrepreneurs. In confirmation of the above-stated statement, Nwabueze and Ebele (2019) opines that library and information science graduates are expected to possess entrepreneurship skills to be relevant in the new information science education in Nigeria today cannot be relevant without effective preparation of new librarian to effectively use Information and Communication Technology in their professional practice.

Moreover, commercialization is the process of managing or running something principally to financial gain, or the process of bringing new products or services to market, or commercialization is the process by which a new product or service is introduced into the general market, (Investopedia, 2020).

From the above stated meanings of commercialization, we advocate that the library managers should begin to market library and information services to be generating their own revenue internally. To affirm the assertion, Nworie (2019) clearly explained that libraries are chiefly funded by the established parent's body-government, individual and institution/organization without recourse for self-funding and revenue generation. Adding that the library administrators are to look inwards and generate revenue that would complement whatever grant it receives from the parent's body.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

Theories of sustainability attempt to prioritize and integrate social responses to environmental and cultural problems. An economic model looks to sustain natural and financial capital; an ecological model looks to biological diversity and ecological integrity; a political model looks to social systems that realize human dignity. Religion has entered the debate with symbolic, critical, and motivational resources for cultural change.

The sustainability models include economic, ecological, and political models and are not mutually exclusive and often integrate complementary strengths of the others. Economic models propose to sustain opportunity, usually in the form of capital. According to the classic definition formulated by the economist Robert Solow, we should think of sustainability as an investment problem, in which we must use returns from the use of natural resources to create new opportunities of equal or greater value.

### **Online Entrepreneurship Services in Library**

The invention or the integration of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) into the library industry is a gift and a lucrative or profitable venture to all library professionals in the job already. As we all are supposed to know that over the years, librarians have been ditching out information services, to the users without demanding virtually any farthing from anyone. Dynamically, the condition of dissemination of information services and products to the users by the library administrators must be drastically changed. On this note, Olakunle (2017) observed that the emergence of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) also brings a change to the library functions and services. In addition, that the adoption and application to the new technology, the library is shifting from her old traditional role as a social agency for information generation, storage, retrieval and dissemination to the modern electronic information systems. To this end, Boss (2001), asserted that many libraries have started accessing images of book-form materials in various formats and other materials in digital forms, storing them for retrieval from within and without their materials- the online services. Hence, the Nigerians libraries are being encouraged to incorporate the online services to enable them to be ditching out their business information related services to the young entrepreneurship ventures of the start-ups. In addition, the libraries could be consulted for business research, data gathering and analysis of data and competitive intelligence could be handled by business librarians in our libraries. When these are done on the spot, it will improve the income of our libraries and raise how upcoming or forthcoming entrepreneurs will value libraries in Nigeria society. This could always be realized by designing websites such as blogs for small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria and get proceeds from such innovation.

## **Commercialization Skills in Library Services**

The term commercialization is the process of bringing new products or services to market. The broad act of commercialization entails production, distribution, marketing, sales, customer support and other key functions critical to achieving the commercial success of the product or services, (Investopedia, 2020). While commercialization skills are regarded as entrepreneurship skills because entrepreneurial traits are essential for business creation.

Additionally, entrepreneurs are expected to be risk-taker, innovator, and manager. Thus, they need determination and self-confidence, However, commercialization skills seem to be more than entrepreneurship skills, because developing commercialization pedagogy (method and practice of teaching), revealed that commercialization education has to be real, intensive, interdisciplinary, and iterative. Commercialization skills are necessary because new technologies need to be diffused. Those new high-techs are problem-solver, and they make life comfortable and liveable.

## **Implications of Entrepreneurship and Commercialization in Library Practice**

When entrepreneurship and commercialization are adopted in libraries fully, the implications would be as follows: the library industry would change her primary product or service in response to customer needs, markets and new technologies. Libraries would change in pursuit of a higher return on investment. Libraries and librarians are to start with online retail sales and move into web services in order to thrive because if they fail to join the trends of technological innovation, they will face the consequences of being displaced because of competition in the dissemination of information services to the users, moreover they will face bankruptcy.

Fortunately, libraries are to respond to their own customers by beginning to provide services that had previously been outside their scope. These services may be in demand, but they are largely outside the traditionally defined realm of libraries as collections of print materials, textbooks etc. Above all, libraries are increasingly encouraged to be entrepreneurial. Also, libraries are not immune to the influence of business, sales, markets, and other commercial forces. To this end, Nworie (2019) noted that presently, the dynamism in providing library and information services has significantly emerged as information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) continue to diffuse into information and telecommunications sector, and that the management and service approach to library is becoming more sophisticated occasion by fund viability, establishes policy frameworks, institutional (library) relevance, adoption of modern trends and technology- increase in multiple accesses to information, changes in librarians training curriculum, economy (wages/budget), patrons information seeking behaviour and general layout of the library system and maintenance. Adding that these have pushed the overheads cost and financial needs of the library making libraries to think alternative sources of fund may be commercialization or privatization or entrepreneurially; for them to withstand any shock amidst uncertainty in shortfalls from funding by the parent's body, otherwise they are prone to directly suffer or scuttle services.

### **Entrepreneurship Skills Development through Training**

Entrepreneurship is an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives.

Any would-be entrepreneurs must undergo an intensive training to acquire specific entrepreneurial skills and traits that will make them to succeed in their business ventures. From the foregoing, it is crystal clear to the librarians to put up every possible effort to be trained as entrepreneurs so as to be adaptable in the operation of new technologies in the library industry. To this, Ekeokpala and Ihejirika cited in Abiodun (2019) noted that the synergy with the tools of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought great opportunity and prominence (fame) to the discipline. The services of libraries are increasingly demanded across disciplines and institutions. Their work environment is becoming increasingly complex with constant change in the organizational, technological and informative environment. In their professional work, they have to keep up with new technologies and systems, new forms of information, information media and information sources and demonstrate their value to the parent institutions. Adding that entrepreneurial skills are no doubt imperative for achieving this feat or exploit.

### **Benefits of Entrepreneurship and Commercialization in Library.**

There are many benefits the library practitioners may derive from becoming entrepreneurs. These include:

- i. The freedom to pursue their own vision entrepreneurship is only venue where they pursue that view and see the fruition (success) of the vision. Self-reliance allows one to do his or her thing and pursue those areas that feels passionate about.
- ii. The opportunity to learn and gain knowledge: the entrepreneur often wears many hats- the strategic planner, the marketer, the customer service representative and the book keeper. There are a million things one probably did not know before he or she started the business that you are now forced to learn and gaining all this knowledge enriches him or her as a person.

- iii. The highs and lows of self-employment: entrepreneurs face tremendous challenges and experience incredible joy when these challenges are overcome. If one craves excitement become an entrepreneur. One moment the local newspaper is featuring an individual; and the next, he or she loses her biggest customer. There is never a dull moment in self-employment.
  - iv. The sense of pride and fulfilment in accomplishing things: as an entrepreneur, he or she makes things happen. He/she can create a vision, lay out the plans to bring the plans to fruition and pursue the steps needed to make the business a success. Doing all these things can give him/her an incredible feeling of pride and joy-seeing his/her website used by people, finding your products in the department store, getting compliments from customers on how your business has helped them, and being written about by the media. In many respects, the business is the risk-taker's baby and nurturing it and seeing it grow can give any parent- institutions, a sense of fulfilment.
  - v. The risk-taker will gain confidence from being able to establish and sustain the enterprise overtime. Entrepreneurship is tough. There will be moments where he or she will question decisions taken in the course of running the enterprise. Obstacles that seem insurmountable would come but being able to overcome and steady the tide of the business. Achieving such amidst obstacles builds confidence, respect and renewed energy to foster into bigger tasks in running the enterprise.
  - vi. Each new day is a challenge in running enterprises and there are no dull moments to make the risk-taker get bored. This is so as every day presents a new challenge, new tasks and new discoveries. Entrepreneurs set their pace and thus can choose to build their enterprise in fast mood or gradually.
  - vii. The chance to share one's learning: at the end of the day the risk-taker will have the opportunity to teach and share his or her experiences and knowledge garnered overtime. Sharing experiences and knowledge gained during business operation can serve as a means of giving back to the community or parent institution. It can take the form of mentoring others such as would-be entrepreneurs. This can be achieved through dealing public speeches, writing books or direct contributions to the society.
- Furthermore, the benefits of commercialization; commercialization of research provides new products and services that can be used to solve some of life's most pressing problems as well as making incremental improvements to the quality of life for consumers and business effectiveness across a wide variety of domains (Innovation Institute Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, 2020).
- Commercialization is the process by which a new product or service is introduced into the general market. Commercialization is broken into phases from the initial introduction of the product through its mass production and adoption. It considers the production, distribution, marketing, sales and customer support required to achieve commercial success. As a strategy. Commercialization, requires that a business develop a marketing plan, determine how the product will be supplied to the market and anticipate barriers to succeed. Other commercialization benefits are:
- Societal Benefits: Spanning across areas such as healthcare, environment, wellness fitness, education, industrial applications, and simply, day-to-day life, innovations resulting from University research are most impactful when they are in the hands of those who can benefit from them most.
  - Economic Growth: Taking innovations to market through commercialization also provides an economic benefit. Whether it be through the licensing of technology to other companies or

through the development of new start-up companies, commercialization provides new revenue generation and job creation locally, regionally and potential across the globe.

- Industry Participation: Commercialization provides an opportunity to engage with industry partners ,investors and other business which result in additional funding sources to further University research:
- Recruitment and retention of adequate staff
- Entrepreneurship: By having a focus on entrepreneurship and commercialization, both faculty and staff can get exposed to the business community which cn be beneficial in multiple ways:

Challenges posed to librarians and information users with respect to adoption of entrepreneurship and commercialization in libraries. These challenges are discussed here as follows:

- Financial issues: the main challenge that all entrepreneurs face is to get their business funded. Older business owners have the advantage of a history of good credit and years of networking under their belt, making it easy to find investors and secure loans and contracts. The younger entrepreneur does not yet have these resources.
- Inadequacies of Specific Skills: it should be noted that the clients' population is rapidly changing as the technologies for servicing them is changing too. Many LIS professionals lack various forms of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and entrepreneurial skills relevant for online entrepreneurship services various studies (Lawal, 2009 and Mohammed, 2003) clearly highlight the lack of entrepreneurship content in the Nigeria Library and Information Science Curricula. For this reason. Edewor and Omosor (2012) remarked that many librarians turn to other professional literature for models of entrepreneurship that can be applied to librarianship.
- Inadequate Deployment of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs): Most of Nigerian librarians are yet to deploy adequate Information Technology (IT) in their operation and services. Manual or traditional operations are still very few electronic resources are yet to be imbibed fully and most of them are yet to have websites. All these are necessary for the take-off of online entrepreneurial in Nigeria libraries.
- Inadequate Entrepreneur mindset: Besides, the most librarians do not have the initial ingredient of success that is the entrepreneurial mindset of bringing about a changes creating an invention, or beating competition; This is quite disturbing as libraries are facing endless competition from other information providers.
- Hiring Employees for the first time: So, an entrepreneurs business has grown and it is time to delegate tasks. But finding employees can be a difficult task for a young first-time entrepreneur. When an enterprise is looking for someone with a good attitude and technical skills and abilities that match the tasks at hands. An employee like this can be surprisingly elusive or difficult to get, among other challenges.

**3. Methodology**

**3.1 Research Design**

The researcher used a survey research design. The survey research describes the nature of a given phenomenon to give thorough research to the problem.

**3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

The sample size of this study was 20. Judgmental sampling was adopted and 20 top staff members taken from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Library, Awka.

**3.3 Data Sources**

Data for this study was gotten from primary and secondary sources. The primary source of data was field survey and the secondary source of data was from books, journals and internet sources.

**3.4 Method of data analysis**

Data collected were analyzed using simple statistical tool like percentage respondents opinion table, where the percentage of each type of response was computed by dividing the number of respondents that gave a particular by a total number of responses.

$$\frac{\text{Number of respondents}}{\text{Sample Size}} \times 100$$

**4.1 Data Presentation**

**Question 1: Does libraries have a role in influencing development through its resources?**

OPTION	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGES
Yes	15	75
No	5	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

FIELD SURVEY, 2020

From the above table, it was observed that 75% of the respondents representing 15 persons agreed with the statement that libraries have a role in influencing development through its resources. While 25% representing 5 persons refuted the statement.

**Questions 2: Will commercialization enhance and boost library finances, acquisition, and repository?**

OPTION	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGES
Yes	13	65
No	7	35
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

FIELD SURVEY, 2020

From the above table, it was observed that 65% of the respondents representing 13 persons agreed with the statement that will commercialization enhance and boost library finances, acquisition, and repository. While 35%, that is 7 persons did not agree to the statement.



**Questions 3: Can online library services influence the advice and role of government?**

OPTION	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGES
Yes	14	70
No	6	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

FIELD SURVEY, 2020

From the above table, it was observed that 70% of the respondents representing 14 persons agreed with the statement that online library services influence the advice and role of government. While 30%, that is 6 persons did not agree to the statement.

**Questions 4: Can library services help stir economic and sustainable development?**

OPTION	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGES
Yes	14	70
No	6	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

FIELD SURVEY, 2020

From the above table, it was observed that 70% of the respondents representing 14 persons agreed with the statement that library services help stir economic and sustainable development. While 30%, that is 6 persons did not agree to the statement.

**4.2 Summary of Findings**

It was found that libraries have a role in influencing development through its resources. Also, that commercialization enhances and boosts library finances, acquisition, and repository. It was also ascertained that online library services influence the advice and role of government and that library services help stir economic and sustainable development.

**5.1 Conclusion and Recommendations**

Libraries have traditionally been custodians of information which are provided free of charge to information users. Recent decline in funds to libraries and the change in the concept of information from a free resource to a marketable resource in the information age have necessitated the re-evaluation of free services in libraries. This innovative approach is needed with a view to raising a generation of library and information science professions that would be able to outperform other competitors in the service of library and information delivery.

The online environment that we now live in has great implication for Nigerian libraries. By extension, entrepreneurial skills acquisitions have implications for the library schools that train library and information scientists. There is urgent need for the library schools to review their curricula to reflect the current needs of libraries and information centres.

Librarians should be properly trained to fully become entrepreneurial library practitioners, so that they would be able to affect the successful online entrepreneurial services in the digital age, as any failure to adopt this system will attract negative reactions as regards the stability of librarians in the workforce that is to avoid downsizing and redundancy in the library establishments.

Hence, the paper recommends among others that librarians would have to be trained to become entrepreneurs in the library industry. Nigerian libraries should be adequately funded and supported to deploy needed Information Technology (IT) that will allow them to launch some of the online entrepreneurial services because without massive deployment of the new technology in our libraries, all the good innovations in the use of entrepreneurship and commercialization of library products and services to the library customers will be unrealisable.

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