

ENTREPRENEURIAL LIBRARIANSHIP FOR ENHANCED EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY

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Abstract

This paper discusses the meaning and relevance of Library and Information Science (LIS) in the society. It also examined entrepreneurial librarianship and its roles in promoting employment and employability for librarians. It also examined the concepts of employment, employability, entrepreneurship education, and discussed marketing LIS services as a tool for entrepreneurship success as well as challenges of entrepreneurial business. The paper also identifies the opportunities available in LIS profession which the researchers believe will reduce unemployment and enhance employment and employability for librarians.

Key words: Entrepreneur, Librarianship, Employment and Employability.

Introduction

Librarianship now known as library and information science (LIS) is a profession that is generally concerned with the principle and practice of selecting, acquiring, organizing, disseminating and providing access to information in accordance with specific needs of groups of people or an individual (cheong 2008). Mngutyo (2015) sees LIS as a discipline and profession that is concerned with helping individuals obtain reliable information to increase their knowledge in all spheres of their lives from the cumulated information store of mankind.

LIS is a bridge between two entities: people and information. Librarians are trained professionals who work in the library. The Librarians consider who may need the bridge, when and where a bridge is needed, how it is to be built and how it can be utilized. Librarians provide appropriate communication link between users and their desired information and ensures that

balance, authentic and relevant information is effectively made available to society using appropriate information technology and best practices. Librarians are equipped by training with knowledge and skills for that purpose. They are resourceful because of wide range of services they offered based on their subject expertise and experiences (Ekere & Ekere, 2017).

An entrepreneur can simply be defined as an innovating individual who has developed an ongoing business activity where none existed before. (Arogundade, 2011). Entrepreneurs are those who always discover new invention, work on it and fight to make it available in the market for profit. He has focus on innovation and planned for it and that made him to search for change, respond for change, and make use of the opportunity by converting change into opportunity. Entrepreneurs can perceive opportunities for entrepreneurial profits; that is, they are able to see where a good can be sold at a price higher than that for which it can be bought (De-joining and Marsili, 2010). An entrepreneur has knowledge of market opportunities and can grab any opportunities created by change and make profit out of it before others have done so.

Concept of Employment and Employability

Employment is work especially when it is done to earn money. There are basic skills that are needed for employment. They are: Problem solving: problem solving involves identifying the key issues and their implications having a clear understanding of the problems and determining the most effective solutions. Other basic skills include: organization and planning, initiative, self-management. Leadership, learning, and technology

Employability is a set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy. The essential employability skills are:

- Positive attitude: Being calm and cheerful when things go wrong.
- Communication: You can listen and pass information clearly when you speak or write.
- Teamwork: Being able to work in groups/teams happily.
- Self-management. Ability to manage your resources including time, finance, and emotions.
- Willingness to learn.
- Thinking skill (problem solving and decision making)
- Resilience

Employability skill tools include: motivation, attitudes, accountability, time management, stress management, team work, adaptability, and confidence. Clark (2018) proposed that accountability includes six key dimensions; human capital, social capital, personal attributes, personal behavior, perceived employability and labour market. Therefore, the solution to unemployment is by creating new business and job opportunities, entrepreneurship can help to reduce unemployment and drive economic growth and development.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship often emerges as a result of generation of idea, identification of an opportunity and business planning which result in business creation or product innovation Anyanwu (2018). Entrepreneurship education is a collection of formalized teachings that informs, trains and educates anyone desiring to get involved in establishing a business (Bechard & Toulouse, 2007). Paul, Cooney, & Ipem (2017) stated that it is a form of orientation people are exposed to which enables them to acquire information, skills and knowledge about opportunities to embark on small business as means of livelihood and self-reliance. Entrepreneurship education prepares the individual to be properly equipped to acquire saleable skills that can be used to manage his own business or that of others.

Goals and Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education

Bassey (2013) identified the goals and objectives of the Entrepreneurship Education to graduates as follows:

- To help graduates to define and develop a bankable business plan for any enterprise.
- To equip them with effective management strategies in their chosen enterprise businesses.
- To help them develop, expand and be innovative and creative in their product line(s) through expansion to new markets.
- To develop in graduates the ability to improve in the delivery and distribution system of their products.

- To help them to be better managers of their enterprises with proper record keeping that will assist them in all functional aspects of any enterprise.
- To equip them with the necessary skills in obtaining loan and/or other business transaction.
- To equip them with skills that will make them to be result oriented and have the financial discipline befitting a growing enterprise.

Entrepreneurial opportunities for LIS Professionals

Christiana Amanpour, CNN reporter says that information is life, information is power, information is security, information is money, and information is business. If these are true in this wired world, then we do not need a magician or fortune teller to emphasize the inextricable relationship between information and self-empowerment. If human resources are not optimally developed, the nation optimally is underdeveloped and one vital indicator for development is information (Achebe, 2013). Since businesses are willing to pay the price and when dealing with those who recognize and treat information as commodity, efforts should therefore be geared towards profit making. Librarians must be prepared to take advantage of these golden opportunities.

Therefore, a holistic process of planning, pricing, promotion, and distribution of information goods and services to present and potential users must be developed. Igbeka and Ekere (2012) discussed many aspects of information brokage which the library and information professionals can delve into. Anyanwu (2013) identifies the opportunities available to LIS

professionals as follows: Publishing, Binding/lamination, Stationary stores, Management of school libraries, Development of computer software, Production of computer software, Bookselling business, Operation of business centre and cyber business, Computer maintenance, and Information brokage and consultancy etc.

There are lots of other business which a Librarian can venture into as entrepreneurs apart from the ones listed above. They are printing of library and information, posters and stickers, document delivery services, record and archive management, photocopying services etc. the success of any of the entrepreneurial ventures discussed above is the possession of entrepreneurial mindset, which leads to conception of viable business ideas that address costumers concern satisfactorily.

Marketing LIS services as a tool for entrepreneurship success

Marketing is the process of communicating value in an effort to extend services which is an important aspect to libraries. Marketing of library and information products and services require the application of ICT for effective handling and managing of information. Library professionals need to market their services to their users for effective promotion of entrepreneurial skills. Librarians as a “knowledge managers” have every opportunity to apply their skills in such a way to attract users to their services. The activities of deciding how to advertise a product: at which cost will it be sold or the type of job in which it is done is marketing.

In entrepreneur librarianship, marketing involves publicizing resources and services, convincing people of the value and relevance of the products. It means not waiting passively for the users but actively going out to seek for them. Marketing, according to Ibraim, in Horsefall (2020), is defined as any activity that is undertaken in order to provide goods and/or services that can satisfy the needs of customers. Entrepreneurial business is a market place of idea because when customers/users realize they are getting quality materials and services, they become advocates and passionate supporters thereby creating more employment opportunities because more people will be needed in the business to enhance productivity.

Some challenges associated with entrepreneurial business are:

- i. Lack of Fund: for any business to stand firm and function, fund is required.
- ii. Lack access to information.
- iii. Lack of tools or inadequate tools for the business.
- iv. Lack of skilled professionals.
- v. Lack of marketing strategies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

LIS has different avenues for creating employment. Today, unemployment in Nigeria has made it necessary for LIS graduates to search out other areas of employment in the LIS profession apart from civil servant opportunities. LIS inculcate entrepreneurship skills in trainees and also offers them job opportunities thereby creating employment to the society.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Fund should be provided by the government in form of loans or grants.
2. Librarians should be creative and expert in the business.
3. There is need to maintain good relationship with the public.
4. There is need to be ICT literate: know how to apply ICT and social media tools such as twitter, facebook, e-mail, whatsapp etc. to reach out to users.
5. Need to adequately advertise products and services. This involves talking about products with other interest groups.
6. Adequate Advocacy: Being an advocate between your product and users through services provided.
7. There is need for provision of entrepreneurship education.

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