Entrepreneurship in Library and Information Science/Technology for Self-Reliance in Nigeria

Katamba Abubakar Saka
Department of Library and Information Technology,
Federal University of Technology, Minna – Nigeria
Email: s.katamba@futminna.edu.ng

Abstract

This paper highlighted the areas of entrepreneurship in the library and information science/technology curriculum, thus, include information business, preservation of library materials, book publishing/book trade, printing press, public relations, library building and design as well as consultancy services. Requirements for effective implementation of the entrepreneurship in the curriculum include adequate funding, infrastructural facilities, consultants/experts, recruitment of personnel and adequate practicals. Also highlighted were the opportunities in entrepreneurship for librarians. This includes establishment of cyber-café, computer services, cinema/film houses, GSM centre, mini-printing/publishing press, bookshops, newspaper stands and consultancy services. The expected challenges include low level of skills, huge taxation, power failure and cost implication. Possible recommendations were proffered.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Library schools, Curriculum, Self-reliance, Nigeria

Introduction

During the 1970s couple with the stable economic growth with an appreciable GDP, the employment of graduates and secondary school leavers was obvious and automatic. In fact the officials of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity were going round various institutions of learning carrying out documentation of graduates to be before the completion of their programmes jobs were already awaiting them. At that period, the issue of entrepreneurship does not arise. Entrepreneurship can be seen as the acquisition of innovative and creative skills thereby making beneficiaries to establish independent business or venture at a profitable level and sustainable living.

The issue of automatic employment since 1980s to date is no longer in existence except in some few rare cases due to inability of government to employ/absorb graduates and secondary school leavers leaving them to their fate while some are roaming the streets in search of white-collar jobs. This situation turned them to become prostitutes, militants, armed robbers and all forms of vices (Umeano, 2012). In order to solve this ugly situation and reduce the poverty level, government embarked on various programmes such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Introduction of Entrepreneurship in schools, establishment of Entrepreneurship Development centres as well as making a policy statement in NPE, (2008) so as to create awareness in the minds of Nigerian graduates and the need for them to be job creators rather than to become job seekers. The National Policy on Education (2008) also emphasized the need to acquire appropriate skills for self-reliant nation. The objectives of entrepreneurship education according to Paul (2005) include adequate training, fundamental skills, self-employed, self-reliant, economic growth, and poverty reduction among others.

However, with the few job vacancies in Nigerian libraries couple with the slow rate of library growth, Aina (2013) posits that "the curriculum for the training of librarians needed to be restructured to incorporate the emerging market" (p. 26) so as to carter for the training of LIS professionals who would work in an organization apart from library but the curriculum should

have strong information componentsi.e (ICT, Information repackaging, system analysis and design, information marketing, publishing, record management and journalism). An examination of LIS curriculum in some university-based Library schools in Nigeria as conducted by Saka (2009), Saka and Ahmed (2014), Eyo, Otongand Akin-Fakorede(2014) revealed that library schools' curriculum contain some elements of entrepreneurship. Thus a survey in entrepreneurial librarianship in new generation library schools in Northern Nigeria as conducted by Saka and Ahmed (2014) showed that Library Schools in Northern Nigeria have incorporated few entrepreneurial courses in their curricular with high level of inadequacy of such courses.This justifies the need for library schools in Nigeria to identify in their curriculum the courses/course contents that contains the entrepreneurship components.

Entrepreneurship in LIS/LIT Curriculum (Areas of Emphasis)

Virtually, every aspect of the undergraduate LIS curriculum contains one or more forms of entrepreneurship. Thus, Dung and Yakubu (2013) enumerated areas of entrepreneurship for librarians to include: book production/printing/publishing, bindery services, photocopy/reprography service, lamination, book seller, telephone/GSM services, consultancy services, indexing, abstracting services, etc. Therefore library schools should restructure their courses to identify, incorporate and also emphasize on the below course contents:-

1. Information Business
    -   Telephone/GSM services
    -   Cyber café/Computer Centre
    -   Cinema/Film houses
    -   Selling/servicing of ICT products (Computer and its accessories, satellite dish, video, audio sets, etc).
    -   Television viewing centre

2. Preservation of Library Materials
    -   Binding, photocopy, reprography, laminations, digitization and fumigation.

3. Book Publishing/Book Trade/Printing Press
    -   Establishing a publishing press
    -   Establishing Printing centre
    -   Establishing Bookshops
    -   Book/periodical vendors

4. Public Relations
    -   Aesthetics
    -   Design and painting
    -   Graphics

5. Library building and design
    -   Library design/Architecture
    -   Installation of electrical gadgets

6. Consultancy Services
    -   Information brokery (Indexing, abstracting, compilation of bibliographies)
    -   Organizing training programme
    -   Guest lecturer (Conferences, seminars, public lecturesetc)
    -   Designing of Library complex
    -   Data processing (analysis of statistical data)
    -   Networking of libraries
    -   Cataloguing and Classification of library materials

Requirements for Effective Implementation of the Entrepreneurship in the LIS/LIT Curriculum Contents

For effective incorporation and implementation of the entrepreneurship courses, the Nigerian Library schools running undergraduate programme are expected to meet up with the following requirements.

1. **Adequate Funding**

   For adequate funding to be ensured, the budget base of respective library should be increased while alternative sources of funds are mapped out. DTLC be increased, funds in the form of donation be solicited from Ford Foundation, Macarthur Foundation and other philanthropists. Adequate funds are required for the establishment of infrastructural facilities (computer laboratories, demonstration laboratories, etc) as well as hiring of consultants, employing technicians and all other personnel that will be involved in implementation of the Entrepreneurship courses.

2. **Infrastructural Facilities**

   Reasonable number of computers, binding machines, computer scanners, digital camera, cataloguing/classification tools; video and audio sets, internet facilities are required for practical lessons.

3. **Consultants/Experts for the Training of Students**

   The LIS schools need to employ the services of experts from other departments. Emerging courses such as Publishing, Library Building and Design, Binding, aesthetics, GSM services, graphics, networking require the services of experts from the departments of Building, architecture, Horticulture, Information Technology and Mass Communication respectively. The consultants and experts shouldbe given part-time job to train the students especially the practical aspects.

4. **Recruitment of Personnel**

   There is the need to recruit full-time teaching staff with Master and PhD in Librarianship specializing in the emerging areas. Full-time Technicians are needed for frequent service of IT facilities.

5. **Adequate Practical**

   As we are all aware of low level of IT practicals on the part of LIS professionals, there is the need to not only lay much emphasis on the practicals but there should also be enough periods allocated for the practical lessons. Entrepreneurship is all about the training and acquisition of skills that will enable the trainee to be self-reliant.

Opportunities in Entrepreneurship for Librarians

Below are some of the areas where LIS professionals can be gainfully self-employed thereby contributing positively to the economy.

Information Business Centres

The entrepreneur librarian can establish this centre to sell satellite dish, telephone, Audio Visual Materials/GSM products; computers; establish cyber café for internet services, build/establish cinema/film house for entertainment, recreation and education of the public. The entrepreneur can also embark on maintenance/services of ICT products.

Preservation of Library Materials

An entrepreneur librarian is expected to establish a functional bindery with necessary facilities (scissors, brushes, pressing boards, various parts as well as machines). He/she should have a functional and clean photocopier as well as laminator, computer scanner/scanning machine, digital camera, fumigation equipment such as sprayer and the use of insecticides (DDT). All these are profitable ventures for librarians (Dang and Yakubu, 2013).

Book Publishing/Book Trade

The entrepreneurial librarian can establish (at start) a small/mini printing press for the publication of fictions, journals, pamphlets, etc. All that is required is the printing machine. He/she may also engage in buying and selling of books, newspapers etc (vendor). Establishment of bookshop is another profitable venture for librarian to be self-employed.

Public Relations

In order to attract customers to the business venture, the entrepreneur should also practice the art of beautifying the environment, design and painting. These aspects (aesthetics, design and painting graphic design can be a profitable venture for the librarian. In fact these aspects can earn him/her a lot of money.

Library Building and Design

If incorporated and implemented in the LIS curriculum, the students on graduation can take up the job of designing library for those who may need their services hence can charge for the service rendered. The entrepreneur may be a consultant.

Consultancy Services

Entrepreneur can engage him/herself in indexing, abstracting and bibliographic compilation for those who need the service. Training programmes for Library Assistants can be organized. The entrepreneur can be a guest lecturer to conferences, seminars, workshops, public lecture, etc. The centre can be engaged in data processing (analysis of statistical data; networking of library complex, cataloguing and classification of library materials for libraries that request their service. All these are profitable venture that enable entrepreneur to be self-reliance.

Problems of Entrepreneurial Librarianship

Many opportunities exist for entrepreneurship in LIS profession, though there are some inhibiting factors:-

1. **Low Level of Skills**
   There is low level of skills acquired from library schools and that is why even where LIS graduates are employed in the government jobs especially libraries, they tend to exhibit low level of skills, thus there was inadequate entrepreneurial courses in Nigerian Library schools (Saka and Ahmed, 2014).

2. **Tax and Revenue System**
   The entrepreneur suffers the problems of taxes and various forms of revenue. This will not only affect the income but also discourage the entrepreneur from contributing positively to the economy (Umeano, 2012).

3. **Power Failure**
   Most of the business/venture use power and the Nigerian factor of incessant power failure affect the level of productivity and income for the entrepreneur.

4. **Cost Implication**
   A great deal of money will be needed to establish a venture or ventures such as publishing house, printing press, bindery, information business centres. In a situation where the financial base of an entrepreneur is low/poor, it will discourage entrepreneur.

Conclusion

Having identified the entrepreneurship as emerging market in the LIS curriculum, the Nigerian Library schools by implication should assign codes to those affected courses. This by implication means that the LIS schools have to give emphasis to them in the course of teaching the undergraduates.

Recommendations

Based on the above expected challenges in the course of setting up an entrepreneurship, the paper proffers the following possible recommendations:-

1. Library schools running undergraduate programme should establish a well- equipped

ICT and demonstration laboratories so that adequate practicals can be provided while students acquire the basic skills. To achieve high level of skill manpower will be needed for the practical training.

2. Tax should not only be moderate but also be the responsibility of one tier of government for the collection of tax. An entrepreneur should be allowed to pay tax to only Local Government Area under its jurisdiction.

3. Government should provide loan facilities (with low interest rate) to support the establishment and running of the entrepreneurship. Part of the loan could be used for the procurement of automatic standby generating plant as well as putting necessary infrastructural facilities in place.

References

Aina, L.O. (2013). Information, Knowledge and the Gatekeeeper. An Inaugural Lecture 132nd Series, University of Ilorin, Ilorin: University of Ilorin Press.

Dang, T.L. & Yakubu, H. (2013). The Entrepreneurial Librarian: A Hallmark for Library Growth and Development.*InProceedings of the 13th Annual Conference and General Meeting of the Nigerian Library Association, Enugu State Chapter, held at National Library of Nigeria, Enugu from November 20th - 22nd, 2013, 78-85.*

Dike, V.W. (2014). *Sustainability of LIS Education in a Globalised World: Contemporary Issues.* Keynote Address presented at the NALISE Conference Held at the ABSU Uturu, April 28 - May 1.

Eyo, E.B.F., Otong, E.I. & Akin-Fakorede, O. (2014). *Training the Trainer: Emerging Trends in the course Content of Library and Information Science Education in South-South, Nigeria.* Paper presented at the 16th NALISE Conference held at ABSU Uturu 28th April – 1st May, 2014.

Federal Government of Nigeria (2008). *National Policy on Education.* Abuja: Nigerian Educational Research Council.

Federal University of Technology, School of Technology Education, Department of Library and Information Technology Academic Brief October 2013 - 2008.

Paul, E.O. (2005). *Entrepreneurship Education in Vocational Education.* Enugu, Nigeria: OZYBEL Publishers.

Saka, K.A. (2009). Extent of the Implementation of ICT in Library Schools' Curriculum in Northern Nigeria. *Global Review of Library & Information Science: A Publication of the Department of Library & Information Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 5, 51-61.*

Saka, K.A. & Ahmed A.O. (2014). *Entrepreneurial Librarianship for Self Employment Opportunities in Nigeria.* Paper presented at the 16th Annual National Conference of the National Association of Library and Information Science Educators (NALISE) held at Abia State University, Uturu on April 28 - May 1st, 2014.

Umeano, N.E. (2012). ICT Entrepreneurship Development: A way of Alleviating Poverty in Nigeria. *Journal of Management and Entrepreneurship Development, 2* (1), 27-32.

"LIS Profession in the 21st Century Nigeria: Progress, Challenges and Expectation."