

INFOPRENEURSHIP AS TOOL FOR ENHANCING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE STUDENTS AND GRADUATES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Purpose – The aim of the paper is to determine Infopreneurship As Tool For Enhancing Employment Opportunities For Library And Information Science Students and Graduates In Nigeria. The concept of infopreneurship, infopreneurship requisite competencies, areas of infopreneurship, and its challenges were discussed.

Design/methodology/approach - This study is based on a review of available literature on infopreneurship.

Findings - The results of the review of relevant subject literature indicate that infopreneurship, as a feature of the information sector, is practiced in Nigeria. Additionally, it has established that infopreneurship is constantly developing as a new concept. Notwithstanding its challenges, the findings of infopreneurship, show that infopreneurship can be a tool for employment opportunities for LIS students and graduates in Nigeria.

Originality/value – The review has brought together related studies in the area in Nigeria and has been updated using the most current studies, providing new information and knowledge for further practice, research, teaching and learning in the area of infopreneurship.

Keywords: Infopreneur, information consultant, infopreneurship, information broker.

Introduction

Library and information science students and graduates should be able to earn a living with the knowledge they have acquired from University education. Presently, Nigerian graduate's main focus is attaining formal employment in either private or public sectors. However, as noted previously, neither of these employment tracks can cope with formal employment demands. Increasingly, Library and Information Science students and graduates who fail to have employment opportunity formally seek alternative employments elsewhere.

Unemployment is one of the main challenges faced by Nigerians particularly library and information science students and graduates in Nigeria. It has become a cacarwarm which has eaten deep into the fabrics of our society and the inability to employ LIS student and graduates into the labour market. Has been noted, among others, by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (OECD 2017).

In Nigeria, unemployment has had a negative impact on our economy, particularly as it concerns the erosion of human capital, reduction of economic welfare and increase in crime, insecurity, increase in poverty level, kidnapping among others. To curb this menace, many programmes have been introduced and adopted by both federal and state government in Nigeria. Such programmes include: N power, trader money including National social Investments Programmes (NSIP) in 2016 programmes targeting Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises. Their sole aim is to improve economic potentials of young adults, LIS Students and graduates above all, to eradicate poverty, hunger and all sorts of social virses among young adults. This indicates that there is an urgent need for recognition of infopreneurship as an alternative option to employment for LIS students and graduates' in Nigeria. If something is not done urgently, it will cause serious damage to the entire nation. In two different studies, Ivwurie (2015), Ivwurie and Ocholla (2016) stressed that, infopreneurship is not given sufficient attention it desired in the country despite its importance.. There is a gap in the knowledge and awareness of the infopreneurship area in Africa and Nigeria in particular and its potential for alternative job creation and employment option for LIS students and graduates'.

Therefore, the main focus of this study is to discuss the concept of Inforpreneuership, areas of inforpreneuership, competencies and challenges of infopreneuership business in Nigeria

The Concept and Importance of Infopreneurship

In the words of David and Dube (2014), infopreneurship is a business that involves creation, capturing, acquiring, processing, sharing, using information as products and services.

The word, ‘infopreneur’ is a new concept though, in the past certain words were used interchangeably with inforpreneueship. Such words include;’ entrepreneurship, information consultant’ and ‘information broker’ as envisioned by Oduwole and Onatola 2008). In affirmation to this view, (Amin et al.2011) concludes, that, infopreneurship is entrepreneurship, information consultancy and information brokering, and its business is the production, sale and provision of information goods and services for a fee. The authors further explained that, “they are individuals who gradually refine data into information and knowledge for relevant patrons, for a fee. While Anyanwu, Amadi and Oparaku (2011), entrepreneurship is seen as an individual who takes calculated risk by investing in business opportunities and gets compensation from the risk by enjoying high profits as the reward of the risk taking in the business, Individuals who (via the integration of old methods of information entrepreneurship and new methods occasioned by information and communication technologies (ICT) sell information products and services to patrons’ that needs their services (Lahm and Stowe 2010).

An information consultant is an individual who provides his/her services for a fee (Broughton et al. 1991). In business terms, he/she is an individual with expert knowledge of analytical skills, research, data analysis expertise, and information searching and retrieval skills,

among others to advise patrons on finding solutions to real-world issues (Oduwole and Onatola 200, Vickers 1992). In a two separate studies, Oduwole and Onatola 2008, Onaade 2012,) described an information broker as a middleman who either buys and sells information products, or acts as a middleman between the information user and the information itself. An information broker is responsible for collection of information from various sources, rearranges it to suit a client, and then sells it to the patrons; bridges the gap between what is available and what the end-user requires and finally involve in market surveyor. (Broughton et al. 1991).

Infoprenuer came about as a result of the introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) Nweze (2018) adduced that ‘‘Infopreneurship entails taking advantage of business opportunities in the production of information products and services and information management. Information is dynamic, expensive and is continually being changed or reconfigured and repackaged for use. This indicates that many LIS students and graduates’ have used the opportunity of turning information provision into a successful business venture to improve their economic situation. It is a widespread practice of developing information, selling and reselling information products and services that will enhance economic development among library and information science students and graduates.’ Additionally it will also eradicate poverty, insecurity, cultism,youth restiveness, kidnapping and other social vices in Nigeria.

In the recent past, chasing after self-employment particularly in information field was a difficult task.The wide range of web and emerging technologies, everyone and anyone can attain information which is value-added (Igbeka, 2018). Information which is essential constituent of this changing world and knowledge-based economy is a vital resource for survival of both LIS

students and graduates. Information has become an utmost resource in every aspect of production, such as Land, labour, capital and entrepreneur. Waweru, (2014) Explained that, Infopreneurs are those who provide these kinds of information for sustainability and productive results.

An infopreneur will make a blue print by creating new products and services for the benefit of LIS students and graguates. As each individual infopreneurial skills are being developed and supplemented in all aspects of life. Having the mind of creativity and innovation in ideas Infopreneurship will make a greater impact in national Economy (Osakede, Lawanson and Sobowale, 2017). The term is new to many people. Infopreneur is an entrepreneur who set up a business based on product or a service which needs more information. In simple terms the entrepreneur will sell information which already is recognized by him to the needy who are ready to buy online. Trend has changed from entrepreneurship to Infopreneurship. As they have given a new meaning where there is no requirement of more staff/more investment which involves more technology with less financial risks for a tech savvy person. With each page review, comments of the visitors will make infopreneur stronger to penetrate the business world better. Infopreneurship has become critical resources that provide national development to both LIS students and graguates in Nigeria.

The epidemic increase and accessibility of information resources and services in all aspects of human attempt which has unfold new opportunities and disput for information specialist. These evolution continue to provide comfortable opportunities for Library and Information Sciences students and graduates' to review and re-examine their roles in an

interchangeably ways in order to fully enlarge the job that has been produced. (Ayegba, et al. 2016). Library and Information Sciences students and graduates are now being challenged to think beyond their area of study, to think of different methods through which the 5 management of information resources can be revolve into money making progress at a time when unemployment and underemployment arise from economic crisis has made it very difficult for government to provide employment opportunities for all graduates in the country including library and Information science students (Adeyi, et al., 2016). Wisdom, (2016) has made a study on awareness level about Infopreneurship among LIS practitioners.

List of areas to make money using information include web designing, online selling of e books, hosting online events, consultancy services, online publishing services and other e services. The study has identified the challenges towards Infopreneurship as it requires high literacy, internet connectivity issues; escalate in cost of maintenance, information management skills, and poor awareness among the people. The research has touched on the importance of Infopreneurship among the graduates which will improve country's performance, need to develop a curriculum which may equip the information management related skills.

Competencies Required of Infopreneurs

As a result of many competencies that are involved in infopreneurship business, Man etal (2002) classified them into six classes to include: opportunity competencies, organizing competencies,, relationship competencies, conceptual competencies, strategic competencies, and commitment competencies. Though comprehensive in nature, These Autors' model is

compressed into two different classes by David and Dube (2013) Ivwurie and Ocholla (2016). Which include, specialized business skills, and specialised technical skills.

Specialized business skills: Specialized business skills is seen by Ivwurie and Ocholla (2016) as a “prerequisite for working as an infopreneur in the business domain” Coulson-Thomas (2001) insists that these type of skills are likely to make an infopreneur more successful in business. Ocholla (2016) states that , there is a need for financial management, marketing management, and personnel management In a study conducted by David and Dube (2013), some students indicated that it is the “business skills that could enable them to start small information selling/marketing enterprises.”

Specialized business skills are prerequisite for infopreneurs to stand a better chance of succeeding in the information sector. These skills include: Project management skills; human resource management skills; communication skills; leadership skills; division of labour skills; time management skills; planning skills; financial management skills; networking skills; negotiation skills; customer service skills; sales skills; marketing skills; procurement skills; pricing skills; training and team development skills; advertising skills; fore-casting and backcasting skills; interpersonal skills; conflict management skills; business plan writing skills; motivational and strong Skills mentoring abilities; an ability to adapt to a new environment; and the willingness to learn and understand.

Specialised Technical skills: This type of skill is also known as conceptual skills. specialised technical skills are best described as competences that relate to different conceptual abilities (Man et al. 2008). Just like specialized business skills, these skills are necessary to translate

infopreneurs' initiatives into a real business (David and Dube 2013). To Ivwurie and Ocholla (2016), they are fundamental to infopreneurship and afford those integrating them into their business a greater chances of success. From the description above and the results from the interviews, it was established that the specialized technical skills of an infopreneur are linked to the areas of infopreneurship.

To be specific, if an infopreneur's area of infopreneurship is web development, that can be translated as "he/she has web development skills" or has "human resource management skills" to scout for someone with web development skills. For IT-related infopreneurs, technological skills that stood out as the most important were, for example: photocopying skills; laminating skills; photo-editing skills; video editing skills; photography skills; videography skills; programming skills; the ability to use the Internet; skills in setting up a network; database skills; graphic design skills; data capturing skills; design skills (logos, signs, brochures, invitation cards, business cards, posters, banners, and menus); website design and development skills; multimedia skills; broadcasting skills; computer literacy; computer/phone repair and troubleshooting skills. Several areas of infopreneurship were identified.. Additionally, as can be seen below, are the areas of infopreneurship that can help LIS students and graduates gain employment and employ others.

Areas of Infopreneuers

Noting the benefits of technology and expounding on Ocholla's work, Oduwole and Onatola (2008) believe that new areas of infopreneurship are created each time there is innovation in ICT . This indicates that, technology makes infopreneurs to function well (Buda et

al. 2011). Hence, Amin et al. (2011) believe that new and more sophisticated infopreneurship areas will continue to emerge as long as there is ICT. Boadi (2006) asserts that for inventive infopreneurs, income-generating activities might be limitless. Ivwurie and Ocholla (2016) indicated many options for infopreneurship business. According to the degree programmes, a study by David and Dube (2013) categorised infopreneurship. Ivwurie and Ocholla later adopted these categories (Ivwurie and Ocholla 2016), with little modifications. According to David and Dube (2013), the categories of infopreneurship are: Records and Archives Management; Library and Information Science; Journalism and Media Studies; and Publishing studies. In his research, Ivwurie (2015) adds Information and Communication technology.

<p>Records and Archive Management (RAM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting of records centres • Records management services • Collection management services • Documentation • Database design and management system • Data services involving data analysis • Designing and developing data capturing software • Records classification and indexing • Registry systems analysis and design • Records surveying • Records appraisal • Automation of records management systems; 	<p>Journalism and Media Studies (JMS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • television and radio broadcasting • Online advertising • YouTube vlogging • Blogging • General advertising • Satellite connection installation • Online news • Online business • Desktop and electronic publishing • Video editing • Photo booth rental services • Event photographer and videographer • Photo-shoot and Photoshop studio
<p>Library and Information Science (LIS)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing of library buildings • Organising and setting up of library • Library automation business • Designing of library buildings • Indexing and abstracting • Maintenance of services offered through consultancy services • Knowledge and Information Consultancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compilation of bibliographic lists • Cataloguing • Development of specialised libraries from scratch • Helping libraries write proposals. • Organising seminars, workshops and conferences and preparation of proceedings • Organising files and planning of paper

<p>service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of services offered through consultancy services • Referral services • Project writing • Preparing business plans • Business registration • Research and pooling of information for clients • Novel, short story, and poetry writing • Workbooks • Information provider's skill development programs 	<p>flow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online and offline searching and retrieval of information • Substitution for librarians who are away on leave, etc. • Performance of chores (moving, barcoding, shelf reading) • Lending library • Reading room • Career counselor
<p>Information and Communications Technologies-Computer Science (ICTs-CS)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cyber café • Web site creation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troubleshooting and PC repairs • software and hardware installation • Security devices installation • Designing local area networks (LAN) • CCTV installation/maintenance • Tracking device • Software designing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software creation and development; • Networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • forensic investigation services, • Design and implementation of customised information systems • system programming • Conversion of manual file into M/E-files • Global system for mobile communication (GSM) connectivity • Airtime business • Phone call centres • Phone repairs • Network maintenance • Fax messages • Internet service provider • Database design and management system • Computer and ICT skills training centre
<p>Publishing Studies (PS)</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • newsagent • Books publishing • Editing and proofreading • Magazine report • Development of professional journals • Bookshop, book trade and book drive • Compilation of directories • Translation services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stationery shop • Photocopying, printing, scanning, lamination, binding workshop • Reprography services • Online bookstore • Digital book/periodical publishing or e-publishing • Subscription agency of electronic

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information repackaging • Document delivery services • Document vocabularies • Newspaper clipping services. • Periodical subscription agency • Iconographers • Property networking and multilisting • Portfolio management • Book and print media selling and marketing • Audio and video products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> books/journals • Publishing projects consultancy • Graphic designing services • Educational publishing • Authorship • Publishing liaison • Freelance editor • Content cover designer and Illustrator • Evaluator • Tips booklets • Online/offline subscription newsletters • Electronic books • Pricing strategies • e.Commerce (selling products on eBay, Amazon, Gumtree, OLX) • Advertising services
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Source: (Batthini 2014, Chandler 2007, David and Dube 2013, Elisha 2009, Ivwurie and Ocholla 2016)

However, these areas of infopreneurs is not exhausted since infopreneurship business is based on Information and communication Technology (ICT).

Challenges Associated with Infopreneurship in Nigeria

Privacy: Amin et al. (2011) noted that privacy, copyright and intellectual property rights present challenges to everyone working with information sector. The authors warn that some of the information that infopreneurs work with might be of commercial value to people, and as such, should be respected in the same way. Since infopreneurs promote and leverage access to information from the public domain, they should try as much as possible to uphold information ethics, particularly as they constantly collect and repackage information of which others hold the copyright According to Fisher and Kunaratnam (2007), Ivwurie and Ocholla (2016) copyright

laws protect the information products and services produced by individuals and firms in the information sector. David and Dube (2013); Ivwurie and Ocholla (2016), affirmed that would be infopreneurs and seasoned infopreneurs ought to carefully avoid copyright and intellectual property rights infringements if they desire to flourish.

Poor Management Skills: As a requisite skill for a business to thrive, the lack of this skill is detrimental. For one to be an infopreneur, one needs some of these skills (Ivwurie and Ocholla 2016). Agbenyegah (2013) explained that poor management skills have a negative impact on most infopreneurs starting up a business venture. David and Dube (2013) noted that the lack of management skills hinder LIS students and graduates' taking infopreneurship as a module in the study conducted by Dewah and Mutula (2016) indicated the need for a management module to be included to the students curriculum. On this note, it is important to state that inadequate management skills can lead to the end of the business. As a result of this, a proactive measure must be put in place to prevent the death of the business. This could be by learning management skills. Or by hiring a specialist with managerial skills and abilities for training, and retraining of staff to be perfect in the day to day running of the business.

Crime: In the recent past, Nigeria is faced with several socio-economic challenges that negatively affect infopreneurship, such challenges include, high Banditry, unemployment, cyber crime, poverty, income inequality, corruption, prostitution etc. Olawale and Garwe (2010) indicated that crime is one of the highest deterrents of moving into a business venture particularly in the information domain. Direct and indirect impacts, ranging from physical and monetary harm to psychological harm (McDonald et al. 2008), crime can deter aspiring

infopreneurs moving into a business venture (Olawale 2010; Oyelana and Fiseha 2014). Crime also affects a small business's customer attraction and productivity (Oyelana and Fiseha 2014). Therefore, it is important that the government partners with both Government and none Governmental organizations to eradicate crime in the society (Olawale 2010, Oyelana and Fiseha 2014).

Problem of Getting Reliable Employees Kesavan: (1998) Highlighted in the framework of infopreneurship, that, when necessary and as required by the job, an infopreneur may recruit qualified people. For Fisher (2008), the decision of having employees or not is solely on the “amount of value-added that your service provides.” Three major aspects have been noted in this study as reasons why infopreneurs might need employees. The first reason is that the business is too big for one person totake care of; secondly, the infopreneur lacks certain skills, and to compensate, infoprenuer hires a specialist that has the skills lacking in the business; and finally, due to the language barrier, some infopreneurs are forced to hire employees to help get over this challenge. However, the need for an extra hand presents the challenge of finding someone with the right set of skills, who is reliable, and then how to retain that employee. and clients complaining about the poor service from the employees. You might have disloyal employees who will just vanish with no notice. This creates a backlog of work and slows the entire business down. This could also lead to the end or collapse of the business.

Recommendations

To become a successful infopreneur, first, LIS students and graduates need to acquire additional skills in areas such as digital marketing, web design, content creation, and project management. They also need to be able to identify and target specific markets for their products and services. This requires a shift in mindset from traditional library and information science roles to entrepreneurial roles.

Secondly, the government and nongovernmental organizations can create an enabling environment for infopreneurship through policies that support entrepreneurship and innovation, access to funding, and the provision of necessary infrastructure such as reliable internet connectivity. The government can provide funding and tax incentives to infopreneurs, as well as create a supportive legal and regulatory framework for infopreneurs to thrive well.

Lastly, there is need for training and mentorship to support infopreneurship among LIS students and graduates in Nigeria, there is a need for training programs and mentorship schemes that provide practical skills and guidance on how to start and run a successful infopreneurship business. These programs can be offered by academic institutions, professional bodies,

Conclusion

In conclusion, infopreneurship gives LIS students and graduates in Nigeria a realistic professional route. Infopreneurs have the ability to develop and market a variety of informational products, goods and services, opening up job opportunities for both themselves and others. However, in order to succeed, LIS students and graduates must pick up new abilities and develop an entrepreneurial outlook. Through policies that promote innovation and entrepreneurship,

provide access to funds, and build out the required infrastructure, the government and other stakeholders may assist infopreneurship in this regard.

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