

INFOPRENEURSHIP SERVICES AND IMPLEMENTATION IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: A FOCUS ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN POLYTECHNIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the infopreneurship services and implementation in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria with a focus on its current state and opportunities created in the polytechnic libraries in South East Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted and used by the researcher for this study which was carried out in polytechnic libraries in South East Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 183 staff working in public polytechnic libraries in South East Nigeria which were purposively sampled for this study. The instrument for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire. Data generated from the questionnaire was analysed using a descriptive statistical technique such as frequency count, Mean ($\bar{X}$) and Standard Deviation (SD). The principle of real limit of numbers was used indicating that any mean response above 2.50 is considered positive while those below this real limit of numbers are considered negative. The findings revealed that the current state of infopreneurship services in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria is very low at present. The analysis of data presented also showed that there are opportunities created by infopreneurship services in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria which include Internet blogging businesses and cyber café business.

Keywords: *Infopreneurship, Academic Libraries, Sustainable Development and Polytechnic Libraries.*

Introduction

A new era of information known as infopreneurship filled with opportunities has been created through the innovation of Information and Communication Technology and users' willingness to pay for information products and services. El-Kalash, Mohammed and Aniki (2016) affirmed that, infopreneurs are profit oriented enterprising business people running internet based businesses that enable them sell their expertise to a world-wide audience, by packaging and marketing their knowledge as information based products, online services and

premium consultancy. In Aregbesola et al (2019), Infopreneurship development in Nigeria revolves around all businesses related to provision of information products and services. Information has been denoted as an integral part of economic growth and as such it is being given priority as applicable in some developed countries of the world. As the largest economy in Africa, the information sector accounts for one of the twelve industrial sectors in Nigeria. The information sector most of whom are involved in creating information products and services comprises of broadcasting, telecommunications industries; software publishing; film industry; sound recording industries, data processing industries and information services. In Khumalo and Nkala (2015), infopreneurship is more essential in this information age that has turned information into a vital commodity for individuals and organisations' success through packaging, repackaging and selling of information to consumers for a profit. This has made infopreneurship an indispensable venture as individuals, organizations and countries are relying on and utilizing information and knowledge for their survival and growth and equally investing heavily in information as a commodity and basic resource for all issues of human reckonings.

Amakiri and Marie (2019) highlighted the engagement catchment areas of infopreneurship which include online database services, database designing, sale of e-books, web newsletters, offering online conferences through networking services, e-publishing, information brokerage, information consultancy, internet services, selective dissemination of information (SDI), current Awareness Services (CAS), publishing and editing, indexing and abstracting services, online literature search, information repackaging, contract cataloguing; marketing of books to libraries; reprographic services; and electronic publishing. These are many streams of information services that can be utilised by the infopreneur. Infopreneurship is an alternative source of employment which has not been given sufficient attention in the country despite the opportunities it offers. There are unemployed information sector graduates who could benefit greatly from infopreneurship if more awareness and popularization of the practice were achieved. Unemployment is one of the main challenges facing Nigerian graduates. This inability to absorb graduates into the labour force has a major impact on every aspect of the economy.

Statement of Problem

There are many opportunities created by infopreneurship services which cannot be over emphasized. Some of these avenues include but are not limited to library automation, software and hardware installation, marketing of information products, information repackaging, records management, introduction of new products which bring new customers, development of new skills and knowledge reviewing, creation of blogging software used on websites; construction of robust websites etc. The application of the internet has dramatically improved the efficiency and reliability of information services. Despite all these accrued benefits, there seems to be a gap in knowledge and awareness of the opportunities created by infopreneurship services in academic libraries. On this note therefore, the problem of this study put in a question form is what is the present status quo of infopreneurship services and implementation in academic libraries and its opportunities for sustainable development in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria?

Research Objectives

- 1) To examine the current state of infopreneurship services in Polytechnic libraries in Nigeria.
- 2) To evaluate the opportunities created by infopreneurship services in Polytechnic libraries in Nigeria.

Literature Review

infopreneurship offers opportunities for creating enterprising information-based businesses by identifying the knowledge gaps and selling target-based information products and services, mainly through the internet to fill these gaps. Akidi and Udoh (2021) examined infopreneurship skills for sustainable development in Nigeria, with a focus on Library and Information Science (LIS) students of selected federal universities in Nigeria. The study

revealed that infopreneurship opportunities for LIS students in Nigeria include: indexing and abstracting services business, computer services business, sale of library equipment business and information consultancy services business, among others. The findings added that the motivational factors for infopreneurship skills development of LIS students include: a desire to become a boss of their own, become an employer of labour and a job creator, increased social status and prestige, personal financial gain and freedom, as well as high rate of unemployment in Nigeria, among others.

The Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics report of 2021 revealed a very high disturbing 33.3% growth rate of unemployment. The report further specified that Nigeria has 22.8% underemployment, 42.5% rate of youth unemployment and 21.0% rate of youth underemployment (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). This is corroborated by Olurounbi (2021) who reported that Nigeria's unemployment rate has risen to 33.3% in the fourth quarter, being second highest on global list, which is equally based on statistical report published by the National Bureau of Statistics (Akidi & Udoh, 2021). The author lamented the surge and revealed that more than half of the labour force are either unemployed or underemployed. To this end, possessing infopreneurship skills by LIS students assumes an assured opportunity for LIS students and graduates to contribute to sustainable development.

There are a lot of challenges confronting the successful implementation of infopreneurship services in academic libraries. Aregbesola et al (2019) studied the opportunities and challenges of infopreneurship in a developing country. In their studies, they found out that blogging has been a huge source of finance for young adults who have strategically integrated themselves into it. This social media platform is being employed for marketing, political campaign, education and self-presentation among other uses. From the comfort of homes, individuals can engage in blogging, reaching out to millions of people around the world. Many youths that would have been roaming the street of Nigeria are gainfully involved in the business of blogging, thereby reducing the rate of unemployment in Nigeria.

According to Abdullahi et al (2022) in their studies on Infopreneurship: Opportunities and Challenges for Library and Information Science Professionals in 21st Century, the

opportunities offered by infopreneurship include information brokerage, information systems consultancy, blogging and advertisement, web development/programming, database designing/ distribution as well as internet café/business centre. The study stressed that these opportunities could enable tech-savvy LIS professionals to engage in one or more of these ventures without necessarily waiting for white collar jobs from the government. They could also offer job opportunities to themselves and to others, become self-reliant, as well as prestige associated with the jobs which could ultimately contribute in boosting the economy of the country, reduce unemployment and empower people.

Skrba (2020) has revealed that there are more than 600 million blogs on the web and the United States accounted for more than 31.7 million users of blog in the year 2020. The main purpose of creating a blog is to connect people with relevant information. Infopreneurs could take the opportunities availed by the Internet to engage in blogging by updating relevant information to clients while making fortune out of it. One could assist in marketing goods and services on behalf of organisations and companies especially regarding keeping customers updated about their products and assessing the level or extent customer satisfaction. An infopreneur could also sell e-books, sell advertisement spaces, creating websites and blogs to act as their storefront. Another infopreneurship opportunity available for library and information science professionals is database designing/distribution. Database is an electronic system that allows data to be easily accessed, manipulated and updated (Technopedia, 2021). It is used by organisations as a method of storing, managing and retrieving information. An infopreneur who is conversant with variety of subject databases can design or subscribe to the databases while granting access to the users for fee. A database infopreneur needs to be familiar with database softwares such as Oracle, SQL SERVER, MySQL, etc. The proliferation of internet across the globe has offered publishers, researchers and information brokers the opportunity to become database producers/distributors who are engaging in the activities of creating commercially available online databases through which information could be accessed for a fee. their speciality. Another area of interest is the business centre and internet café. This is where all commercial computer related activities are carried out for clients. Iheanacho (2018) highlighted some activities carried out in business centres to include: typesetting, computer training, graphic designs and photocopying services. Library

and information science professional could establish this business in a tertiary institution, government establishments etc. The business centre could also operate internet café services where customers could browse through internet and offer other internet related activities such as online registration, results checking and downloading of information materials etc.

Methodology

The study area is South East Nigeria. There are six geo-political zones in the country. These zones are South-East, South-South, South-West, North-East, North-West and North Central. The study covered infopreneurship services in academic libraries with a focus on its availability and users' satisfaction in polytechnic libraries in South East Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted by the researcher for this study which was carried out in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. The population of the study involves the staff working in polytechnic libraries in South East Nigeria. The sample size comprised 183 staff working in public polytechnic libraries in South East Nigeria which were purposively sampled for the study. This procedure agrees with the citation in Ifidion and Ifidion (2007) where it was stated that when a population is uniform, a small sample provides the sample amount of information as a large sample. The population of the study involves the same staff of polytechnic libraries in South East Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire which was validated by three lecturers, two from University of Nigeria Nsukka and the other from Federal University, Lafia, Nasarawa State. Data from the questionnaire were analysed using a descriptive statistical technique such as frequency count, Mean (X) and Standard Deviation (SD). Specifically, real limit of number was used to arrive at decision as shown below:

- 3.50 – 4.00 Strongly Agree (SA)
- 2.50 – 3.49 Agree (A)
- 1.50 – 2.49 Disagree (D)
- 0.50 – 1.49 Strongly Disagree (SD)

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Mean Ratings of the Current State of Infopreneurship Services in Polytechnic Libraries in Nigeria

Current State of Infopreneurship Services in Polytechnic Libraries in Nigeria.			
S/N		Mean SD	Decision
1	Designing and developing data capturing software	2.31 .62	D
2	Software and hardware creation and installation	2.13 .40	D
3	Records classification, abstracting and indexing	3.57 .74	SA
4	Database design and management system	2.36 .57	D
5	Desktop and electronic publishing	2.33 .83	D
6	Library automation business	2.40 .65	D
7	Satellite connection installation	2.03 .51	D
8	Data services involving data analysis	2.37 .73	D
9	Information repackaging	3.62 .49	SA
10	Book and print media selling and marketing	2.28 1.1	D
11	Reprographic services	3.54 .50	SA
12	Document delivery services	3.70 .46	SA
13	Business advertisement	2.16 .64	D
14	Digital book and periodical online publishing	2.25 .77	D

Table 1 above reveals the current state of infopreneurship services in Polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. The analysis of data presented showed that all the items listed except items 3, 9, 11 and 12 were all rejected by the respondents as the current state of infopreneurship services in

polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. This implies that infopreneurship services is very low at present in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria.

Table 2: Mean Ratings of the Opportunities Created by Infopreneurship Services in Polytechnic Libraries in Nigeria.

Opportunities Created by Infopreneurship				
S/N	Services in Polytechnic Libraries in Nigeria.	SA	Mean	Decision
1	Computer programming business	3.49	.92	A
2	Reprographic services business	3.51	.92	SA
3	Record classification, indexing and abstracting Business	3.42	.89	A
4	Computer sales, repairs and maintenance services	3.71	.46	SA
5	Website creation business	3.82	.39	SA
6	Installation of security technological devices (such as CCTV etc)	3.82	.39	SA
7	Internet blogging businesses	3.89	.32	SA
8	Cyber café business	3.87	.34	SA
9	ICT skill acquisition training services	3.58	.50	SA
10	Book bindery businesses	3.56	.50	SA
11	Book publishing business	3.60	.50	SA
12	Phone repair and maintenance services	3.62	.49	SA
13	Conversion of files into its electronic format	3.72	.51	SA
14	Record management services	3.60	.78	SA
15	Documentation and data analysis business	3.47	.91	A

Table 2 above shows the opportunities created by infopreneurship services in Polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. The analysis of data presented showed that all the items listed are all accepted by the respondents as the opportunities created by infopreneurship services in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria. Internet blogging businesses and cyber café business with their corresponding mean and standard deviation as 3.89 (.34) and 3.97(.32) respectively as offer the highest opportunities.

Recommendation

- 1) There should be a massive creation of awareness on the need to incorporate infopreneurship services in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria.
- 2) The government at all levels should support the success of infopreneurship services in polytechnic libraries in Nigeria by providing enough fund in education sector especially in tertiary institutions.

Conclusion

The practice has been challenged in Nigeria by lack of structure and coordination from several operators. Therefore, government at all levels should support the success of infopreneurship in Nigeria as this will help to reduce the rate of unemployment and at the same time lead to economic and sustainable development.

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