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ENHANCING THE SELF-DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARIANS THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP OPPORTUNITIES IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROFESSION

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Abstract

Self-development is one of the core aspirations of LIS professionals as they get employed in any library institution or other organisations. Librarians aspire to move from one level to another in their years of active services rather than depending on salaries and promotions for survival. More so, investing energy, expertise, ideas and capital in entrepreneurship ventures is worthwhile for achieving high level self-development. The paper explored the concept of entrepreneurship and self-development, entrepreneurial opportunities in library and information science (LIS) profession, ways entrepreneurship enhances self-development of LIS professionals, sources of capital for entrepreneurial ventures in LIS and challenges associated with enhancement of librarians' self-development through entrepreneurship ventures. Based on the established facts in the discourse, it was recommended that financial institutions should make policies that will be favorable to entrepreneurs for easy access to loans; library managements should encourage librarians to engage in self-development programmes; the government should create policies that will be favorable to young investors; and the government should control and reduce the rate of revenues and taxes been imposed on entrepreneurial ventures.

Key Words: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship opportunities, Self-development, Library and Information professionals, Librarians

Introduction

Library and information science (LIS) professionals are experts in the provision of information services in a systematic and defined manner that meet the information needs of users. Globally, library and information science (LIS) professional are held in high esteem in the business and management of information in all spheres of human field. Today, library and information science professionals have grown to be innovative, creative and developed mastery

in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in providing library and information services to the users. Shafack (2016) affirm that librarians have proven the most suitable with skills and mandate to pull together, organize and make available and accessible information in all forms and formats to all irrespective of their social, educational and physical status. Librarians are making efforts to remain relevant in the information services business, hence, are creating and exploring various avenues to reach out to the users.

Library and information science (LIS) professional are acquiring new skills to meet up with emerging technologies, tools and concepts in the profession. According to Emezie and Nwaohiri (2013) 21st century librarian will have to be armed with competent skills that will enhance the provision of effective library services to meet client's changing information needs. Byrne (2009) reveal that that the skills posses by librarians in managing and accessing information and knowledge are vital to social and economic development. The contemporary library and information science professionals have shown readiness to compete favourably in the information service provision business. Such readiness include acquiring new skills, integrating information technologies in library house-keeping activities, engaging in continuous professional development (CPD) programmes, exploring entrepreneurial opportunities in LIS profession and engaging self-development programmes for personality growth in the profession and the society at large.

Acquiring new skills can be through self-development programmes. Self-development is important in the career development of librarians. It helps the grow their personality in the profession. Conversely, the self-development of librarians in Africa is at low rate. Ekuoye (2007) lament that it is sad that there are so many earnest and hardworking librarians who think excelling in librarianship is inconceivable. This assertion could be linked to some impending factors such as management approach and style, low income, salary shortfall, poor motivation and many others. More so, it is well known that irrespective of the small salary rate, there are usually delays in paying salaries. This situations have had negative impact on the self-development of librarians. Hence the need to create alternative sources of making income (entrepreneurship) to sponsor self-development programmes.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is the operation and ownership of a business for self-employment purposes and for creation of job opportunities through production and marketing of goods and

services. Emerole (2015) define entrepreneurship as a unique blend of innovation, creativity and risk taking propensity with plans to creating and sustaining the value enjoyed by the customers. Nwafor (2007) see entrepreneurship as the pursuit of opportunities without regard to resources currently controlled. To be enterprising is to keep your eyes open and your mind active. Entrepreneurship is centered on developing new business idea, acquiring necessary skill or training, raising capital, acquiring land, creating business contacts and networks, hiring labour and production of goods and services.

Entrepreneurship has to do with taking advantage of market opportunities and demands for goods and services by venturing into its production, dealership and supply. Isimoya (2012) state that entrepreneurship emerges when an individual notices a profitable business opportunity unexploited and exploits it, innovation is the specific tool of entrepreneurs, the means by which they exploit changes as an opportunity for a different business or different service. There is need to enlighten and encourage library and information science professionals to engage in entrepreneurial ventures especially in Africa where there is high unemployment rate. Pahuja and Rinku (2015) reveal that in the Indian context, the more entrepreneurial developmental activities are confined to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector, which is often termed as the 'engine of growth'. In Africa, entrepreneurial ventures could be small and medium scale (a business employing from 11 to 250 persons and earning between 1 million to 5 million naira). Or also a large scale business employing large number of labour and generating huge income in hundreds of millions.

Library and information science professions can as well become entrepreneurs by investing in various information businesses. One who invest in an entrepreneurship venture is an entrepreneur. An entrepreneur has traditionally been described as an individual who takes risks and start something new (Babalola, 2011). Emphasising on the characteristics of entrepreneurs Elonye and Uzuegbu (2013) affirms that they must endeavour to possess the applicable skills in order to succeed in any business venture. Entrepreneurs create, nurture and grow enterprises using a reasonable degree of initiative, skills and competencies necessary to transform change into opportunities thereby stemming personal satisfaction, monetary rewards and independence. Starting, growing and sustaining an entrepreneurial venture is task demanding and in most cases demoralizing.

The importance of entrepreneurship cannot be overemphasized. Entrepreneurship helps in creating job opportunities, curbing crime rate, shaping the life of people in a society, promoting business initiatives, reducing the level of dependence on the government to create jobs by the

citizenry, nurturing people in wealth creation and to become employers of labour. Onyekwusi and Obasi (2015) posit that entrepreneurship is recognised as the engine of economic growth and poverty reduction worldwide. This is because the social and economic value added through innovation and employment generation is critical to the increase in the productiveness of the economy. It is worthy to state here that nations with high entrepreneurship rate have experienced increase in gross domestic product (GDP) and income per capita.

When librarians invest in entrepreneurial ventures they will be able to create alternative source of acquiring wealth rather than over-dependence of salary and earned allowances. Librarians needs to grow and develop in their professional career. Through entrepreneurship librarians can create sources of funding themselves in self-development programmes. Ugwu and Ezeani (2012) reveal that technological innovations and new ideas are borne out of information sourcing, processing and dissemination thereby empowering and creating wealth for library and information professionals. Through entrepreneurial ventures, librarians can be able to create alternative source of making money to sponsor themselves in self-development programmes and take care of other basic needs. Every entrepreneurial venture is geared towards job creation, innovation, production, services and profit making.

Concept of Self-development

Self-development is a step one takes or training one acquires to better himself, advance his skills and become mastery in a particular field. This could be achieved by learning new skills, participating in enlightenment programs and doing away with bad habits. Webster's New World Dictionary (2014) defines self-development as efforts made by someone toward self-fulfillment, either through formal study programs or on one's own. In order words, self-development is a step, a programme or a training a librarian takes to train himself in order to advance his personality capacity. Coates (2007) accentuate that training of librarians is a big investment. In essence, LIS professionals engaging in self-development training improves the quality of library services provided, brightens the professional career prospects of the librarian and enhances the entire library system.

Self-development is essential if Librarians must have edge over other information service providers. Omekwu (2009) aver that if library and information professionals do not acquire skills, other professionals from computer science and engineering will step into their core areas of work specialization and usurp their opportunities. Therefore, in order to develop and grow in the information service business librarians need to enroll into self-development

programs. “Designing professional development program is a commitment to self-investment, to develop new knowledge in using an array of sophisticated resources and tools in order to remain competitive for other future opportunities. Such opportunities might be new job prospects, collaborative or solo projects, or roles that would permit continued advancement and career path excellence, by expanding skills, knowledge, experiences and networks while working” (Pun, 2016, 2).

Self-development programs for librarians include attending and presenting papers in conferences, writing and publishing journal articles, contributing to book chapters, participating in seminars and symposia, engaging in outreach programs, enrolling to acquire higher degrees, enrolling to acquire ICT skills, learning to develop library software, participating in workshops, volunteer services through outreach programmes and on the job training. There is the need to explore the entrepreneurial potentials in information as a tangible commodity. Library and Information Science professionals in Africa should equip themselves with necessary skills, attitudes and values needed for improved library services to cope with increasing entrepreneurship opportunities created by ICT. Therefore, the need to create alternative source of generating income entrepreneurial venture. It is an essential mechanism through which librarians can earn money to finance themselves on self-development programmes.

Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Library and Information Science (LIS) Profession

Varieties of entrepreneurial opportunities that foster creativity, innovation and original thinking in the creation of information related products and services exists for librarians. The entrepreneurship opportunities include:

Information Brokerage: Librarians acquire information brokerage skills in library and information science schools. Librarians can invest and make money from information brokerage. An information broker is an individual who gathers information about individuals and organisations, assembles the data to create individual profiles and sale the profiles to companies, agents or institutions that need them for various purposes. Onaade (2012) state, “information brokers provide their clients with information for a fee.”. Information brokerage involves sorting out information available on a mass scale and delivering it on personalized basis. Librarians can utilize variety of information sources (print and non-print) to provide information brokerage services. This business requires little or no capital to start. Users will find this services useful especially researchers thus will be willing to pay for it.

The types of information brokerage librarians can invest in are indexing and abstracting, literature search (print and non-print), selective dissemination of information (SDI), current awareness services (CAS), document delivery, bibliographic compilation, retrospective conversion; cataloging and classification (contract cataloguing) for private libraries, management of private libraries, book editing, literature reviews, packaging and repackaging of information, volunteerism, community information services for rural dwellers and sensitization programs.

Book Publishing: Publishing is a very lucrative business especially in the academic environment. This is why publishing is taught in library and information science schools. LIS professionals can start publishing business by collecting manuscripts from writers or authors especially children books or story books for publishing. Typeset manuscripts can be stored in CD ROM as soft copy or printed as hard copy. One can decide to carry out all the activities or can take one or two categories and specialize in them. Also, a librarians can decide to be publisher, an editor, a reference book critic or children's books reviewer. With technological advancements, LIS professionals can engage in e-mail publishing also known as newsletter publishing, web publishing and desktop publishing. Publishing is a special and precise job in which one has to be skilled, knowledgeable and up-to-date if he/she is to succeed in this entrepreneurial venture.

Book Dealership or Trading: Entrepreneurial potentials exists in the area of book dealership and trading for librarians. ICT has made it possible for online publishing, online book stores, online publishers and union catalogues. With these, a librarian can at the comfort of his office build contacts with the publishers (local and international) and connect with libraries that need supplies of information resources online. A librarian can also open book shops or stores through within the tertiary institution environs.

Printing: Printing is a very lucrative venture that librarians can invest their financial resources and energy in. Printing has become diversified. Librarians can start with printing library bulletins, library newsletters, library posters, signage and many more. Librarians can also undertake in printing journals for research groups, books written by lecturers and students, handbooks and manuals.

Binding Services: In the academic environment binding business is booming. LIS professionals can bind projects and thesis for students and other literature resources emanating from the academic institution. Binding business requires little capital and tools to start and it is not time consuming.

Computer and Internet Business Services: A large number of librarians have grown to be information and communication technology (ICT) experts. They also possess Internet surfing skills. This knowledge can be harnessed by starting computer and internet services for students' registration, online payments, typesetting and printing, blog creation, website development and sourcing of information resources for assignments, term papers, projects etc.

Library Software Dealership: Library automation has become global best practices in library and information science profession. In order to automate library services library, oriented software packages are needed. Librarians can become entrepreneurs by dealing on library software and installation. Software packages are important for library in-house operations. A librarian can become a middle man between the software developers and various libraries that want to upgrade to automated services.

Supply of Library Facilities and Equipment: LIS professionals are in the best position to know the best and state of the art facilities and equipment for modern libraries such as furniture, cabinets, seats, trolleys, shelves etc. Hence, a librarian can start supply of library facilities for school libraries (especially private schools), private libraries, special libraries, academic libraries and public libraries.

Establishing and Managing Libraries for Organizations and Individuals: Library and information professionals can delve into establishing and managing libraries for organizations or individuals. It could be a traditional print library or electronic library. Some individuals acquire lots of information resources (books, journals, magazines, newspapers, manuscripts, audiovisuals etc) but don't have organisation knowledge. Hence, librarians can make prominence by taking up such task.

Compilation of Directories: Compilation of directories is another entrepreneurial opportunity that library and information professionals can venture into as entrepreneurs. There are so much that need to be compiled. It can be "Who is who" in virtually anything, profession, village, organization, etc. The telephone directory is a wonderful tool.

Compilation of Bibliographies: This involves the compilation of bibliographic details of a given discipline, subject or topic for a given target audience. Library and Information Science professionals, as entrepreneurs can earn sustainable income through publishing of subject and trade bibliographies.

Freelancing: A freelancer is a self-employed person offering his/her service where needed and not contracted to any single employer. Freelancing can be in many fields like outdoor writing, copy-editing, publishing, proof reading, real estate editors, etc. The internet has helped to

enhance this discipline as freelancers can always find substantial information from the internet. Many retired LIS professionals can undertake freelancing jobs in their free time and earn money after retirement.

Ways Entrepreneurship Enhances Self-development in LIS Professionals

Entrepreneurship enhance the self-development of library and information professionals in many ways. They include:

1. It helps library and information professionals in developing managerial techniques, competencies and skills for managing the library (both personnel and material resources).
2. It is a means of acquiring extra source of capital to finance self-development training programmes.
3. It encourages creativity and innovative thoughts for improved library services among librarians.
4. It facilitates easy adaptability to emerging state of the art information technologies (IT) and to global best practices for improved library service delivery.
5. It helps LIS professionals to build team leadership persona in their various library institutions. Hence become exemplary figures among colleagues (both subordinates and superiors). Persons who take the lead by showing how tasks should be performed. Professionals that have good psychological traits to understand the complaints and lapses of others workers and help them improve on them.
6. It encourages capacity development of the LIS professionals which will help them in initiating new ideas to foster the goals and objectives of the library.
7. It promotes the image of library and information professionals in the society beyond the confines of the library building or profession. It is an avenue to reach out to customers beyond the horizon of library service delivery
8. It encourages the librarians to think out of the box and become strategic, dynamic, foresight and visionary.
9. It helps librarians to develop ingenuity mindset through the use local resources to achieve great job tasks. This will reduce the much complains on lack of fund to purchase sophisticated or state of the art tools and materials before getting things done.

Sources of Capital for Entrepreneurial Ventures in LIS

Finance or capital is the major resource in starting up an entrepreneurial venture. In most cases raising capital can frustrate starting a business venture. There are various sources that LIS professionals can raise fund to establish an entrepreneurial venture, they include:

Savings and Loans: Savings and loan financial institutions are renowned for providing loans with low interest rate to small scale businesses. LIS professionals can approach famous ones for loans to start up a business venture.

Cooperative Societies: LIS professionals can join cooperative societies or form one within their institutions in order to raise capital to establish businesses.

Commercial Banks: Commercial banks grant financial loans to entrepreneurs. They give large amount of capital as loans although with collateral. One of the disadvantage of such loans is that it has high interest rates, requires rigorous processes and in some cases taxes and charges are involved. Commercial banks also provide financial and business support to their loaners.

Micro Finance Banks: Government agencies and ministries provide loan schemes through micro finance banks. Also as a financial institution, they give out loans to entrepreneurs. Micro finance bank can raise over-drafts for its customers to support them when there are delays in paying salaries.

Partnerships: A LIS professional with a business idea and plan can partner with others with much affluence who will carry the financial responsibilities. In partnership, the business initiator can provide the land or business premises while the other disburses capital needed to commence the business (recruitment of staff, purchase of equipment and facilities, registration with cooperate affairs commission and other relevant government agencies).

Industrial Bank: Such financial institution support and provide loan and grant scheme to but small, medium and large scale businesses. It is owned and operated by federal government to support industries with finance.

Small and Medium-scale Enterprises (SME) Centers: Both federal and state governments provides capital and business support for entrepreneurs through SMEs centres.

Personal Capital: A LIS professional can also fund a business venture through personal saving without going for loans or partnership. That depends on how affluent the LIS professional is to raise the capital.

Government Loan Schemes or Programmes: Both federal and state governments create schemes and programmes to help fund or support business ideas of aspiring entrepreneurs. Such

schemes as YouWin has greatly helped young business minded youths to get financial supports to start up businesses.

Religious Bodies, Organisation or Denominations: Religious bodies and christian denominations are renown for providing financial support for their members. Lot of business ventures have been established through the support of religious bodies even with no interest.

Donour Agencies or Organisations: LIS professionals can write project proposals for grants from various donour agencies and organisations (nationals and international). Although this may take rigorous processes to get the fund but can be big enough to enhance the living standard of the beneficiary.

Business Investors: Some persons or groups provide financial support for entrepreneurs and own major stake in the business.

Challenges Associated with Enhancement of Librarians' Self-development Through Entrepreneurship Ventures

Some impending factors hinder library and information science professionals from engaging in entrepreneurship for self-development attainment. The factors include:

Library Management Variables: It has been observed that library management attitudes does not encourage librarians to invest their energy and time in entrepreneurial ventures. More so, some library managements are stringent with librarians' commitment to work and don't support librarians' to participate or enroll in capacity building and development programmes.

Poor Attitude of LIS Professionals: Librarians in Africa show less concern in showcasing their ideas and initiatives beyond the confines of the library institutions. They are lazy and deter from activities that will be stressful on them or require investing much energy and time.

Increased Workload: Due to shortage of LIS professionals employed in various library institutions in Africa, there is increased workload or job task on library and information professionals. Low number of professionals caring out job task of numerous unemployed graduates has had adverse effects. Evidently, enormous workloads hinders them from thinking out of the box.

Poor Sources of Capital: Access to loans and capital from various financial institutions could be frustrating to entrepreneurs especially the ones who are just starting. In most cases, rather than go through the rigorous processes of accessing loans they forfeit the business plan. Also loan requirements such as collateral, sureties etc could deter one from a business initiative.

Government Policies and Actions: Some government policies in African nations are not favourable to aspiring investors and entrepreneurs. There are numerous past incidents where some governments have demolished houses, shops, markets and business buildings even with short notice to the owners of the structures. More so, the incessant revenue charges, high interest rate, inflating tax charges are frustrating entrepreneurial ventures.

Incessant Revenues: Revenue collections are on the increase yearly. Entrepreneurs have suffered in the hands of revenue collectors from Local Government Councils, state government and federal government. This unfriendly situation is unbecoming and forcing many entrepreneurs to shutdown their business and demoralise others from taking loans to establish business. Tax rates keep increasing both internally generated, from purchases made, bank transactions, foreign currency exchange and what have you.

Poor Infrastructures: Irrespective of the high revenues and taxes the infrastructures are dilapidated. Bad condition of road to transport goods and services, poor communication networks, poor power supply amid heavy electricity bills, poor communication network services, poor internet services etc are having negative effects of business with little or no efforts by the governments to fix the problems.

Economic Meltdown: The poor economy and low gross domestic product (GDP) has greatly affected businesses in Africa. Within the few decades ago and recently some African countries have gone into recession, experience economic stagnation and business are forced to close down.

Conclusion

An analytic discussion on entrepreneurship as a self-development mechanism for contemporary library and information science (LIS) professions in Africa is worthwhile. It is worthy to state that self-development should be one of the priorities of LIS professionals as they get employed in any library institution or other organisations. Librarians should desire and aspire to move from one level to another in their years of active services rather than depending only on promotions. Although achieving this requires lots of sacrifices, resilience and financial involvements, self-development is worth it.

Entrepreneurship involves passion, innovation, creativity, competencies, skills, risk, rewards, self-reliance and self-motivation. Entrepreneurial investments create new self-development opportunities. With emerging technologies, tools and concepts in the library and information science profession, librarians need to enroll in advanced programmes and higher degrees, participate in conferences, workshops, training and symposia. Such engagements can be

financed and sustained through the proceeds from entrepreneurial ventures. Librarians will remain relevant when they key into the dynamism in the information business and improve their overall skills through acquisition of various skills, knowledge and competencies. More so, develop entrepreneurial culture and mindset.

Recommendations

Based on the facts established in the discourse the following recommendations are made:

1. Financial institutions should make policies that will be favourable to entrepreneurs for easy access to loans.
2. Library managements should encourage librarians to enagage in self-development programmes.
3. Government should create policies that will be favourable to young investors.
4. The government should control and reduce the rate of revenues and taxes been imposed on SME enterprises.
5. The government should initiate loan schemes and programmes to finance business ideas of young entrepreneurs.
6. Infrastructures such road and power supply etc should be improved by the government to encourage entrepreneurial ventures.
7. Commercial banks should support entrepreneurship by making loans easy and interest low for SMEs.
8. LIS professionals should enroll in skill acquisition programmes and entrepreneurship courses in order to acquire necessary entrepreneurial skills.
9. The government should look into improving the economy of the nation and GDP growth.

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