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Relevance of Information Literacy Skills in Librapreneurship Education for Graduates' Self-Reliance: A Review

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Abstract

The need for Library and Information Science (LIS) graduates to possess flexible entrepreneurial skills to enable them be self-reliant cannot be undermined in the present Information Technology age. Information literacy competency empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, educational and entrepreneurial goals. This paper conceptualizes librapreneurship and the impacts of information literacy skills. It presents LIS graduate as a librapreneur who initiate or provide information services and products to meet user's need in new and creative ways; if given the right kind of training/education that is capable of stimulating entrepreneurial spirit with a view to creating innovation or original thinking in terms of information resource use and development taking into consideration the inadequate collar job in Nigeria. It highlights the importance of information literacy in librapreneurship and enumerates necessary ingredients required for every librapreneur such as creativity, innovativeness, risk taking, collaboration, decisiveness and action-oriented. Key business prospects in librapreneurship and challenges to librapreneurship education in Nigerian library schools were presented.

Keywords: Information Literacy, Graduate, Librapreneurship, Librapreneur, Nigeria

Introduction

The need for Library and Information Science (LIS) graduates to possess flexible entrepreneurial skills to enable them be self-reliant cannot be undermined in the present Information Technology age. For any nation to progress, it depends on how knowledgeable the citizens are and a nation whose citizens are information illiterates cannot be empowered economically (Moruf, 2020a). In Librarianship, there is need for a shift not only to the information literacy of patrons using ICT processes but also the need for Library and Information Science Schools to equip undergraduates to be self-reliant, self-employed and employers of labour upon graduation. This therefore resulted to the introduction of Entrepreneurship education by the Nigerian government in 2005 with its adoption and

implementation by tertiary institution in 2008 of which LIS is among the departments in the Nigerian tertiary institutions (Agim, 2020). It is in this recognition that the National policy on education (2004) maintain that there should be “acquisition of appropriate skills for self-reliant nation”. Therefore, to function in this kind of society, an individual is expected to be an independent lifelong learner, able to master higher-order talents as well as possess the capabilities of a skilled worker through information literacy.

Information Literacy (IL) is a pre-requisite for participative citizenship and a key for socio-economic development by inculcating sustainable learning habits of self-motivation, independence, self-actualisation through willingness to learn, curiosity and positive critical thinking (Moruf, 2020b). IL refers to a set of skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary to know when information is needed to help solve a problem or make a decision, how to articulate that information need in searchable terms and language, for efficient search, retrieval, comprehension, evaluation, and communication to others if necessary, then utilization to accomplish bottom-line purposes (Horton, 2008). According to Dorlvo (2016), IL skills are useful to the society as a whole but particularly to students, so that they will be able to achieve educationally and in their future career prospects. Therefore, information literate individuals are expected to be found in all areas of human endeavour, Librarianship inclusive.

Thus, the purpose of this paper is to discuss the relevance of information literacy skills in librapreneurship education for graduates’ self-reliance. In so doing, its purpose was explored through a logical literature review by making use of a combination of both the contextual and conceptual review methods.

Conceptualisation of Librapreneurship

The idea of entrepreneurship is not new in the field of librarianship, but recently a heightened emphasis is laid on the adoption of entrepreneurial skills aimed at coping with change and bringing about improvement in the traditional library practice. There is a thin line between entrepreneurship and librarianship. Entrepreneurship is profit-oriented while

librarianship is not. Evolving the entrepreneurial skills in librarianship brought about the concept of Librapreneurship. It is an aspect of entrepreneurship that deals solely on Library and Information businesses using the new technology.

The word 'Librapreneurship' which is a two-word phrase meaning “Library entrepreneurship”, first appeared in the paper presented at MANLIBNET's International Conference in 2012 by Batthini. He explored diverse entrepreneurial opportunities for librapreneurs, which lead librarians into the new paradigm. According to Edewor & Omosor (2012), entrepreneurial librarianship known as librapreneurship involves fostering entrepreneurial thinking, which is aimed at developing the social, cognitive, career and management skills. It therefore, concerns itself with exercising initiative or providing information services and products to meet user needs in new and creative ways. Librapreneurship entails LIS professionals becoming information consultant, personal or virtual reference assistant, social media consultant, freelancer, reviewer, application developer, website developer, desktop publisher, informational product creator, domain name hosting provider, translator, referral services consultant, computer trainer, web librarian, data librarian etc.

According to Atterbury & Finnell (2009), librarians often lack prior training in entrepreneurship. Consequently, LIS students need to be trained on business models, commonly employed in entrepreneurial ventures with its associated elements of personal financial risk and potential financial gain (Scanlon & Crumpton, 2011). Applying new business models to traditional services, librapreneurs eagerly embrace entrepreneurship in response to patrons' demands, funding declines, changing resource formats, and other challenges. Librapreneur is an innovative librarian who generates, gathers, organizes, and disseminates information as a profit-making venture or as a value-added service. They possess excellent knowledge management skills by offering best services to users; during the service, he imparts

some lots of business ideas; leadership and marketing strategies, as well as a theory of economics principles.

The following, adapted from Edewor & Omosor (2012) are qualifications to become successful librapreneurs:

1. **Confidence:** Librapreneurs must be confident in the face of difficulties and discouraging circumstances. They are confident with the knowledge that they will make their businesses succeed. They arouse that confidence in everything they do.
2. **Collaboration:** Librarians should develop relationships that blend across personal and professional contexts. The advent of social networking tools such as instant messaging, wikis, blogs and networking sites. They engage in networking to find and meet the right people that fosters new kind of collaboration. Opening the channels of communication encourages innovation that stretches across various backgrounds.
3. **Self-Reliance:** Being resourceful enough to depend on themselves.
4. **Focus and total commitment.** Being focused in chosen library and information services business, hard work, vigour and single-mindedness are essential elements in the librapreneurial profile.
5. **Problem Solving:** There should be a solutions-based approach towards problems and not necessarily settle for what is offered or for what has been traditionally accepted. Librarians should be change initiators. Librapreneurs must demonstrate the entrepreneurial spirit by embracing solutions-based approach towards problems and building a network of experiences with colleagues and clients.
6. **Innovativeness and creativity:** Librapreneurship goes hand-in-hand with innovation- the ability to produce new' ideas; provide better solutions, and pioneer new products. One facet of creativity is being able to make connections between seemingly unrelated events or situations. Librapreneurs repurpose products to market them to new industries.

7. **Resiliency:** This describes the ability to weather the ups and downs of any business. Librapreneurs possess resilience which enables them withstand all kinds of challenges and even bounce back stronger and wiser.
8. **Risk Taking:** To succeed means taking measured risks. Often the successful librapreneur exhibits an incremental approach to risk taking, each stage is exposed to a limited, measured amount of personal, financial and business risk and moving from one stage to another as each decision is proved.
9. **Willingness to learn and read outside the Profession:** Successful librapreneurs accept that they do not know it all, therefore, are always ready to learn. Also, there is more to learn when reading take place outside the professional domain, particularly in the areas of information technology, customer service, marketing, management and associated fields.
10. **Self-Reflection:** Librapreneurs engage in a lot of thinking and contemplating by reflecting on the past and planning for the future.
11. **Results-oriented:** Librapreneurship requires the drive that comes from setting goals and targets as well as deriving pleasure from achieving them.
12. **Sales:** Every librapreneur is a sales person, either marketing their ideas, products or services.
13. **Decisiveness and action-oriented:** Librapreneurs must think and make decisions quickly, then discipline themselves to carry out the decisions they have made by taking action.

The other characteristics of librapreneurs that have been listed by many commentators include ambition, multi-skills, assertiveness, perseverance, persistence and persuasiveness.

Information Literacy Skills and Librapreneurship

Information literacy being a prerequisite for librapreneurship is a set of integrated abilities which encompass the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued as well as the use for the creation of new knowledge and personal empowerment. This concept influences and coexists with librapreneurship. Therefore, IL skills determine the success of librapreneurship.

Several studies established the relationship and effect of IL skills on entrepreneurship (Elonye and Uzuegbu, 2013; Nwokocha Chimah, & Okorie, 2019) as described above. These researches indicated an effective librapreneurship depends on one's level of IL skills. According to Adeleke & Emeahara (2016), IL skills are imperative for accessing information in this generation of technology advancement that most of the information needed for research can be retrieved from electronic sources. For librapreneur, it goes beyond just being able to search for something on the internet or in a book; it involves being able to determine whether or not the information obtained is true and reliable then the ability to apply the information to enhance librapreneurial competency. Information literacy is important owing to the amount of information needed for successful librapreneurship.

IL offers a life-long education, which provides library practitioners the opportunity to manage information in creative and innovative way by gathering, organizing and disseminating information as a commercial venture or as a value-added service. Therefore, LIS graduate should possess six operationalized constructs of IL as shown in Figure 1.

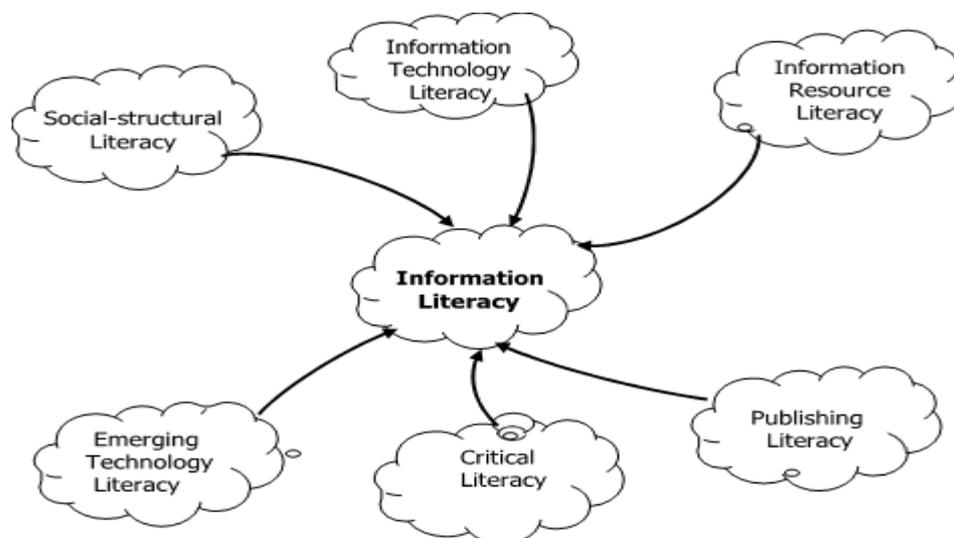


Figure 1: Operationalized constructs of Information Literacy

Furthermore, IL is important to understand the difficult question of ownership of information and copyright, knowledge required of an information broker. IL is required to have a critical thinking approach, a skill needed for effective librapreneurship. IL enhances competency in librapreneur by impacting three main elements:

1. Generic skills: Entails critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration.
2. Information skills: This includes information technology fluency, information seeking and use etc.
3. Values and beliefs: Using information wisely and ethically, learning to learn, social responsibility and community participation.

Librapreneurship Opportunities for Library and Information Science Graduates

The following, adapted from previous literature (Ekuoye 2007; Igbeka, 2008; Bathini, 2012; Elonye and Uzuegbu, 2013) are the librapreneurial opportunities which LIS graduates can explore to start a new venture:

1. **Information Brokerage:** Information brokerage involves sorting out information available on a mass scale and delivering it on personalized basis. An information broker is an individual who gathers information about individuals and organisations, assembles the data to create individual profiles and sell the profiles to companies, agents or

institutions that need them for various purposes. 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.

2. **Book Publishing:** Publishing is a very lucrative business especially in the academic environment. LIS professionals can start publishing business by collecting manuscripts from writers or authors especially children books, story, novels as well as non-fiction writing for publishing. Content and copy editing, proof-reading as well as manuscripts typeset are provided as services, manuscript can thereafter 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 librarian can decide to be publisher, an editor, a reference book critic or children's books reviewer, indexer and abstractor. With technological advancements, LIS professionals can engage in e-mail publishing also known as newsletter publishing, web publishing and desktop publishing.
3. **Book Dealership or Trading:** With the aid of ICT, a librarian can at the comfort of his office build contacts with 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 or act as intermediaries between manufacturers and vendors of library facilities and supplies through license.

4. **Printing:** Librapreneur can start with printing library bulletins, library newsletters, library posters and signage, and can also undertake in printing journals for research groups, books written by lecturers and students' projects, handbooks, manuals etc. in higher institutions printing press. This may be in form of self-owned job or hired service.
5. **Binding Services:** In academic environment, binding business is booming. LIS professionals can bind projects and thesis for students and other literature resources emanating from the academic institution.
6. **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.
7. **Library Software Dealership:** Library automation has become global best practices in LIS profession. In order to automate library services library, oriented software packages are needed. Librarians can become librapreneurs by dealing in 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.
8. **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.

9. ***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.
10. ***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 for organizations, businesses etc. are wonderful services.
11. ***Compilation of Bibliographies:*** This involves the compilation of bibliographic details of a given discipline, subject or topic for a given target audience. LIS professionals, as entrepreneurs can earn sustainable income through publishing of subject and trade bibliographies.
12. ***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.
13. ***Information literacy consultancy:*** Librapreneurs may act as information literacy consultants who teach, train and impart information literacy skills by helping organizations and institutions to plan and implement information literacy skills, projects and activities.

Other opportunities include newspaper dealership, stationery outlet, lending library, reading room, online bookstore, periodical subscription agency, subscription agency for electronic book/journals, consultancy services and educational/career counsellor etc.

Librapreneurship Education

Librapreneurship Education can be defined as a collection of formalized teachings that informs, trains, and educates LIS professionals interested in participating in socioeconomic development through entrepreneurship consciousness, business creation, or small business development for information products and services. Entrepreneurship education on the other hand, is usually conceived more broadly, it seeks to foster self-esteem and confidence by drawing on the individual's talents and creativity, as well as building the relevant skills and values that will assist students in expanding their perspectives on schooling and opportunities beyond (Sánchez, 2013). Researches have shown that universities and schools currently have the aim of encouraging economic and social development, in part through entrepreneurship education, since it is capable of stimulating the entrepreneurial skills of students (Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018; Fiore, Sansone, & Paolucci, 2019). It is therefore important for LIS schools to pay keen attention to librapreneurship education immersed with IL competencies. Hence, acquisition of IL skills enhances librapreneurial proficiencies. Arthur, (2019) posits that the broad aim of entrepreneurial education initiatives is to create resilient, optimistic, confident, creative, digitally fluent, agile, imaginative, risk-taking and problem-solving life-long learners.

Benefits of Librapreneurship Education for Graduate Self-Reliance

The following are the benefits of librapreneurship education to LIS Students:

1. Librapreneurship Education bridges the gap between science and business strategies, creating new enterprise.

2. It promotes innovation by introducing new products or services to information users who are ready to pay in return.
3. It prepares LIS professionals to create and successfully operate a library-related business enterprise.
4. It equips LIS graduates with diversified knowledge and creative abilities to initiate, establish and run business of their own.
5. Librapreneurship Education focuses on developing understanding and capacity for pursuit, of entrepreneurial behaviour, skills and attributes.
6. Librapreneurs received the opportunity to be independent and control their own business while taking decisions according to their own wishes.
7. Librapreneurship Education offers a chance to make a difference and ultimately reduce unemployment in the society.
8. Librapreneurship Education helps LIS professionals to attain and utilize their full professional talents.
9. Librapreneurship Education confers on LIS graduates a chance to pursue specific outfits which are often closely associated with their interests.

Challenges ahead Librapreneurship Education on Information Literacy Skills Development in Nigerian Library Schools

The challenges ahead of any library schools toward producing adequately trained graduates who are information literate can be grouped under two main categories; (a) challenges on library schools and (b) on LIS graduates (see Fig. 2). Looking at library schools first, there is need to realign its curriculum offering to reflect the current labour markets demands in terms of IL skills, to retrain staff with an up-to-date knowledge and ICT skills required to handle new technology and new services. It is even argued that traditional curriculum was unable to take into cognisance new IL skills demanded by present information age and labour market (Atterbury & Finnell, 2009). On the graduates perspective, the challenges include; non-challant

attitude of students towards librapreneurship education and inadequate ICT skills to practicalize librapreneurial approach of LIS profession.

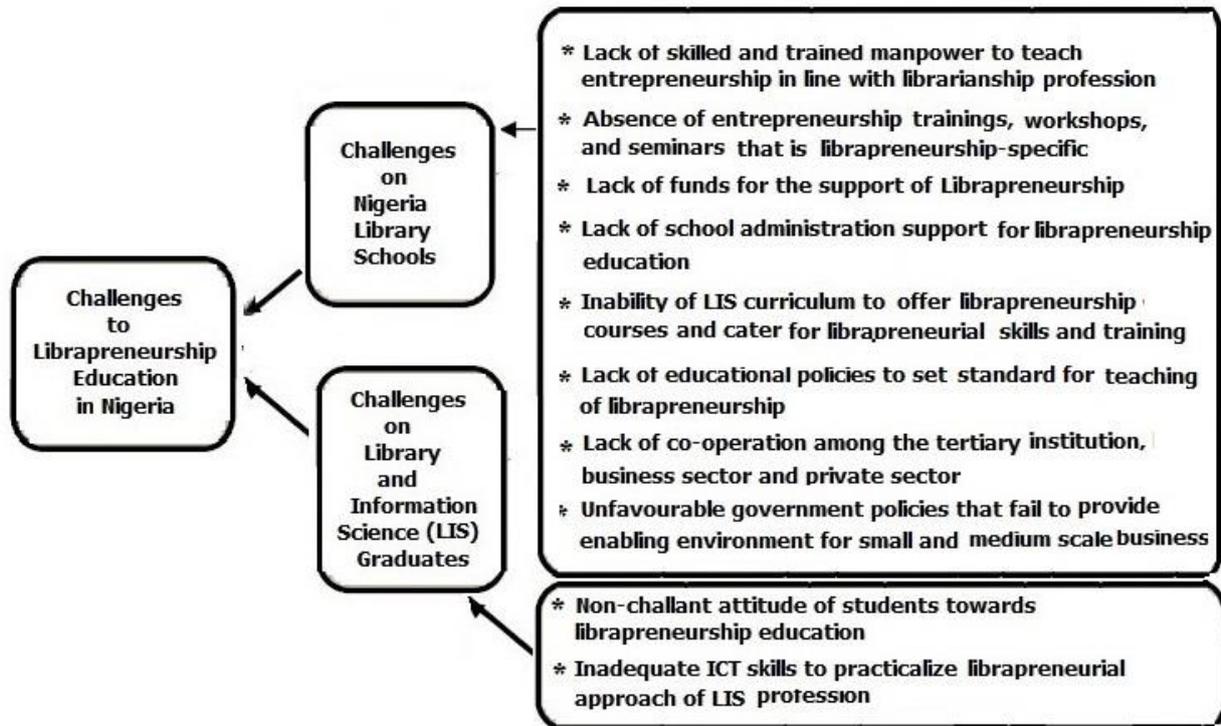


Figure 2: Conceptual framework of some challenges ahead Librapreneurship Education on Information Literacy skills development

Conclusion and Recommendations

LIS graduates become relevant when they key into the dynamism of change, to improve their overall skills through acquisition of various forms of information literacy competencies, to develop librapreneurial culture and mindset in order to exploit various opportunities in the profession towards achieving self-reliance. Librapreneurship education when supportably integrated into the curriculum of Nigerian Library Schools will deepen the frontiers of information provisioning for every sector of the economy; create direct and indirect employment for individual practitioners, as well as improve the image of the profession. Hence, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Efforts should be made by all stakeholders to increase the level of awareness of Librapreneurship among LIS graduates. The Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria, the National Library Association, Library Schools and the government should be at the forefront of such campaign.
- Library schools should train LIS students on needed librapreneurial skills and allay their fear towards competition and failure
- LIS students should be allowed to undertake industrial training in order to interact with entities that make businesses succeed.
- LIS students should be taught how to generate compelling business ideas for new librapreneurial businesses. Lack of such ideas would breed frustration and make the aspiring librapreneur to start a business similar to the one he has seen around him.
- LIS professionals should acquire specific skills in ICT in order to exploit the entrepreneurial opportunities in the profession so as to exploit the full opportunities in the digital age.
- LIS professionals should develop librapreneurial culture and mindset to initiate library-related enterprise for self-empowerment.
- LIS professionals should attend workshops and seminars on entrepreneurship to acquire the skills and business acumen required to engage in any librapreneurial venture.
- LIS professionals should develop entrepreneurial spirit to generate viable businesses that would make them relevant in the knowledge age.

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