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Exploring the Practice of Infopreneurship among Librarians in Bauchi State, Nigeria

Abstract

The study explored the practice of Infopreneurship among librarians in Bauchi state Nigeria that are already working and earning their living in libraries. The survey research design was employed to conduct the study. The questionnaire was the major instrument used to collect data. The population of the study consisted of 92 librarians drawn from various libraries in Bauchi state, Nigeria. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistic expressed in percentages and frequency counts. The objectives of the study are to identify types of infopreneurship services, factors that motivate librarians into infopreneurship, types of skills librarians possessed, tools employed and the factors hindering librarians from venturing into infopreneurship. Findings from the study revealed that book vending, information brokerage, indexing services and digital publishing were found to be the major types of infopreneurial services provided by infopreneurs/librarians. Factors that motivate librarians into infopreneurship include the desire to earn extra income, provision for post-retirement and in response to identified demand. It was revealed that most of the respondents possess information literacy skills, communication skills, online marketing skills and record keeping skills. The tools employed to provide infopreneurial services to clients by librarians include computers, books and documents. In conclusion, it is obvious that librarians have sample opportunities to engage in infopreneurship to earn additional income to augment their salaries and to create jobs for the unemployed. Based on the findings from this study it is being recommended that librarians should go into various types of business ventures in which they have comparative advantages in terms of knowledge, tools and skills. In addition, librarians going into infopreneurship should employ information and communication devices to provide infopreneurial services to clients when, where and how they need it.

Keywords: *Infopreneurship, Librarians, Bauchi State, Nigeria*

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1.1 Introduction

Information has become a strategic resource that contributes to sustainable development. The exponential growth and availability of information resources and services in virtually all aspects of human endeavour has opened new opportunities and challenges for information professionals. These developments continue to provide ample opportunities for librarians to rethink and re-examine their roles and redefine their contribution in a most mutually beneficial way. In order to fully maximize the opportunities that has been provided, librarians are now being challenged to think outside the box to explore various avenues through which the management of information resources can be turned into money making venture at a time when unemployment and underemployment resulting from economic crisis has made it practically impossible for government to provide white-collar job for the mass of jobless youth including library and Information science graduates.

Infopreneurship, according to Ononogbo (2014) refers to those businesses associated with Library and Information Science that someone can start or manage in order to earn a living soon after graduation in the event that government jobs are not forthcoming. In this sense, infopreneurs are entrepreneurs who are creative thinkers, innovators who volunteer to take risks and invest money in business ventures. In other words, an infopreneur is someone who invests in information infrastructure, facilities, systems and human resources in order to undertake the provision of relevant information profitably. Librarians that are gainfully employed need to create another stream of income, create jobs for the unemployed young librarians and also prepare for post retirement engagement. This is possible while they are still active in service. However, determination and diligence are

requirements for success, as engaging in infopreneurship could be demanding. The strategic role of information in eliminating uncertainty and facilitating choice and decision making cannot be questioned. Access to the right information is what gives individuals, business organizations and nation awesome edge in competitive global environment nowadays. Therefore, what librarians choose to do and how they trade with information to become infopreneurs is critical to job creation and the challenge of unemployment.

Individuals, organizations, nations are investing huge sums of money on information facilities, systems and human resources capacity development in order to satisfy the increasing need for information for quality decision making. The application of information and communication technology in the gathering, acquisition, organization, processing, retrieval and presentation of information in the right place at the right time and in the right form provides ample opportunities for librarians to become infopreneurs. However, with the promising opportunities, many librarians lack the ideas, financial resource, motivation, skills and tools to venture into infopreneurship with its possibilities.

The challenges confronting the librarian today and in the near future have to do with how the phenomenal explosion in the information industry can be exploited maximally to contribute to wealth creation and job creation. It is in this light that this study explores the practice of Infopreneurship among Librarians in Bauchi with focus on identifying the types of infopreneurship services provided by librarians, factors that motivate librarians into infopreneurship and the types of tools employed by librarians to carry out infopreneurship in Bauchi state, Nigeria.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study include:

1. To identify types of infopreneurial services provided by librarians
2. To identify the factors that motivate librarians to go into infopreneurship
3. To investigate the types of entrepreneurial skills possessed by librarians
4. To find out the types of tools employed by librarians to provide infopreneurial services
5. To ascertain whether librarians possess the characteristics of entrepreneurs
6. To identify the factors hindering librarians from venturing into infopreneurship

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions are to guide data collection for the study

1. What are the types of infopreneurial resources and services provided by librarians?
2. What are the factors that motivate librarians to go into infopreneurship?
3. What types of entrepreneurial skills are possessed by librarians?
4. What types of tools are employed by librarians to provide infopreneurial services?
5. Which unique characteristics of entrepreneurs are possessed by librarians?
6. What are the factors hindering librarians from venturing into infopreneurship?

2.1 Review of Related Literature

The term infopreneurship is a neologism portmanteau of two words 'information' and 'entrepreneur'. An infopreneur as entrepreneur who identifies opportunities for creating enterprising information based business by identifying knowledge deficiency situations and selling target-based information products and services to clients. In the words of Ononogbo (2014), infopreneurship refers to 'those businesses associated with library and

information science (LIS) that someone can start or arrange in order to earn a living soon after graduation in the event that government jobs are not forthcoming. It is the kind of business fresh graduates and retirees and even practicing librarians can venture into profitably. This kind of business is a viable venture that that would bring high returns on investment because of the high premium individuals and organizations are putting on acquiring information resources and services for sustainability. An infopreneur is therefore an entrepreneur who makes money by collecting, organizing and selling information in a niche market (online and offline).

Infopreneurship has become a viable business venture for information professionals because information which is their trade in stock has become a marketable commodity with high demand. McCreddie and Rice in Ikoja- Odongo and Mostert(2006) describes information as a commodity or resource that can be produced, purchased, replicated, distributed, manipulated, passed along, controlled, traded and sold. Furthermore, Onah, Adebayo and Igwe (2014) observed that the society we live in is presently driven by information and communication technologies (ICT). These technologies have created various business opportunities for individuals especially those that possess the skills, such as graduates of tertiary institutions from different fields of study like library and information science (LIS). For the librarian, Online publishing, Records management, information brokerage, Translation services, Abstracting and Indexing services etc. are viable areas that can be engaged in as infopreneurship. The germane question here, is, to what extent and in what ways are librarians engaged in the establishment, ownership and management of small/ medium scale enterprises providing infopreneurial services?

According to Igbeka, (2008), information generation is continuous, so also

is the management/ organization of information, and knowledge enterprise is a lifelong process. The gap that exist between the increasing 'information need' and 'information provision' can be filled when information professionals go the extra miles to creatively package and deliver information resources and services to individuals and organizations even at commercial rates.

In the opinion of Igbeka (2008), librarians do not have to work only in established institution, for they can establish their own libraries or information centers and become information brokers or business librarians searching and finding information for clients. This means that by using cutting edge technologies, databases, websites etc. librarians can search for and disseminate information to clients for a fee.

The role of infopreneurship can be better appreciated when considered within the context of unemployment and underemployment which has serious implication for sustainable national development. Consequently, there is the need for citizens to establish businesses where they are self employed and become employer of labor. Entrepreneurship has been identified as the best solution to unemployment, underemployment and poverty reduction among the youths, especially in instances where educated individuals cannot find jobs (Brownhilder 2014). However, graduates of library and information science do not need to look for white-collar-job because they can establish their own infopreneur business by searching, packaging and providing information resources and services to interested customers. Frank et al (2001) observes that the kind of information provided by the infopreneur is value added information.

Studies by Ayegba and Omale (2016), Malebana (2014), Kume et'al (2013) and Khoung and An (2016) focused mainly on the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions with less attention on actual entrepreneurial

success stories. In a study, Ayegba and Omale (2016) reported on factors that influence entrepreneurial development among small and medium scale business owners. Using chi-sqaure to examine responses on determinants of entrepreneurial development, it was revealed that entrepreneurship development in Nigeria depends on environmental factors such as power supply, access to credit facility as well as modern technology.

Furthermore, research reports in the area of infopreneurship and its practices in Nigeria are still scanty because the field is at its infancy. This study intends to fill this gap by exploring the practice of infopreneurship among librarians in Bauchi State, Nigeria.

3.1 Methodology

The descriptive research of the survey type was adopted for the study. The survey research was used because of the characteristics of the respondents. The population of the study consisted of 92 Librarians drawn from different libraries in Bauchi state. A self developed questionnaire was developed and used for data collection. The content validity of the instrument was done by a senior professional colleague at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi The content validity was done to ensure that the wordings and the structure of the questionnaire were appropriate for obtaining required data. Data collected for the study were tabulated and analyzed using descriptive statistics expressed in frequency counts, percentages and mean scores.

4.1 Data Analysis

Response Rate

A total of 92 copies of questionnaire were administered on the respondents. Out of this number, 84 copies representing 91.3% were returned duly completed and found useable for the purpose intended. This high level of response was obtained because the

researcher personally administered the questionnaire to most of the respondents with the period of four weeks within which they filled and returned the questionnaire.

Table 1: Types of Infopreneurial Services

Infopreneurial Services	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
Information brokerage	38	45	21	25	16	20	9	10.5
Digital Publishing	26	31	30	36	10	12	18	21.4
Book Vending	37	44.6	40	48	4	4.7	3	4
Abstracting Services	24	29	28	34	18	21.4	14	17
Indexing Services	30	36	28	34	14	17	12	14.2
Library Consultancy	30	36	24	29	18	21.4	12	14.2
Contract Cataloguing	22	26	16	19	20	24	26	31
Document Delivery	24	29	23	27	22	26	15	18
Translation Services	20	24	14	17	20	24	30	36
Training	35	42	36	46	10	12	5	6

From table 1 Book vending 77 (92%), Information brokerage 59(70%), Indexing Services 58(69%) and Digital Publishing 56 (67%) were the major types of infopreneurial services provided by Librarians in Bauchi State, Nigeria. On the other hand, Abstracting Services 47(56%), Contract Cataloguing 38(45%) and Translation Services 34 (40.4%) were the least types of infopreneurial services provided by librarians in the study area. The implication of this is that librarians prefer to engage in infopreneurial businesses like book vending, information brokerage, indexing services and digital publishing to other types of businesses.

Table 2: Factors that motivate Librarians into infopreneurship

Motivating Factors	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
To earn extra income	42	50	38	45	3	3.5	1	1.5
To provide employment for others	27	32.1	18	21.4	20	24	19	23
To contribute to national development	18	21.4	15	18	25	30	26	31
In response to demand	30	36	24	29	15	18	15	18
To meet identified need	28	33	20	24	16	19	26	24
To provide for post-retirement	38	45	29	35	9	11	8	10

Table 2 revealed that prominent among the factors that motivated librarians to go into infopreneurship are the desire to earn extra income 80 (95.2%), to provide for post retirement 69 (82.1%), and in response to demand 54(64%). The implication of this is that the motivating factor has to do with satisfying personal need than the need to contribute to sustainable development.

Table 3: Types of Skills Librarians possesses for infopreneurship

Infopreneurial Services	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
Interpersonal skill	30	36	34	40	12	14	8	10
Communication skill	36	43	32	38	6	7	10	12
Selling skill	28	33	30	36	14	17	12	14
Analytical skill	20	24	26	31	16	19	22	26
Information literacy skill	43	51	35	42	2	2.3	4	4.7
Decision making skill	26	31	28	33	16	19	14	17
Online marketing skill	34	40	32	38	10	12	8	10
Forecasting skill	27	32	31	37	16	19	10	12
Record keeping skill	36	43	30	36	6	7	12	14
Information technology skill	20	24	24	29	18	21	22	26

Table 3 has shown the types of skills librarians possess for effective engagement in infopreneurship. Majority of the respondents indicated that they possess information literacy skill 78(93%), Communication 68(81%), Online Marketing skill 66 (77%). The possession of some of these skills is critical to the success of any infopreneurship endeavour. Findings here agree with the position of Blenker et al (200) who submitted that entrepreneurship or enterprising behaviour characteristics, competencies, and skills can be learned and taught.

Table 4: Types of Tools Librarians employed to provide infopreneurial services

Tools employed by Librarians	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
Books	34	40	28	33	14	17	8	10
Journals	26	30	30	36	16	20	12	14
Database	28	33	32	38	13	15	11	13
Catalogues	20	24	25	30	17	20	22	26
Abstracts	18	21.4	15	18	29	35	22	26
Indexes	22	26	26	31	19	23	17	20
Reference sources	27	32	23	27	14	17	20	24
Online sources	30	36	33	39	12	14	9	11
Computer	40	48	28	33	6	7	10	12
Documents	32	38	29	34	15	18	8	10

Table 4 shows that Computer 68(81%), Online Sources 63 (75%), Books 62 (74%) and Documents 61 (72%) were identified by respondents as the major tools employed to provide infopreneurial services. The implication is that librarians employ their professional working tools to carry out infopreneurial services.

Table 5: Challenges Affecting Infopreneurship

	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%
Defective LIS curriculum	29	34	33	39	14	17	8	10
Lack of interest in business	30	36	35	42	12	14	7	8.5
Unwillingness to take risk	48	36	43	7	8.3	1	1.5	
Low public image of librarians	28	34	26	31	10	12	20	24
Inability to see opportunities	38	45	36	43	4	4.7	6	7
Low marketing skills	3	44	31	37	6	7	10	12
Poor attitude towards business	34	40	38	45	4	4.7	8	10
Lack of incentives	36	43	28	34	9	11	11	13
Lack of business ideas	36	43	32	38	8	10	8	10

Table 5 show that majority of the respondents identified lack of startup capital 76 (91%), inability to see business opportunities 74 (88%), poor attitude towards doing business 72(86) and unwillingness to take risk as challenges militating against involvement in infopreneurship. The implication is that, where librarians are not ready to confront these challenges, venturing into infopreneurship becomes an uphill task.

5.1 Discussion of Finding

Book vending, Information brokerage, indexing services and Digital publishing were found to be the major types of infopreneurial services that most of the respondents provide. This finding agrees with that of Amindu, Mohammed and Ayodele (2019) which identified the types of entrepreneurial opportunities preferred by Library and Information Science graduates in North Central States of Nigeria.

The desire to earn extra income, provision for post-retirement and response to identified demand constituted the factors that motivated librarians in Bauchi state into infopreneurship.

This finding align with the position of Fasua (2007) that some business ideas come from a careful analysis of market trends, opportunities and consumer needs while others come from dreaming and visioning.

Most of the respondents possess information literacy skills, communication skill, online marketing skill, Record keeping skill information technology skill among others. This is imperative, because librarians cannot operate effectively without these skills.

Computers, Books, Online resources and Documents were identified as tools employed by respondents to provide infopreneurial services to clients. Since librarians work with these information carriers, it is easy for them to exploit these tools to provide infopreneurial services effectively and efficiently to the clients

Lack of start-up-capital, inability to see business opportunities, poor attitude towards doing business and unwillingness to take risk were found to be the major challenges affecting infopreneurship among librarians in Bauchi state. This finding concur with opinion of Umehali (2014) who observe that being an entrepreneur is more than a job or career, so the manger must be flexible and

imaginative, be able to plan, take risks, and make decisions and implement actions to achieve desired goals.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of this study, it has been revealed that various types of infopreneurial services can be provided by librarians in order to contribute to sustainable development through job creation and Wealth creation With the increasing possibilities provided by information and communication tools and devices, librarians can maximize available opportunities and render the much needed infopreneurial services motivated by existence of ready market. With the enormous knowledge and skills possessed by librarians, every challenge affecting the success of infopreneurship can be surmounted in order to maximize the numerous benefits of infopreneurship

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Librarians should go into various types of infopreneurship in which they have comparative advantage in order to maximise their involvement in business.
2. The desire to succeed and contribute to sustainable national development should motivate more librarians to venture into infopreneurship. Librarians should try to augment their income and prepare for post retirement life.
3. Concerned stakeholders should continue to review the library and information science curriculum for the training and retraining of librarians to build their capacity and to acquire requisite skills to make them successful infopreneurs.
4. Librarians going into infopreneurship should employ information and communication technology – driven tools to provide effective and efficient infopreneurial services to client when,

where and how they need it

5. Librarians should learn to build up start-up capital and be ready to look out for business opportunities and take same in order to unearth and optimise the goldmine in infopreneurship in Nigeria.

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