INFOPRENEURSHIP SKILLS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS IN LIBRARIES IN BAUCHI AND GOMBE STATES FOR EFFECTIVE INFORMATION MARKETING SERVICES DELIVERY

Yakubu Attahiru Liman, PhD

Federal College of Education (Technical), yakubuattahiruliman@gmail.com

&

Umar Shuaibu

Gombe State College of Education and Legal Studies, babanfarukdazainab@gmail.com

Abstract

The study investigated Infopreneurship programmes for Librarians in academic Libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States. The objectives of the study were: to determine infopreneurship skills for academic librarians in libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States, to identify various challenges associated with infopreneurship skills needed by academic librarians. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The study's population consisted of 118 academic librarians in Bauchi and Gombe States. Questionnaire was used for data collection for the study sample of 110 which was retrieved and found usable. The findings of the study revealed that most academic librarians indicated that infopreneurship provides opportunities for academic librarians to demonstrate capabilities for information marketing service delivery in the libraries. The study also showed that challenges associated with infopreneurship skills needed by academic librarians in Bauchi and Gombe States was still prominent among some academic librarians. The study concluded that librarian needed infopreneurship skills such as information marketing skills, information literacy skills, offered by infopreneurship provide opportunities for academic librarians to demonstrate capabilities for practical information service delivery in the libraries. It recommended that needs for librarians to demonstrate opportunities provided by infopreneurship to gain practical know-how in information service delivery in the libraries.

Keywords: Infopreneurship, Skills, Academic Librarians, Academic Libraries, Information Science.

Introduction

Infopreneurship was derived from two words that is information and entrepreneur. Madu et al (2016) confirmed that before the introduction of ICT, Infopreneurship was in practice by some group of people who used different methods to transform the information they organized into products such as, printed reports usually delivered through mail. However, at that time, infopreneurship had no identity. Infopreneurship plays a strategic role in the economic sector of any nation and is important and beneficial in many ways. Umoru (2016) succinctly put it that the growth and development of any society lies in the ability of its citizenry to identify and exploit

existing but unnoticed investment opportunities in a way quite novel to the expected market. The term infopreneurship is an extension of two distinct fields. The term has its origin from the words; information and entrepreneurship. Information is a critical resource in today's knowledge-based economy. It is dynamic, expensive, continually being reconfigured and repackaged and has earned inclusion into the factors of production which were previously limited to land, labour, capital and entrepreneur (Aregbesola et al., 2019). Presently, information professionals (people who help to structure, manage, navigate and find information) are compelled to use new skills and strategies in order to change and continue to compete in a world of virtual information. This has created a new area of specialization which is referred to as infopreneurship. The overcrowded labour market in Nigeria is forcing thousands of graduates including Library and Information Science (LIS) graduates into the realities of unemployment and its associated consequences that result pathetically in under development (Madu et al., 2016). The information age is an environment where information provision is an increasingly important commercial activity. It has led to a change in the role of librarians with regards to information handling. The focus of this research work is infopreneurship intention.

Infopreneurship intention is the willingness of an individual to exhibit behaviour and engage in activities associated with self-employment initiatives and new business creation relating to information provision. Infopreneurship intention is the conscious awareness, conviction and desire by an individual to start up one's own information business venture and plan to do so in the future with the thinking that can drive individual attention, experience, and action towards the objective to perform that business. In the same vein, Fatoki (2015) argued that individuals consider infopreneurship based on their perception that such efforts can enhance the achievement of personal goals, pursuit of ideas, and the realization of financial gains. Infopreneurship skills have become critical assets that will assist librarians to provide national development. Infopreneurship now exist in academic libraries to assist librarians to bridge the prevailing information provision gaps in the search, location, identification, retrieval, evaluation and use of information among others (Elizabeth & Ronke, 2015).

The emergence of the infopreneurship skills has opened opportunities for librarians to share and market information services with their users (Adeyinka, Akanbi-Ademolake & Olufemi, 2017). Academic librarians from developed countries have adopted infopreneurship to enhance library services and actualize the core mandate of academic institutions. Similarly, librarians from developing countries have joined their counterparts from the developed countries to provide library services using the infopreneurship with the view to remain relevant in the digital era (Rose, Eldridge & Chapin, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Infopreneurship which is the identification and exploitation of information business opportunities is seen as a viable option that can address the problem of unemployment amongst information professionals and students of Library and information sciences. However, observations and literature reviewed revealed that the rate of unemployment is still on the rise

amongst many graduates of Library and Information Science despite the opportunities provided by infopreneurship. A situation which is quite disheartening considering the limitless opportunities offered by advancement in technology for the creation, packaging and selling of information as products and services through various online and offline platforms. This study became necessary to investigate the infopreneurship programmes for Librarians in Academic Libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine infopreneurship skills needed for academic librarians in academic libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States
2. To identify challenges associated with infopreneurship skills needed by academic librarians in academic libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States

Research Question

1. What are the infopreneurship skills needed for academic librarians in academic libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States?
2. What are challenges associated with infopreneurship skills needed by academic librarians in academic libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States?

Review of Literature

Onah, Adebayo and Igwe (2016) affirmed that information and communication technologies (ICT) 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 infopreneurship areas that librarians can be engaged. Areas identified from which money could be made from using information were: web designing, online selling of E-books, hosting online events, consultancy services, online publishing services and other E-services. The research also listed the areas of infopreneurship such as e- publishing, database management services, mass broadcasting, and information services among others. According to Igbeka, (2018), information generation is continuous, so also is the management/ organization of information while 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 mile to creatively package and deliver information resources and services to individuals and organizations even at commercial rates. In his opinion, Library and Information Sciences graduates do not have to work only in established institutions, for they can establish their own libraries or information centers and become information brokers. This means that by using cutting edge technologies, databases, websites and other information resources, Library and Information Sciences graduates can search for and disseminate information to clients for a fee. However, they need to have the required skills to perform these duties.

Gloria and Patrick (2020) studied the values and implications of employment sustainability of SMEs in Nigeria in the area of infopreneurship. They analysed parameters such as knowledge creation, increasing value of a product, credibility of the information, availability of necessary information, profits expected, independence of business and technology involved. The study was carried out with owners of SMEs. The study suggested that unemployment problems can be reduced to an large extent by involving students in infopreneurship related businesses such as knowledge enhancement, value creation ,freelance writing cum teaching, management consultancies , content development, blogging services etc. by using tested models as it may increase sustainability. Aregbesola et al., (2019) carried out a study on infopreneurship in a developing countries, exploring its opportunities and challenges in Nigeria. The study showed that developed countries were able to curb unemployment, disruptiveness, theft & robbery, terrorism activities by implementing infopreneurship activities facilitated through government bodies and organizations. It is a strategic instrument for reduce unemployment which develops the nation simultaneously.

SaifulFarik (2019) maintained that infopreneurship education is a tool for economic growth. The study explored the employment opportunities available for an infopreneur and listed the skills required for information management business. There is a high need for infopreneurship education among the graduates which will definitely solve issues related to it . Kamaluddeen (2016) explored a study on infopreneurship, economic development and sustainability for a developing economy, Nigeria as a case study. The study recommended refocusing and updating the information related courses to meet the current demands in digital services. It also recommended that governments at all levels should promote capacity upgrade for handling technological innovations while the adoption of ICTs with the provision of good infrastructure may offer a conducive environment for sustainable economic growth of infopreneur in the country.

As new technologies evolve and the demand for information becomes more sophisticated, certain trend, attributes and approaches has infiltrated into the practice with librarians needing requisite skills to cope with the information needs of the 21st century users. An information literate person of today who intend to become an infopreneur should possess specific online search skills such as the ability to select appropriate search terminology, logical search strategy and appropriate information evaluation, acquisition and appropriate use of skills in the information communication technology age. There is therefore the need for skills acquisition to facilitate access to gain the limitless opportunities inherent in infopreneurship (Ukachi, 2013). Infopreneurship is an emerging business model in mainstream information practice that is profit oriented in nature, based on a vision and passion to create/develop, package and sell information products and services for the purpose of generating income (El-Kalash et al., 2016). Chux-Nyeche and Opara (2019) theorized that infopreneurship involves the creation of value through the identification of unmet needs or through the identification of opportunities for change

especially as it concerns information needs. Simply defined, any person that is involved in the practice of infopreneurship is an infopreneur.

Igwe (2017) affirmed that there are generally two main categories of infopreneur namely: content creators and product and service oriented infopreneur. Content creators are people creating their own content and affiliate marketers while product and service oriented infopreneur means people who market products and services as a result of their own knowledge, training and background. There are ranges of information products and services that can be exploited in the career landscape of Library and Information Science (LIS). Babalola et al. (2015); Nwokocha and Chimah (2015) noted that many entrepreneurial opportunities abound for information professionals in the knowledge economy and identified some that can be leveraged on by the LIS graduates as sources of business venture to include: information brokerage business which entails the provision of specific information products or professional services for an agreed fee, (e.g., cataloguing and classification, literature reviews, Internet services, blogging services, selective dissemination of information (SDI), current awareness services (CAS), online literature search, information repackaging, marketing of books to libraries; reprographic services, bibliographic compilation, translation, speech writing and presentations, setting up of libraries, and inter library loan services. Others are publishing and editing, consultancy services, freelancing, bookselling and marketing business, operating a business centre/cybercafé, rural information provision services and binding services. As a result, different skills are required as key requirements for successful infopreneurship by librarians. These include: information technology skills; managerial skills; personal entrepreneurial skills; information literacy skills; economics and marketing of information products and services skills among others (Ugwu & Ezeani, 2016).

Challenges associated with infopreneurship skills of librarians in academic libraries in Nigeria

The need for increased accessibility of information resources and services for all aspects of human endeavor has unfolded new opportunities for information specialists. These evolution continues to provide comfortable opportunities for Library and Information Sciences students to review and re-examine their roles in ways that fully enlarge their job options (Ayegba, et al. 2016). LIS students are now being challenged to think beyond their disciplines to think of different methods through which the management of information resources can evolve into money making processes at a time when unemployment and underemployment arising from economic crisis has made it impossible for government to provide employment opportunities for all graduates in the country (Adeyi, et al., 2016).

Wisdom, (2016) conducted a study on the level of awareness of Infopreneurship among LIS practitioners. Musa and Tsafe (2019) identified the challenges associated with infopreneurship to include: need for high information literacy, internet connectivity issues, escalation in the cost of maintenance of information business equipment, information

management skills, poor awareness among the people of the importance of infopreneurship skills and the need to develop a curriculum which may equip the LIS students with the information management related skills. Mudia, (2015) in a study on creating awareness about infopreneurship among the library and information science students, remarked that it is important that students are made to understand that the skills required for infopreneurship obtained through previous experience and training is critical because it provides employability skills that removes poverty. The innovation in technology compels the graduates to choose infopreneurship in their career choice during their training and education. Thanuskodi (2019) remarked that various challenges associated with infopreneurship in digital era were flux of technological innovations, inflation in economy, poor power supply, high maintenance costs, and lack of financial resources, unfavorable working space and environment.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The study population consisted of 174 academic librarians in academic libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States. The academic libraries covered in this study include: Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi; Bauchi State University, Gadau; Federal Polytechnic, Bauchi; Gombe State University; Federal University, Kashere and Federal College of Education (Technical), Gombe. Stratified random sampling technique was used for this study. Probability sampling is a sampling technique that permits the researcher to specify the probability or chance, that each member of a defined population will be selected for the sample (Croswell, 2012). Therefore, the sample size of the librarians is 118. 118 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the study population. Of the 118 copies of the questionnaire administered, 110 copies were returned. Data analysis was done using frequency counts and simple percentages. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software was used as tool for data analysis. The respondents were given statements infopreneurship for academic librarians and they were to answer by stating their level of agreement with them using the scale: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) =3, Disagree =2 and , Strongly Disagree (SD)= 1 respectively.

Results

Research Objective 1: To determine infopreneurship skills for academic librarians in academic libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States. To address this objective the researcher identified sub-themes that addressed infopreneurship skills for academic librarians in academic libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States. Table 1 shows the statements that the respondents were presented with and how they responded

Table 1: To determine infopreneurship skills for academic librarians in libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States

	Infopreneurship skills for academic librarians	Strongly Agree Count%	Agree Count%	Strongly Disagree Count%	Disagree Count%
1	Infopreneurship skills for information repackaging	39 (35.4%)	29 (26.3%)	24 (21.8%)	18 (16.3%)
2	Ability to search, locate, identify, retrieve, evaluate and use information resources in print and electronic formats(information literacy skills)	38 (34.5%)	28 (25.4%)	25 (22.7%)	19 (17.2%)
3	Knowledge/skills for marketing information services	37 (33.65)	32 (29.0%)	23 (20.9%)	18 (16.3%)
4	Infopreneurship skills for information brokerage business	22 (20.0%)	15 (13.6%)	45 (40.9%)	28 (25.4%)
5	Infopreneurship skills needed to promote web designing, online selling of e books, hosting online events, consultancy services, online publishing services	39 (35.5%)	29 (26.3%)	24 (21.8%)	18 (16.3%)

Source: Field Data, (2023).

The findings revealed that 68 (61.8%) of the respondents indicated that Infopreneurship skills, about information repackaging while 42 (38.1%) had a divergent view. Similarly, the finding also showed that 66 (60%) of the respondents revealed that Infopreneurship skills needed to assist librarians to bridge the prevailing information provision gaps in the ability to search, locate, identify, retrieve, evaluate and use information among others, while 44 (40%) had contrary view. Another knowledge/skill is development of market information services, 69 (62.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, while 41 (37.2%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. Also, respondents agreed that infopreneurship skills include information brokerage for business 73 (66.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. The findings also revealed that 68 (61.8%) of the respondents indicated that infopreneurship skills promote web designing, online selling of e books, hosting online events, consultancy services, online publishing services, while 42 (38.1%) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagree with the statement.

Research Objective 2: To determine challenges associated with infopreneurship skills needed by academic librarians in academic libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States

Table 2: To determine challenges associated with infopreneurship skills needed by academic librarians in libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States

	Skills Needed	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
		F /%	f/%	f/%	f/%
1	Inadequate infopreneurship skills has limited librarians to demonstrate competence in modern information marketing service delivery	39 (35.4%)	29 (26.3%)	24 (21.8%)	18 (16.3%)
2	Poor attitude of academic librarians towards acquiring infopreneurship skills to enhance library service that can actualise the core mandate of academic institutions has been hindered	37 (33.65)	32 (29.0%)	23 (20.9%)	18 (16.3%)
3	Inadequate skills in infopreneurship know-how in web designing, online selling of e books, hosting online events, consultancy services, online publishing services in libraries	38 (34.5%)	28 (25.4%)	25 (22.7%)	19 (17.2%)
4	Inability of academic librarians to acquire infopreneurship skills to search, locate, identify, retrieve, evaluate and use information resources has affected information business(lack of information literacy skills)	45 (40.9%)	38 (25.4%)	25 (22.7%)	19 (17.2%)
5	Inadequate infopreneurship knowledge required for sharing and marketing information services with their users disrupts effective library services	39 (35.5%)	29 (26.3%)	24 (21.8%)	18 (16.3%)

Source: field data, 2023

The respondents identified challenges associated with infopreneurship skills needed by academic librarians in academic libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States. This was demonstrated as 68 (61.8%) of the respondents revealed that inadequate infopreneurship skills has brought set-back for librarians to demonstrate competence in modern information marketing service delivery while 42 (38.1%) of the respondents had a different belief. Moreover, 83 (75.4%) of the respondents agreed that poor attitude of academic librarians towards acquiring infopreneurship skills that will actualise the core mandate of academic institutions has been hindered, while 27 (24.5%) had a divergent opinion. With regards to inadequate skills in infopreneurship know-how in web designing, online selling of e books, hosting online events, consultancy services, online publishing services in libraries; 68 (61.8%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 86 (38.1%) disagreed .Similarly, 66 (60.0%) of the respondents indicated inability of academic librarians to acquire infopreneurship skills to search, locate, identify, retrieve, evaluate and use information has affected business services, while 44 (40.0%) did not agree with the statement. In addition, 68 (61.8%) of the respondents also acquiesced that inadequate infopreneurship knowledge required for sharing and marketing information services with their users disrupt effective inforpreneurship services, while 42 (38.1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement. This implies that challenges associated with infopreneurship skills needed by academic librarians in academic libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States were very prominent among academic librarians.

Discussion

The finding aligned with trends identified in the literature. Objective one of the study was to determine infopreneurship skills for academic librarians in libraries in Bauchi and Gombe states. The study revealed that infopreneurship skills included infopreneurship skills information repackaging, skills needed to search, locate, identify, retrieve, evaluate and use information resources in print and electronic formats, knowledge/skills to market information services, skills for information brokerage business ,infopreneurship skills to enhance library service that can actualise the core mandate of academic institutions, skills to locate, identify, retrieve, evaluate and use information(information literacy skills), infopreneurship skills needed to promote web designing, online selling of e books, hosting online events, consultancy services, online publishing services. These were infopreneurship skills needed by academic librarians for services delivery in the libraries. The finding is in line with a study by Nwokocha & Chimah (2015) who affirmed that librarians were opportune to be information literates and demonstrate knowledge of book publishing and trade which were most likely entrepreneurship skills. It also aligns with the ideas of Ugwu & Ezeani,(2016) which maintained that infopreneurship skills include: information technology skills; managerial skills; personal entrepreneurial skills; information literacy skills; economics and marketing of information products and services skills among others.

The second objective is to determine various challenges associated with infopreneurship skills needed by academic librarians in libraries in Bauchi and Gombe States. The finding revealed that inadequate infopreneurship skills has brought set-back for librarians to demonstrate competence in modern information service delivery. The study also showed that poor attitude of academic librarians towards acquiring infopreneurship skills to enhance library service that facilitate the core mandate of academic institutions, inadequate skills in infopreneurship know-how in web designing, online selling of e books, hosting online events, consultancy services, online publishing services were prominent challenges as identified by some respondents as existing among librarians in the study and these lead to poor infopreneurship service delivery. The finding of this study was in line with the study conducted by Musa and Tsafe (2019) which revealed that the challenges associated with infopreneurship included: need for high information literacy, internet connectivity issues, escalate in cost of maintenance, lack of information management skills and poor awareness among the people. The findings of this study disagreed with Mudia, (2015) who opined that lack of awareness about infopreneurship skills among the library and information science practitioners was a critical factor, and there is need to develop a curriculum which may equip them with information management related skills. The study corroborates findings of Thanuskodi (2019) which identified the various challenges linked to poor infopreneur skills in the digital era to include: technological innovations, inflation in economy, poor power supply, high maintenance costs, and lack of financial resources, unfavorable working spaces and environment.

Conclusion

Infopreneurship has become a critical asset that assist librarians to provide national development. Infopreneurship now exist in academic libraries to assist librarians bridge the prevailing information provision gaps in the ability to search, locate, identify, retrieve, evaluate and use information among others. This was demonstrated as the findings revealed that the impact of infopreneurship among academic librarians cannot be undermined as the opportunities provide librarians with relevant information literacy skills and capacity to use information effectively. The study concludes that opportunities offered by infopreneurship enable academic librarians to demonstrate capabilities for practical information service delivery in the libraries. The study equally concluded that gaps still exist as some librarians were yet to seize and use the opportunities provided by infopreneurship to demonstrate enhance library services delivery to users who are willing to pay or value added services that can enrich their library experiences ,increase access to information resources that meet their information needs. This can be improved if librarians acquire the relevant infopreneurship skills required or practice.

Recommendations

1. Librarians need to develop infopreneurship skills to gain practical know-how in information service delivery in the libraries.
2. Librarians must essentially ensure reduction of the challenges associated with

infopreneurship skills by developing the necessary skills of infopreneurship by updating their knowledge.

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