

Entrepreneurship Activities among Librarians in Niger State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper discusses entrepreneurship activities among librarians in Niger State, Nigeria. The concept of entrepreneurship was adequately defined. Areas covered by entrepreneurship in librarianship were identified. The paper noted that currently, Nigeria and Niger state in particular, does not seem to have any record or data of Library and Information Science professionals who are engaged in the practice of various entrepreneurship activities. The descriptive survey research method was used for the study. The population of the study was 111 and the total population was used because of its manageable size. Out of 111 copies of the questionnaire administered 98(88.3%) were returned and found usable. Data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings of the research among others showed that while 54 (51.1%) of librarians were involved in one entrepreneurial activity or the other, 44(44.9%) were not. The study concluded that desired impact is yet to be felt among librarians on entrepreneurship skills acquisition. It was recommended; among others that access to loans for business should be encouraged.

Introduction

Virtually every individual engages in an area of specialization in order to earn a living either during active life as an employee or as a business man after retirement or still yet, as self employed in his/ her chosen profession. Consequently, Librarians choose Librarianship and Information Management so as to benefit from all aspects of library and information services to serve as a life-long activity. In

order to achieve the desired objectives as professionals or businessman therefore, most librarians are expected to engage in one aspect of entrepreneurship services or the other.

Entrepreneurship has recently been defined in a variety of ways by different authors to justify their interest and circumstance. For example Malumfashi in Bitagi & Obaje (2014) define entrepreneurship as:

A process of identifying, developing and bringing a vision to life. The vision may be an innovative idea, an opportunity or simply a better way of doing something. The end result of this process is the creation of a new venture formed under conditions of risk and considerable uncertainty.

From the above definition, it could be argued, in the context of this research, that entrepreneurship has to do with risk bearing of acquiring all types of information through a variety of means and selling such information for a token fee with a view to making profit. This profit is what keeps the entrepreneur in business. Anyanwu, Oduagwu, Ossai Onah & Amaechi (2013) corroborated the above view when they observed that entrepreneurship implies the ability to be prepared to risk personal energy and financial resources to achieve unpredictable results. They further contented that, it is the results of a discipline, systematic process of applying creativity and innovation to the needs and opportunities in the market place.

Ugwu & Ezeani (2012) were however, of the view that irrespective of the way entrepreneurship is defined; all definitions revolve around innovation/creativity, competency, risk taking, self reliance and rewards. The authors therefore, defined the term as the process through which entrepreneurs create, nurture, and grow enterprises using a reasonable degree of initiative, skills and competencies necessary to transform change into opportunities, thereby deriving personal satisfaction, monetary rewards and independence.

Entrepreneurship in librarianship covers a variety of areas. Though not exhaustive, the following areas could be identified:

1. Book Publishing/Printing Press
2. Book Selling/Vending
3. Operation of Cyber Café
4. Information Brokerage
5. Abstracting and Indexing
6. Networking/Internet Services
7. Production and Sale of Library Equipment
8. Software Development
9. Editing and Directory Compilation
10. Web Page Design
11. Consultancy Services
12. Bindery and Reprographic Services.

The Librarian, as an entrepreneur could assume responsibility, risk, operation, and management of any of the above itemized business with the intention of making profit. At this juncture, Udoudoh, Babalola, Bitagi & Saka (2014) see the need for the entrepreneur (Librarian) to decide on the product, acquire the facilities, and bring together the labour force, capital, and production materials necessary for embarking on the business. The extent to which librarians have embarked on businesses related to their profession (librarianship) is the focus of this study.

Statement of the Problem

Currently, Nigeria and Niger State in particular does not seem to have any record or data of Library and Information Science professionals who are engaged in the practice of various entrepreneurship activities. The need to identify who is in what area of the entrepreneurship becomes imperative so as to forge alliances to develop ideas that could address our society's every day information needs in diverse areas. This becomes necessary

because the Federal Government, through the National Policy on Education (2004) provides that there should be “acquisition of appropriate skills for self reliant nation” and by extension, self reliant citizens who would not depend on the nation to provide a means of livelihood. For this reason serving and retired librarians have been engaged in one business or the other. However, the extent of involvement has not been established. This constitutes an information gap. The present research is therefore carried out to fill the gap so created with particular reference to Niger State, Nigeria.

Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the areas of entrepreneurship in which Librarians in Niger state are engaged.
2. Determine the extent of involvement of Librarians in areas of entrepreneurship.
3. Determine the level of success of entrepreneurship engagements by Librarians in Niger State.
4. Determine the factors militating against successful entrepreneurship among Librarians in Niger State.

Review of Related Literature

Entrepreneurship in Librarianship literally means bearing the risk of acquiring all types of information through various sources, repackaging and selling such information for a fee which gives the librarian some amount of profit. Bjornner (1995) argues that librarians who engage in entrepreneurship establish owner operated, for profit information enterprises that offer information services to clients. According to the author, this group of librarians provide information services or products ranging from research on demand to market or research analysis to software products. The author went further to posit that, other librarians serve Libraries and Information Centres by

providing publications for the profession, consulting services, or temporary staffing on or off site.

Onaade (2012) while stressing the importance of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial approach to information brokering emphasized that regardless of Africa's approach to Information and Communication Technology in the information age, the business of information brokering is a manifestation of globalisation global village where information is at our finger tips but queried how many people including researchers, students, managers, and lecturers are skillful enough in ICT, information retrieval techniques, storage and dissemination. It is from this perspective that finding a solution to everyday problems is the goal of many visionary entrepreneurs and especially the librarians. Engagement in entrepreneurship activity in Nigerian has therefore, become pertinent on librarians for some obvious reasons. Among these are the teeming graduates who are roaming about the streets searching for white collar jobs that are not readily available. Coupled with these are our retired professional colleagues who are paid inadequate pension and gratuity and find it very difficult to make ends meet. Because of these and other problems, there is dire need to develop entrepreneurial skills at schools and work places. The recent Federal Government directive to tertiary institutions in Nigeria to develop entrepreneurial skills among students is therefore in the right direction and quite too timely.

Ocholla in Onoade (2012) argues that in considering investment in consulting and brokerage services in a unique consumer environment such as Africa, it would be fool-hardy to ignore the complexities posed by the coexistence of an information conscious population, on the other hand. In Nigeria and Niger State in particular, there is therefore, the need to repackage needed information in congruent with the level of education of the client. This

is the reason why Christozov & Stoimenova (2014) suggested business processes for an information entrepreneur. These include:

1. Surveillance of the information environment and identifying relevant information resources to the problem domain.
2. Researching the sources from the point of view of relevance and accessibility including the price.
3. Collecting (obtaining) subjectively defined relevant information among what is available.
4. Analysing obtained information from the point of view of relevance, truthfulness, consistency, cause, effects and relationship.
5. Synthesising knowledge and information product by formulating the obtained content to serve the client via creative generalization and abstraction.
6. Presenting information to the client (teaching).
7. Disseminating information.

If the above processes are adequately followed, the librarians would be able to provide the right information to the right client in the right content irrespective of educational status.

The role which entrepreneurship plays in the development of individuals and society at large cannot be overemphasised. Ogunleye & Petinrin (2013) posited that the role of entrepreneurship in developing economy is progressively becoming significant. They further stressed that the advantages of entrepreneurship have been well recognised as it forms the bedrock of industrialisation process in developed and developing countries. The authors however, noted that entrepreneurship education has not made desired impact on the Nigerian economy in spite of all the efforts geared towards it.

To be a successful entrepreneur, Librarians need to possess certain qualities. This is because despite the fact that most people desire to be entrepreneurs, becoming your own boss and creating your own career, though attractive, is tedious and laborious. Laidre

(2014) itemised five major characteristics of a successful entrepreneur to include self motivation, creative, intuitive, authoritative, and strongwilled. In addition to the above, to be a successful entrepreneur in librarianship, one should have the knowledge of the area of interest, managerial skills, and sufficient capital to start off with.

Research Methods

The descriptive survey research method was employed for the study. The population of the study was 111 librarians made up of those who are employed, retired and self-employed. The population was based on the directory of librarians in Niger State compiled by Garda & Saka (2009), visits to institutions and relevant businesses in Niger state for update. The total population was used for the study as this agrees with the recommendation of Afolabi (1999) when the author argued that the entire population can be adopted in a study if it is manageable in terms of cost and accessibility to subjects. Questionnaire was drafted and administered to every member of the population. Data gathered were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the 111 copies of questionnaire distributed, 98 (88.3%) were properly filled, returned and used for the analysis. Of this number 58 or 59% of the respondents were male while 40 or 41% were female. Table 1 shows majority of the respondents were employed (61.2%).

Table 1: Status of Librarians in Niger State

Status	Frequency	Percent (%)
Retired	20	24.4
Employed	60	61.2
Self-employed	18	18.4
Total	98	100

Table 2 reveals that 44(44.9%) of librarians were not in any form of entrepreneurship engagements. However, 12(12.2%) were involved into book selling and vending, 9 (9.2%) were in book publishing and printing, 7.1 (7.1%) were engaged in bindery and reprographic services, 6 (6.1%) were engaged in networking and internet services installation, 5(5.1%) were engaged in operation of cyber café business and information brokerage, 4(4.1%) were involved in production and sale of library equipment, 3(3.1%) were engaged in web page design and consultancy services. Table 3 shows that 38(38.7%) of librarians were fully engaged in entrepreneurship, 16(16.4%) were involved on part-time basis while 44(44.9%) were not engaged in any form of entrepreneurship. Only retired and self-employed librarians were engaged in book selling, operation of cyber café, production and sale of library equipment. Similarly, only librarians who are still working are engaged in information brokerage, web design and consultancy services.

Table 2: Areas of Entrepreneurship amongst Librarians in Niger State

Areas of entrepreneurship	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Book publishing/Printing Press	9	9.2
Book selling /Vending	12	12.2
Operation of Cyber Café	5	5.1
Information brokerage	5	5.1
Abstracting and Indexing	-	-
Networking/Internet services	6	6.1
Production and sale of library equipment	4	4.1
Software development	-	-
Editing and directory compilation	-	-
Web Page design	3	3.1
Consultancy service	3	3.1
Bindery and reprographic services	7	7.1
Not engaged in any entrepreneurship	44	44.9
Total	98	100

Table 3: Level of Librarians' Involvement in Entrepreneurship in Niger State

Areas of entrepreneurship	Extent of Librarians' Involvement in Entrepreneurship				Not Engaged
	Full Time		Part Time		
	FQ	(%)	FQ	(%)	
Book Publishing/Printing Press	6	6.1	3	3.1	
Book selling /Vending	12	12.2	-	-	
Operation of Cyber Café	5	5.1	-	-	
Information brokerage	-	-	5	5.1	
Abstracting and Indexing	-	-	-	-	
Networking/Internet services	5	5.1	1	1.0	
Production and sale of library equipment	4	4.1	-	-	
Software development	-	-	-	-	
Editing and directory compilation	-	-	-	-	
Web Page design	-	-	3	3.1	
Consultancy service	-	-	3	3.1	
Bindery and reprographic services	6	6.1	1		
Not engaged in any entrepreneurship	-	-	-	-	44
Total	38	38.7	16	16.4	44 (44.9%)

Table 4 reveals that 27(27.5%) of the librarians were highly successful in their various areas of entrepreneurship, 17(17.4%) had medium (average) success while 10(10.2%) were lowly successful. The table also revealed low success in information brokerage and consultancy. However, 44(44.9%) of the librarians were not engaged in any form of entrepreneurship.

Table 4: Level of Success of Librarians in Areas of Entrepreneurship in Niger State

Areas of Entrepreneurship	Level of Success in areas of Entrepreneurship							Not Engaged
	High		Medium		Low			
	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%		
Book publishing/Printing Press	3	3.1	5	5.1	1	1.0		
Book selling /Vending	8	8.2	4	4.1	-	-		
Operation of Cyber Café	4	4.1	1	1.0	-	-		
Information brokerage	-	-	1	1.0	4	4.1		
Abstracting and Indexing	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Networking/Internet services	3	3.1	3	3.1	-	-		
Production and sale of library equipment	3	3.1	-	-	1	1.0		
Software development	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Editing and directory compilation	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Web Page design	3	3.1	-	-	-	-		
Consultancy service	-	-	-	-	3	3.1		
Bindery and reprographic services	3	3.1	3	3.1	1	1.0		
Not engaged in entrepreneurship	-	-	-	-	-	-	44	
Total	27	27.5	17	17.4	10	10.2	44 (44.9%)	

Table 5 reveals that difficulty in securing loan from financial institutions 90(91.8%), lack of adequate capital 80(81.6%), high competition between librarians and non librarians 78(79.6%) and inadequate entrepreneurial skills 78(79.6%) were the major factors militating against successful entrepreneurship amongst librarians in Niger state. Insecurity, lack of patronage from professional colleagues, lack of adequate infrastructural facilities, and lack of self confidence and fear of failure were not significant militating factors against successful librarians' entrepreneurship in Niger state.

Table 5: Factors militating against successful librarians' Entrepreneurship in Niger State.

S/N	Militating Factors	SD		D		A		SA	
		FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%	FQ	%
1	Lack of adequate capital	8	8.2	10	10.2	20	20.4	60	61.2
2	High competition between librarians and non librarians in the entrepreneurship	5	5.1	15	15.3	60	61.2	18	18.4
3	Difficulty in securing loan from financial institutions to start business	4	4.1	4	4.1	60	61.2	30	30.6
4	Inadequate entrepreneurial skills	5	5.1	15	15.3	70	71.4	8	8.2
5	Lack of self confidence and fear of failure	65	66.3	13	13.3	15	15.3	5	5.1
6	Lack of patronage from professional colleagues	20	20.4	50	51.0	20	20.4	8	8.2
7	Lack of adequate infrastructural facilities	50	51.0	20	20.4	28	28.6	-	-
8	Insecurity	65	66.3	18	18.4	10	10.2	5	5.1

Key: SD= Strongly disagree, D= Disagree, A= Agree, SA= Strongly agree

Discussion of study

Majority 60(61.2%) of librarians in Niger state are gainfully employed. The study revealed that 44(44.9%) of the librarians in Niger state who are employed were not engaged in any form of entrepreneurship. They solely depend on their monthly salary. Bookselling, publishing, bindery and reprographic services were the businesses mostly engaged by librarians.

Librarians are engaged in book selling, cyber café production and sale of library equipment and Internet services do them on full time basis. Equally, librarians in employment who are engaged in entrepreneurship were mostly into information brokerage, web page design, and consultancy. Librarians were not engaged in software development, abstracting and Indexing as well as editing and directory compilation businesses in Niger state. This might be as a result of lack of skills to handle these businesses well. It could be noticed especially in businesses like, book selling, cyber café, bindery and reprography, book publishing and printing, that majority of entrepreneurs were not librarians. The competition is therefore very high.

The level of success based on actual librarians in entrepreneurship (54), reveals that 27(50%) were successful in various areas of entrepreneurship, 17(31.5%) were on the average of being successful while 10(18.5%) had low success. This shows that, librarians who are engaged in entrepreneurship in Niger state are doing very well in their areas of businesses. However, when we consider the total number of librarians in Niger state, the rate of success in entrepreneurship is low as many are not engaged in entrepreneurship.

Major factors militating against successful entrepreneurship amongst librarians in Niger state were difficulty in securing loan from financial institutions, lack of adequate capital, high competition between librarians and non librarians and inadequate entrepreneurial skills.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it could be concluded that, even though the Federal Government and universities have been emphasising on developing entrepreneurial skills among professionals, the desired impact is yet to be felt among librarians in Niger state since 44(44.9%) were not involved in any business.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Access to source of financial loans from commercial banks for the purpose of establishing a business should be made easily available.
2. Library schools should put more effort in the training of librarians on entrepreneurial skills acquisition and benefits.
3. Infrastructural facilities such as electricity and other sources of power should be improved upon to enhance business operations.

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