

NIGERIAN LIBRARIES

JOURNAL OF THE NIGERIAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

VOL. 45, NO 2. DEC, 2012

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(PUBLISHED BY NIGERIAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION)
SPONSORED BY TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND (TETFUND)

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: THE IMPERATIVE OF TEACHING INFORMATION BUSINESS TO NIGERIAN LIBRARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

ABDULWAHAB OLANREWaju ISSA, PhD.

abdulwahab.issa@yahoo.com

Senior Lecturer & Head,

Department of Library and Information Science,

University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State

ABDULLATEEF LANRE M'BASHIR, PhD

lanbashir2004@yahoo.com

Principal Lecturer & Head,

Department of Library and Information Science,

Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, Kogi State

HAMMED TAIWO SAKA

sahataoyee@yahoo.com

Librarian II,

The Library, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State

**BEING A PAPER PRESENTATION AT THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF THE NIGERIAN ASSOCIATION OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION
SCIENCE EDUCATORS (NALISE)**

**HOLDING AT THE AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA,
BETWEEN 8TH AND 12TH NOVEMBER, 2011**

Abstract

The paper discusses the more inclusive concept of Entrepreneurship Education, tracing its rather short history in Nigeria, its justification and present state. It also presents a justification of the imperativeness of Information Business in modern-day librarianship; taking on historical perspective of the Nigerian library educational development. Information was defined, underscoring its significance as both individual and national asset of a monumental value; while also conceptualizing Information Business vis-a-vis the emerging trends in the library and information marketplace. The implications of these for the library profession and indeed, library education were examined, highlighting the imperativeness of Information Business. The paper concludes that library

schools have a central role to play in this regard, further to their responsibility in repositioning themselves better in order to achieve this onerous task. On-the-job training for older generation of practicing librarians as well as deliberate and general exposure to computer literacy and appreciation have been recommended for both practicing and prospective librarians respectively.

Introduction

There is no doubt that over the years, Nigeria has failed in preparing her workforce for the challenges of the rapidly changing global economy, owing to the dry and bookish kind of education it gives her youths, which is only suited for white collar jobs mainly. Paper qualifications, with little or no skills at all, have been the country's focus of emphasis, thereby relegating the need for skills acquisitions to the background. Consequently, our educational system has ceased to be development-focused and now we have certificates that are lacking in requisite and commensurate skills demonstration. This is because our educational curricular are largely deficient in the much-desired entrepreneurial components/orientation.

However, improved and sustainable global economic development depends on a strong entrepreneurship education, partly explaining why high schools in the developed countries provide such entrepreneurship education for life-long trade to their students. They offer courses that enable them to meet their general academic requirements as well as learning a trade. Given the recent challenges in world economy, their own schools shifted emphasis to training in computers, information technology and related fields. This is in line with the demands of this Information Age. The practice is for their public schools to work closely with willing industries to establish curriculum and programmes to meet their skills' demand. Unlike these nations, Nigeria has little or no traces of entrepreneurship education in her educational arrangement. This is an indication that while the developed countries have continued to provide such education to the youths, this has continued to suffer neglect in the developing countries like Nigeria (Arogundade, 2011).

Omolayo (2006) stated that many Nigerian individuals have difficulties in translating their business ideas to realities and creating new business ventures due to lack of necessary information and skills needed to achieve their targets. To him, the university curriculum was in the past oriented towards making graduates suitable only for white collar jobs. This underscores why millions of our youths and a lot of university graduates roam about the streets of the major cities and towns in search of white-collar jobs. It is necessary and possible to position

Nigerian universities to stimulate economic growth through a deliberate agenda of production of entrepreneurial graduates. Paul (2005) conceived of entrepreneurship education as one that is structured to achieve the following objectives namely, to:

1. Offer functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant;
2. Provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities;
3. Serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development;
4. Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management, to make certain bearing feasible;
5. Reduce high rule of poverty;
6. Create employment generation;
7. Reduction in rural-urban migration;
8. Provide the young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium sized businesses;
9. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on; and
10. Create smooth transition from traditional to a modern industrial economy.

Historically, this kind of education started emerging in the mid 1980s. This is because before this period, unemployment and poverty were not a national concern as it is currently. However, political instability and inconsistencies in the social-economic policies of successive government led to the emergence of high level unemployment in Nigeria. In the mid 80s, the Nigeria economy collapsed while youth and graduate unemployment hit the roof. There was large-scale layoff of workers and early retirements as a result of structural adjustment policies and bad economic trends in the country. In the face of this situation, entrepreneurship, which would have salvaged the situation, was not encouraged (Arogundade, 2011).

Observations have shown that tertiary education has not properly included the philosophy of self-reliance such as creating a new cultural and productive environment that will promote pride in primitive work and self-discipline, encouraging people to take part actively and freely in discussions and decisions affecting their general welfare, promoting new sets of attitudes and culture for the attainment of future challenges. Nwangwu (2007) opined that the failure of tertiary education to inculcate the above philosophy in students has led to wastages in both human and natural resources. This is because the youth who

graduate from tertiary institutions are not equipped with the skills with which to exploit the natural resources that abound in Nigeria. All these factors have rendered the pursuit of self-reliance among our graduates difficult to retain.

Ayodele (2006) identified inadequate capital to be one of the principal factors hindering entrepreneurship in the country; aside our irrelevant education that is bookish, theoretic and “white-collar job” oriented. Also, Nigeria's macro-economic environment is unhealthy and unstable for a virile entrepreneurship development. There is also the fear of failure by the people to take risk on entrepreneurial activities, while an unstable and conducive political environment drives away investors that are planning to embark on entrepreneurial activities. In addition, government programmes are not designed to promote entrepreneurship, given the poor level of infrastructural development provided by the government, affecting, considerably, the level of productivity and entrepreneurial activities in the country. Thousands of youth have been affected negatively by the high rate at which many business enterprises wound up prematurely due to the highly hostile operating environment that Nigeria represents. Akinkugbe (2004) justified the need for entrepreneurship education for the Nigerian students describing it as skill they require to develop an entrepreneurial orientation and mindset as a necessary preparation for the business, vocational and professional lives after their formal university education. By complementing their academic education with entrepreneurship and financial education, they are leveraged with the qualities and skills they need to become more relevant in today's global market places. It is against this backdrop that this paper proposes Information Business as that component of the library school curriculum, which lends itself to entrepreneurial preparation of prospective library school graduates as an antidote to the growing prevalence of unemployment in Nigeria.

Evolution of Library Schools in Nigeria

The library profession in Nigeria is of very recent history compared to that of medicine, law and engineering, which makes librarianship “a relatively new profession in Africa” as “it is certainly less than 100 years old” (Aina and Serema, 2001). The history of library profession in Nigeria is connected with that of library education, since from time immemorial, the need to teach men to be creative and to acquire skills and capabilities necessary for surmounting all kinds of problems in a given discipline had always informed the rise of professional education. The concept of library education was also rooted in this concern and to develop an ideal profession that will provide practitioners with sound working frame-work. This is because, the human factor in the development of any organic society or institution represents an important element deserving great attention to

facilitate the optimum use of individual talents and capabilities. Thus, Insaيدoo (2001) insists that “the realization and harnessing of talents are crucial for development in various human activities for the achievement of goals and objectives”.

The need to find a lasting solution to the shortage of indigenous library manpower to cater for the then rising needs of the emerging libraries prompted the 1953 Ibadan UNESCO Seminar, with the conviction that librarianship is a labour-intensive service profession, which makes effective library services demand a lot of skilled and efficient team of staff. One of its major outcomes was the establishment of the first library school in Nigeria at the then University College, Ibadan, in 1959 and the Zaria Library School, in 1968, being F.A. Sharr's main recommendation having conducted a study of the library needs of Northern Nigeria in 1963. By the mid-70s, the two schools could no longer cope with the increasing demands for the supply of heavy manpower requirements of Nigerian libraries, which were rather fast expanding in nature and sizes. Hence, the justification for the establishment of more library schools in Nigeria (Ministry of Information, 1963). Consequently, Bayero University, Kano (1977); University of Maiduguri (1978); Imo State University, Owerri (1981); Abia State University, Uturu (1981) and University of Nigeria, Nsukka (1983) established library schools in that order. Since then, the number has continued to increase steadily with a total of 16 universities offering the programme currently as contained in the JAMB Brochure (2002/2003). In addition, some polytechnics and colleges of education have also established similar programme leading to the awards of certificate, national and higher national diplomas. Kaduna Polytechnic (1980); Federal Polytechnics, Nekkedé (1981); Oko (1983); and Offa (1999) as well as Colleges of Education, Awka (1981); Nsugbe (1982) and Eha-Amufu (1982) are some of these.

However, today, the situation has changed from that of inadequate number of library personnel to that of library school graduate unemployment; hence the imperative of entrepreneurial education for prospective library schools' graduates. This paper therefore postulates that a course on Information Business taught to library schools' undergraduates will meet the demand for such entrepreneurial education by prospective library schools graduates in Nigeria.

Concept of Information and its Significance

The New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language (1992) defines information as knowledge obtained by search, study, etc.; and Grundnitski (1989) views it technically as “data that have been put into meaningful and useful context

and communicated to a recipient who uses it to make decisions". Pinniston (1980), from an industrial perspective, categorizes it as ranging "from articles in technical publications to verbal reports of informal meetings and from news items in daily or trade newspapers to patent specifications". Daniel (1986), sees it as "knowledge used in its generic sense irrespective of the sources, format, mode or transfer medium". Thus, the term 'information' is processed data, facts or ideas meant to convey intelligible meaning for use.

Its significance lies in the fact that there is a sense in which one could argue now, as did Issa (1998), that information has become "the prime commodity of the present age". Whereas the developed countries appreciated the role of information in every sphere of their existence, such a reality has not been fully realized in the developing ones like Nigeria. Indeed, there is a juxtaposition of a nation's material prosperity against her information-wealth and vice-versa; since the free flow of information represents a fundamental prerequisite for the emergence of a crop of well-informed and participatory citizenry. A combination of experience and new knowledge produces information, essential for the healthy development of the society; to the extent that development/prosperity are as knowledge-based as they are dependent upon the dissemination and application of different types of information (Issa, 1998). Also, Muhammed (1994) reiterates that information is "vital resource which provides impetus for a nation's social, cultural, spiritual, political, economic, scientific and technological advancement; greater socio-political equality; and effective and efficient governance, power and followership. Thus, one can readily infer from the above that information has always played a central role in human life; hence a basic human need, which has an over-riding and all-permeating significance to all and sundry.

Information Business as an Entrepreneurial Education in Library Schools

The New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language (1992) defines 'business' as "one's regular employment, profession, occupation etc", referring to a set of organized activities engaged in by the individuals with the primary purpose of earning a living. It is that, in which the individual is engaged for sustenance; or profit-making. Thus, "information business" is a coinage used to designate and describe a set of organized activities aimed at providing a range of information needs to users' demands for stipulated fees. It is an involvement or engagement that places monetary value on information provision contrary to the traditional practice of free information provision in libraries. It denotes an advanced form of information services provision, which extends beyond the convention of fee-free-based information services provided in the library.

It is a business because it is a set of organized activities aimed at providing services that are fee-attracting. The information component of the concept refers to the fact that the principal “article of trade” in this engagement is information services; meaning that the main commodity on offer for 'sale' is information. The underlying principle in information business is thus a direct negation of the typical library philosophy, which sets out the library mainly as “a social agency” (Gates, 1976) or as “a service institution” (Katz, 1974), devoid of monetary charges. In a typical library parlance, therefore, “information business” simply refers to that value-added component of information services provision, which, due to its nature and extent of physical, mental and even financial requirements, must attract fee.

Hence, information business is an organized, personalized, monetarized, and free-lanced information services provision. Its services provision philosophy is, for all intents and purposes, pro-active and not retroactive; implying services provision in anticipation of demands or fee-based information services otherwise known as information brokerage. Afolabi' (1991) identified some key fee-based information services to include:-

Corporate and institutional charge-back information services, privately owned fee-based information services, free-lance librarians, information brokers, information consultants, information specialists, library consultants, information retailers, information on-demand companies, researchers, free-lance indexers, free-lance cataloguers and others who provide library and information services for a fee.

The emergence of information business as a concept is traceable to Europe as far back as 1940s, starting in France as a form of self-engaged information services provision attracting fees. Shortly after, it became popular among research and educational institutes across Europe, and spread over to America and other parts of the world as a promising engagement for information professionals whether gainfully employed or not. In Nigeria, however, its emergence was recent, coming only as an inevitable choice to make, by library schools graduates whose chances of securing employment in libraries were fast getting slimmer by the day, just as it is for their counterparts in other disciplines.

In the early 1990s, the Ahmadu Bello University library school introduced the course 'Information Business' to the undergraduate curriculum primarily to orientate the students, usually at the graduating level, on the diversified areas of

application of their degree on graduation beside the traditional library settings. It sets out to acquaint the prospective graduates with various possible self-employed engagements on graduation given the mounting prevalence of unemployment in Nigeria. It also sought to prepare them for possible sundry self-engagements or even additional occupational undertakings where they are already gainfully employed.

Since then, evidence abound that many library schools have reflected this need in their curricular even as government policy now makes it mandatory for all Nigerian university students through the introduction of compulsory General Studies Courses on entrepreneurial education. This is because Ifedili and Ofoegbu (2011) found that though the students they studied have positive attitude towards the entrepreneurial education course, the packaging and delivery of the knowledge was porous due to many challenges faced by the lecturers and recommended better funding of the course by the government and upgrading of lecturers' knowledge.

Trends in Library and Information Market Place

Since time immemorial, the library has served as an agency responsible for storing past and present messages so as to make them easily accessible, retrievable and transferable by storing data of the recorded experiences spanning all ages and civilizations. Thus, Sangal (1998) regards the library as a "reception center for the assembly of communications of every description covering the whole spectrum of knowledge". The permeating impact of the ubiquitous Information Technology has come to change the nature, scope, extent and most importantly, environment of the library and information profession and its practices. This means that the hitherto stable world of library and information works has witnessed a paradigm shift. Norton (1988) reiterates that 'the position of permanence and solidity enjoyed by Library and Information Services (LIS) is now under a bombardment of threats from a variety of factors, services and systems which have come to the fore on widespread technological, social and economic levels'.

The reason is that libraries, the traditional dispensers of ERIC (education, recreation, information, culture) are now challenged by rivals that technological innovations and market forces have created. Cronin (1983) adduces reasons for this in his remarks that "accelerating developments in computing and communications technologies have cracked the mould. Terms like 'end-users access', 'libraries without walls', 'distributed processing', 'information self-reliance'- all signify the shift from the institution to the consumer". Consequently,

electronic information systems now impinge on library stability, impacting tremendously on the ways information is viewed and received. Such technologies as CD-ROM, optical disk, digital auto-tape and internet provide new qualities of “immediacy, distribution and satisfaction to a combination of faculties and needs: sight and sound, experiential and intellectual, passive and interactive”.

Today, hundreds of libraries and information centres have begun to capture images of books, pamphlets, journal articles, manuscripts, photographs, slides, and other materials in digital forms, storing them for retrieval from within and without their facilities (Boss, 2001). Advances in technology have thus revolutionized the world and especially the areas of information management, business and governance, to the extent that the effective use of information technology makes the difference between success and failure. Indeed, Gloria (2001) remarks that “to be successful in today's fast-changing and highly competitive world, it is vital to use Information Technology effectively”.

Thus today, the library has metamorphosed into a place where printed and electronic information sources are collected, managed and disseminated and the librarian as a collector, organizer, finder and disseminator of information and information sources on varying disciplines and fields. Fortunately, the need for information is simply pervasive in every human society such that its continued existence and development directly depend on the availability, unhindered access and free flow of different kinds of information needed by the individuals and organizations in furtherance of their activities. This means that the services of the librarian and other information professionals remain ever relevant and therefore sought after. The young, prospective library school graduates and practitioners should cash in on this ever-present need gap to offer required information services to individuals and organizations. Hence, the imperative of teaching Information Business to library school students as a means of equipping them with the requisite skills needed for self employment and self reliance after graduation.

Entrepreneurial Education for the LIS Profession

There is no doubt that the coming of information technology has changed the traditional environment for information professionals. Biddiscombe (2001) captures this essence thus:

While requiring a new and more diversified set of skills for individuals, the Internet has also made it impossible to pinpoint a defined space where information professionals ply their trade.

The results of an information professional's work may now appear on desktops around the campus, across the company, or further afield. The individual support they give may be required in a library, a person's office, a student cluster of workstations, a training suite or in the lecture room.

From the above, the far-reaching implications and challenges that the present IT environment holds for the library and information professionals are evident with great implications for professional programmes concerned with the education and training for librarianship. The issues relate to the recognition of increasingly diversified information fields in which librarians can no longer claim a monopoly, since professionals who are adept at the application of IT now control the fields.

Unfortunately, many practicing librarians today left library schools a long time ago before the advent of the IT era and perhaps at a time much less hostile in terms of employment opportunities than now. Such categories of practicing librarians were certainly ill-prepared for the dramatic challenges and expectations thrown up by the emerging information market environment. Thus, it is expected that attention be shifted to library schools where prospective professionals undergo training. This is because, the much-needed orientation, inculcation and education preparatory to going into today's hostile employment world, should naturally be provided for in the library schools. Then the preparedness of these library schools comes under scrutiny. The task before Nigerian library schools is to find remedies to observable deficiencies found in them so they can produce graduates that have skills for self employment and then self-reliance in a hostile employment situation such as we have in Nigeria today.

Teaching Information Business in Library Schools for Self-Employment

The foregoing has revealed that new forms of challenges and expectations are now placed on library and information professionals; if only to cope and remain relevant in the present age. Hence, their preparation must, quite logically, begin in the library schools where they will be taught not only the techniques of such practices, but also the underpinning concepts and principles. According to Agada (1988) the latter is fundamental to developing professionals with "broad and flexible perspectives necessary for the design of new system and the adaptation of old ones as needs, circumstances and opportunities changes". Thus, a course on Information Business taught to library schools' students would help to widen their horizons on the unimaginable applicability of their certificates in the labour market. It is to help prospective graduates understand the broad scope of their

knowledge base such that they could begin to see their job opportunities beyond the traditional library environments.

In response to such challenging prospects, many library schools today have been giving necessary face-lifts to their curriculum contents so as to reflect needed changes in this direction; even though the present situations are still far from being satisfactory. Given the pervading unemployment situation in Nigeria, there is no time that Information Business becomes more imperative as now. As for practicing librarian, on-the-job training in this area, as well as long years of working experiences could serve as a significant basis for launching oneself into a given information business venture of choice. For both categories, computer literacy and appreciation is a must to enhance easy and quick accessibility to databases, CD-ROM and even Internet for the purpose of information gathering.

Indeed, there are many career opportunities for the library school graduates in Nigeria as articulated by Igbeka (2008) include Information Brokerage or Fee-based Library Services such as Indexing, Abstracting, Information Repackaging, Information/Document Delivery, Compilation of Bibliographies, Directories and Biographies, Clipping services, Publishing and Marketing Library and Information services. According to her, some specific career options for librarians include Academic Librarianship, Corporate Librarianship, Government Document Librarianship, Art and Architecture Librarianship, Information Broker/ Business Librarian, K-12 Librarianship, Law Librarianship, Medical Librarianship, Public Librarianship, Serials Librarianship, Information Consultancy, Content Manager, Database Administrator, Taxonomist, Webmasters etc. Nearly all these are engagements that involve great professional library skill but very little amount of capital to start off. Your brain, skills, commitment and determination to succeed are all that you require to start off, and survive, in most of them.

Conclusions

There is no doubt that the old, traditional environments have given way to new technologically-propelled information environments, leading to drastic changes in the old information marketplace that librarians are fast losing grips as the principal purveyor of information and knowledge. This calls for a quick redress in order to save professionals from the great consequences of irrelevance, lack of job mobility or outright unemployment. As a way out, this paper postulates that the teaching of Information Business as a component of library schools' curriculum can well serve to fill the gap created by the need for an entrepreneurial education for the Nigerian library school undergraduates while the practicing

librarians could deploy their already acquired wealth of experience as launching pad into the information business activities, even as they are gainfully employed. That way, employment opportunities for librarians would have been diversified; thereby reducing the current rate of general unemployment opportunities especially among library schools' graduates.

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