

## **Entrepreneurship opportunities for graduates of library and information science**

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### **Abstract**

This paper discussed the entrepreneurship opportunities for graduates of Library and Information Science (LIS) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Entrepreneurship has been identified as a solution to the problems of unemployment being experienced in most economies of the world. This is because; it provides a lot of opportunities for employment, self-reliance, skills and knowledge development and success in life. Graduates of LIS sometimes find it difficult to secure jobs after graduation. This paper identified and discussed a number of opportunities that graduate of library and information science (LIS) can explore to get employment and become self-reliant.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, opportunities, library and information science, graduates.

### **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to manipulate ideas and turn them into reality.

These include creativity, innovation, initiative, and bearing of risk. It is also the ability to manage project in order to achieve objectives. Morrison (2006) defined entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of a person or persons to acquire Educational skills to explore and exploit investment opportunities, establish and manage a successful business enterprise. Nwaka (2009) opined that entrepreneurship education prepares an individual for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work as well as preparation for responsible citizenship and a tool for promoting environmentally sound sustainable development and a way of alleviating poverty for individual who takes risk and start something new.

According to Babalola (2011), entrepreneurship in library and information science is all about attitudinal change and

development, behaviour of library and information science practitioners at the individual level to pursue opportunities through innovative leveraging of resources that for the most part are not controlled internally. Entrepreneurship makes an individual to be self-reliant, focused, functional, realistic, productive, reliable and creative where he/she can manage and utilize available resources for income generation and survival. According to the Bureau of Public Reforms (BRP) (2009), an entrepreneur is simply a person who is able to come up with a specific business idea and skills, ability and finance to transform it into a viable business concern.

Opportunity refers to a chance for advancement, progress or profit. Such chances can be obtained by an individual to accomplish set of goals and objectives if well-articulated. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2015) defined opportunity as a time when a particular situation makes it possible to do or achieve something. It can also be seen as a favorable

circumstance or occasion. According to Hansen (2009), for an opportunity to be meaningful, it must be recognized, discovered and identified. This is known as entrepreneurial opportunity.

Entrepreneurial opportunities provide economic value to the entrepreneur after he must have attended to the identified need. That is why Shane and Venkaturam (2000) opined that, it is those situations in which goods and services, raw materials and organized methods are introduced and sold at greater than their cost of productions. Entrepreneurial opportunities enable the entrepreneur to discover new methods and techniques of harnessing goods, services, raw materials, personnel etc. in order to earn economic value.

### **Relevance of entrepreneurship to library and information science**

Due to the advent of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the new trends in librarianship which made libraries to transform their services from the conventional/traditional methods to the modern methods of library services. The introduction of ICT in library services has brought tremendous changes in the content and pattern of services provided. The current trends in librarianship changed attribute and approaches into the practice of today's librarians with requisite skills needed to cope with the information needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century users. For example digital libraries with online catalogue, database management, reference services (online), resource sharing among sister libraries etc., have emerged. Millions of information is daily churned into the library in multiple formats thus, making the demand for information more sophisticated. Therefore, it is important for graduates of library and information science graduates to be equipped with relevant entrepreneurial

skills, ideas and values that would make them independent individual in their future endeavor.

### **Role of library schools and professional organizations in entrepreneurial development**

The Nigeria educational system is in serious crisis and there is frequent cases of youth restiveness, armed robbery, Prostitution, Kidnapping, Cattle rustling, Drug abuse, Oil bunkering, and most current Insurgency. The social maladies are not far from being associated with unemployment which is as a result of youths not being given necessary skills either in School or Employees of Institution. Ehirrname and Ekpeyong (2012) revealed that majority of Nigerian graduates who completed the mandatory National Youth Corps (NYSC) in the last five years are unemployed. Ekere and Ekere (2012) posited that this situation portrays failure of the nation's Educational system and underlines an inherent mismatch between the type of education received by Nigerian graduates and the needs of governments agencies, private, industrial establishments and other employers of labor. These analyses have necessitated the introduction of entrepreneurial education in the curricular of all higher institution in Nigeria by the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Board of Technical Education (NBTE).

Therefore, there is urgent need to prepare the upcoming graduates of LIS in Nigeria's higher institutions for the challenges and benefits of self-employment. This can only be achieved if the concerned stakeholders like the Departments of Library and Information Science in our universities, polytechnics and colleges of education, library schools, the Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN), the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) can

systematically accommodate entrepreneurship education courses in their curriculum as this will help greatly in the production of sound graduates of LIS. Furthermore, the advent of ICT in librarianship had open new forms of information packages and packaging thereby, uplifting the frontiers of library and information science profession. Entrepreneurship education will equip the students of library and information science with much needed skills to focus and drive the realization of profit maximization opportunities. After graduation, they can, as professionals, acquire entrepreneurial skills through conference, seminar and workshop attendance as this will expose them to the numerous business opportunities available in the profession.

### **Entrepreneurial opportunities for graduates of library and information science**

Graduates of Library and Information Science have a lot of opportunities in their chosen profession. However, such opportunities can only be realized when library and information products/services are improved as a result of the application of innovations or initiatives and discoveries. Anyawu (2013) identified the opportunities available to graduates of LIS as follows:

- 1) Publishing
- 2) Development of computer software
- 3) Production and sale of library equipment
- 4) Information brokerage and consultancy services
- 5) Book selling business
- 6) Operation of business centre and cyber café business and
- 7) Computer maintenance.

*Publishing business:* For being a graduate of library and information science profession it

would be an added advantage to those graduates who may wish to venture into publishing business. Having known much about the history of books and book publishing, serials, and other information resources. It is expected that the graduate librarian would make visible difference in the printing and publishing business since he/she must have been exposed and mastered the bibliographic features of each type of information resources. He/she is also conversant with the legal way of publication by obeying /following the due process of legal deposit law and acquisition of International Standard Book Number (ISBN) for books and International Standard Serial Number for serials publications from the National Library of Nigeria (NLN).

*Library equipment business:* This includes the production, sales and repairs of library equipment needed for the processing, display and storage of information materials in different libraries and information centers. Some of these equipment may include circulation counters, metal and wooden shelves, trolleys, catalogue cabinet, book display racks, filling cabinets, issuing strays, metal library ladder, book pockets and cards, conference tables and chairs, study carrels, newspaper/magazine racks, dictionary stand, stylus pen etc.

With a little take off fund, the graduate librarian can hire a small Store or Shop to begin with. However, he/she need to conduct market surveys within his locality to determine their needs and wants.

*Information brokerage business:* This is another business opportunity for LIS graduates. Information brokerage entails the provision of specific information products or professional services for an agreed fee. This is done on request by the library users for personal information needs. Information products and information brokerage includes

indexing and abstracting, cataloguing and classification, literature reviews, online literature search, editing, development of hyper media products, bibliographic compilation, translation, speech writing and presentations, setting of libraries, collaboration with other libraries for inter library loan etc.

*Book selling business:* With vast knowledge in books and its component parts, the LIS graduates can venture into book selling business which is very attractive and profitable. Books selling centers can be identified and be properly advertised. He can also utilize the mobile book selling business using his personal vehicle to display his stock in places like Conferences Centers, Seminars and Workshops venues. He can also go into bulk selling (Wholesale) by opening book shops or selling centers in market stalls. He can patronize educational institutions at all levels to advertise his products.

*Operating a business centre/cyber café:* This is another attractive venture these days. With the advent of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and small capital, he can open a small business center around his community and perform activities like photocopy; typing of documents; Printing; and internet services business which are mostly patronized by almost every one due to its speed and accuracy. This is a great opportunity that LIS graduates can venture into for self-reliance.

Similarly, according to Okafor and Okey-Okafor (2015), other opportunities that can be leveraged on by the graduates of Library and Information Science as a source of business ventures that would bring about little income and source of employment for the entrepreneur librarians are: Consultancy services; Rural information provision

services; Binding and reprographic services and Photocopying and stationary sales services as discussed below:

*Library consultancy services:* This is where a professional librarian will use his wealth of experience to offer professional advices and other consultancy services to his clients especially, newly established institutions in setting up their libraries, either for private organizations or individuals who are willing to establish libraries for an agreed fee. He/she can serve as a resources person and undertakes manpower training development as well as other consultancy services requested by his/her clients.

*Rural information provision service business:* This type of business has to do with research techniques/ analysis of information needs of specific area/location. This process involve collating, appraisal and repackaging of vital information about a particular area with the aim of selling such information to either history bureau, companies, researchers, geographical information agencies, governments at all level, research institutions, museums, etc. Such type of information should be capable of aiding the development of the people of the said community.

*Binding and reprographic service business:* This type of business consists of repairs of minor/major of damaged books in order to restore them to their original shape and prevent further deterioration. Binding of books, documents and research materials/projects and other vital documents, is a very bricks business especially, in educational institutions. This business can go a long way in supporting LIS graduates to be self-employed, employ others and also attend to their basic/domestic needs.

### Conclusion

It is very clear to that the changing nature of the world where unemployment, economic recession, poverty and youth restiveness tend to be consuming our society. An entrepreneurial opportunity therefore, plays a vital role in alleviating these societal and economic problems. Society today, needs entrepreneurs of different categories to invest and achieve meaningful progress. Library and Information Science trainers should do anything possible to inculcate entrepreneurship education in our students before they graduates from Library Schools so that they do not have to defend on white color jobs which are very scarce. Therefore, graduates of library and information science should venture into any of the identified business opportunities for profit maximization in the area of information science.

There has been the need to expand career opportunities given to small growth of libraries and information centers' in developing countries like Nigeria. With the present economic realities, population expulsion and the challenges in the labor market in Nigeria as well as the need to equip students of LIS with the basic entrepreneurial skills that would enable them to be self-employed after graduation. It is recommended that:

1. LIS students should be required to acquire the necessary skills that will enable them to meet up with the needs of the society.
2. The professional and regulatory bodies like Nigerian Library Association (NLA), Librarians Registration Council(LRCN), library schools and departments of library and information science should as a matter of urgency continually organize seminars, conferences and

workshops on the best methods to inculcate entrepreneurship education in the LIS curriculum. This will definitely reposition the library and information science graduates to be self-reliant.

3. Governments at all levels and other relevant agencies should provide enabling environment for our LIS graduates to acquire soft loans for a startup of their entrepreneurial business.
4. Training and re-training of the lecturers of library and information science in respect to entrepreneurial education should be intensified in order to reposition them to impart positively, the knowledge of entrepreneurship to students of LIS.
5. Government should adequately fund the library schools and libraries so that they can provide of necessary materials in our libraries and laboratories in higher institution for effective and efficient teaching and learning process.
6. The entrepreneurial education should not just be theory based but students should be exposed to practical aspects of the course in order to see for themselves a real situation.
7. Stakeholders in business circle; that is, managers and captains of industries should be invited from time to time to enlighten students on to venture into business and acquired necessary skills on steps to be follow when in backing in business venture.
8. Excursion visits and industrial training should be encouraged in order for the LIS graduates to acquire practical work and entrepreneurial skills.

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