

ENTREPRENEURIAL LIBRARIANSHIP AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY AMONG YOUTHS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Entrepreneurial skills in librarianship are required by youths and students to enable them to become employable and self-employed after graduation. On this premise, the paper centered on entrepreneurial librarianship as a tool for enhancing employment and employability among youths in Nigeria. The paper attempts to discuss the concepts of entrepreneurial librarianship and youth employment and employability. The main thrust of the paper which is entrepreneurial librarianship as a tool for enhancing employment and employability among youths in Nigeria was explained. Entrepreneurial librarianship is a tool for enhancing employment and employability among youths in Nigeria by enabling them to start up business ventures, become employers of labour, and engage in productive economic activities that prevent them from engaging in criminal activities. Thereafter, challenges and measures to improve entrepreneurial librarianship for enhancing employment and employability among youths in Nigeria were presented.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial librarianship, Employment, Employability, Youths

Introduction

There are no readily available jobs in the labour market to sustain all the graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This contributes to a high rate of unemployment which is related to social vices such as youth restiveness, armed robbery, cultism, armed banditry, prostitution, and kidnapping among others. These social vices to some extents are a result of not equipping the youth and the graduates with the necessary entrepreneurship skills for them to be self-employed and self-reliant after graduation even if the labour market is unable to accommodate them (Okolo & Iwighreghweta, 2021). In situations where government employment or being well-paid is no longer guaranteed in most African countries such as Nigeria, entrepreneurship has become a major source of employment (Jude-Iwuoha & Inemesit, 2021).

The high rate of unemployment among youth in Nigeria has placed greater emphasis on the need for entrepreneurial librarianship. Awujoola and Ikegune (2018) asserted that the present economic realities and the challenges in the labour market in Nigeria also justify the need to equip undergraduates with the basic entrepreneurial skills that would enable them to be self-employed after graduation. Entrepreneurial librarianship has become imperative to enable youths and graduates of library and information science to be self-employed.

Literature Review

Concept of Entrepreneurial Librarianship

Entrepreneurial librarianship is the ability of individuals to explore and exploit investment opportunities in library enterprise as a means of livelihood. Okolo and Iwighreghweta (2021) defined entrepreneurial librarianship as the act of equipping students with skills that would enable them to be self-employed and create employment for graduates of Library and

Information science. Entrepreneurial librarianship is concerned with having the qualities and abilities required to start a business in the acquisition, processing, and selling of books and non-book materials to users to make money. It has to do with having a business venture that offers library and information services. Edewor and Omosor (2012) noted that entrepreneurial librarianship is concerned with learning opportunities that stimulate exercising initiative or providing information services and products to meet user needs in new and creative ways. Entrepreneurial librarianship inculcates in students the necessary skills to initiate plan, execute, and venture into library service business.

Entrepreneurial librarianship provides opportunities for students to acquire crucial skills required to plan, organize, and execute library enterprises. Obuezie and Ogedoihu (2020) described entrepreneurial librarianship as the process of acquisition of a variety of skills that foster creativity, innovation, and original thinking in the creation of information-related products and services that exist for librarians. Entrepreneurial librarianship is related to developing and possessing skills to take financial risks to initiate business ventures in the field of library and information services. Mohammed and Mohammed (2010) averred that entrepreneurial librarianship teaches knowledge and skills that enable librarians to be self-reliant by guiding them in starting up businesses. Entrepreneurial librarianship is the acquisition of skills and development of the ability to learn, start, and become successful in library business ventures. According to Chukwuji and Umeji (2019), entrepreneurial librarianship is the process through which individuals are nurtured and helped to grow library and information service enterprises using a reasonable degree of initiative, skills, and competencies. Entrepreneurial librarianship is the process of helping students acquire the requisite skills and sound knowledge required for self-reliance and productivity in the creation and management of information.

Entrepreneurial librarianship is all about developing the ability to identify opportunities in the library and information science and take initiatives towards starting up the business to maximize profit. The opportunities in entrepreneurial librarianship include information brokerage, database producers/distributors, book dealerships or trading, freelancing, binding of materials, printing, and consultancy activities (Obuezie & Ogedoihu, 2020). Similarly, Usuka, Ekere, Oviri, and Ajibo (2019) asserted that entrepreneurial opportunities in Library and Information Science include information brokerage, book publishing, book dealership or trading, printing, binding Services, computer and internet business services, library software dealership, supply of library facilities and equipment, establishing and managing libraries for organizations and individuals, compilation of directories, compilation of bibliographies and freelancing. Okolo and Ivwighrehweta (2021) listed the opportunities in entrepreneurial librarianship include academic librarianship, archiving, records management, data curation, database administration/development, digital librarianship, information architecture, knowledge organization, law librarianship, and public librarianship. Other areas include bindery and lamination services, newspaper vendor/distributor, computer maintenance, establishing a library, and operation of business centers and cybercafé businesses.

Concept of Youths Employment and Employability

Youth employment occurs when young people are with jobs. It is a situation where people who are willing and capable of working have suitable paid jobs or businesses of their own. Abubakar, Zipporah, and Hussaina (2022) identified two options of employment namely salary employment and self-employment. Furthermore, Abubakar et al (2022) noted that youth employment refers to any salary or paid job under contract (written or not) to another person, organization, or enterprise in both the formal and informal organization, while self-employment

refers to working for oneself rather than working for a specific employer who pays them a salary. Youth employment is the state of young people having paid jobs or businesses. Youth employment is the situation where young people are actively engaged in the production of goods or services to receive salaries and earn income as a means of livelihood.

Employability is the possession of required skills and knowledge for securing and effectively performing a given job. Okeke-Ezeanyanwu, Okafor, and Makwe (2022) defined employability as the capability of the youths to be employable and ready to compete in businesses using their ideas and skills to increase their productivity. Employability is the competencies needed to gain employment and progress in the workplace. Jude-Iwuoha and Inemesit (2021) described employability as a process of continuous quality learning to acquire and broaden the skills, experiences, awareness, and attributes suitable for the world of work and also be successful in chosen occupations. They added that it consists of the skills needed to enter, stay in, and progress in the world of work both privately or in public employment. Employability is the act of acquiring and mastering essential skills before entry into the work environment. According to Okeke-Ezeanyanwu and Nweke (2021), employability is the attributes, skills, and knowledge that individuals possess to ensure the capability of being effective in the workplace. Employability is the core abilities, aptitudes, and capacities that are needed to gain employment and be successful in a given business or job.

Utilizing Entrepreneurial Librarianship to boost Youth Employment and Employability

Entrepreneurial librarianship enables youths to set up a business in the library and bears all the risks involved to maximize profits. Youth and graduates in the field of library and information science are expected to be self-employed with the acquisition of necessary skills through entrepreneurial librarianship. Aju and Tofi (2020) noted that entrepreneurial librarianship helps graduates convert their acquired knowledge in entrepreneurship into intellectually productive ventures by starting and managing their businesses. Becoming a successful and fulfilled library entrepreneur requires knowledge and skills that could be acquired through entrepreneurial librarianship. Ntogo-Saghanen and Essor (2021) asserted that entrepreneurial librarianship is a tool for self-employment for librarians who have an interest in engaging and being successful in the information business.

Graduate unemployment which is associated with social vices could be tackled through Entrepreneurship librarianship. Entrepreneurship librarianship is very crucial in the lives of youths as it enables them to participate in meaningful economic activities and prevents them from engaging in social vices that constitute a nuisance to society. Chukwuji and Umeji (2019) opined that entrepreneurship librarianship enables youths to establish personal businesses and or remain relevant at workplaces and minimize social ills/vices like banditry, terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, and drug addiction among others.

Entrepreneurial librarianship enables youths to find new and better ways of solving creating, storing, and accessing information. Ghosh (2019) opined that entrepreneurial librarianship enables youths to take proactive steps in solving information access problems. Awujoola and Ikegune (2018) pointed out entrepreneurial librarianship enables youths to create ideas, innovations, and knowledge about what can solve problems in information access and also yield profit.

Entrepreneurial librarianship equips undergraduates and graduates with skills that reposition them for job creation in library and information science. Ntogo-Saghanen and Essor (2021) pointed out that entrepreneurial librarianship equips youths with skills to set up their private business in the library and information for wealth creation, self-reliance, and employers of labour. When graduates arm themselves with skills acquired through entrepreneurial librarianship, they will not only become self-employed but employers of labour.

Entrepreneurial librarianship channels the mindset of youths toward identifying and utilizing business opportunities within and outside their immediate environment to participate in the development of society. Ghosh (2019) noted that entrepreneurial librarianship enables youths to proactively identify opportunities to gain advantage through creativity and innovation. Jude-Iwuoha and Inemesit (2021) asserted that it enhances youths' ability to identify a variety of activities, actions, and practices that involve the generation of business ideas, identification of investment opportunities, and decision-making towards the exploitation of investment opportunities in librarianship within their environment.

Challenges to Entrepreneurial Librarianship in Nigeria

Most graduates and youths have limited access to credit which poses a challenge to venturing into entrepreneurial librarianship. Usuka, Ekere, Oviri, and Ajibo (2019) pointed out that access to loans and capital from various financial institutions could be frustrating to entrepreneurs, especially the ones who are just starting. Continuing, Usuka et al. (2019) asserted that in most cases, rather than go through the rigorous processes of accessing loans they forfeit the business plan. In the same, Chukwuji and Umeji (2019) noted that difficulty in securing the financial support required to start a business venture and the requirement of collateral by

financial institutions before offering a loan to a business owner is one of the major challenges to entrepreneurial librarianship among youths. The failure to meet loan requirements such as collateral and sureties has created apathy in the youths from indicating interest in venturing into the library business or becoming a library entrepreneur.

Poor attitudes and interests of youths towards library and information science businesses have adversely affected entrepreneurial librarianship for enhancing employment and employability in Nigeria. Anyanwu, Oduagwu, Ossai-Onah, and Amaechi (2013) pointed out that the indifferent attitude of students and youths towards self-employment opportunities available in the library and information science is a challenge to entrepreneurial librarianship in Nigeria. A negative attitude towards business ventures in librarianship has failed entrepreneurial librarianship in Nigeria.

The problem of generating compelling business ideas has militated against entrepreneurial librarianship for enhancing employment and employability among youths in Nigeria. Okolo and Iwighrehweta (2021) noted that youths aspiring to be entrepreneurs in library and information science are faced with the problem of how to generate compelling business ideas for new entrepreneurial businesses. Furthermore, Okolo and Iwighrehweta asserted that this inability of not knowing how to generate ideas usually breeds frustration; thereby making the aspiring entrepreneur start a business similar to the one they are conversant with.

Most youths lack entrepreneurial spirit which is an obstacle to the success of entrepreneurial librarianship for enhancing employment and employability in Nigeria. Chukwuji and Umeji (2019) asserted that youths lack the entrepreneurship spirit and culture to venture into

business in library and information sciences. Some youths have self-motivation to start and take ownership of their businesses in librarianship.

Most of the youths are unwilling to take risks of venturing into business in library and information science because of the fear of competition and failure. Obuezie and Ogedoihu (2020) noted that fear of competition/failure is one of the challenges hindering entrepreneurial librarianship in Nigeria. The low sense of drive, curiosity, creativity, and resilience have hindered entrepreneurial librarianship in enhancing employment and employability among youths in Nigeria.

Measures to Improve Entrepreneurial Librarianship in Nigeria

The government should make a policy that encourages financial institutions to grant credit facilities to youths aspiring to be entrepreneurs in library and information science. Ntogo-Saghanen and Eссор (2021) asserted that youths and librarians should be empowered and encouraged financially to be able to venture into information entrepreneurship. They added that Government, Financial institutions, and Non-Governmental Organizations should provide loans to graduates who are worthy to be entrepreneurs in library and information science. Usuka, Ekere, Oviri, and Ajibo (2019) noted that commercial banks should support entrepreneurship by making loans easy and interest low for SMEs. Usaka et al further opined that the government should initiate loan schemes and programs to finance the business ideas of young entrepreneurs

Public enlightenment and orientation through mass media should be used to sensitize youths on the need for library entrepreneurship to help them develop positive attitudes and interest towards library and information science businesses for the success of entrepreneurial

librarianship to enhance employment and employability in Nigeria. Awujoola and Ikegune (2018) noted professionals in library and information service can create awareness of entrepreneurial librarianship by organizing campaigns using leaflets and other materials for public distribution; posters or advertisements; public meetings; media work-newspaper, video or TV; stunts or events to attract media attention; using celebrities to support your cause; letter-writing campaigns; petitions; competitions; mass lobbies and demonstrations; mass events-facts, cycle rider, street theatre, running an active website, T-shirt, overhead transparencies; e-mails and many more.

Management of the university should invite members of Library Professional Associations during the orientation of newly admitted students to encourage them to delve into business ventures in library and information science after graduation without fear of failure and competition. Ntogo-Saghanen and Eссор (2021) posited that students should be encouraged and motivated from their first year in school to graduation to acquire skills to venture into business in library and information science without fear of failure and competition. Anyanwu, Oduagwu, Ossai-Onah, and Amaechi (2013) noted students should be given proper orientation to enlighten them on the need for entrepreneurial librarianship.

Education institution has essential roles to play in building the entrepreneurial spirits of youth by helping them acquire skills and aptitudes to seek out investment opportunities in librarianship and establish and run successful business enterprises in the area. To buttress this, Jude-Iwuoha and Inemesit (2021) noted that the need for instilling entrepreneurship spirit among youths has placed greater on educational institutions. The orientation of students towards innovation instills entrepreneurial spirit and builds their confidence to successfully run business ventures in librarianship.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurial librarianship empowers youths in library and information science to establish businesses, manage risks, and apply acquired knowledge, fostering self-employment. The author delineates the challenges encountered by Nigerian graduates and young individuals aspiring to engage in entrepreneurial librarianship, including limited credit access, loan application frustrations, negative attitudes toward library businesses, difficulty in generating business ideas, and lack of entrepreneurial spirit leading to fear of competition and failure.

It also suggests government policies encouraging financial institutions to provide credit facilities, advocating for loans from various sources, and lowering interest rates for SMEs. Public awareness campaigns are recommended to foster positive attitudes toward library entrepreneurship involving professionals in library services and using diverse methods for promotion. University management is urged to invite Library Professional Associations during orientation to encourage students to pursue library business ventures, stressing the need for continuous orientation to alleviate fears of failure. Finally, the role of educational institutions is emphasized in building entrepreneurial spirit, providing skills, and instilling innovation orientation among youths for successful business ventures in library and information science.

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