ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROFESSIONALS IN NIGERIA: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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Abstract
This paper examined the concept for Entrepreneurship education and highlighted its brief historical review in Nigeria. It appraised the present state and justified the imperativeness of information business in modern library and information science programmes, tracing a short historical view of the Nigerian library education. Information concept is defined with its relevance to the needs of individuals and the nation’s development agenda. It further conceptualized information business as a new development in the nation’s educational history and related the emerging trends in the library and information business environment, the challenges and implications of these trends of the library profession and education were also examined. The paper concluded by recommending that library schools evaluate their programmes and reposition themselves better in order to fulfill their set goals. They need to collaborate with willing and reputable industries to design and establish a well conceived curriculum and programmes in order to meet their expectations.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, teaching, information business, library school and Nigeria.

The system of education in Nigeria is not yet suitable enough to meet the manpower and employment needs of the nation. This development can be expressed by the high population of unemployed youths graduating from both secondary schools and tertiary institutions that roam the streets without employment. There are few industries and most of them especially the multinational companies are folding up, while some are relocating to other countries as a result of harsh business climate and decay of infrastructural facilities (Anyanwu, Amadi and Oparaku, 2010). Nigeria at present has not been able to prepare her workforce for the challenges of the rapidly changing global economy, because emphasis of education is on paper qualification rather than skills acquisition for self empowerment, thereby relegating the need for skills acquisition to the background.

Entrepreneurship is the bedrock of industrial development throughout the world. In Nigeria and other developing countries, there are few entrepreneurs due to harsh economic and political environment. Issa, M'Bashire anad Saka (2012) stated that improved and sustainable global economic development depends on the strong entrepreneurship education, that is why schools in developed countries provide such entrepreneurship education for life-long trade to the students as well as learning a trade that is essential for self-employment and self-reliance. Given the recent challenges in world economy, their schools emphasize training in computers, information technology and other related fields.

In line with the demand of this information age. The practice here is that, public schools work closely with industries to establish curriculum and programmes to meet their skills’ expectation. In Nigeria, there is yet effort to introduce entrepreneurship education in her education curriculum and academic programmes. On this note, Arogundade, (2011) opined that while developed countries have
continued to provide such entrepreneurship education to the youths, this has continued to suffer neglect in the developing countries like Nigeria.

Issa, et al (2012) citing the study of Omolayo (2006) maintained that many Nigerian have difficulties in translating their business ideas into realities and creating new business ventures due to lack of necessary information and skills needed to achieve their target. This implies that the University curriculum was in the past tailored towards making graduates collar-job focused and not skills acquisition oriented for self development. This explains why millions of our youths and lot of university graduates are unemployed and are found roaming about major cities and towns in Nigeria in search of white-collar jobs.

It is therefore, imperative to reposition Nigeria University to stimulate economic growth through deliberate agenda of production of entrepreneurship graduates. Paul (2005: p. 26) stated the aims of entrepreneurship education as one that is structured to achieve the following objectives, namely:

1. Other functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliance;
2. Provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying more business opportunities;
3. Serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development; risk management to make certain bearing feasible;
4. Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management to make certain bearing feasible;
5. Reduce high level 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 for traditional to modern industrial economy.

Akimkugbe (2004) maintained that there is urgent need to review our educational system that will encourage entrepreneurship education that is rich in curriculum content and practical that can produce relevant skills and needed to acquire necessary orientation and mindset for business, vocational and professional lives after the university education. It is from this assertion that this study proposes that information business be incorporated into the library school curriculum and programmes that will prepare prospective library school graduates with relevant certificates that will make them to be self-reliance and employable in both private and public enterprises.

History of Library School in Nigeria

The library profession in Nigeria is a recent development compared to other professions such as law, medicine and engineering. Aina and Serma (2001) cited by Issa, et al (2012) opined that librarianship as a professional body is very recent and relatively a new profession in Africa, as it is certainly less than 100 years old. The history of library profession in Nigeria is traceable to the history of western education attached with library education. Like other professions, the need for the profession of library and information science is born out of the need to teach men to be creative and to
acquire skills and competence necessary for surmounting all kind of problems in the library profession.

Issa, et al (2012) further observed that the concept of library education is rooted in the concern to develop an ideal profession that will provide practitioners with sound working framework. Insiado (2001) believed that the acquisition and utilization of talents are very crucial for the development in various human activities for the attainment of goals and fulfillment of objectives in organizations.

The need to resolve the problem of shortage of indigenous library manpower to cater for the rising needs of young and emerging librarians prompted the 1953 Ibadan UNESCO Seminar. One of the major decisions taken 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. By the mid 70’s the two schools could no longer meet the demand for increasing needs of manpower supply of Nigeria libraries, hence the justification for the establishment of more library schools in Nigeria (Ministry of Education, 1963). Consequently, the library schools were established in the following Universities: Bayero University, Kano (1977); University of Maiduguri (1978); Imo State university, Uturu (1981); and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (1983). Since then, the number has continued to increase, both public and private institutions offering the programme. In addition, some polytechnics and colleges of Education were established to award national Diploma Certificate and National Certificate in Education. Federal Polytechnic Oko established in 1980, Federal Polytechnic Nekede established in 1981; and Federal Polytechnic Offa established in 1999. Also College of Education, Awka established in 1981, College of Education, Nsugbe 1982, College of Education Eha-Amufu established in 1982 and among others.

Fee-based Information

Information as a concept has been defined by many scholars according to how it is viewed and understood. The new Webster (1992) defined information as knowledge obtained by search, study.

Grundnitski (1989) in Issa, M’Bashire and Saka (2012) viewed information as data that have been put into meaningful and useful context and communicated to recipient who use it to make decision. Pinniston (1980) cited by Issa (2012) from an industrial perspective, classified information as ranging “from article in technical publications to verbal reports of informal meetings and from news items in dailies or trade newspapers to patents specification”. Daniel (1986) viewed it as “knowledge used in its generic sense irrespective of the source, format, mode or transfer medium. Lwehabura (1999) saw information as a processed data, facts or ideas meant to convey intelligible meaning for use.

The significance of information in human life cannot be over emphasized. Issa (1998) maintained that influence has become a prime commodity of the present age. In the developed countries like America, Britain, France, people appreciate the important role of information in every segment of their existence, such a practice is yet to be fully realized in the developing countries like Nigeria. Issa, et al (2012) maintained that there is a juxtaposition of a nation 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. It is further argued that a combination of experience and new knowledge produces information, essential
for healthy development/prosperity are as knowledge-based as they are dependent upon the dissemination and application of different types of information. Mohammed (1994) stated that information is a vital resource which provides impetus for a nation social, cultural, spiritual, political, economic, scientific and technological advancement, greater socio-political equality, and effective and efficient governance, power and fellowship. It is highly believed that from the above observation, that information has always played a central role in human life, hence they are essential basic human need, which is of great significance to all and sundry.

On the other hand, the new Webster (1992) cited in Issa, et al (2012) defined ‘business’ as one’s regular employment, profession, occupation, etc, referring to a set of organized activities engaged in by the individual with the primary purpose of earning a living. It is believed to be that which the individual is engaged in for subsistence or profit making. On the other hand, information business is a business term denoting a description of a set of information needs to the user’s demand for stipulated fee. 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 improved and advanced form of information service provision, which is a recent development and which extends beyond the conventional fee-free-based information provision practices in libraries. It is termed business because it is an organized activity-based practices, directed at providing services that are monetized or attach price label.

Issa, M’Bashir and Saka (2012) saw information business as an organized personalized, monetized and free-lanced information service provision. It’s services provision philosophy is for all items and purposes proactive and re-proactive; implying services provision in anticipation of demands of fee-based information service, otherwise known as information brokerage. Afolabi (1991) mentioned some key fee-based information services to include:
   i. Corporate and institution charged-back information services, free-lance librarians.
   ii. Information brokers, information consultants,
   iii. Information specialists, library consultants,
   iv. Information retailers, information on demand
   v. Companies, researcher, free-lance indexers,
   vi. Free-lance catalogers and others who provide library and information services for a fee.

The history of information business as a concept began in Europe in the 1940s’ staring in France as a form of self-engage (reliance) information services provision attracting fees.

Shortly after, it spread among research and educational institutions across Europe, America and other parts of the world including Africa. In Nigeria, its emergence is recent, as a course programme in our library schools. 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 besides the traditional library settings Afolabe (1991).

At present, evidence abound that many library schools have reflected entrepreneurial education in their curricula contents. As a matter of policy, in Nigeria library schools have introduced entrepreneurship education as a compulsory course incorporated into general studies for all first year students in all Nigerian Universities, Ifedill and Ofoegbu (2011) believed that students they have taught entrepreneur education courses expressed positive attitudes towards the subjects. The
packaging and delivery of knowledge was still porous due to many challenges faced by lecturers. It is recommended that government should better fund this course to enable lecturers upgrade their knowledge for effective and efficient service delivery to their students.

**Current Trends in Library and Information Business**

Before now, the role of the library was mainly focused as an agency responsible for acquiring storming past and present information (messages) for easy accessibility. Retrieval and transmission of the recorded experience or messages across all ages and civilization. In this regard, Sangal (1998) cited in Issa (2012) regarded the library as reception centre for the whole spectrum of knowledge. The impact of modern information technology has brought a great change to the nature, scope, content and most importantly environment and general conception of the library and information profession and its practice to further buttress this observation. Norton (1988) reaffirmed that “the position of permanence and solidity employed by library and information services (LIS) is now under bombardment of threats from a variety of factors, services and system which have come to the fore from a widespread technological, social and economic levels. M'Bashire also observed that the reason why library is under threats is because, as the traditional disperser of ERIC (education, recreations, information, culture) are now challenged by innovations and market forces created by information communication technology. Cronin (1983) advanced reasons for library threat as accelerating development in computing and communication technologies that have crack the mould”. The coinage of modern terms such as “end-users”, “access”, libraries without walls; distributed processing; information self-reliance’ among others signify a parading shift of emphasis of a library from institution to the consumer.

Today’s library with modern electronic systems possesses a great threat to the library stability, impacting a great deal on the ways information is now viewed and received. Modern technologies as CD-ROM, optical disk, digital auto-tape and internet are now abound in libraries deliver to all end-users.

In modern library, Boss (2001) observed that many libraries have started accessing images of book-form materials in various formats and other materials in digital forms, storing them for retrieval from within and without their materials. It is further remarked that advances in technology have changed things globally, especially, in the area of information management, business and governance, so much that the effective use of information technology makes a difference between success and failure. In any organization Gloria (2001) stressed that to be successful in today’s fast-changing and competitive world, it is vital to use information technology effectively.

The emergence of information communication technology is also bringing a change to the library functions and services as a response to the adoption and application to the new technology. The library is shifting from her old traditional role as a social agency for information generation, storage retrieval and dissemination to the modern electronic information systems. Thus, Issa, M'Bashir and Saka (2012) reiterated that library has metamorphosed into a place where printed and the librarian as a collector, organizer, finder, dissemination of information and information sources on organizations are inevitable and very essential, such that its existence and development to a great extent depends on the availability, storage, access, retrieval and dissemination to the targeted audience.
The role of the librarian and other professionals remain crucial in the information generation and utilization. Thus Issa, M’Bashir & Saka (2012) stated that the services of the librarians and other professionals remain ever relevant and therefore sought for. It is necessary to mentor the young prospective library school graduates and practitioners who come out of school well-equipped. Hence, the imperative of teaching information market to library school students as a channel for equipping them with the essential training, education and skills needed to be functional, self-employed and self-reliance after leaving school.

**Free-based Education for the Library and Information Science Professionals**

It is longer in doubt that the advent of this new technology termed information and communication technology is threatening the job of librarians and other information professionals which is creating the need to hastily re-adjust their operation to catch-up with the modern electronic information system. Biddiscombe (2001) cited in Issa, M’Bashir & Saka (2012: p. 34) remarked thus:

> “While requiring a new and more diversified set of skill or individuals, the internet has also made it impossible to pinpoint a defined spaces where information professionals play their trade. The result of an information professional’s work may now appear on desktop around the campus, across the company or further field. The individual support they give may be required in a library, person’s office a student cluster of workstations, training suit or the teacher room”.

From the above comment it means that advent of information technology have a great implications and challenges for professional programmes in terms of curriculum contents, proposals for the mounting of the programmes and provision of facilities and resources required to meet with NUC accreditation among others.

In today's global information electronic system, the library can no longer lay claim of monopoly of diversified information fields, as ascertained by Issa, M’Bashir and Saka (2012) since other professionals from rival fields who are adept all the application of innovation now seen to have dominant control of the fields.

Thus, it is therefore imperative that emphasis by all and sundry who are stakeholders in the entrepreneurial education business be shifted to library schools were prospective professionals undergo training and education for self-employment and self-reliance.

**Teaching Fee-based Information in Library Schools for Self-Employment**

The need to cope with these challenges and expectations and remain relevant has become imperative for library schools and their students. At this stage, a good foundation must be laid by library schools where students will be taught the techniques of practical, basic concepts and principles that will guide them readjust and adapt to the modern information electronic system in the information generation and utilization. Agada (1988) observed that exposing students to basic concepts and principles is fundamental to developing professionals with “broad and flexible perspective necessary for the design of new system and the adaption of old ones as needs, circumstances and opportunities change”. One great task on library schools, thus, is to mount a course on information business taught to library schools students that could help to widen their horizons on the application of their certificates in the labour market.
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The goal of library schools should be designed and tailor towards providing entrepreneurial education for long-life trade their students, library schools work closely with willing and reputable industries and other related entrepreneurial oriented agencies to establish rich entrepreneurial education curriculum and programmes that will meet skills expectations in Nigeria.

They should offer courses that meet both students’ academic requirements and as well learning a trade that are essential for self-employment and self-reliance. To meet the challenges of this information age, schools should place great emphasis on training on computers, information communication technology (ICT) and other related fields.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The advent of new technology such as the information electronic system has taken over the role of the library in handling library and information related matters. This calls for attention and rethink to quickly readjust and adapt to the new information technology to safe library and information professionals from the consequences of irrelevance, lack of job mobility and unemployment.

It is lovely recommended that to redress the challenges of entrepreneurial education in Nigeria, library schools should reposition themselves with the teaching of information business as a component of library school’s curriculum which is rich in contents and practices that have the capacity to produce functional and employable library schools graduates after leaving schools.

References


