

LIBRARY SERVICES, INNOVATIONS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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CHAPTER TEN

ENTREPRENEURIAL INNOVATIONS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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Introduction

Entrepreneurship is the act of being an entrepreneur that is an individual having the willingness and ability to seek for investment opportunities to establish and to run an enterprise successfully. It is a process of creating wealth or establishment of business in which individual can employ themselves for the purpose of making a good living, solving problems and people's needs. Omeodu (2019) posits that entrepreneurship as a means of providing employment and income generation in the country and a panacea to poverty reduction and pathetic unemployment situation. Entrepreneurship is the process of doing new things or amending old things in a new way. It can be described as the methods of bringing together innovative ideas, management skills, and organizational skills to combine both people, money and other resources to satisfy humans' needs according to Agomuo (2002, as cited in Zarha, et al. (2014). This is where librarianship comes in as the sole purpose of librarianship is to satisfy humans' need through the provision of resources and services.

Library entrepreneurship is an interdisciplinary and emerging field of study within library management. Entrepreneurial librarianship offers specific techniques for creating an entrepreneurial environment in a library or information services organization or initiating such techniques where a less-successful operation is already in place (Clair, 1996). Entrepreneurial librarianship is a process whereby library staff use their energy and intellect to reinvent and enhance their work to heighten service to its user communities. According to Modak and Singh (2014, as cited in Onu, 2020) entrepreneurial librarianship refers to librarian's ability to use knowledge, skills, creativity, and innovations to design and invent new services in response to users' demand for self-reliance and development. An entrepreneur does not succeed without being innovative. Innovation is an essential part of a business venture as the entrepreneur must be able to come up with new and creative ideas for the purpose of achieving success. Entrepreneurship is therefore a key priority area with the potential to stimulate job and wealth creation in an innovative and independent way. Innovation in the other hand, is the addition of new things or ideas to an already existing product or process. Innovation is the successful exploitation of new ideas. Entrepreneurial innovation in Library and information Science (LIS) is therefore concerns with exercising initiative or providing information services and products to meet user needs in new and creative way.

Conceptualising Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Innovations and Entrepreneurial Librarianship

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is neither a science nor an art. It is a practice. It has a knowledge base. Knowledge in entrepreneurship is a means to an end. The term 'entrepreneurship' is derived from a French word 'Entreprendre' which means 'to undertake', 'to pursue opportunities', or 'to fulfill needs and wants through innovation and starring businesses'. The concept was used in the military sphere and later on it began to be applied to construction, engineering, and other related activities. It was only in the 18th century that the term entrepreneurship was applied almost exclusively to economic activities and gained much popularity when Richard Cantillon gave the concept of entrepreneurship a central role in Economics. The concept of entrepreneurship is understood in different manners by different scholars and authors; meaning that there is no one consensual definition of the term 'entrepreneurship'. Different dimensions have been used to explain the term, while some call entrepreneurship as 'risk-bearing', others view it as innovation and yet others consider it as 'thrill-seeking'. Entrepreneurship therefore is based on purposeful and systematic innovation. It is the process of discovering new ways of combining resources to achieve a set goal (Dhar, 2021; iEduNote, 2021; Googlesir, 2020, Taxmann, 2021).

Entrepreneurship includes creativity, sense of initiation, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan

and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. It is measured with competencies such as transversal skills and attitudes, as well as expertized knowledge and abilities. Entrepreneurship is a mindset or the mental capability of creating commercial and social supports to everyday life at home and out of home. It is the foundation for establishing a social or commercial activity. In summation, entrepreneurship is all about seeing opportunity, devising a strategy to utilize it and setting enabling environment to face the risks involved and as well enjoy the associated gains (Mohammed & Giri, 2019). Entrepreneurship allows entrepreneurs to create, nurture and grow enterprises using a reasonable degree of initiative, skills and competencies necessary to transform change into opportunities thereby stemming personal satisfaction, monetary rewards and independence.

The importance of entrepreneurship cannot be overemphasized according to Isaac, et al. (2019) as it helps in job creation opportunities, curbing crime rate, shaping the life of people in a society, promoting business initiatives, reducing the level of dependence on the government to create jobs by the citizenry, nurturing people in wealth creation and to become employers of labour.

Entrepreneurial Innovations

Entrepreneurs innovate; meaning innovation is the specific instrument of entrepreneurship. Innovations involve problem-solving and the entrepreneur gets satisfaction from using his capabilities in attacking problems. Innovation generally refers to changing

processes or creating more effective processes, products and ideas. It combines ideas and knowledge into new value. Innovation according to Okpara (2007) requires a fresh way of looking at things, an understanding of people, and an entrepreneurial willingness to take risks and to work hard.

Innovation is not an abstract or new concept, but the tangible result of the human urge for knowledge and progress. Innovation simply expresses the human desire for a comfortable life in prosperity, peace and good health. Also at work, staff strive to improve processes or develop new products and services to create a positive working environment and value for the organisations (Jeltsch, 2018).

The word innovate comes from the Latin innovatus, where “in” means “into” and “novatus” is a form of the verb for “making something new.” The word eventually came to refer to bringing new things or changing established practices. Innovation can come from anywhere, anytime, and learning to encourage and manage innovation is a major competitive differentiator (Day, 2021). In the context of library and information science, innovation has to do with new methods and strategies of information service deliver for users’ satisfaction.

Entrepreneurial innovation is the need to link entrepreneurship to innovation by collaborating with partners, improving products, processes, introducing models, always seeking the improvement of productivity

and the achievement of competitive advantages. Entrepreneurial innovation is the byproduct of innovation. There is considerable overlap between entrepreneurship and innovation. Innovation has to do with individual or organization creating new ideas, such as new products, workplace processes and upgrades to existing services or products. While Innovative entrepreneurship put the created ideas into practice by creating new business ideas intending to generate profit, assist their community and accomplish organizational goals. Innovative entrepreneurship can provide ideas that help grow new and existing businesses, develop products to improve local communities and encourage change to enhance customer experiences. Innovative entrepreneurship identifies new trends and market demand that helps an organization produce new goods or services that appeal to its target audience (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021).

Ghosh (2019) reiterated several authors opinion that librarians are among the most innovative, as they provide needed resources and program for patrons and incorporate technology into their professional duties. Libraries are engaged in creative partnership which refers to projects involving non-profit organizations and other external partners who are committed to educational and economic development, with focus on quality of life and creativity.

Entrepreneurial Librarianship

The fifth law of library science states ‘the library is a growing organism’. This depends on which area of librarianship and information one finds himself. Today we

find ourselves in the digital era and as librarians, we have to embrace it to remain relevant and also help fulfil the fifth law. The library is growing and need changes. The change can come through injecting new and creative ideas into the system for effective service delivery. Entrepreneurship is very important in today's society as every organization is doing everything possible to remain relevant, the library inclusive.

Librarianship is connected to social engagement, innovation, and knowledge creation. Librarians empower community voices, champion intellectual freedom, equitable access to information, and democratic conversation, provide access to credible sources of information, and create networks of knowledge in the communities. Initially, librarians did not see themselves as entrepreneurs due to their nature of work which was seen as a non-for profit service. With the radical change in service provision and the integration of ICTs into every activity of the library, librarians had to think outside the box to continually remain relevant in the information provision competitive world. For this reason, librarians have growing interest in entrepreneurial librarianship, specifically as social entrepreneurs due to the services librarians provide every day (Prato, 2013). Social entrepreneurship is very closely aligned with librarianship because it identifies a societal problem and uses entrepreneurial principles, such as innovation, to create and implement ways to achieve change, which is closely related to the mission and outcome of the library.

Today's librarians are innovators embracing the entrepreneurial spirit to explore new technologies and novel ideas in the relentless pursuit of excellence. Librarians and entrepreneurs share certain characteristics such as creativity, persistence, and passion. With persistence, passion and creativity, librarians can flourish even in this digital age. All they need do is becoming a little creative on how resources and services are provided for today's digital native users. Social entrepreneurs like librarians do not measure performance in profit but take into account a positive return to society.

The benefits of entrepreneurship cut across almost every sector of the economy and spheres of human life and endeavors. Adejumo, (2000) posited that entrepreneurial activities have been found to be capable of making positive impacts on the economy of a nation and the quality of life of the people. In order to highlight its significance in relation to the growth and development of a given economy, entrepreneurship has been variously referred to as a source of employment generation.

Entrepreneurship in Library and Information Science
Innovation is the introduction of new ideas, methods, techniques or strategies of doing work into a system to bring about enhancement of organizational goal attainment. It is a special kind of change which may involve renewing inputs, renewing processes and renewing products (Etuk, 2006; Okon et al., 2015). In the library and information science context, it is an initiative of providing information services and products to meet user needs in new and creative ways. Collaboration is an

essential ingredient in this new concept of entrepreneurial innovation. In this way librarianship training that is able to stimulate an entrepreneurial spirit with a view to creating innovation or original thinking in terms of information resource use and development is required.

Entrepreneurial librarianship as opined by Chung (2010) provides a means to not only integrate business skills, but also their applications toward a variety of goals from commercial enterprise to social or non-profit initiatives. It fosters entrepreneurial thinking aimed at developing the social, cognitive, career and management skills. For Ghosh (2019) entrepreneurial is innovative strategies adopted by libraries for revenue generation, designing spaces, improving infrastructure and enhancing services for the community. While entrepreneurship in libraries is the act of undertaking initiatives or providing leadership to meet library goals and cost saving through creative ways. In the library, entrepreneurial innovation can emanate based on two reasons. These are:

- i. Inefficiency of the previous information resources used with respect to the modern society and prevailing information communication Technology (ICT) system.
- ii. Knowledge obtained from research findings.

Entrepreneurial Innovation and Opportunities in Library and Information Science

As a result of various innovations in library and information science, there has been technological advancements that have impacted timely and speedily dissemination of information.

Automation of Library Resources: To innovate ways of competing with on-line resources, libraries had to automate its holdings and make them available on-line to easy and timely access at all times.

Job Search Corner: The creation of a job corner vacancies from newspapers, magazines and online sources, and other possible authentic sources will attract users' attention as it will save users time in scanning through the resources. To achieve the aim to which the corner was created, daily addition to the list must be made, while older information is taken off weekly.

Library Twitter Page: Libraries can create twitter page as a feedback mechanism to user. **Library Facebook page:** This will give the library opportunities to interact informally with the community to answer their questions online, and access services other libraries are offering.

Idea exchange: This is another innovation that consists of white boards and markers where library users can write their thoughts about just anything. This could be used as a medium for complaint about resources and services in the library. Staff and other readers can make comments on social and political issues, knowledge sharing point to ask intellectual questions on their researches. Answers, ideas, suggestions and counter- suggestions are also written down by others and it goes on and on to help intellectuals, political and social discourse amongst the users. This allows for expressions which would have not been expressed.

Recreation Corner: A corner for relaxation through games, and opportunity to make friends. Board games such as scrabble, monopoly and chess are provided and strategically placed where they could also vent in writing to give users a sense of belonging as they identify the library as not just reading space but also a place where they are free to join their voices to discourses, make inputs, interact and relax.

Apart from innovations in the highlighted areas, librarians need to also explore the possibilities to start new ventures and become successful and fulfill their innovative dreams which is to disseminate information to the wider audience. These may include but not limited the following:

Publishing: A very lucrative venture especially in the education sector. Its importance cannot be overemphasized as it is a course of study in library schools. Librarians can decide to be publisher, an editor, a reference book critic or children's books reviewer. With technological advancements, LIS professionals can engage in e-mail publishing also known as newsletter publishing, web publishing and desktop publishing. Publishing is a special and precise job in which one has to be skilled, knowledgeable and up-to-date if he/she is to succeed in this entrepreneurial venture (Isaac et al., 2019).

Book Distribution Agency: Book distributors partner with book publishers. They help publishers to advertise the books. With digital publishing, the job becomes easier as the marketing are done online prior to the publication

of the book. Librarians create the catalogues of new titles that they promote to users.

Periodical Subscription Agency: Distribution of periodicals in print, as electronic, or a combination of both. The main aim is to promote these resources to the target customers and libraries.

Book shop: Librarians, who are interested to start a book shop should choose good and safe location where academic programme is in progress, example universities, schools, polytechnics, and monotechnics. This is to meet up with the need of the researchers according to their field of specialization.

Information brokerage: This is an innovation by librarians who are interested in disseminating certain information to users. This business thrives for librarian with strong subject knowledge, in addition have the skills of accessing and retrieving authentic information that could be disseminated for a fee.

Reading Room: Starting reading room in a quiet environment and with minimum amenities will be an innovation of business opportunity of a librarian, the librarian with good financial support may plan to setup such venture small or huge in nature, for the purpose of information dissemination.

Binding of information sources: If a librarian does quality binding work, he could get jobs on a continuous basis. This work can be acquired from various printing

presses, schools, colleges, bank, ministries, companies and other offices, this innovation prolong the life span of information resources for users.

Photocopy/Reprography: This business can be set up at residential or commercial areas. Reprographic services are used by all categories of people and it is a rewarding business. In order to be successful in this business, one has to provide qualitative and quantitative service. While the competition in this field is very high, it is a very rewarding business, indicate the knowledge of the librarian on copy right law, individual piracy and intellectual freedom because information of any kind can be reproduce to researchers.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurial innovation in library and information science entails the identification and exploration of novel business ideas through the harmonization of available resources and personal skills. The ultimate goal and purpose of library and information sciences graduates, especially in this period of tough economy, to survive we need innovation in entrepreneurship.

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