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Abstract

Career opportunity has become extremely important in the contemporary world for librarians and information scientists in Nigeria. It has a kind of revolutionized the information world wide. The paper spells out the relationship between information and library and how a well trained librarian and information scientist could avail himself the numerous opportunities of having at least the minimum comfort of life by doing what he knows best. The paper also examines career opportunities for librarians and information scientists in Nigeria. The authors confine themselves within that limitation to developing countries, because awareness is higher in the developed countries. The authors adopt non-probability – a convenience sampling method. An appraisal of career opportunities for librarians and information scientists in Nigeria is selected for the study unit for this investigation. The choice of Nigeria was made because of its proximity, ensured maximum accessibility and served as time and cost saving device to the researchers. Thus, the paper concludes by sensitizing professionals on the need to diversify their career opportunities and an array of information services that could be offered for a price as equally discussed.

Keywords: Library and information scientists, information services, information broker, information market, information management and career opportunities.

Introduction

The computerization of library services in Nigeria has been long over due and now inevitable. The number of publications and volume of information available in the world are increasing in a rapid rate. However, libraries have to survive and thrive. Without all these no research or teaching of resource is possible without access to archival and historical records and the result of latest research work. The modern world of business is a challenging and competitive world of survival of the fittest. Success in the business world, to

a large extent, depends on the speed and efficiency of business communication. Business is concerned with employment, occupation and profession which serves as a mean of earning a living and that can occupy one's time, attention and labour of men for the purpose of profit. Information business is therefore, concerned with the idea of giving information people with aim of receiving money for the services rendered in return, information business is fee-based. Fee-based information services therefore, is the business of buying and selling information, tangible otherwise, as a commodity.

In Nigeria today, fee-based information centres operate different services such as a computer, internet, fax, e-mail, photocopy, telephone, publishing, book sell consultancy and broadcasting services. All these information business centres are set up in order to make profits. Fee-based means carrying monetary value, hence fee-based information services is the monetary value benefit acquired by an organization or individual through the marketing of information.

According to Tymbious, (1996) the question of a fee-based service arose when businessmen and organizations expressed the need to have information specialists at their disposal. In Nigeria information could be made fee-based if it is given value like their developed counterparts and the professionals availing themselves the opportunity of modern information management.

According to Salman, (2002), the time for stepping back and looking critically at the underside of career opportunities in library & information science as a field is past due. In recent times, people had written on career opportunities for library science practitioners, but not much emphasis was laid on information science and possibilities of internet and other computer related connectivity to manage information. Things are changing, and studies have showed that we are in the information age or information economy, this is why any librarian or information scientist who want to remain relevant will have to move with the trend of global technological advancement. Regardless of the fact that library schools in the past did not really emphasize modern information management trend, professionals should see it as a challenge and needs to be sensitized to their responsibilities of making information available in any circumstance they find themselves.

Daniel (2000) stated that the world is witnessing a wave of revolution in the information technology the information revolution. Catalytic changes are occurring everyday as a result of the application of information that is changing the world into what has variously been described as an "information society". Information is now considered as the most relevant factor in the production of a world economy that is now gradually becoming globalized. The computerization of library services in Nigeria has been long over due and how inevitable. The number of publications and volume of information available in the world are increasing in a rapid rate. However, library and information science have to survive and thrive. Without all these no research or teaching of resource is possible without access to archival and historical records and the result of latest research work.

Jegede (1990) has argued that the use of technology has formed the basis for progress in all areas of human endeavour. In other words, each improvement on standards of living depends largely on the advances of technologies in that society; what society achieves largely depends on the technology available to it.

Ayo (2001) opined that information and Communication Technology (I.C.T) is one of the most potent forces which are shaping the twenty first century. Its revolutionary impact changes and improves the society tremendously. In this present information age, it is generally agreed that information is the communication of knowledge. There is also a common aphorism that says, "knowledge is power". Like any other human endeavour, library and informal science have been experience considerable changes.

Problem Statement

The present information age has knowledge and information as its main focus. However, in Nigeria, since we are working towards development, chances are that in less than five years (2020) our economy will also be information driven. This paper attempts to answer the question posed by professionals and non-professionals alike about the placement of library & information science in the intellectual world. It is equally an attempt to present a clear-cut understanding between information and library as different but related concepts.

This study seeks to give answer to the following questions despite its benefits and problems. It is against this background that this research work is

designed to examine career opportunities for librarians and information scientists in Nigeria.

Research Questions

In this research work, the authors adopted narrative method. Nigeria is selected as the study for this investigation. The choice of Nigeria was made because of its proximity, ensured maximum accessibility to data and served as time and cost saving device to the researchers.

In an attempt to determine the state of career opportunities for librarians and information scientists in Nigeria. Attempt was be made to answer the following research questions.

- What are the career opportunities in the area of study?
- What are the problems that hindered career opportunities in Nigeria?
- How can these problems be resolved?

Objective of the Study

Research endeavours are designed to achieve certain objectives. This is to study the career opportunities for librarians and information scientists in Nigeria with a view to proposing ways of increasing the career opportunities for librarians and information scientists.

This Research work is designed to achieve certain objectives;

- To gain access to a wide variety of career opportunities for librarians and information scientists in Nigeria.
- To increase career opportunities for librarians and information scientists.
- To give recognition to librarians and information scientists in Nigeria.
- To preserve career opportunities for librarians and information scientists.
- To keep abreast information about career opportunities for librarians and information scientists.

Significance of the Study

The research work will be significant for the understanding of the career opportunities for librarians and information scientists in Nigeria. The findings

can serve as eye opener to the problems so as to improve on the career opportunities for librarians and information scientists. The culminating effect is expected to improve library profession.

Scope of the Study

This study limits itself to the career opportunities for librarians and information scientists in Nigeria only. We do not have enough resource to go beyond Nigeria.

Literature Review

Scholars have given their individuals views on career opportunities for librarians and information scientists.

The study of information processes, in general, had suffered from lack of standardized definitions, which is necessary for the exchange of information among those doing research or analysis in the field. Although, it will take a very long time to convince all authors and editors to employ a single set of definitions. This is because there is divergence in the use of terminology and for different purposes. To start the process of convergence to some standards, the writer intends to present some workable definitions of both information and library so as to present a clear-cut understanding of the two concepts. However, it is not intended to propose that the world adopt any particular usage, but that all the authors adopt the practice of relating whatever terminology they choose to a standard. There is difficulty in drawing a clear distinction between a definition and an attribute of a concept.

Information Concept

In the past we have reputable theorists like Belkin (1978), Brookes (1980), Heilprin (1989) Mchlup & Mansfield Haves (1993) and Menou (1995) who had reviewed definitions in information science. "The term" information" is used in so many different contexts that a single precise definition encompassing all of its aspects can in principles not be formulated" (Belkin, 1978) indirectly quoting Goffman (1970). The pioneer theorists of information concepts Shannon and waver (1959) provided formal definitions of some terms and of the relationship among them.

Bell (1979), defines "information as a pattern or design that arranges data for instrumental purposes". Arrow (1984), defines information as a means of

reducing uncertainty". The two above definitions tells us objectives of information. Lunch (1969), opined that information is a data recorded, classified, organized related or interested within the contents to convey meaning". In actual sense, information could be regarded as processed data that convey meaning to the user. Farade (1976), sees "information as representation of knowledge or thought". This implies that information is an expression of knowledge.

Library Concept

According to Chamber's Encyclopedia the word library signifies a place set apart for reading or reference, and by extension, a collection of books. The encyclopedia Americana describes a library as a collection of books and other forms recorded, housed, organized and interpreted to meet broad and varying needs of people for information, knowledge, recreation aesthetic enjoyment. Olanlokun and Saliu (1993), stated that library is an agency, which engage in the collection, organization, processing, preservation, and dissemination of recorded information in the various formats most convenient to its target users.

The library, therefore in our society has an important role to play in uplifting the educational standard of individual. Alokun, (2003) library is seen as an agent of educational, social, cultural, economic and political changes in the society. It has therefore become a place entrusted with the acquisition, preservation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information.

However, library and information are not the same but closely related, information scientists do adopt some of the techniques that libraries use in organizing, storing and retrieving information for final dissemination. The information professional should embrace the embedment of information concepts in our library schools. This however gives us armful opportunity to practice as librarians and information scientists.

If library is seen as an institution charged with the responsibility of acquiring, organizing, preserving all information materials of different kinds for the propose of retrieving and disseminating the said information to a targeted community, then the role of an information scientist could be similar to that of librarian. However, libraries exist to provide information services to users. Edeka (1992: p13),

opined that "there could be variations in the extent and intensity of the services provided by different libraries depending on the type and nature of the library. This is where dichotomy in library and information comes in library as one institutionalized information centre. We can begin to talk of National, Academic, school, public and special libraries.

Olanlokun and Salisu (1993) library is essential instrument for giving reality to the potential of books for immortality. The flood of information if unorganized and uncontrolled can obscure and confuse instead of clarifying and informing.

Career Opportunities and Consultancy Service for Library and Information Scientists

Every individual, group or organization needs information for decision-making or for awareness. Hence, information professional can work in any organization his main duty is to control or manage the inflow and outflow of information from the organization. Biddicombe [2001] reiterated this in his remarks that 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 trades. The results of an information professional's work may never appear in desktop around campus, across the company, or further field. The individual support they give may be required in a library a person's office, a student cluster of work stations, a training suite or in the lecture room.

Ajiferuke (1991) he categorized information professionals into; information Researchers, information systems designers/analysts, information managers, information intermediaries, information Analysts, information technologists, information brokers, and information educators. However, each category of these professionals are specialist and concerned with investigating, analyzing, planning, developing and coordinating, transmitting, information system, maintenance, information services for a fee, and educating professionals and non-professionals alike. Elisa [2009] defined Library consultancy as part of information consultancy which extend to the area of publishing, marketing, printing, bookselling, database design computing and management. She stated that these services can either be lumped together

into one consultancy package or treated separately as specialized consultancies to encourage specialization. She identified consultancy services that graduates of Library and information scientist could engaged in as design and implementation of library automated systems customized information systems. Khan and Bhatti [2012] stated that information broking is a generic term with the responsibility of providing information service for a price. In other words, such information intended to be provided must have value, which will attract a price. Under this category, we could have a long list of services that could be offered by librarians such as; indexing & abstracting, Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) C-D Rom / Data base searching, Bibliographies, prototyping, publishing information materials vendor services, telex and telephone services, technical writing, record management, document delivery, E-mail/internet services, video coverage, translation, conservation and preservation of information materials, binding / lamination of documents, book review, current awareness services and computerized information systems.

Popoola (2002), opined, "consultancy service is an expert service or technical service rendered or offered to clientele by an expert or professional in particular field of knowledge to improve the clientele job performance or in establishing new business, to maximize profit or to stay in business".

These services are tailored towards meeting the information requirement of users and a library and information scientist could avail himself / herself the opportunity of choosing a career in any of the specializations mentioned above. In order to engage in consultancy services, the pertinent question that we should ask ourselves is "what is information consultancy service"?

In offering consultancy services, a common scenario is an evaluation of information needs. The broker or consultant reviews the existing information service in an organization, interview personnel to establish information requirements and makes recommendations for improving the services. These services are tailored towards meeting the information requirement of users and a library and information scientist could avail himself / herself the opportunity of choosing a career in any of the specializations mentioned above. In order to engage in consultancy services, the pertinent question that we should ask ourselves is "what is information consultancy service"?

The Information Market in Nigeria

According to Adeoye (2000), the concept of information markets as "the buying and selling of information". People use information for problem solving and decision making in the course of their daily life. It is equally important to note that information acquires value only when it is relevant for a particular need and when it is used towards a definite purpose. For example, we might want to know the interest rate charges at a particular time-when we want to borrow money from a financial institution. The information circle is central to the information market i.e the collection, storage, and organization and processing of information. In modern times, the wheel of the information cycle is greatly oiled by telecommunication. For example, in Nigeria, the perquisite infrastructure for the dissemination of information, particularly in areas of telecommunications, although based on British practices, is neither robust nor capable of meeting most requirements. Nigeria is making a number of strides in the communications services, particularly in the area of digitalization and access to the internet, e-mail and published scientific information. A visit to the website provides a number of daily Newspapers. The state of the art in Nigerian information market could be greatly determined by so many variables inclusive of market supply and demand, book publishing information infrastructure, education and training of information professionals among others.

According to Akanwa [2015].In this digital era where there is high level shift from use of library to internet, library and information practitioners are expected to have adequate knowledge of marketing skills.He further stated that information provision is no longer the monopoly of librarians, therefore in order to remain relevant in the information conscious society, it is imperative that marketing of information services is integrated into the curricula of library schools in Nigeria as this will empower the librarians to be with requisite marketing skills.

The Role of Business Information in Library and Information Centres

Their level of technological development notwithstanding, developing economies are beginning to take advantage of the enormous possibilities of information technology. This they do by investing in both its software and hardware facilities to meet the needs of commerce, industry, banking, insurance, publishing public records, marketing advertising, medicine, education, library and so on. Information centre or business centre have

become a booming business in the towns and cities. Photocopiers, electric typewriters, word processor, desktop, publishing facilities are available to serve the varying needs of the ever-increasing number of users. Computer programming data analysis and consultancy interm of reference service. Bibliographical survey, photocopy, interlibrary. Cooperation, newspapers cutting, current awareness services, selective disseminate of information service etc. are some of the other services being offered by these business centres or information centres. These services are tailored towards meeting the information requirement of users and a library and information scientist could avail himself / herself the opportunity of choosing a career in any of the specializations mentioned above. In order to engage in consultancy services, the pertinent question that we should ask ourselves is "what is information consultancy service"?

Problems of Library and Information Service in Nigeria

The term "less developed country" such as Nigeria embraces many different cultures, economic and sociological, population sizes, political structures, research and development performers and capabilities. Colloquially and politically this includes less developed countries. Such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and national that are firmly on the road to industrialization such as Brazil and Mexico. It is also applied to South America as well as the nations of Africa, China, India and the likes which amount to at least one hundred and thirty (130) nations. Information services issues are similar in these nations because of the developing circumstances they find themselves.

Keren & Harmon (1990), identify common LDC information problem in less developed countries, including Nigeria as follow:

- i. Lack of appreciation by national decision makers for role of scientific and technical information in development.
- ii. The absence of an adequate infrastructure for information storage and processing.
- iii. The absence of an adequate infrastructure for information usage an absorption by users; and
- iv. Economic administrative technological, cultural, educational, and structural barriers to an adequate flow of information.

In Nigerian where the key regular of the economy is the government, and the economy is public sector driven. It has the market share of about 80% leaving the remaining 20% to the private sector. This implies that government dominates the economy. Government

formulates policies to regulate the economy. Information sector or industry is affected in one form or the other. Most often government imposes tariff especially on foreign information goods and services so as to conserve its foreign reserve. Legislations are made at times for free flow of information and for manpower development in the information industry e.g. copyrights act, intellectual property decree. Freedom of information act (FOI). National Archives decree (1992), Librarian's Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN) 1995 etc. Esezobor (1976, p. 260) opined that the pattern of development of information industry depends on the economic structure of the country concerned.

These factors are influencing tendencies in the information service issues in less developed country like Nigeria which may either affect the services positively or negatively.

Conclusion

The position of this paper is that, in as much as Nigeria and her developing counterparts have such potential to develop their information market, all they require is to tap it. What is important is to put all the marketing strategies discussed in this paper into action for successful information services which is the key factor for excellent user / customer operational service.

Recommendations

Nigeria can however boast of pioneering education in library & information studies in Africa. With the accelerating use of the internet in reference work, information professionals not only be able to carry out searches on the internet but also have fair exposure to the technical of it.

- Library and information professionals should be equipped with entrepreneurial skills by introducing entrepreneurial education into the library and information curriculum. As acquisition of such skills will adequately prepare them for jobs creation instead of being consumed in the society where unemployment is causing a menace.
- The lecturers in library schools should be trained and retrained on practical entrepreneurial skills so they can impact this knowledge to their student, as they can only give what they have.
- The role of library & information scientists in Nigeria of the world, could disappear if the concerned professionals are not encouraged to strengthen this relevant role. They should hold the bull by the horn

and be ready to develop their potentials in order to meet the ever-increasing challenges in the information world.

- There should be re-focus and re-orientation about their information concept, which will enhance diversification in career opportunities. Gone are those days when traditional librarianship was in vogue. The shortcomings or hindrances in availing the professionals career opportunities notwithstanding. No longer on problem but rather settled by the wake and trends in the need of librarians and careers.
- Career opportunities in Nigeria is affected by government policies, the nature of the economy, especially government driven economy, degree of security, infrastructure, and of course foreign exchange. The big question is, given an ideal business environment, are the information professionals in Nigeria well equipped to meet information management challenges?

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