

## MARKETING FOR SELF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY: LIBRARIANS' PERCEPTION

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### Abstract

*Marketing in library and information systems and services has a lot to offer for the librarians to become self-employed in the knowledge-based economy. This study therefore adopted a descriptive survey design to find out the level of librarians' perception of marketing as a pivot for self employment opportunity for librarians in the knowledge-based economy. The population of the study constituted all the 50 professional librarians working in five selected libraries in Bauchi metropolis of Bauchi state. A questionnaire was instrument used for data collection. Thus, 48 out of the 50 questionnaire administered were returned. Hence, Statistical Package for Social Science Version 20 (SPSS) was used to determine the Mean and Standard Deviation of the responses at 3.00 Mean ranting as positive. The result indicated among others that the librarians are having a slit misconception on the current global economy paradigm - shift from industry-based economy to knowledge base economy with total means score of 2.97 and 2.95 disputing that not all library products are marketable. Finally, the paper recommends among others century librarians' should be informed about the challenges and opportunities created by marketing for entrepreneurship in library practice as well the need to create time for themselves as professionals to learn to how to use commitment and readiness for accepting risk with little or full Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills compliance in order to succeed in job creation and become employers of labour in the knowledge economy driven society.*

**Keywords:** marketing, librarianship, knowledge economy, self employment

### Introduction

The growing problem of unemployment in Nigeria has contributed largely to the worsening problem of poverty among the learned professionals. As such many able-bodied and highly qualified persons who could not secure gainful employment have remained economically dependent on their parents. This is because they lack necessary occupational skills to be self-employed and to effectively function in today's world of work (Vanguard; 2011). This has been justified by the predication made by Ekere & Ekere (2012) in library and information science profession that, there may be unemployment for many graduates of Nigerian library schools but lots of opportunities for proactive librarians will emerge in the new information environment.

Unarguably, Aduku (2001) contends that there are lot of opportunities for graduates of library and information science to harness as protocol officers, public relations officers, lecturers, security advisers, sales agents and representatives, promotion and publicity officers, information brokers, social workers among others. Aduku further observed that apart from paid employment, librarians are also trained to provide self-employment and self-empowerment for themselves and become employers of labour through the establishment of bookshops, manufacturing and maintenance of library equipment, establishment Information and Communication Technology (ICT) shops, business centres for typesetting, processing, photocopy and lamination, recording and sales of video and audio cassettes and establishment of information centres. However, Malumfashi (2013) declared that it is only the librarians with entrepreneurial skills that have the greatest opportunities to practice one of the businesses listed if they are to become self-reliant thereby creating wealth and providing employment opportunities in the knowledge-economy. The library manager who waits to find the perfect system before implementing new technologies will not be successful. Therefore librarians have to become risk takers and try new technologies even though the results are not guaranteed (Giesecke, and McNeil; 2010).

It is therefore, pertinent to say that century librarians are expected to possess practical-based innovative skills in ICT and entrepreneurship, if they are to remain relevant with the capacity to fit into the global market-place on which today's economy depends. According to Abubakar (2013) the changing nature,

creation, dissemination and consumption of information in the knowledge economy has brought about a paradigm shift in opportunities for libraries and librarians to operate in a practical and non-theoretical arena in order to produce and share knowledge. It is obvious that, librarians with adequate ICT skills and knowledge plus entrepreneurial skills can establish computer centres with internet facilities to offer fee-based information systems and services, since electronic resources in the knowledge economy have become the most needed and patronized resources. Von and Claudia (2003) affirmed that the development of digital information systems and services has rapidly increased with the Internet connecting resources from all over the world, and all kind of databases and e-journals are now available therefore, librarians should have a speciality to learn how to cope with the emerging trend with a mission to improve their customers' information literacy and need for optimum opportunity to create wealth for themselves.

No doubt, Wade (2012) confirmed that for libraries to continue perform their role and achieve their objectives, they must respond to the digital, financial and societal changes by similarly challenging their own ways of working. If libraries do not rise to this challenge, they are likely to be increasingly marginalised by commercial organisations which can use the ubiquity of the internet to provide services, without necessarily providing the quality of content or equality of access

Similarly, the new information environment requires new skills in seeking, processing and using information for self-employment. Because the best of librarians in the knowledge economy are those with the ability to understand and use information ethically and legally in a qualitative ongoing learning process and facilitate same to their customers for infinite possibilities and empowerment for decision making which attainable if librarians have requisite knowledge on the prominent roles of application marketing strategies and segmentation in information system and services.

According to Koont (2001) marketing is a process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals. Arachchige (2005) opines that the concept of marketing covers not only the activities involve in buying and selling for financial gain, rather it further deals with the achievement of organizational objectives successfully. In other words, the modern marketing system is applied not only to the profit-making organizations, but also to the non-profit sector and social service organizations like libraries. Marketing in the library service sectors emphasises on the performances of planning, organizing, dissemination, and controlling of information services in a proactive and user-oriented way that ensures user satisfaction while achieving the objectives of the parent organization.

To underscore the concept “product”, Janakiraman (1998) states that products can be anything offered by the marketer to the customers for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that would lead to the satisfaction of want or need. Hence, product, in a broader sense, includes physical goods and services may be a person or a place, or an organisation, or an idea, and so on. Meanwhile, product in library and information science context might include physical goods, such as books, catalogues, .compact disks, microforms, audio visual cassettes, periodicals, etc. Services can include provision of a photocopy of a document, information searching, indexing, reference service, document issue and return, etc. photocopy facility for the readers.

Therefore, marketing is an integral part of librarianship though, Taylor (2006) observed that most librarians aren't aware of the influences of marketing concept and practice to create job for themselves over the past several decades. Thus, the knowledge-based economy is now a turning point where information marketing principles becoming an integral part of our daily lives and the professional practice of librarians. But to be precise, libraries and librarians are influenced by the marketing efforts of book vendors, Internet providers, and database facilities. Therefore, modern libraries need a paradigm shift in their operation and survival to meet with the information needs and services of its customers.

The knowledge-based economy is a paradigm shift in marketing of library and information system and services which affects the operations of libraries and librarians from the user mindset approach to a customer mindset. The change is obvious, since it also affects the librarians' active engagement and reverse mode from myopic view of being custodians of information to services and products providers. Unarguably, librarians are like all other professionals have to adapt to and cope with the changes taking place in the environment in which they operate (Martey; 2000). Doing this would give the opportunity to treat the user communities as customers rather than mere library users.

A customer can be any person or group of persons who buys or consumes an organisation's product or services either directly or indirectly. Customers of information resources encompass all variety of individuals which include among others: researchers, policy advisors and civil servants, development

partners, members of civil society and other private sector, farmers, artisans, students, lawyers. All the categories have different purposes and needs for information and what supposedly the librarians should do is their ability to determine how to market their services and resources across the categories of the customers. But it should be noted that, researchers and students rely heavily on existing knowledge during the conceptualization of their research and throughout the research process.

During the conceptualization stage, researchers and students engaged in the review of formally published and gray literature of the following forms or format: (1) discussion papers (2) program documents (3) conference proceedings (4) technical guides among others which is aimed at identifying the existing gaps in research that is of interest to them and/or demanded by stakeholders (Rhoe., Oboh, and Shelton; 2010). Hence, Weiner (2007) warned that librarians must know what customers want and then let them know that their needs can be met through their libraries. It is therefore the librarians' ability to provide information services and products to all categories of customers, it pertinent to say that those with the ability may have better chance to generate fund for themselves and remain self-employed without being dependent on paid employment or being totally unemployed even after retirement.

The findings of the study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the level of librarians' perception about marketing of information systems and services for self employment and wealth creation. It will also provide insight into the library schools on the factors that hinder Library and Information Science (LIS) graduates' participation in marketing of library and information product and services in the knowledge-based economy thereby leaving themselves unemployed, which demands for LIS curriculum planners and instructors to avail themselves and improve in that area in order to meet with the global employability standards and recognition towards reduction of unemployment rate of graduating skilled librarians.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Marketing as a concept in librarianship is relatively considered by some as a new trend in the profession. Hence, it is unfortunate that one of the major barriers to operating a profitable information business is the lack of business expertise among librarians and over-dependence on government and paid employment. It is therefore not surprising that failure in income generation is not only an economic loss to an individual but it also affects professional development, job creation, wealth generation and unemployment in librarianship. Research indicates that marketing as a concept is still being misunderstood among librarians. Marketing misperceptions are due in part to the lack of training most library managers have in the role of marketing (Taylor; 2006).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to determine the librarians' perception of marketing as a pivot for self-employment opportunity for librarians in the knowledge-based economy. Therefore, the study is expected to achieve the following specific objectives:

- (1) Ascertain the librarians' Perception of marketing for self-employment in librarianship
- (2) Identify the major skills needs of librarians for self-employment opportunities in the knowledge-based economy
- (3) Find out the factors inhibiting the librarians' utilization of job opportunities for self employment in the knowledge-based economy

### **Research Questions**

- 1) What is the librarians' perception of marketing for self-employment in librarianship?
- (2) What are the skills needs by librarians for self-employment opportunities in the knowledge economy?
- (3) What are the factors inhibiting the librarians' utilization of marketing opportunities for self employment in the knowledge-based economy?

### **Methodology**

The study employed descriptive survey design with a questionnaire as the instrument for data collection which contained 24 items build on 4-point rating scale. A cut off point of 3.00 was regarded as a positive while anything below 3.00 was regarded as a negative response. It covers 3 federal and 2 public libraries within Bauchi metropolis which include: Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Library (2) Muhammadu Wabi library Federal Polytechnic (3) Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic Library (4) Bauchi State Library Board and (5) National Library of Nigeria, Bauchi. Hence, the population of the study

consisted of all the 50 librarians from the libraries and there was no sampling because the population was manageable. The self-designed questionnaire was face-validated by 3 experts, from the department of vocational and technology education, ATBU, Bauchi. The data collected was analysed using mean and standard with the help of (SPSS version: 20)

### Results and Discussion of Findings:

With reference to Table 1: It is revealed that items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 have meet the aggregate scores 3.18 and above which indicates that the respondents have strong believed and positive Perception of Marketing as a pivot for Self- employment for librarians in the knowledge economy. Except that of item 2 and 8 with the lowest mean scores of 2.97 and 2.95, which is an indication that most of the respondents misconceived the paradigm-shift in information system and services that changes the economy of the developed countries from the industry-based economy to the knowledge-based economy. Hence result has justified the study conducted by Martey (2000) on marketing products and services of academic libraries in Ghana who found that most of library personnel have a poor knowledge on marketing principles and therefore, they are not aware of the importance of marketing in libraries.

Of course some respondents to this study also held the view that the concept of marketing deals only with the activity of buying and selling of goods for a financial profit. They therefore assumed that library and librarians cannot market their products and services, and therefore, they hold prejudices that they cannot practice marketing in their activities. The findings of this study also justifies the result of the study conducted by Arachchige (2005) in Sri Lanka who reported that library personnel in special and academic libraries in Sri Lanka do not actually consider information as a marketable resources, and therefore they maintain conventional strategies and to the concept of free information service. Thus, researcher contends that today's libraries have to struggle with competitors for their survival. Yet, libraries seem not to prepare for this challenge. But when considering the impact of marketing in librarianship, Weiner (2007) affirmed that library marketing is a planned approach to identifying, attracting, serving and gaining support of specific user groups in a manner that furthers the goals of the library and the organization that supports it.

Q1: What is the Librarians' Perception of Marketing for Self Employment in Librarianship?

**Table: 1**  
**Librarians' Perception of Marketing for Self Employment in Librarianship N=48**

ITEMS	Mean	SD	Decision
1. Libraries and information centres are social and non - profit service oriented organizations.	3.18	.84	Positive
2. Global economy has shifted from industry-based economy to Knowledge- based economy.	2.97	.86	Negative
3. Information is a valuable commodity that can be sold and bought for decision making in the knowledge economy.	3.56	.58	Positive
4. Librarians have better opportunities to create wealth for themselves in the knowledge economy driven society	3.35	.69	Positive
5. Marketing of library and information services is a source for Job creation and self employment opportunity for librarians	3.50	.61	Positive
6. Marketing of library and information service and products provides theoretical framework for job creation and wealth generation	3.39	.60	Positive
7. Entrepreneurial skills is a determinant factor for librarians' self employment opportunities and wealth creation in the knowledge economy	3.20	.79	Positive
8. All library services and products can be marketed	2.95	.84	Negative
Cluster Mean	3.28		

While, table 2: Indicated that item 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 were accepted as some of the skills needs by the respondents for self-employment opportunity in the knowledge economy. But they felt to agree that commitment and readiness to accept risk is also a skill needed by the librarians before they become self-employed in the marketing arena, which indicated in item 7 with the lowest mean score of 2.97. Nickels, McHugh and McHugh (1999) states that an entrepreneur is a person who risk time and money to start and manage a business. Thus, successful entrepreneurs rarely are risk takers and it is obvious that librarians should be ready to accept risk if they are to derive the benefit created by marketing practices in librarianship.

Q2: What are the skills needs by librarians for self-employment opportunities in the knowledge economy?

**Table 2:**  
**Skills needs of librarians for self-employment opportunities in the Knowledge-economy**

ITEMS	Mean	SD	Decision
1 Extend library and information service and products to potential users across disciplines and specification	3.35	.66.	Positive
2 Improve customer information satisfaction	3.31	.58	Positive
3 Improve resource attraction to the diverse group of customers	3.37	.60	Positive
4 Promote the overall image of library profession	3.50	.65	Positive
5 Determine the detail cost-benefit relationship of fee based information products and services.	3.06	.69	Positive
6 Use knowledge and skills to create wealth	3.33	.72	Positive
7 Use commitment and readiness to take risk as entrepreneurs	2.97	.75	Negative
Cluster Mean	3.27		

**Table 3 which is on the factors inhibiting the librarians' utilization of job opportunities for self-employment in the knowledge-based economy,** indicated that item 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 8 affects the respondents' engagement in marketing of library and information system and services. Hence, item 7 with the mean score of 2.93 which is negative indicated that the respondents do not agree with the statement that; none active participation of librarians in societal and voluntary services affects their ability to utilize the opportunities created by marketing in librarian practice. Meanwhile, the last item (9) on the table has a total mean score of 2.87 which indicated that the respondents do not agree; that over dependence of information users on none library professionals for information system and services affects the none-active utilization of job opportunities created by the knowledge-economy for librarians. But Amoor (2008) affirmed that entrepreneurial skills provides students with opportunities to identify and develop range of expertise and attributes that will help them to create and shaping their future endeavours for optimum utilization of business and work environment.

Q3: What are the inhibiting factors to librarians' utilization of marketing opportunities for self employment in the knowledge-based economy?

**Table 3:**  
**Factors inhibiting the librarians' utilization of job opportunities for self- employment in the knowledge-based economy**

ITEMS	Mean	SD	Decision
1. Lack of Capital	3.35	.81	Agreed
2. Lack of ICT skills and knowledge	3.37	.73	Agreed
3. Lack of entrepreneurial skills	3.31	.80	Agreed
4. Over dependence on government job	3.39	.84	Agreed
5. Lack of understanding of marketing concept and its relationship with library and information practices	3.39	.73	Agreed
6. Lack of understanding of the professional roles of libraries and librarians in marketing	3.20	.87	Agreed

7. Librarians non -active participation on social and voluntary services	2.93	.69	Not Agreed
8. Lack of information user awareness to seek for fee-based services and products	3.02	.78	Agreed
9. Over dependence of information users and non library and information expert for information services and products	2.87	.76	Agreed

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**Cluster Mean**

**3.20**

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**Conclusion and Recommendations**

In conclusion it is reasonable to say that librarians need to have a better understanding of marketing and its entrepreneurial benefits in library and information, business, thus if acquainted with the knowledge it will serve an eye-opener for them to create wealth for themselves as well become self-employed professional in the knowledge-based economy driven society. Notwithstanding, the global changes posed by knowledge creation, acquisition, storage and sharing which is transforming the industry-based economy of the developed countries to knowledge-based economy cannot be over emphasis when considering the President Obama's (2009) speech saying that:

*Over the past decade, we have seen a crisis of authenticity emerge. We now live in a world where anyone can publish an opinion or perspective, whether true or not, and have the opinion amplified within the information marketplace. At the same time, Americans have unprecedented access to the diverse and independent sources of information, as well as institutions such as libraries and universities, that can help separate truth from fiction and signal from noise (p.1)*

The study therefore recommended that:

- 1) Century librarians' should be informed about the challenges and opportunities created by marketing for entrepreneurship in library practice
- 2) Librarians need to create time for themselves as professionals to learn to how to use commitment and readiness to accept risk with little or full ICT compliance if they are to succeed in job creation or become employers of labour in the knowledge economy driven society.
- 3) Librarians needs to be abreast on the global changes posed by the knowledge-based economy trends which is transforming the industry-based economy to the of various countries into the amount of information a person has or a country and the modalities for making it available to it consumers

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