Chapter 30
Measuring Infopreneurial Intentions of Library and Information Science Graduating Students

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study anchoring this chapter was to measure the extent to which the students from the Department of Library and Information Science had intentions to venture into infopreneurship after graduating with their Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Library and Information Science. Using a mixed-method design, data were collected from a population of 45 students through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Findings revealed that the majority (25) students intended to pursue infopreneurship as information consultants, information brokers, researchers, information literacy assistants, writers, and proofreaders. The study concluded that infopreneurship could be a panacea to the unemployed information science graduates in Zimbabwe. Since the field of infopreneurship is unique and under-researched, the study recommends the creation of a community of practice of infopreneurs who research, share ideas, collaborate, and make the field of infopreneurship robust and efficient in creating employment opportunities for information science graduates.

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship development in higher education equips students with knowledge and skills to venture into businesses that create employment and contribute to the economic growth of a country. With the broadness of entrepreneurship bearing in mind the discipline specific competencies of university students, Infopreneurship has been deemed a panacea for the unemployment situation being faced by Information Science graduates. This is because infopreneurship encourages the leveraging of familiar capacities in information science to create individual business ventures (information-based entrepreneurship). With the unemployment rate steadily rising in Zimbabwe, this study aimed at measuring the extent at which the part 4 final year students from the department of Library and Information Science had intentions to venture into infopreneurship after graduating with their Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Library and Information Science. The infopreneurship module was introduced at the National University of Science Technology in 2011 (Dewah and Mutula, 2016), but for Records and Archives Management (RAM) students. The 2018- 2019 part 4 final year LIS class was the pioneer group to enrol in this specialised field of infopreneurship hence the researchers' desire to measure if the students had infopreneurial intentions upon completion of this new module borrowed from the sister department, Records and Archives Management. Ivwurie and Ocholla (2016) observed that in South Africa and Nigeria, the graduates who had intentions and ultimately the behaviour to engage in infopreneurship were from the Computer Science department compared to the Information and Communication Science departments like Library and Information Science. David and Dube's (2014) study focused on the infopreneurial behaviour of people who had graduated from National University of Science and Technology [NUST] and their findings indicated positive infopreneurial initiatives, which were however discouraged by the lack of business and technical skills to translate the initiatives into real businesses. The few studies on infopreneurship that were identified (David and Dube, 2014; Dewah and Mutula, 2016; Iwurie and Ocholla, 2016) did not address the aspect of infopreneurial intentions by students. The present study addressed this gap by empirically examining students' views.

The chapter is organised in to four sections. The background section covers the entrepreneurship and infopreneurship development in students. Entrepreneurship in information studies is contextualised followed by the theoretical framework. The statement of the problem is explained and evidence is adduced. The methodology used to carry out the study processes is described and justified while the findings are presented first quantitative and then qualitative results in that order. Discussion of the findings follow before the chapter concludes with recommendations and areas for further research.

BACKGROUND

Universities and colleges, in various countries, across the globe have introduced entrepreneurial courses in their curriculum as a response to the increasing demand and to the request to promote careers in entrepreneurship (Postigo and Tamborini, 2002). Coduras, Urbano, Rojas and Martinez (2008) commends the significance of the university's support to the entrepreneurial activities. Kazmi and Nabradi (2017: 149) opine that "studies on entrepreneurship education focus on measuring the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programmes in tertiary education only". It is important to note that some of the intentions to starting a business maybe induced by aspects in which the students can plan on or exercise self-control on. Xie (2014) has attributed traits, cognitive, environmental and demographic factors. The

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