

Barriers to Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition among Library and Information Science Undergraduate Students in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the barriers to the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills among Library and Information Science undergraduates in Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the final year Library Information Science (LIS) undergraduates in University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The questionnaire tagged "barriers to entrepreneurial acquisition (BESA)" was used for data collection. BESA was subjected to content validation by three (3) experts from the department of LIS and from measurement and evaluation unit, all from the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN). The instrument reliability was carried out with 20 final year students of LIS, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument with correlation coefficient 0.97. A total of 87 copies of questionnaire were administered, out of which 81 copies were correctly filled and returned and used for the study. Data was analysed using Mean and standard deviation. The study revealed that LIS students acquired information management entrepreneurial skills more than other entrepreneurial skills. It also revealed that insufficient teaching facilities for practical sessions is the greatest challenge of entrepreneurial skills acquisition of LIS students. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other things that adequate provision of facilities for teaching and learning entrepreneurship courses should be

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Introduction

Graduate unemployment in Nigeria has become worrisome both to the government at all levels and other stakeholders especially in the education sector. The Federal Government of Nigeria introduced entrepreneurship education in the university curriculum to tackle unemployment and help undergraduate students imbibe entrepreneurial competencies or skills so that upon graduation, they can start and run an enterprise successfully (Adesoji & Sangoleye, 2017). This will consequently reduce poverty and societal ills such as kidnapping, drug addiction and youth restiveness to the barest minimum.

As a global phenomenon, there are various definitions of entrepreneurship education. For the purpose of this paper, the teaching of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge to students undergoing a programme of education in Library and Information Science to enable them to establish their own business and succeed is the working definition of entrepreneurship education.

It is imperative to equip graduates of Library and Information Science with entrepreneurial skills that are required to achieve self-reliance especially now that the job spaces in the libraries are inadequate to absorb all the library school graduates. By way of operational definition, entrepreneurial skills are those skills required to empower Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduates to establish businesses upon graduation to sustain themselves and contribute to the development of the society.

There are various entrepreneurial skills embedded in Library and Information Science programme for students to explore and acquire so as to succeed either as librarians or entrepreneurs especially with the emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Several scholars have made references to some courses through which LIS undergraduates could acquire entrepreneurial skills. For instance, Akin-Fakorede *et al*, (2014) note that LIS students can acquire entrepreneurial skills through the following courses being offered to them: Cataloguing and Classification of Information Resources; Theory and Practice of Bibliography; Repackaging of Information; Entrepreneurial Studies (GST course); Collection Development; Field Experience (SIWES); Entrepreneurship in Information Services;

Indexing and Abstracting; Archives and Records Management; Book Production Publishing and Trade; Information Entrepreneurship and others. It is expected that LIS graduates, having been equipped and empowered with these entrepreneurial skills courses and many others, can start and run small business ventures upon graduation. When this is achieved, it will drastically reduce the burgeoning unemployment and its consequences among LIS graduates.

Notwithstanding its relevance, Ejedafiru and Toyo(2015) and Nnadozie, Akanwa and Nnadozie(2013)reported that LIS graduates are not equipped properly with the practical entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance and productivity while in training. In support, Nnadozie (2014) and Anyanwu et al, (2013), for instance, reveal that LIS students still contend with several challenges in the course of acquiring entrepreneurial skills.

Statement of the Problem

Library and Information Science programme is enriched with entrepreneurial skills acquisition courses that can enhance specialization in different areas in the business environment. However, the researchers observed that so many LIS graduates are not only unemployed but also not making a career in entrepreneurship. It is sad to note that those people without a basic background in librarianship usurp entrepreneurship opportunities in Library and Information Science. Perhaps, LIS graduates did not acquire adequate entrepreneurial skills while in Library schools.Hence, there is a need to examine the barriers to entrepreneurial skills acquisition among LIS undergraduate students in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of entrepreneurial skills acquisition of Library and Information Science undergraduates in Nigeria?
2. What challenges are associated with entrepreneurial skills acquisition of Library and Information Science undergraduates in Nigeria?
3. What strategies can be adopted to enhance entrepreneurial skills

acquisition of Library and Information Science undergraduates in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Library and Information Science undergraduates are those students in a university pursuing a first degree in Library and Information Science programme. They can acquire entrepreneurial skills if properly equipped in Library schools. Such entrepreneurial skills include publishing, development of computer software, production and sale of library equipment, information brokerage and consultancy services, bookselling business, sales and repairs of information communication technology (ICT) components, design of websites, computer maintenance, operation of business centres and cyber café business to be self-reliant and contribute positively to the economy (Anyanwu, *et al.*, 2013). In support, Akin-Fakorede, *et al.*, (2014) pointed out that if library school graduates are well-equipped in Library schools, they could be established as indexers, abstracters, cataloguers, publishers, information consultants, information brokers, information organizers, archives and records managers, documentation and bibliographers and others.

The literature featured very many impediments to acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by undergraduate students. For instance Anyanwu, *et al.*, (2012) and Ekoja, *et al.*, (2016) observed that lack of teaching facilities such as well equipped workshop/laboratory and other infrastructural facilities in a majority of the library schools for teaching, research and learning entrepreneurial skills hinder entrepreneurial skills acquisition among undergraduate students. Other impediments include poor funding of education in Nigerian universities (Anyanwu, *et al.*, 2012); inappropriate syllabi and content, inappropriate teaching methods, lack of entrepreneurial support by the government and students' lack of exposure (Yaghoubi, 2010 and Lekoko, 2011); shortage of competent resource persons to teach entrepreneurial studies (Nnadozie, 2014); lack of infrastructure such as regular power and water supply, good roads, social amenities and credit facilities from financial institutions and private ones (Obeleagu-Nzeribe and Moruku in Nwekeaku, 2013); lack of ICT skills (Anyanwu, *et al.*, 2013); poor and negative attitudes toward acquisition of entrepreneurial skills on the part of the students (Anyanwu, *et al.*,

2013); lack of awareness of entrepreneurship opportunities or skills within LIS programme by students. In a research study, Ugwuand Ezeani (2012) found out that up to 70% of LIS students were not aware of entrepreneurship opportunities within librarianship.

Strategies to enhance acquisition of entrepreneurial skills of LIS undergraduates are varied. They include: provision of teaching facilities such as well equipped workshop/laboratory and other infrastructural facilities for practical sessions in library schools (Anyanwu, *et al.*, 2013); provision of facilities for students to acquire hands-on experience both in their Departments and places of industrial training (IT) and student industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) (Ekoja, *et al.*, 2016); sufficient funding of the education sector (Nnadozie, *et al.*, 2013); developing a curriculum that will equip LIS students with entrepreneurial skills they need to succeed in the competitive business world (Ekoja, *et al.*, 2016); using effective teaching methods such as demonstration, seminar, field trip, business simulation, going on excursions and study visits to successful businesses owned by librarians for students to see entrepreneurship at work (Arasti, *et al.*, 2012 and Nnadozie, *et al.*, 2013); constant training and retraining of LIS educators to acquire entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and competencies which they will also impart to students (Ekoja, *et al.*, 2016); government support such as increasing budgetary allocation to education, creating enabling environment for business ventures to thrive, and regulating interest rates on bank loans (Ekoja, *et al.*, 2016); provision of all forms ICT equipment (Ugwu, 2012); lecturers being more knowledgeable about the entrepreneurial skills or opportunities in librarianship and creating the awareness to students. They should also help students develop interest in entrepreneurship education by drawing their attention to the benefits of being self-employed. This will help students develop good attitude towards entrepreneurship education.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey. The population comprised all final year students of Library and Information Science in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka (NAU) and University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) for 2014/2015 academic session. They are 87 in number comprising fifty-two (52) students from UNN and thirty-five students

(35) from NAU, Awka. Total enumerative sampling technique was used in this study. This is because the population was relatively small and manageable. The instrument used for the study was structured questionnaire. Out of the 87 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 81 copies were completed, returned and found usable. This represents 93% of the response rate. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The questionnaire was structured on a four point scale and criterion mean was placed at 2.50.

Results

Data collected were analysed based on the research questions that guided the study and presented in tables as shown below:

Research Question 1: What is the extent of entrepreneurial skills acquisition of undergraduate students of Library and Information Science?

**Table 1:
Mean responses of students on extent of entrepreneurial skills acquisition**

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	NA	Mean	SD	Rmk
1	Book industry entrepreneurial skills	13	32	27	9	2.60	0.89	A
2	Information management entrepreneurial skills	30	26	19	6	2.99	0.96	A
3	ICT entrepreneurial skills	20	19	25	17	2.52	1.09	A
4	Independent librarianship entrepreneurial skills	15	32	26	8	2.67	0.79	A
5	Archives and records management entrepreneurial skills	14	29	20	18	2.48	1.03	R
6	Production and sale of library equipment entrepreneurial skills	9	14	25	33	1.99	1.02	R

Note: Very High Extent (VHE) = 4; High Extent (HE) = 3; Low Extent (LE) = 2; Not at All (NA) = 1.

Data in table 1 indicate that the most acquired entrepreneurial skill is information management skill which has a mean score of 2.99. Others are independent librarianship entrepreneurial skills(2.67); book industry entrepreneurial skills (2.60); ICT entrepreneurial skills (2.52); archives and records management entrepreneurial skills (2.48) and production and sale of library equipment entrepreneurial skills (1.99).

Research Question 2: What challenges are associated with the entrepreneurial skills acquisition of Library and Information Science undergraduates?

Table 2:
Mean responses of students on challenges associated with entrepreneurial skills acquisition

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Rmk
1	Insufficient teaching facilities for practical sessions	43	22	9	7	3.25	0.97	A
2	Poor funding of education	34	30	14	3	3.17	0.85	A
3	Inappropriate curriculum	30	21	19	11	2.86	1.07	A
4	Ineffective teaching methods	33	27	12	9	3.04	1.01	A
5	Shortage of competent lecturers	30	33	11	7	3.06	0.93	A
6	Lack of entrepreneurial support from the government	32	33	12	4	3.15	0.85	A
7	Inadequate infrastructure	40	27	7	7	3.23	0.94	A
8	Insufficient ICT skills by LIS educators	25	36	14	6	2.99	0.89	A
9	Insufficient ICT skills by LIS students	37	25	9	10	3.09	1.03	A
10	Poor attitude of students to entrepreneurial skills acquisition	15	33	22	11	2.64	0.94	A
11	Lack of awareness of entrepreneurial skills available in LIS programme	34	25	14	8	3.05	0.99	A

Note: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

Table 2 presents result of challenges associated with entrepreneurial skills acquisition of LIS undergraduates. The table indicates that insufficient teaching facilities for practical sessions is the greatest challenge with a mean score of 3.25. Other challenges are: inadequate infrastructure (3.23); poor funding of education (3.17); lack of entrepreneurial support from the government (3.15); insufficient ICT skills by LIS students (3.09); shortage of competent lecturers (3.06); lack of awareness of entrepreneurial skills available in LIS programme (3.05); ineffective teaching methods (3.04); insufficient ICT skills by LIS educators (2.99); inappropriate curriculum (2.86) and poor attitude of students to entrepreneurial skills acquisition (2.64).

Research Question 3: What strategies can be adopted to enhance the entrepreneurial skills acquisition of Library and Information Science undergraduates?

Table 3:
Mean responses on strategies to enhance entrepreneurial skills acquisition of students
N=81

S/N	Items	VA	A	FA	NA	Mean	SD	Rmk
1	Provision of sufficient teaching facilities for practical sessions	50	23	5	3	3.48	0.78	A
2	Adequate funding of education	45	26	7	3	3.39	0.80	A
3	Developing appropriate entrepreneurship curriculum for LIS profession	49	18	9	5	3.37	0.91	A
4	Employing effective teaching methods (both theoretical & practical)	48	27	4	2	3.49	0.71	A
5	Provision of competent lecturers	49	17	9	6	3.35	0.95	A
6	Entrepreneurial support from the government	45	22	7	7	3.29	0.95	A
7	Adequate provision of basic infrastructure	54	15	6	6	3.44	0.92	A
8	Training in ICTs for LIS educators	44	26	5	6	3.33	0.89	A
9	Training in ICTs for LIS students	46	28	4	3	3.44	0.76	A
10	Students should be passionate about entrepreneurial skills acquisition	45	23	9	4	3.35	0.87	A
11	Creating awareness about entrepreneurial skills available in LIS	49	25	5	2	3.49	0.73	A

Note: Very Appropriate (VA) = 4; Appropriate (A) = 3; Fairly Appropriate (FA) = 2; Not Appropriate (NA) = 1

Table 3 shows the strategies to enhance the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by LIS undergraduates. The table indicates that use of effective teaching methods (both theoretical & practical) and creating awareness about entrepreneurial skills available in LIS are the dominant strategies. It can be seen from the table that both of them have the highest mean score of 3.49 each. Other strategies are: provision of sufficient teaching facilities for practical sessions (3.48);adequate provision of basic infrastructure (3.44); training in ICTs for LIS students(3.44). Adequate funding of education (3.39);developing appropriate entrepreneurship curriculum for LIS profession (3.37); provision of competent lecturers (3.35); students to be passionate about entrepreneurial skills acquisition (3.35); training in ICTs for LIS educators (3.33) and entrepreneurial support from the government (3.29).

Discussion of Findings

The result of the findings shows that LIS students acquired information management entrepreneurial skills more than others. Perhaps this is a reflection of the level of development of traditional roles of librarians who are experts in all aspects of information—finding it, authenticating it, distilling it, and organizing it. This agrees with Riccio (2011) who stated that skills librarians possessed in cataloguing and classification as well as indexing are very beneficial to information management. The result also indicates that the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in archives and records management, production and sale of library equipment are still at a low level. This implies that less attention was given to these entrepreneurial skills in LIS programme, hence it is necessary to infuse more entrepreneurial skills courses into LIS curriculum.

It is also evident from the findings that the respondents were generally agreed on all the items on the challenges associated with entrepreneurial skills acquisition. The finding is in line with the position of Nnadozie (2014) and Anyanwu, *et al.*, (2013) who reported that entrepreneurship education still contends with several challenges in Nigeria. The result of the findings showed thatinsufficient teaching facilities for practical sessionsis the greatest challenge of entrepreneurial skills acquisition of

LIS students. The findings corroborate Anyanwu, *et al.*, (2012) and Ekoja, *et al.*, (2016) who reported that lack of teaching facilities in majority of the Library Schools for teaching, research and learning entrepreneurial skills hinder entrepreneurial skills acquisition among undergraduate students. This implies that LIS graduates are not properly equipped with the practical entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance and productivity while in training. This anomaly accounts for the inability of LIS graduates to form and operate business ventures, create wealth and jobs for themselves and others.

The respondents also agreed on all items dealing with strategies to enhance entrepreneurial skills acquisition of LIS undergraduates. Findings from the study showed that use of effective teaching methods (both theoretical & practical) and creating awareness about entrepreneurial skills available in LIS are the dominant strategies that will boost the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by LIS students. This agrees with the views of Arasti, *et al.*, (2009) who observed that the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education is dependent on teacher's skills and his knowledge of using different teaching methods, specifically the methods of teaching entrepreneurship. Without practical entrepreneurship teaching and training, students will not be equipped with tangible business skills.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. It is necessary to infuse into LIS curriculum more entrepreneurial skills courses. The courses should be made compulsory for all the LIS students from year one to all levels.
2. Adequate provision of facilities for teaching and learning entrepreneurship and training of teachers handling entrepreneurship courses should be made. However, this could be achieved if the Federal Government of Nigeria gives strong support to entrepreneurship education by improving the budgetary allocation to the education sector.
3. LIS educators should develop and utilize various teaching methods that will boost entrepreneurial skills acquisition.

Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that entrepreneurship education still contends with several challenges in Nigeria. From the findings, it can be concluded that LIS graduates will be empowered more properly with entrepreneurial skills if the strategies highlighted in this study are implemented. This is necessary to enable LIS graduates start and operate business ventures, create wealth and also contribute positively to the society.

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