

An assessment of entrepreneurial skills of LIS students in Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara-State, Nigeria

Yakub Olayinka Ahmed¹, Tunde Idris Yusuf², Sulyman Olaitan Mahammuod³ and Jimoh Omotayo Jimoh⁴

^{1,3,4}Department of Library and Information Science, School of Communication and Information Technology, Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria

²Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Communication and Information Technology, Osun State College of Technology, Esa Oke, Osun State, Nigeria

E-mail: ahmedyakub55@gmail.com¹, yusuftundeidris@gmail.com², beebsquare@gmail.com⁴

Abstract

The study assessed the entrepreneurial skills of LIS students in Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria. The descriptive research survey design was used for this study. The population for the study consisted of 250 HND I and HND II students of Department Of Library and Information Science for 2021/2022 academic session. Purposive sampling technique was used since it is believed that they have completed their mandatory Industrial Training Programme and offered entrepreneurship education course for at least 5 semesters. 250 questionnaires were distributed and 236 questionnaires (representing 94.4%) were returned and found usable. Data from the study were analyzed using mean. Mean was used to answer all the research questions and decision rule for positive (agreed) response was set at mean score of 2.50 and above, while a mean score of below 2.50 set as negative and rejected. The major findings of the study included low level of entrepreneurial skills acquisition by the LIS students; out of the sixteen skills examined, they only agreed to have 4; the major challenges identified were lack of financial support to start a business, high student population among others. It was recommended that the curriculum should be reviewed and practical skills required to function effectively as an entrepreneur after graduation should be included.

Keywords: Assessment, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, LIS students, skills

Introduction

The Nigerian government in her effort to ensure job opportunities for students after graduating from the academic institutions. established a compulsory entrepreneurship education course and training. With this knowledge, it is expected that students can set up small business enterprises rather than remain jobless for a long period after graduation. Entrepreneurship brings economic growth, innovations and creates new jobs. Hence in recent years, the interest toward entrepreneurship has been increased as an important alternative to professional occupation, especially for the graduates of tertiary education (Usuka et al., 2019). Entrepreneurship has been identified as a veritable means to the actualization of this dream because it creates a vibrant economy by creating new jobs, market and an upward

moving class; from middle class to rich, from poverty to affluence.

After graduation, it is expected that one should get a good job to take care of himself, his family and contribute to national development. Meanwhile, the jobs are scarce and companies are either folding up or reducing their levels of productivity and services because of economic situation, thereby throwing people back to the unemployment/labour market. However, economic self-reliance appears to be the only recourse in addressing these associated problems. Hence, the increased interest in entrepreneurial careers and education in higher institutions of learning all over the world.

According to the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics [NBS] (2022), Nigeria unemployment rate reached 42.5% in Q3

2022. Realities of the day have shown that Government alone cannot provide jobs for all her ever growing job seekers. An unemployed youth is certainly a hungry man, restiveness, high rate of criminality like armed banditry, kidnapping, drug abuse/addiction, militancy among others, have become our trade mark as a nation because of unemployment.

The Federal Government of Nigeria (2013) listed among its educational objectives, acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as necessary tools for an individual to live by and contribute positively to the national development. Most of the skills required in LIS were talked about before the dawn of this century. These skills cut across librarianship to marketing, management to ICT etc. In line with this Ugwu and Ezeani(2012) discussed some set of entrepreneurial skills which include: Information Literacy Skills; Information technology skills; Managerial Skills; personal Entrepreneurial Skills; they concluded that the combination of some or all of these skills with the right support turns ideas from dreams to real and viable businesses. Ugwu and Ezeani (2012) stressed that in library and information science (LIS), information and communications technology (ICT) equipment should be put in place to enhance the training and acquisition of skills. These can be in knowledge and information management, book publishing, bibliotherapy, abstracting and indexing and among others. Therefore, it has become necessary for lecturers to re-equip themselves with modern technological tools and modern trends in order to give practical orientation during lectures thereby making students active participants.

Library and information science graduates are expected to possess entrepreneurship skills in order to be

relevant in the new information era which is skills driven. Library and Information science education in Nigeria today cannot be relevant without effective preparation of new librarians to effectively use information and communication technology in their professional practices. Going by the above, graduates-to-be should be adequately repositioned in theory and practical knowledge of the profession as well as trained to be entrepreneurial in mind and reasoning as this is the one of the major ways through which unemployment in Nigeria can be reduced drastically.

Statement of the problem

The unemployment situation in Nigeria has resulted in graduates getting involved in some social vices like armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping etc. This sorry situation gave rise to increased yearning for skills and competency based education through which graduates can acquire skills necessary for entrepreneurship. If library and information science students do not acquire skills, they cannot become entrepreneurs in their field. Failure to equip students with entrepreneurship education, skills and motivation undermines their ability to embrace entrepreneurship and achieve self-reliance. The acquisition of these skills enables students to live a responsible life in the society. In lieu of the above, the researchers seek to assess the entrepreneurial skills acquired by library and information science students in Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to assess the entrepreneurial skills of library and information science students in Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State. The specific objectives are to:

1. find out the entrepreneurial skills acquired by library and information science students of Federal Polytechnic, Offa;
2. investigate the challenges confronting entrepreneurial skills among library and information science students of Federal Polytechnic, Offa; and
3. suggest the way forward to enhancing entrepreneurial skills acquisition of LIS students in Federal Polytechnic, Offa

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the entrepreneurial skills required by library and information science students of Federal Polytechnic, Offa?
2. What are the challenges confronting entrepreneurial skills among library and information science students of Federal Polytechnic, Offa?
3. What are the way forward to enhancing entrepreneurial skills acquisition of LIS students in Federal Polytechnic, Offa?

Literature review

Entrepreneurship involves passion, innovation, creativity, competencies, skills, risk, rewards, self-reliance and self-motivation. Entrepreneurial investments create new self-development opportunities. Usuka et al. (2019) stressed that self – development programs for librarians include attending and presenting papers in conferences, writing and publishing journal articles, contributing to book chapters, participating in seminars and symposia, engaging in outreach programs, enrolling to acquire higher degrees, enrolling to acquire ICT skills, learning to develop library

software, participating in workshops, volunteer services through outreach programmes and on the job training. There is the need to explore the entrepreneurial potentials in information as a tangible commodity. Library and Information Science professionals in Africa should equip themselves with necessary skills, attitudes and values needed for improved library services to cope with increasing entrepreneurship opportunities created by ICT.

Also, Awujoola and Ikegune (2018) noted that the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of tertiary institution is meant to increase the innovation and creativity level in students, so that at the end of their study in the institution they will be able to provide for themselves a means of living, create job opportunities for others, add value to the life and their communities and also, assist in the development of their nation. Many reasons have been pointed out to justify the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of tertiary institutions, more importantly, in Library and Information Science. But Chukwuji and Umeji (2019) in their study found out that there is low skills acquisition among LIS students. They are of the opinion that LIS students were more deficient in skills such as information brokerage, owing a bookshop, digitization skills etc and this poor level of acquisition is largely because of their non-inclusion in the school curriculum.

In addition, Chukwuji and Umeji (2019) stressed that unless the challenges of acquiring entrepreneurial skills are adequately addressed, LIS graduates will continue to remain deficient in both professional and managerial skills (competencies) they need to establish personal business and or remain relevant at work places, create their own business so as

to reduce the pool of unemployed Nigerians, we will continue to have increase in unemployment, general poor standard of living and its associated social ills/vices like banditry, terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, drug addicts etc. These are all impediments to a sustainable individual and national development.

According to Udo et al. (2019), entrepreneurial skills are critical for undergraduates, especially in the face of high-level unemployment in Nigeria. These are possible skills that are capable of equipping graduates with the capacity to set up business enterprises on their own if they are unable to secure government employment or by choice decide to be in the

private sector. Library schools have realized the importance of entrepreneurship skills to few graduates and, have therefore, included them in their curricula. Many LIS Schools are now expected to teach courses with heavy doses of entrepreneurship skills in them.

Methods

The descriptive research survey design was used for this study. The population for this study consisted of total of 250 HND I and HND II students for 2021/2022 academic session of department of library and information science of Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Population of the study

Institutions	Final Year Student
HND 1	140
HND 2	110
Total	250

Total enumeration was used for the sample size. Purposive sampling technique was used for the study, this is because it is believed that the categories of students have completed their mandatory industrial training programme and have offered entrepreneurship education courses at least 5 semesters. The study used an adopted questionnaire from the work of Chukwuji and Umeji (2019). Out of the 250 questionnaires distributed, 236 copies were returned and found usable. This number constitutes 94.4% the sample size. Data from the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean scores. While arithmetic mean was used to answer all the research questions. Decision rule for positive (agreed) response was set at mean score of 2.50 and above, while a mean score of below 2.50 set as negative (rejected).

Results

Table 2 shows that the distribution according to level of respondents which revealed that the majority of the respondents are in HND 1 (132, 55.9%) while 110(44.1%) of the respondents are HND 2 students. On the gender distribution, it was revealed that the majority of the respondents were females (136, 57.6%) while 100 (42.4%) of the respondents were males. In terms of marital status, 204 (86.4%) of the respondents constituting the majority were single while 32(13,6%) were married. In addition, the data revealed that the highest number of respondents 110 (46.6%) were found in the age bracket of 20 to 25 years, followed by 83 (35.2%) who were 26 to 30 years age bracket, 27 (11.4%) were between the age of 31 and 35 years, and 16 (6.8%) were found to be between 31 and 35 years.

This result implied that there was a little disparity in gender distribution of library and information science students in Kwara State, Nigeria, as there were more female students than their male counterparts. Also, the population of

admitted students in HND 1 are more than HND 2. Also, most of the library and information science students in Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State were young and dynamic enough to be associated with entrepreneurship intentions.

Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Level	HND 1	132	55.9%
	HND 2	104	44.1%
Gender	Female	136	57.6%
	Male	100	42.4%
Marital Status	Married	32	13.6%
	Single	204	86.4%
Age	20 – 25 years	110	46.6%
	26 – 30 years	83	35.2%
	31 – 35 years	27	11.4%
	36 and above	16	6.8%

Table 3: Mean score rating on the entrepreneurial skills of LIS students, Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State

Num.	Entrepreneurial skills	Mean	Decision
1.	Abstracting and indexing	2.80	Accepted
2.	Compilation of bibliography	2.75	Accepted
3.	Digitization skills	2.10	Rejected
4.	Editing and proofreading	2.20	Rejected
5.	Engagement in outreach program	1.40	Rejected
6.	Freelancing	1.90	Rejected
7.	Information brokerage	1.60	Rejected
8.	Information literacy skills	1.75	Rejected
9.	Knowledge management skill	1.40	Rejected
10.	Managerial skills	1.80	Rejected
11.	Managing a bookshop	1.70	Rejected
12.	Online cataloguing	1.88	Rejected
13.	Photocopying services	2.70	Accepted
14.	Records and archive management	2.60	Accepted
15.	Web creation	1.85	Rejected
16.	Writing and publishing journal articles	1.60	Rejected

Table 3 shows the entrepreneurial skills acquired by Library and Information

Science students, Federal Polytechnic, Offa and the ones they do not have. The result

showed that they have positive mean score of 2.80 for abstracting and indexing, for compilation of bibliography they score 2.60, records and archive management has 2.60 and photocopying services has 2.70. This shows that their abilities on those four items/skills are significant. The result also revealed significant weaknesses on the rest of the items/skills. This is evident in their low mean score below the 2.5 decision rule, which examined their acquisition of skills on information brokerage (1.60), online cataloguing (1.88), information literacy skills (1.75), digitalization skills (1.90), web

creation (1.85), editing and proofreading (2.20), managing a bookshop (1.70), writing and publishing journal articles (1.60), engagement in outreach program (1.40), freelancing (1.90) and knowledge management skill (1.40). However, Knowledge management skills, Information brokerage, engagement in outreach services, information brokerage, information literacy skill, managing a bookshop, and writing and publishing journal articles have the least values and are said to be the areas of major weaknesses in competencies among students.

Table 4: Mean score rating on challenges confronting entrepreneurial skills of LIS students in Federal Polytechnic, Offa, Kwara State

Num.	Challenges confronting entrepreneurial skills	Mean	Decision
1.	Students preference to paid employment and fear of failure	2.30	Rejected
2.	High students population in class	3.38	Accepted
3.	Phobia for competition	3.37	Accepted
4.	Lack of financial support to start a business	3.40	Accepted
5.	Requirements in assessing loan from financial institutions	3.36	Accepted
6.	inadequate curricula provisions	3.28	Accepted
7.	High number of courses offered per semester	3.38	Accepted
8.	Lack of required skills	3.20	Accepted
9.	Students lack of practical thinking	2.10	Rejected
10.	Inadequate qualified educators and lack of suitable professional experience	2.26	Rejected

Table 2 shows the mean value on the challenges associated with the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. It was depicted that six items recorded positive mean scores. The result showed that high student population in class has 3.38, high number of courses offered 3.38, phobia for competition 3.37, lack of financial support to start a business 3.40, requirements in assessing loan from financial institutions 3.36, inadequate

curricula provisions 3.10. It also showed that lack of financial support to start a business, high number of courses offered, high student population in class and lack of required skills are serious challenges.

Student's preference to paid employment and fear of failure recorded the least mean of 2.30 and Inadequate qualified educators and lack of suitable professional experience 2.26.

Table 5: Mean score rating on the way forward to enhancing entrepreneurial skills of LIS Students in Federal Polytechnic, Offa

Num.	Way forward to enhancing entrepreneurial skills	Mean	Decision
1.	Financial institutions such as bank should make policies that will enhance easy access to loans.	3.40	Accepted
2.	Government at all levels, should initiate loan schemes and programmes to finance business ideas of young entrepreneurs	3.19	Accepted
3.	The curriculum should be updated regularly to accommodate trends in entrepreneurial skills as related to LIS as a field of study	3.40	Accepted
4.	Students should be allowed to pick a resourceful area and register with CAC before graduation	3.25	Accepted
5.	Successful entrepreneurs in library and information science should be used as a role model for students during teaching	3.30	Accepted
6.	The head of department should support entrepreneurship education and training by providing tools and equipment needed for teaching and learning	3.20	Accepted

Table 3 shows a unanimous agreement amongst the respondents on the strategies that will enhance the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in LIS. The result shows that LIS curriculum should be updated regularly to accommodate trends in entrepreneurial skills has the highest mean value of 3.40 and therefore is regarded as the most important of all the identified strategies. Adequate funding must be ensured by heads of library schools to support entrepreneurship education and training with the least mean value of 3.10 is the lowest strategy but equally important.

Discussion

Entrepreneurial skill is central and crucial to self-reliance and self-dependence of graduates and equally guarantees the success of an entrepreneur. Unfortunately, the result of this study on the assessment of entrepreneurial skills LIS students in Federal Polytechnic, Offa showed low skills acquisition. From the sixteen skills listed only four skills were chosen. This poor level

of acquisition can be attributed to the skills non-inclusion in the school curriculum. This finding supports the positions of Elonye and Uzuegbu (2013), who agreed to non-skills oriented university education in Nigeria. The findings also showed that the students were more deficient in skills such as Knowledge management skills, Information brokerage, engagement in outreach services, information brokerage, information literacy skill, managing a bookshop, and writing and publishing journal and so on.

There is also a high level of agreement on the challenges confronting the entrepreneurial skills in LIS. Lack of financial support to start a business and high number of courses offered emerged as the major challenge. This of course is enough to discourage such a person from venturing into self-business. Other important challenges such as high student's population in class, phobia for competition, banks requirements in assessing loan from financial institutions, inadequate curricula provision and lack of required skills are

believed to exist as a result of inadequate education and motivation.

The respondent's agreed strongly on all the way forward to enhancing entrepreneurial skills of LIS students in Federal Polytechnic, Offa. Thus, it is pertinent to adopt these recommendations in light of the need for entrepreneurship education for students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Of utmost importance is restructuring of the LIS curriculum to contain practical courses in entrepreneurship and financial institutions should make policies that will be favourable to entrepreneurs for easy access to loans.

Conclusion

It is no news that unemployment, economic recession, poverty and youth restiveness tend to be overwhelming our society. An entrepreneurial opportunity therefore plays a vital role in alleviating these socio-economic problems. The study assesses the entrepreneurial skills by LIS students in Federal Polytechnic, Offa. The finding showed that there is low entrepreneurial skills among LIS students, thereby indicating a high level of deficiency in competencies among the students. If the institution is to produce job/wealth creators instead of seekers, LIS student's entrepreneurial skills should be taken seriously. This will create variety of self-employment opportunities for our teeming unemployed graduates and LIS students whose stock in trade is information, need to be put in proper perspective on entrepreneurial skills available to them in this information age.

The following are recommended in the light of the findings:

1. The department should organise series of trainings in entrepreneurial skills in LIS so as to equip the students

with the required skills needed to be self-reliance.

2. The regulatory body should look at the number of courses offered especially in HND 2 classes. This will enable students to face the practical aspect of the courses and also have time to acquire the required skills needed to be enterprising.
3. Government and other stakeholders should work out formalities of ensuring LIS graduates acquire loans/start up capitals or grants.
4. The entrepreneurship education should not just be theory based but students should be exposed to practical aspects of the course in order to see for themselves a real situation.
5. Managers and owners of businesses / industries should be invited from time to time to enlighten students on how to venture into business and acquired necessary skills on steps to be follow when backing in business venture.
6. Emphasis should be laid on practical skills required to function effectively as a entrepreneur after graduation

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