

A Survey of Career Intentions and Entrepreneurial Competencies Needs of Library and Information Science (LIS) Students in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study investigated the career intentions and entrepreneurial competencies needs of Library and Information Science students in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined students' awareness of entrepreneurship opportunities available in librarianship, career intentions and entrepreneurial competencies needs of the students. The study covered level 400 LIS students in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire which was distributed to 196 respondents using the accidental sampling technique. Results showed an awareness of entrepreneurship opportunities among the students. It also revealed a high level of intention to get paid employment in the LIS profession by the LIS students. There was a perceived need for entrepreneurial competencies, mostly in the areas of marketing and information technology skills. Among others, the study recommended that entrepreneurship re-orientation should be given especially to final year students to help them become more interested in entrepreneurship in LIS.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Career Intentions, Competencies Needs, Library and Information Science (LIS) Students

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has been identified as a powerful engine for economic growth and crucial for improving the quality and employment opportunities in any economy. The drivers of this powerful engine are entrepreneurs. Nwosu (2014) defined entrepreneurship as the process of using initiative to transform business concepts into new ventures and diversifying existing ventures or enterprises to high growing venture potentials. Similarly, Ogar, Nkanu, and Eyo (2014) simply identified it as the bedrock of industrial development throughout the world.

In Nigeria, there is the common opinion that the country has not been able to prepare her workforce for the challenges of the rapidly changing global economy. This is because the emphasis of education has been more on paper qualification than on the acquisition of skills for self-empowerment (Ogar, Nkanu and Eyo, 2014). For this reason, in 2006, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced entrepreneurial education as a compulsory course for all disciplines in universities. The goal was to prepare graduates for entrepreneurial success while at the same time changing the popular notion that the nation's tertiary institutions are mills for job seekers rather than job creators (Ojiefu, 2012).

While there is the urgent need to curb unemployment by encouraging entrepreneurship, it is believed that successful entrepreneurship relies on the exhibition of certain competencies and skills. As pointed out in the report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2005), individuals are required to have competencies that will enable them to survive in today's society. Ugwu and Ezeani (2012) also noted that it is expedient for LIS undergraduates to acquire basic professional and entrepreneurial competencies, attitudes and

values that are deemed critical for achieving self-development.

Hence, the entrepreneurship courses as contained in the LIS curriculum at different levels of study in both institutions under study aim to prepare students for entrepreneurial activities after graduation. At the Delta State University, entrepreneurship course starts in second semester of Level 200. The course titled “Entrepreneurship and Innovation” is a two-unit course with a core course status. Again, in second semester of Level 300, the students are exposed to another entrepreneurship course titled “Entrepreneurship Studies (Business Creation and Growth).” This is also a two-unit core course. At the University of Benin, the entrepreneurship course is given in the second semester of Level 300 entitled “Entrepreneurial Development”. The aim of the course is to develop entrepreneurial orientation and skills in the students. It also exposes the students to the opportunities in entrepreneurship and the basic characteristics required for successful practice as entrepreneurs. The essence of these courses is not only to expose the students to viable entrepreneurship opportunities in the LIS field, but also to instil in them some of the required competencies and skills in entrepreneurship. It is against this background that the paper attempts to survey the career intentions and entrepreneurial competencies need of the LIS students.

Statement of the Problem

The statistics of unemployment in Nigeria are high. In an attempt to curb this trend, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced entrepreneurial education as a compulsory course for all disciplines in universities. LIS as a field of study is not left out. LIS schools across the country give entrepreneurship courses at different levels. The aim is to train future librarians to become successful entrepreneurs. What is unclear is whether the entrepreneurial courses offered to LIS students are influencing their career intentions. Hence, the question to be answered is: What are the career intentions and entrepreneurial competencies need of LIS students in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria?

Research Questions

1. What is the level of LIS students’ awareness of entrepreneurship opportunities available in librarianship?

2. What is the perception of LIS students about the entrepreneurial competencies they need?
3. What are the career intentions of LIS students?

Literature Review

During the last decades, the concept of entrepreneurship has become very important due to the need to overcome constant and increasing economic and developmental problems facing countries. According to Kristiansson and Jochumsen (2015), entrepreneurship is an increasingly central phenomenon in contemporary society because it seeks to prepare people, students in this case, to be responsible and to become enterprising individuals who have the attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary to achieve the goals they set for themselves. Thus, entrepreneurial competencies become an essential element for the adaptability of new labour markets (Sanchez, Ward, Hernández and Florez, 2017). Ejedafiru and Toyo (2015) also pointed out that entrepreneurship education seeks to embrace skill acquisition in creative thinking, product development, marketing, leadership training, and wealth creation. Entrepreneurship is the ability of an individual to rely on his/her own abilities and efforts; that is, the person is able to survive on his or her own in the business world (Idiaghe, 2011). Nwosu (2014) added his voice to the issue by echoing that entrepreneurship education is the process of instructing individuals on using their initiative to transform business concepts into new ventures, diversifying existing venture or enterprise to high growing venture potentials.

In relation to library science students, Inyang and Enuoh ((2009) defined entrepreneurship in librarianship as a programme that offers specific techniques for creating an entrepreneurial environment in library and information service. It is perhaps in this regard that Igwe, Uzuegbu Issa Aliyu and Adebayo (2015) stressed that young librarians have also been urged to pursue non-traditional careers and business in librarianship or to have niche knowledge and skills that will help them stay out of the job market. According to Campbell (2012), what makes entrepreneurship education for LIS graduates stand out clearly is the focus on realisation of opportunities with profit making as the ultimate.

Students' awareness about entrepreneurship is an integral part of this research. Awareness is believed to be an integral component of the students' choice of librarianship as a career. Swamiji (2014) defined awareness as that which manifests in all forms of perception, in all forms of knowing. A study to survey the awareness of students on the issue of entrepreneurship by Onyia and Agbawe (2017) reported that all the 118 respondents (100%) became aware of entrepreneurship because it was among the general courses offered in their departments. An earlier research by Ugwu and Ezeani (2012) showed that students were aware of entrepreneurship through the media and the general courses they took. In essence, the general courses in entrepreneurship did not satisfy the specific demands of LIS profession. The implication of that study was that the students did not acquire the relevant competencies and skills that can make them compatible with and accessible to the variety of entrepreneurship opportunities in the profession.

Career intentions are crucial to understanding the entrepreneurship process. Mhango (2006) explained that intentions are the degree of commitment towards specific target behaviour, such as a goal to start a business or to follow a certain career path. Entrepreneurial intention is defined by Palalic, Ramadani, Dilovic, Dizdarevic and Ratten (2017) as positing to owning a business or becoming self-employed. It is also the degree of commitment towards a goal to study and pursue a career in entrepreneurship. This definition shows that the students' behaviour is purposely planned as to what they want to do after their degree. Once the intended goal is identified, students can plan actions and behaviour to reach the target. That is to say that students decide what they really want to do with their course of study: either they want to practise as professional or they want to follow other career paths. Kennedy, Drennan, Renfrow, and Watson (2003) also indicated that intentions are affected by perceptions of desirability, perceived feasibility, and propensity to act on opportunity. An investigation by Ntui (2015) into the attitude of LIS students towards entrepreneurship at the University of Calabar revealed that only 40% of the LIS students have the intention to become entrepreneurs and only 37% of students have positive feelings about entrepreneurship. Their study implied that most of

the LIS students at the University of Calabar did not have positive attitude towards entrepreneurship.

According to OECD (2005), competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilising psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context. For example, the ability to communicate effectively is a competency that may draw on an individual's knowledge of language, practical IT skills and attitudes towards those with whom he or she is communicating. A similar definition was given by Man, Lau and Chan (2002) as the totality of one's ability as an entrepreneur to perform this role successfully. Ejedaferu and Toyo (2015) were of the opinion that would-be LIS graduates are expected to acquire necessary skills that will enable them to meet the needs of society. A study by Ugwu and Ezeani (2012) evaluated the awareness and skills among LIS students in universities in South East of Nigeria. Their findings showed that up to 70% of the students did not possess entrepreneurship and ICT competencies crucial for the entrepreneurship opportunities in LIS. Moreover, these students are yet to develop the culture and the mindset towards entrepreneurship because of some major challenges which have been identified as inadequate education and training resulting from lack of entrepreneurship and ICT courses in their curriculum, absence of qualified and suitable educators in entrepreneurship courses, unavailability of ICT facilities, lack of self-confidence and fear of failure among students, and high interest of graduates in paid employment.

Onuma's (2016) study investigated the exposure of undergraduate students to entrepreneurial education for job creation when they graduate from higher institutions. The findings show that entrepreneurial education is relevant to students with regard to equipping them with skills and competencies for post-graduation job creation ability rather than job seeking. Igbeka (2008) also noted that evidence from the curricula of many institutions has shown that LIS courses are still traditional with no practical programmes on entrepreneurship and technological innovations. Olaley (2007) observed that students need to acquire management competencies, planning, organising, supervising, directing, controlling and coordinating the business enterprise. Okpan (2006) also identified marketing

competencies as requisite for entrepreneurship development to be able to capture and retain the attention of customers and to promote and sell the organisation.

Ekuyo (2007) listed entrepreneurial opportunities that include business services, consultancy, book repair, information brokerage, packaging information, etc. that LIS professionals can delve into as entrepreneurs. Igbeka (2008) identified information brokerage as an entrepreneurial opportunity for LIS professionals. In the opinion of Pun (2016), future librarians must be entrepreneurs who will pursue their own learning interests and goals beyond traditional approaches. A recent study by Okpokwasili (2019) to assess entrepreneurial skills and competencies expected of library and information science (LIS) students in Enugu State, Nigeria, revealed that out of the twenty items of entrepreneurial skills that were listed, the respondents rated highly the acquisition of exploiting opportunity skill, financial management skill and marketing skills. Using a cross-sectional design and a quantitative approach, students at the University of Malaysia Kelantan were examined to determine the effect of key entrepreneurial competencies on students' entrepreneurial intention. Findings revealed that the students' ability to recognise income-generating opportunities, entrepreneurial training and skills, innovativeness, and information-seeking competencies have a significant effect on their entrepreneurial intention (Mamun, Nawi, Dewindren and Shamsudin, 2016). Several authors have carried out investigations into entrepreneurship awareness, competencies needs among LIS students; however, there is scarce information on the career intentions and entrepreneurial competencies needs of library and information science students in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria. This study intends to fill this gap.

Methodology

The study was a descriptive study. The population consisted of all the level 400 LIS students in Delta State University, Abraka and the University of Benin, Benin (i.e. one federal university and one state university in Southern Nigeria). Records from the departmental offices for the 2018/2019 session for both institutions showed that there were 118 students from Delta State University and 98 from the

University of Benin. This gave a population of 216 students. The reason for using only level 400 was because they had undergone entrepreneurship courses at the lower levels and were about to graduate and enter the Nigerian labour market. The accidental sampling technique was employed in this research. A questionnaire was used to collect the required data for this study. The questionnaire was designed using the Likert scale of strongly agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD) and Undecided (U).

The questionnaire was self-administered to the respondents in their respective schools; and as such, after due permission was sought from the Heads of Department of both institutions, only students who were present in class were given the instrument to fill. Efforts were made to retrieve the instruments on the same day. The researchers were able to administer a total of 196 copies of the questionnaire. 147 were retrieved and found usable for the study, and this gave a response rate of 75%. This percentage is considered adequate for the study since the standard and acceptable response rate for most research studies is 60% and above (Morton, Bandara, Robinson and Carr, 2012). Data were analysed using frequencies for the bio-data of the respondents, statistical mean for answering research questions one to three which focused on the LIS students' awareness of entrepreneurship opportunities available, their perception about the entrepreneurial competencies they need, and their career intentions. This was done with a criterion mean placed at 3.00.

Results

Out of the total of 143 respondents, 56.5% were from Delta State University while Edo State University was 43.5%. Only 38.1% of the respondents were male, while female students constituted 61.9%.

Level of Awareness of Entrepreneurship Opportunities Available in Librarianship

Table 1 shows the students' level of awareness of entrepreneurship opportunities available in librarianship. According to the table, an aggregate mean of 3.05 was obtained. This is an indication of the students' awareness of entrepreneurship opportunities available. This implies that the level of

LIS students' awareness of entrepreneurship opportunities available in librarianship is high. A Mean score of 3.57 shows that they were more aware of entrepreneurship opportunities as consultancy service providers; this is followed by awareness of entrepreneurship opportunities as a researcher 3.56.

The low mean scores in the more technology-driven areas (e.g. web publisher, desktop publisher, database producer, etc.) are indicative of lack of awareness that there are entrepreneurial opportunities available in these areas. This is remarkable given that this is an age of technology and the impact it has had on library work.

Table 1: Level of LIS Students' Awareness of Entrepreneurship Opportunities Available in Librarianship

I am aware of the following entrepreneurship opportunities available in librarianship:	SA	A	D	SD	U	Mean
As an information broker	29	36	27	31	24	3.10
As a library consultant	47	21	26	42	11	3.35
As a book publisher and trader	35	39	16	28	29	3.16
As an information specialist	10	32	38	48	19	2.77
As an information retailer	9	17	66	43	12	2.78
As a researcher	48	43	20	16	20	3.56
As a freelance indexer	28	39	37	19	24	3.19
As a freelance cataloguer	31	37	31	26	22	3.20
As a consultancy service provider	43	45	25	21	13	3.57
As a web publisher	11	28	41	30	37	2.63
As a desktop publisher	15	36	38	39	19	2.93
As a compiler of directories	9	20	45	48	25	2.59
As an information service provider to the visually impaired	48	37	16	32	14	3.50
As a database producer/distributor	16	46	31	27	27	2.98
As a research marketer	21	12	36	48	30	2.63
Vendor business	12	18	52	55	10	2.78
Aggregate Mean						3.05

Criterion Mean

3.00

Level of Students' Perception of Entrepreneurship Competencies

Table 2: Perception of Entrepreneurship Competencies Need by LIS Students

Perception of Entrepreneurship Competencies	SA	A	D	SD	U	Mean
Writing skills	66	72	9	–	–	4.39
Oral communication skills	72	75	–	–	–	4.49
Marketing skills	103	44	–	–	–	4.70
Organising skills	47	100	–	–	–	4.32
Managerial skills	36	89	–	22	–	3.95
Planning skills	36	111	–	–	–	4.24
Goal-setting skills	39	101	7	–	–	4.22
Accounting skills	68	78	1	–	–	4.46
Leadership abilities	51	96	–	–	–	4.35
Marketing of information products and services skills	78	69	–	–	–	4.53
Information technology skills	91	56	–	–	–	4.62
Network building/administration skills	40	100	7	–	–	4.22
Efficient use of search engines skills	20	122	5	–	–	4.10
Digitisation skills	44	99	–	4	–	4.24
Ability to use common office ICT tools	36	111	–	–	–	4.24
Information literacy skills	33	108	6	–	–	4.18
Aggregate Mean						4.33

Criterion Mean

3.00

Table 2 shows that there is a high perception of entrepreneurship competencies need among the LIS students. This is seen in a high aggregate mean score of 4.33. A closer look shows that the students perceived the highest need in marketing skills with a mean score of 4.70; this is closely followed by

information technology skills with a mean score of 4.62. With all the items on the list having a mean score of above 3.00, it is evident that the students' perception of their entrepreneurship competencies need is very high.

Level of Students' Career Intention Perception of Entrepreneurship Competencies**Table 3: Career Intention of LIS Students**

Career Intention	Frequency	Percentage (%)
It is my intention to become an entrepreneur in the LIS profession.	82	53.7
It is my intention to become an entrepreneur in other professions outside LIS.	90	61.2
Becoming an entrepreneur in LIS is totally unattractive to me.	59	40.1
It is not my intention to become an entrepreneur at all.	85	58
It is my intention to get paid employment in the LIS profession.	103	70
It is my intention to get paid employment in any area that I find work.	61	41.4

From Table 3, the career intention of LIS students were to get paid employment in the LIS profession 103 (70%), to become an entrepreneur in other professions outside LIS 90 (61.2%), and 85 (58%) indicated that they do not want to become an entrepreneur at all. From this data, the LIS students' career intention is to get paid employment in the LIS profession.

Discussion of Findings

The findings show that the LIS students were aware of an assortment of entrepreneurship opportunities available in the profession. It is interesting to observe from this result that consultancy service provision awareness was very high. This result is an indication that the LIS students were aware that consultants in service provision are specialists who give experts information/advice on library and information needs. There is also awareness for other entrepreneurship opportunities in areas such as information broking, library consultancy services, book publishing and trading, freelance indexing and cataloguing. On the other hand, there was obvious lesser awareness in technology-related areas, such as web publisher, desktop publisher, and database producer. Seen from this perspective, it can be said that the students were more aware of opportunities in the traditional aspects

of the profession. This finding is in agreement with the result of Onyia and Agbawe (2017), and Ugwu and Ezeani (2012) that the LIS students in Nigeria were aware of entrepreneurship opportunities in librarianship. Similarly, the finding from this study agrees with the result of Anyanwu (2013) that identified publishing as the first entrepreneurial opportunity open to LIS graduates. However, the result does not support Adimorah (2002) who asserted that most LIS graduates wish to become information consultants.

The LIS students perceived a need for entrepreneurship competencies in marketing and information technology skills. It is believed that for every 21st century business to survive, there is the need for marketing abilities and information technology skills on the part of the entrepreneur; hence the choices for these competencies by the LIS students are understandable. This finding supports the conclusion reached by Iroaganachi and Iwu (2013) that LIS graduates must be well equipped with the necessary entrepreneurial skills and marketing strategies training to enable them succeed in the 21st Century job market. This result confirms the recent findings presented by Okpokwasili (2019) that LIS student in Enugu State required marketing skills to a great extent.

The aim of the third research question was to find out the career intentions of the LIS students. The finding revealed that the intentions of LIS student is to get paid employment in the LIS profession and those that expressed an intention to become entrepreneurs wanted to do so in other professions. This result suggests that the entrepreneurship courses being offered may not be influencing the career intentions of the students. This result confirms earlier findings by Cubico, de Oliveira, Bellotto, Formicuzzi, and Sartori (2015) that only 13% of the sampled respondents expressed interest to start a business after completion of their course of study. Similarly, this result supports the finding of Ntui (2015), who also indicated that only 28% indicated an intention to start their business. Cano, Tabares and Alvarez (2017) observed that only 12% of students in the short-term want to be entrepreneurs, while 30% of them want to be employees.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The career intentions and entrepreneurial competencies needs of Library and Information Science students in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria were ascertained. From the results, it is possible to conclude that LIS students were aware of entrepreneurship opportunities available in librarianship and clearly expressed entrepreneurial need for marketing and information technology skills, while their career intentions are more towards getting paid employment.

This study has shown to both curriculum planners and LIS school administrators that there is urgent need to make entrepreneurship education more robust, so that entrepreneurship courses can have a more positive influence on the career intention of the students. There is need for further research into the exposure given to the students about entrepreneurship opportunities, as well as the overall adequacy of entrepreneurship courses taught in LIS schools across Nigeria.

The following recommendations have been made in light of the findings:

- Entrepreneurship courses should be expanded to focus on ICT-driven entrepreneurial opportunity areas, such as web publishing, desktop publishing and database-producing

courses, this will enhance the awareness of the students to want to pursue careers in these areas.

- In order to improve the career intentions of the LIS students, entrepreneurship re-orientation should be given, especially to final-year students to further help them become more interested in entrepreneurship in LIS.

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