



Challenges Hindering the Acquisition of Entrepreneurship Skills among Librarians in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated Challenges Hindering the Acquisition of Entrepreneurship Skills among Librarians in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria. It aimed to address two specific objectives and corresponding research questions. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, encompassing all 140 academic librarians from selected Colleges of Education in the South-South States of Nigeria. Due to the manageable population size, all the academic librarians were used. Data collection involved a structured questionnaire, which was validated by three experts and demonstrated a reliability coefficient of 0.76 using the Cronbach Alpha method. Descriptive statistics, including Mean and Standard Deviation, were used to analyze the data and answer the research questions. The findings revealed several challenges hindering the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills among academic librarians, including inadequate funds, insufficient ICT facilities, a lack of qualified personnel with suitable professional experience, insufficient support from parent institutions and library management, low self-confidence among librarians, and erratic power supply. Additionally, strategies for enhancing these skills were identified, such as providing adequate funds for training, improving ICT facilities, employing qualified personnel, encouraging librarians to develop a positive interest in acquiring entrepreneurship skills, and ensuring continuous support from parent institutions and library management. In conclusion, the study highlighted that academic librarians in Colleges of Education in the South-South States of Nigeria face significant challenges in acquiring entrepreneurship skills, mainly due to inadequate funding, insufficient ICT infrastructure, a lack of qualified personnel, and infrastructural issues like erratic power supply. The study recommended that institutions should prioritize enhancing ICT facilities and increasing bandwidth capacity to support entrepreneurship skill acquisition, and that parent institutions and library management should establish dedicated funding streams to support the development of entrepreneurship skills among academic librarians.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Skills and Challenges of Acquisition of Entrepreneurship Skills.

Introduction

In recent years, entrepreneurship skills have become increasingly vital across various professional fields, including library and information science. These skills empower individuals to innovate, manage resources efficiently, and adapt to rapidly changing professional environments. For academic librarians, acquiring entrepreneurship skills can significantly enhance their ability to contribute to their institutions by fostering a culture of innovation and improving the overall quality of service delivery (Brophy, 2005). In this evolving role, librarians are not merely custodians of information but are also expected to drive new initiatives, develop creative solutions to resource management, and engage actively in the strategic goals of their institutions. However, despite the growing recognition of the importance of these skills, there remains a considerable gap in the availability and acquisition of entrepreneurship skills among academic librarians, particularly in developing regions such as the South-South States of Nigeria. This gap is attributed to several factors, including inadequate funding, insufficient training opportunities, and a lack of institutional support for professional development in entrepreneurship. Addressing this deficiency is crucial as it hampers the potential for librarians to fully engage with and contribute to their academic communities, ultimately affecting the overall educational and informational ecosystem. Consequently, there is a pressing need for targeted interventions and strategic initiatives to bridge this skills gap and empower librarians with the entrepreneurial competencies necessary to thrive in their roles and drive institutional success.

The role of academic librarians has undergone a profound transformation over the years. Traditionally viewed as the custodians of information, responsible primarily for the organization, preservation, and dissemination of library resources, librarians are now expected to fulfill a much broader and more dynamic set of responsibilities. This expanded role encompasses the management of digital resources, which includes navigating the complexities of digital archives, electronic databases, and online information systems. Additionally, librarians are increasingly involved in information literacy training, equipping students and faculty with the skills necessary to effectively locate, evaluate, and use information in various formats. They also play a crucial role in institutional management, contributing to strategic planning and decision-making processes that shape the academic and

administrative directions of their institutions. This shift demands a diverse skill set that goes beyond traditional library science competencies to include entrepreneurship skills. In the context of libraries, entrepreneurship involves the ability to identify and capitalize on opportunities, develop and implement innovative services, and manage library resources strategically to maximize their value to the institution (Kirby, 2006). These skills are essential for librarians to lead initiatives that enhance the library's offerings, improve user experiences, and align library services with the institution's broader goals. However, the acquisition of these skills is fraught with challenges, especially in environments plagued by systemic issues such as inadequate funding and poor infrastructure. These barriers can severely limit access to professional development opportunities, advanced training, and necessary technological resources, thereby stifling the potential for librarians to grow and adapt in their evolving roles. Overcoming these obstacles requires targeted interventions, robust support systems, and a concerted effort to invest in the development of entrepreneurship skills among academic librarians, ensuring they are well-equipped to meet the demands of their multifaceted roles.

In many Nigerian Colleges of Education, academic librarians encounter a myriad of obstacles that significantly hinder their ability to acquire and effectively utilize entrepreneurship skills. One of the primary challenges is inadequate funding, which restricts access to necessary resources, training programs, and technological tools essential for developing entrepreneurial competencies. This financial constraint is closely linked to the insufficient ICT facilities available within these institutions, which hampers librarians' ability to engage with modern digital tools and platforms that are crucial for innovative library management and service delivery (Ogunsola, 2011). Furthermore, there is a noticeable shortage of qualified personnel who possess the requisite professional experience to mentor and guide librarians in acquiring and applying entrepreneurship skills. This deficit in expertise means that librarians often lack role models and practical examples of entrepreneurial practices within their own professional environment.

Adding to these challenges is the often insufficient institutional support from both the parent institutions and library management. This lack of backing manifests in several ways, including limited investment in professional development and a general absence of a supportive framework for innovation. For instance, without continuous professional development opportunities, librarians struggle to stay updated with the latest trends and best practices in entrepreneurship. The lack of structured mentoring programs further exacerbates this issue, leaving librarians without the necessary guidance and support to effectively adopt entrepreneurial approaches in their work (Ezeani, 2012). This combination of inadequate funding, poor ICT infrastructure, insufficient qualified personnel, and lack of institutional support creates a challenging environment for academic librarians. It stifles their potential to innovate and improve library services, ultimately impacting the quality of education and information dissemination within Nigerian Colleges of Education. Overcoming these barriers requires a concerted effort to address these systemic issues through targeted investments, the development of comprehensive training and mentoring programs, and a commitment to fostering a supportive institutional culture that values and encourages entrepreneurial initiatives among academic librarians.

The current study concentrates on the South-South States of Nigeria, a region where educational institutions are continually grappling with significant resource constraints and infrastructural deficiencies. These challenges are not isolated incidents but rather reflect broader systemic issues within the Nigerian educational system as a whole. According to Nkanu and Okon (2010), academic libraries in this region are particularly affected by problems such as erratic power supply, which disrupts daily operations and diminishes the reliability of library services. Additionally, there is limited access to contemporary ICT tools, which are essential for modern library management and service delivery. This technological gap prevents librarians from leveraging digital resources effectively and hinders their ability to implement innovative solutions. The inadequacy of training programs further compounds these issues, as it restricts opportunities for librarians to develop new skills and stay abreast of current trends and best practices in their field.

These combined challenges severely impede the daily functioning of academic libraries, making it difficult to maintain high standards of service and resource availability. More critically, they limit the professional development of librarians by creating an environment where it is challenging to acquire and apply entrepreneurship skills. Without consistent power, reliable ICT infrastructure, and ongoing professional development opportunities, librarians are ill-equipped to engage in entrepreneurial activities that could enhance their effectiveness and contribute to the institution's success. This situation underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions that address these infrastructural and resource-related deficiencies. Improving power supply, expanding access to modern ICT tools, and developing comprehensive training programs are crucial steps towards empowering librarians with the entrepreneurial skills necessary to navigate and overcome these challenges. Only through such measures can academic libraries in the South-South States of Nigeria enhance their operational efficiency and contribute more effectively to the educational goals of their institutions.

Given these formidable challenges, it is imperative to explore and implement effective strategies aimed at enhancing the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills among academic librarians. The importance of such initiatives cannot be overstated, as they play a pivotal role in equipping librarians with the necessary tools to navigate the complex landscape of modern academic librarianship. Various studies have underscored the critical need for targeted interventions, emphasizing the provision of adequate funding, the enhancement of ICT infrastructure, and the fostering of a supportive institutional environment (Ugwu and Ezeani, 2012). These elements are fundamental in creating a conducive atmosphere for professional growth and skill acquisition.

For instance, continuous professional development programs specifically tailored to entrepreneurship can significantly aid librarians in developing the requisite skills to innovate and manage resources more effectively. These programs should be comprehensive, covering a range of entrepreneurial competencies such as opportunity identification, resource management, and strategic planning. By doing so, librarians can be better prepared to introduce and manage new services, optimize existing resources, and drive the library's strategic goals. Additionally, ensuring the availability of qualified mentors and trainers is crucial. Mentors with substantial experience in both librarianship and entrepreneurship can provide the invaluable guidance and support needed for librarians to navigate their expanded roles successfully. This mentorship can include practical advice, hands-on training, and continuous feedback, which are essential for fostering a robust entrepreneurial mindset among librarians.

The relevance of entrepreneurship skills in academic librarianship is profound and multifaceted. These skills enable librarians to respond proactively to the evolving demands of their profession, thereby significantly enhancing the overall efficiency and effectiveness of library services (Jones, 2010). In an era where information needs are rapidly changing and expanding, librarians with strong entrepreneurial skills are better equipped to adapt to these shifts, ensuring that their libraries remain relevant and responsive to user needs. Moreover, entrepreneurial librarians are adept at advocating for their libraries, which is increasingly important in securing funding and resources in competitive academic environments. By demonstrating the value and impact of their services, these librarians can attract investments and support for innovative projects that align with the institution's educational mission.

Furthermore, the ability to implement and manage innovative projects not only meets the immediate needs of library users but also contributes to the long-term goals of educational institutions. Libraries that are led by entrepreneurial-minded librarians are more likely to develop and offer cutting-edge services, resources, and programs that enhance the educational experience for students and faculty. This, in turn, supports the broader mission of educational institutions to provide high-quality education and comprehensive support to their academic communities. Therefore, fostering entrepreneurship skills among academic librarians is not just beneficial for the libraries themselves but is also integral to the success and advancement of the entire educational ecosystem.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Human Capital Theory developed by Gary Becker (1962). This theory emphasizes the role of education and training in enhancing individuals' productivity and economic outcomes. According to this theory, investing in human capital through education and skill development leads to better job performance, higher earnings, and improved overall economic growth. In the context of academic librarians in Colleges of Education, acquiring entrepreneurship skills can be seen as an investment in human capital. Through the development of these skills, librarians can potentially contribute more effectively to their institutions, innovate in their roles, and adapt to changing educational landscapes.

The relevance of Human Capital Theory to this study lies in its focus on how investments in education and skill development (in this case, entrepreneurship skills) can lead to improved individual and organizational outcomes. Understanding the challenges hindering the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills among academic librarians can be analyzed through the lens of Human Capital Theory. For instance, barriers such as limited training opportunities or institutional support can be viewed as constraints on the development of human capital within this specific professional context. Moreover, examining strategies to enhance the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills aligns with the theory's emphasis on how targeted investments in education and training can yield positive returns. Strategies such as specialized training programs, mentorship initiatives, or curriculum adjustments can be explored within this theoretical framework to assess their potential impact on improving librarians' entrepreneurship skills. Thus, Human Capital Theory provides a robust analytical framework for understanding the dynamics of skill acquisition and development in the context of academic librarianship in Nigerian Colleges of Education.

Problem Statement

Despite the critical role of serials in postgraduate education, the researcher has observed persisting challenges in the acquisition and management of these resources within university libraries in Benue State. The observed problem lies in the inadequate alignment of library acquisition and management practices with the specific needs of postgraduate students. This misalignment is evident in the limited diversity of serials, which may not adequately cater to the broad spectrum of postgraduate research interests and specialized fields. Additionally, the researcher has observed shortcomings in the methods used for acquiring serials and in the strategies for their efficient management. This misalignment and these inadequacies, in turn, seem to impact the extent to which postgraduate students can effectively utilize these resources to enhance their academic and research endeavors.

The consequences of the observed problem are far-reaching. Postgraduate students in Benue State universities seem to face limitations in accessing a comprehensive range of serials, which restricts the breadth and depth of their research and academic pursuits. The observed suboptimal methods of acquisition and management also seem to hinder their ability to explore, discover, and utilize relevant materials efficiently, affecting their academic growth and research output. This problem, if left unaddressed, not only hampers the intellectual development of postgraduate students but also impacts the overall quality of research and scholarship generated within the state's universities. It is within the purview of the researcher's observations that this study sought to examine the acquisition and management of serials for utilization by postgraduate students in university libraries in Benue State.

Objectives of the study

Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives

- i. To ascertain the challenges hindering academic librarians in acquiring entrepreneurship skills in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria
- ii. To examine the strategies for enhancing the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by academic librarians in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

- i. What are the challenges hindering academic librarians in acquiring entrepreneurship skills in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria?
- ii. What are the strategies for enhancing the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by academic librarians in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design and was conducted in South-South States of Nigeria. The population of this study comprises all 140 academic librarians in the selected Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria. The population distribution was thus: Federal College of Education Obudu, Cross River State (20), Akwa-Ibom State College of Education, Akwa-Ibom State (36), Edo State College of Education, Edo State (31), Rivers State College of Education, Port-Hacourt, Rivers State (33) and Delta State College of Education (20). Since the population is not large, the study made use of all the 140 academic librarians in the four Colleges of Education under study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, namely, section A and B. five (5) Clusters: A, B, C, D and E and was subjected to face and content validation by three experts. To ensure internal consistency of the instrument, the instrument was trial tested on (30) academic librarians in Colleges of education in Benue State who were not part of the study but possessed similar characteristics of the subjects for the study. The reliability of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach Alpha method and a reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions.

Results

Research question 1: What are the challenges hindering academic librarians in acquiring entrepreneurship skills in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the challenges hindering academic librarians in acquiring entrepreneurship skills in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria

S/No	Item	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Inadequate funds	140	3.31	0.88	Agree
2	Inadequate ICT facilities	140	3.28	0.85	Agree
3	Inadequate qualified resources personnel with suitable professional experience	140	3.65	0.87	Agree
4	Lack of interest by academic librarians	140	2.42	0.91	Disagree
5	Lack of support from parent institutions and management of academic libraries	140	3.41	0.96	Agree
6	Lack of self confidence by academic librarians	140	2.76	0.87	Agree
7	Erratic power supply	140	3.83	0.91	Agree
8	Inadequate bandwidth needed for effective use of ICT	140	3.51	0.89	Agree
9	Lack of suitable entrepreneurship skills	140	3.45	0.83	Agree

N = Sample, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 1 shows the challenges hindering academic librarians in acquiring entrepreneurship skills in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria in Mean and Standard Deviation. As revealed in the Table, except for item 4 with a mean of 2.42 which is below the benchmark of 2.50, the respondents agreed to the other items (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) with mean values ranging from 2.76 – 3.83 which are above the benchmark of 2.50 as the challenges hindering academic librarians in acquiring entrepreneurship skills in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria

Research Question 2: What are the strategies for enhancing the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by academic librarians in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis of the strategies for enhancing the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by academic librarians in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria

S/No	Item	N	Mean	SD	Decision
10	Provision of adequate funds to support the training of academic librarians	140	3.77	0.82	Agree
11	Provision of adequate ICT facilities to support the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills	140	3.48	0.81	Agree
12	Employment of qualified resources personnel with suitable professional experience	140	3.80	0.89	Agree
13	Encouraging librarians to develop positive interest towards the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills	140	3.22	0.88	Agree
14	Continuous support from parent institutions and management of academic libraries for entrepreneurship skills	140	3.53	0.94	Agree
15	Provision of alternative sources of power (Standby generators)	140	3.85	0.87	Agree
16	Provision of increased bandwidth needed for effective use of ICT	140	3.61	0.91	Agree
17	Provision of suitable entrepreneurship skills for librarians to choose from	140	3.75	0.83	Agree

N = Sample, SD = Standard Deviation

Table 2 shows the strategies for enhancing the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by academic librarians in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria in Mean and Standard Deviation. As revealed in table, the respondents agreed to all the items (10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17) with mean values ranging from 3.22 – 3.85 which are above the benchmark of 2.50 as the strategies for enhancing the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by academic librarians in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that inadequate funds, inadequate ICT facilities, inadequate qualified resources personnel with suitable professional experience, lack of support from parent institutions and management of academic libraries, lack of self confidence by academic librarians, erratic power supply, inadequate bandwidth needed for effective use of ICT and lack of suitable entrepreneurship skills are the challenges hindering academic librarians in acquiring entrepreneurship skills in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria. The findings corroborate with that of Awujoola and Ikegune (2018) who reported that many library schools do not have functional ICT infrastructural facilities for proper teaching and training of entrepreneurs. The findings also corroborate with that of Ugwu and Ezeani (2012) who found that students are yet to develop the culture and mindset toward 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. The findings also agree with that of Onyia and Agbawe (2017) who found that some challenges in the acquisition of entrepreneurship knowledge and skills in LIS to include: inadequate ICT facilities and training, difficulty in generating capital, erratic power supply, inadequate bandwidth needed for effective use of ICT, lack of mentors/guides for new entrepreneurs, unresponsive attitude of financial institutions and government in releasing startup capital for new ventures and long maturity time required for a new business to stabilize. Further, the findings agree with that of Nwokocha, Chimah and Okorie (2019) who revealed that the challenges encountered by the students in the acquisition of the skills to include: fear of failure, poor enlightenment, lack of financial backup, absence of skilled resources and lack of learning resources. Furthermore, the finding agree with that of Chukwuji and Umeji (2019) who revealed the challenges of acquiring entrepreneurial skills in library school to include: inadequate ICT facilities for teaching and training, many lack self-confidence and encouragement and so are afraid of failure, fear of competition and taking risks in business by graduates, difficulty in securing financial support required to start a business venture, requirement of collateral by financial institutions before offering loan to a business owner and inadequate curricula provisions do not prepare students for entrepreneurship.

The findings of the study also revealed that the strategies for enhancing the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by academic librarians in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria are provision of adequate funds to support the training of academic librarians, provision of adequate ICT facilities to support the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills, employment of qualified resources personnel with suitable professional experience, encouraging librarians to develop positive interest towards the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills, continuous support from parent institutions and management of academic libraries for entrepreneurship skills, provision of alternative sources of power (Standby generators), provision of increased bandwidth needed for effective use of ICT and provision of suitable entrepreneurship skills for librarians to choose from are the strategies for enhancing the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills by academic librarians in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria. The findings also corroborate with that of Ugwu and Ezeani (2012) who revealed some strategies to enhance entrepreneurship skills in LIS to include: Financial institutions, NGOs, & private sector organizations should offer free entrepreneurship training to students, restructuring the academic curriculum of LIS

profession to accommodate entrepreneurship courses and students must maintain state-of-the-art in the business through participation at seminars, workshops, journals & trade books among others. The findings also agree with that of Onyia and Agbawe (2017) who revealed some strategies for improving LIS entrepreneurial abilities and opportunities to include: increased and improved entrepreneurship courses in LIS programmes, improved electricity supply, government should enhance and increase internet bandwidth for effective use of ICT, loan facilities should be made available to LIS graduate entrepreneurs and Government and private sector should create other avenues for entrepreneurial training. The finding also corroborate with that of Awurdi and Mohammed (2018) who suggested that universities, corporate world, government agencies and wealthy individuals should continue to support and promote entrepreneurship skills and awareness among all students of universities in order to brace them up with the challenges in the labour market after graduation. Further, the findings agree with that of Nwokocha, Chimah and Okorie (2019) who advanced some strategies for enhancing the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills to include: introduction of full-fledged entrepreneurial courses to prepare undergraduates to take advantage of the skills being acquired without being afraid of the future, setting up of a mechanism for the sensitization and enlightenment of undergraduates on entrepreneurship skills for employment and emphasizing possible avenues and tactics to securing funds or loans in order put acquired skills to use. Furthermore, the findings agree with that of Chukwuji and Umeji (2019) who revealed strategies for enhancing entrepreneurial skills acquisition in library and information science to include: financial institutions, NGOs & private sector organizations should offer free entrepreneurship training to students, Government, financial institutions, NGOs etc should provide loans to graduates who are worthy to be entrepreneurs, school management should provide enough ICT facilities for practical training, LIS curriculum should be updated regularly to accommodate identified entrepreneurial skills and students must avail themselves to training opportunities (seminars, workshops etc) in the environment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that academic librarians in Colleges of Education in South-South States of Nigeria face significant challenges in acquiring entrepreneurship skills, primarily due to inadequate funding, insufficient ICT facilities, lack of qualified personnel, and infrastructural issues such as erratic power supply. However, the study also identifies several promising strategies to address these challenges, including providing adequate resources, improving institutional support, enhancing ICT infrastructure, and updating curricula to include entrepreneurship courses.

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

1. Institutions should prioritize the provision of adequate ICT facilities and increase bandwidth capacity to support the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills. This should be coupled with comprehensive ICT training programs for academic librarians to ensure they can effectively utilize these resources for entrepreneurial activities.
2. Parent institutions and library management should establish dedicated funding streams to support entrepreneurship skill acquisition among academic librarians. This includes allocating resources for training programs, workshops, and the purchase of necessary equipment. Additionally, institutions should demonstrate ongoing commitment and support for librarians' entrepreneurial endeavors.
3. Library and Information Science programs should update their curricula to incorporate robust entrepreneurship courses and practical training opportunities. This revision should focus on providing students and practicing librarians with relevant, up-to-date entrepreneurial skills that align with current market demands and technological advancements.
4. Parent institutions and library management should develop mentorship programs that pair experienced entrepreneurs with academic librarians to provide guidance, support, and real-world insights. Additionally, foster collaborations between academic libraries, business schools, and local entrepreneurs to create a rich ecosystem for entrepreneurial learning and development.

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