

# Library and Information Science (LIS) Students' Awareness of and Capabilities in the Field of Entrepreneurship

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**Abstract:** This study investigates information entrepreneurship awareness and skills among Library and Information Science (LIS) students at Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science, and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study was guided by six specific objectives and five research questions. A descriptive research design, specifically a survey type, was employed for the study. The study revealed that LIS students are aware of infopreneurship, with the internet being their primary source of awareness. The findings also revealed that academic writing was the most popular hard skill among LIS students, and communication skills were the most prominent soft skill among them. In addition to the revelations from the research findings, students agreed that the deployment of media was one of the strategies required for creating awareness of innovation. Findings also revealed that subpar power sources are one of the challenges facing the development of infopreneurship among LIS students. One of the recommendations is that all levels of the LIS curriculum should include infopreneurship as a course of study. There is a need for society to change its orientation regarding young adults exhibiting their acquired soft skills, especially content creators.

**Keywords:** Awareness and Infopreneurship; Hard Skills; Soft Skills; Librarianship and Certification; Information-Seeking Behaviours; LIS Practitioners; Information Science; Information-Based Profession.

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## 1. Introduction

The paper is no secret that the world's leading countries are those that have invested more in information and communication technology. Other nations that are certificate-centred, such as Nigeria, remain third-world countries to this day because their focus is primarily on certification. The service-oriented field of librarianship focuses on organising and making relevant information resources available to meet the diverse needs of users. Without users taking up a significant amount of the information services process, librarianship's goals, especially its role in knowledge transfer, cannot be fulfilled; this obsession has ramifications for how librarianship is and will be done. Librarians now need to be at ease in an online setting and understand the ethical concerns involved, in addition to having knowledge and competence in information content and users' information-

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seeking behaviours. Because libraries are information and knowledge warehouses where resources of various kinds are managed to meet users' demands, librarianship is essential to academic activities in higher education institutions worldwide. Due to sociological and technological changes, the information profession today requires significantly more thought and effort in establishing and maintaining relationships with users. Aregbesola et al. [1] highlight the importance of information as a vital component of the knowledge-based economy, which is dynamic and continually evolving.

According to Gillis [2], information is becoming a very valuable resource that must be gained and is a component of the productive elements. Information was one of these production elements that made a substantial contribution to both individual and societal growth. This implies that information is both a resource and a product. They went on to stress the value of information for graduate students, emphasising its use in decision-making, reducing uncertainty, and at the appropriate moment. An infopreneur is an individual who leverages opportunities to create and sell goods and services, primarily in the form of information.

According to Mohammed et al. [3], infopreneurship is the business of profitably selling information. This entails packaging information and sending it to various individuals seeking financial assistance. Infopreneurship, a term formed from the words "information" and "entrepreneur," is the practice of generating income through the sale of information. An infopreneur is a type of entrepreneur who earns money by charging for their knowledge or expertise. This person gathers data from multiple sources to produce content that can be effectively marketed and promoted [4]. This demonstrates that infopreneurship is the practice of generating income by selling informational items and services, often utilising information and communication technology (ICT).

Taylor [5] has researched educating library and information science students about infopreneurship and the skills (training, prior experience, and training) needed to become one, as it can eliminate poverty and offer employability. Technology innovation puts graduates who select infopreneurship as a career at risk since it presents numerous obstacles. A survey on LIS practitioners' understanding of infopreneurship was conducted by. Web design, online book sales, online event hosting, consulting, online publishing, and other e-services were among the industries where information could be used to generate revenue. The study has identified the obstacles that infopreneurship faces, including the need for high literacy levels, issues with internet connectivity, rising maintenance costs, a lack of public awareness, and inadequate information management skills. The research has highlighted the significance of infopreneurship among graduates, which can enhance the nation's performance. As a result, curricula that impart information management-related skills must be developed by the Etijah Foundation [6].

According to Momohjimoh [7], hard skills refer to specific aptitudes, capacities, and skill sets that a person can demonstrate in a quantifiable manner. Hard skills are attainable abilities that enable people to perform tasks related to their line of work or may be necessary for a particular job. These skills are typically focused on specialised tasks required to complete a job, such as using specific tools, software, or other equipment. They can be acquired through training, online courses, education, apprenticeships, and certification programs or learned through experience.

Meanwhile, Dangani [8] suggests that qualities and abilities not specific to a job are referred to as soft skills. These are general, non-technical skills that can be applied to a wide range of job roles. Effective communication, flexibility, teamwork, active listening, emotional intelligence, and time management are examples of essential soft skills. Soft talents are practically applicable anywhere. An employee is more productive than one who only possesses hard skills if they also possess any of these soft skills. Therefore, it is essential for LIS professionals to continually strive to create awareness of best practices in infopreneurship for job creation among emerging practitioners, as noted by the Indeed Editorial Team [9].

### **1.1. Statement of the problem**

Librarianship is an information-based profession that deals with the selection, acquisition, processing, preservation, and dissemination of information-bearing resources [10]. The high rate of unemployment in Nigeria prompts practitioners of LIS to think outside the box by understanding how the incorporation of emerging technologies into the profession can lead to job creation. With this in mind, upcoming librarians should be aware of the opportunities around them in the profession and how best they can be tapped to become fortunes.

As established through experience, observation, and interactions with librarians, the awareness of infopreneurship among LIS students remains very low. Notable issues include not being part of the LIS curriculum, a lack of understanding of information as a prime commodity and a professional service to offer, and an overemphasis on certification over skills. These problems, which are capable of increasing the unemployment rate in the country, most especially among LIS professionals, call for an investigation; hence, the investigation into 'infopreneurship awareness and skills among LIS Students Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science, and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria.

## 1.2. Research Objective

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the infopreneurship awareness and skills possessed by LIS students, motivating them to acquire skills that will enable them to cope with the demanding nature of librarianship in the 21st century and, at the same time, allow them to stand on their own as employers of labour. Specific objectives include are to:

- Examine the level of awareness of infopreneurship among students in the Library and Information Science (LIS) program.
- Examine the hard skills possessed by LIS that are necessary for infopreneurship.
- Examine the soft skills possessed by LIS, which are necessary for infopreneurship.
- Examine the hard skills possessed by LIS that are necessary for infopreneurship.
- Examine the strategies necessary for infopreneurs and the skills required in Library and Information Science (LIS).
- Examine the challenges associated with acquiring infopreneurship skills in Library and Information Science (LIS).

## 1.3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

- What is the level of awareness about infopreneurship among LIS students at BOUESTI?
- What are the hard skills possessed by LIS students that will improve their careers and self-employment?
- What are the soft skills possessed by LIS students that will improve their careers and self-employment?
- What are the strategies required for infopreneurship awareness and skills in LIS?
- What are the perceived associated challenges with the acquisition of infopreneurship skills by LIS students?

## 2. Literature Review

The concept of infopreneurship in the information industry has gained significance in the ever-evolving field of library and information science (LIS). This new area equips LIS students with the tools to navigate and profit from the vast information economy by integrating information management with entrepreneurial techniques. Since they must learn to adapt to new roles that go beyond traditional librarianship, LIS students' professional development depends critically on their understanding of and learning of entrepreneurial abilities.

The term "infopreneurship" refers to the use of entrepreneurial concepts in the information industry. To satisfy consumer demands, this involves identifying, creating, and utilising information-based goods and services. Entrepreneurs skilled in information management utilise their expertise to develop innovative, marketable solutions that benefit both the information industry and the economy. The idea aligns with the broader shift toward the knowledge economy, where data is a vital resource. The emphasis on information as the primary resource distinguishes infopreneurship from traditional entrepreneurship. While business owners may deal with a variety of products and services, infopreneurs particularly use knowledge, data, and information to create value. This requires a specific set of skills, including technological expertise, information literacy, and an understanding of market dynamics.

For several reasons, LIS students need to be aware of entrepreneurship. First of all, it provides them with more job options beyond traditional positions in information centres, libraries, and archives. LIS graduates with entrepreneurial abilities are better equipped to pursue professions in a variety of areas, including consultancy, digital content creation, information brokerage, and data management, in an era where information is a fundamental engine of innovation. The second benefit of infopreneurship awareness is that it encourages LIS students to be proactive in spotting and seizing opportunities in the information sector. This kind of thinking is essential for navigating the ever-evolving information landscape, where new business models and technologies are always being developed. In other words, by learning about infopreneurship, LIS students can become innovators who help shape the future of the information profession.

Studies show that, although infopreneurship is becoming increasingly popular, LIS students still lack a comprehensive understanding and acquire inadequate skills. Many LIS curricula still emphasise traditional information management skills over entrepreneurship education, failing to integrate completely [11]. Students can, therefore, graduate lacking the skills needed to pursue entrepreneurial professions. Numerous studies demonstrate the importance of incorporating intrapreneurship training into the curricula of LIS programs. This entails providing classes on digital technologies, entrepreneurship, and business management, in addition to offering opportunities for real-world experience through projects, internships, and partnerships with businesses. LIS programs can better equip students to meet the demands of the information economy by accomplishing this.

Additionally, a change in pedagogical approaches is necessary for the development of infopreneurship skills. While traditional classroom-based instruction may not be sufficient, experiential learning strategies such as problem-based learning, case studies, and real-world projects should be employed. These strategies help students apply theory to real-world situations, which improves their preparedness for infopreneurial activities [12].

For students studying library and information science (LIS), infopreneurship—the merging of entrepreneurship with the information sector—offers a substantial chance to broaden their professional horizons and career opportunities. The need for experts who can develop and market information-based goods and services is increasing as the information economy develops. LIS students' hard and soft skills underscore the importance of possessing a well-rounded skill set for success in this rapidly evolving industry [13]. The technical and specialised skills necessary for infopreneurship are referred to as hard skills. These include data management abilities, technological competence, and information literacy for LIS students. When LIS students master these hard skills, they will be able to recognise, select, and manage information in ways that benefit prospective clients or customers. Highlighted hard skills according to this editorial team are:

- **Information literacy:** It is the foundation of library and information science education. It entails finding, assessing, and using information efficiently. This ability is crucial for identifying marketable information products and services within the context of entrepreneurship. LIS students need to be adept at handling information resources and understanding how they can be utilised in various sectors of the economy.
- **Technological Proficiency:** Using digital tools and platforms to produce and provide information-based services is a common aspect of intrapreneurship. Information systems administration, digital content production, and data analytics are just a few of the competencies that LIS students need to master. Students with these technical skills are valuable assets in the information economy because they can innovate and streamline operations.
- **Business Acumen:** Although it's frequently labelled as a soft skill, business acumen is a highly technical skill. To succeed as an entrepreneur, LIS students must comprehend marketing tactics, operational efficiency, and financial management. With this ability, students can successfully manage the marketing of their information services and create business models that generate revenue.

Conversely, interpersonal and emotional competencies that support successful leadership, teamwork, emotional intelligence, and communication are referred to as soft skills. These abilities are just as crucial in the context of infopreneurship as hard skills, allowing LIS students to negotiate the intricate social dynamics of the corporate world successfully [14]. The following essential soft skills are highlighted:

- **Creativity and Innovation:** The core of infopreneurship is creativity and innovation. LIS students need to develop their capacity to think creatively and generate original concepts for information products and services. In the fast-paced information industry, innovation often requires the creative synthesis of existing knowledge in novel ways.
- **Communication Skills:** For entrepreneurs to effectively convey the benefits of their information products and services to a wide range of stakeholders, effective communication is essential. Students studying library and information science should practice communicating complex ideas clearly and persuasively, both orally and in writing. Additionally, with the increasing use of online platforms for business contacts, digital communication skills are becoming increasingly crucial.
- **Adaptability and Resilience:** The path of an entrepreneur is frequently paved with obstacles and unknowns. Students studying library and information science need to learn how to bounce back from setbacks and become flexible when needed. These soft skills enable entrepreneurs to stay motivated and maintain a positive attitude in the face of challenges.
- **Collaboration and Networking:** Entrepreneurship is rarely a one-person show. LIS students need to learn how to collaborate well with others to accomplish shared objectives. Establishing connections with professionals in the field through networking is also essential since it can yield invaluable knowledge, prospects, and assistance.

The effective use of hard and soft talents is necessary for infopreneurship. In addition to the technical expertise needed to develop and oversee information goods, LIS students also need to have the people skills necessary to promote and maintain their businesses. Well-rounded infopreneurs who can thrive in the competitive digital economy are more likely to be produced by educational programs that prioritise the development of both skill sets. A comprehensive approach to skill development should be used by LIS programs to accomplish this integration. This can entail introducing possibilities for experiential learning, including internships, group projects, and workshops on entrepreneurship. Students can practice and hone both their hard and soft skills by participating in real-world settings, which will equip them for the diverse demands of entrepreneurship. For LIS students, infopreneurship is a vibrant and attractive career path; however, success in this sector requires a well-rounded set of both hard and soft skills. The capacity for communication, innovation, and adaptation is just as vital as technical expertise in information management and technology. Students will be better prepared to become effective infopreneurs, capable of

navigating and seizing opportunities within the information economy, if LIS programs place a high priority on developing both hard and soft skills [16]. Although infopreneurship has many potential advantages, integrating it into library and information science (LIS) education presents some challenges. Identified ones are:

- **Curriculum Design:** A careful balance between classic Library and Information Science (LIS) disciplines and new information entrepreneurial content is necessary when developing a curriculum that successfully integrates information entrepreneurial instruction. This might call for introducing transdisciplinary education and re-evaluating the current course frameworks.
- **Tutor Expertise:** Some LIS tutors may not have the entrepreneurial background necessary to teach entrepreneurship effectively. Programs for professional development and collaborations with professionals in the field can help close this gap.
- **Student Perception:** Initially, some LIS students may not recognise the connection between entrepreneurship and their professional objectives. Thus, educators need to make an effort to demonstrate the significance of entrepreneurship in the context of the information profession and to increase public awareness of the various options it presents.

For LIS students, infopreneurship presents a valuable opportunity to expand their professional horizons and make a positive impact on the information economy. To realise this potential requires a concentrated effort to increase knowledge and equip pupils with the necessary skills. By incorporating infopreneurship education into Library and Information Science (LIS) curricula and addressing related challenges, instructors can equip aspiring information professionals with the skills necessary to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. The LIS profession's capacity for innovation and adaptation will determine its future, and infopreneurship is a crucial part of its development.

### 3. Methodology

The descriptive research design, a type of survey, was adopted for the study. The employed method was used due to the characteristics of the respondents. The study population consisted of all thirty-four part-one LIS students at the university (BOUESTI), being the first cohort of students in the new department. Total enumeration was employed in the study, where all 34 LIS students returned the questionnaire, which served as the data collection instrument [17].

#### 3.1. Data Presentation and Analysis

- What is the level of awareness about infopreneurship among LIS students at BOUESTI?
- What are the hard skills possessed by LIS students that will improve their careers and self-employment?
- What are the soft skills possessed by LIS students that improve their careers and self-employment?
- What are the strategies required for infopreneurship awareness and skills in LIS?
- What are the perceived associated challenges with the acquisition of infopreneurship skills by LIS students?

**Table 1:** Infopreneurship awareness sources among LIS students in BOUESTI

No.	Items	Yes	%	No	%
1.	Through parents	9	26	25	74
2.	During personal reading and consultations	12	35	22	65
3.	A career talk	3	9	31	91
4.	I learned about infopreneurship via the internet	30	88	4	12
5.	Through my friends	24	71	10	29
6.	Through my lectures	7	21	32	79

Table 1 above showed that 30 (88%) students admitted that the source of their information about infopreneurship awareness was through the internet. That means that they spend more time on the internet day and night.

**Table 2:** Hard skills possessed by LIS students of BOUESTI

No.	Items	Yes	%	No	%
1.	Information literacy	21	62	13	38
2.	Technological proficiency	24	71	10	29
3.	Business acumen	8	24	26	76

4.	Search engine optimisation	22	65	12	35
5.	Web development	6	18	28	82
6.	Social Media Marketing	12	35	22	65
7.	Database Management	2	6	32	94
8.	Academic writing	26	76	8	24
9.	Data Analysis	1	3	33	97
10.	Bilingual Skills	6	18	28	82

Table 2 revealed that 26 (76%) of the respondents confirmed that academic writing was the major hard skill they possessed. That implies that prior skills were accumulated through classwork and the writing of examinations.

**Table 3:** Soft skills possessed by LIS students of BOUESTI

No.	Items	Yes	%	No	%
1.	Creativity and Innovation	24	71	10	29
2.	Communication Skills	34	100	0	0
3.	Adaptability and Resilience	26	76	8	24
4.	Collaboration and Networking	22	65	12	35
5.	Leadership	20	59	14	41
6.	Emotional intelligence	18	53	16	47
7.	Time management	22	65	12	35
8.	Conflict management	17	50	17	50
9.	Problem-solving	17	50	17	50
10.	Critical thinking	22	65	12	35

Table 3 confirmed that the major soft skill possessed by these respondents was communication skills, which received a 100% positive response rate. By implication, it means that the respondents recognised the importance of communication skills from the outset.

**Table 4:** What are the strategies required for infopreneurship awareness and skills in LIS?

No.	Items	Yes	%	No	%
1.	Deployment of media	34	100	0	0
2.	Public lectures and other educational engagements	19	56	15	44
3.	Infopreneurship advocacy	28	82	6	18
4.	Curriculum redesign	19	56	15	44
5.	Promotion of leisure reading regarding infopreneurship	18	53	16	47
6.	Acquisition of more literature on infopreneurship by the libraries	25	74	9	26
7.	Promotion of infopreneurial tools through students' assignments	27	79	7	21

Table 4 confirmed the respondents' positions on all the suggested strategies for creating awareness of infopreneurship. A maximum positive response rate was recorded in favour of deploying media. This means that almost all the respondents have one means or the other through which they access information through the media.

**Table 5:** What are the perceived associated challenges with the acquisition of infopreneurship skills by LIS students?

No.	Perceived challenges	Yes	%	No	%
1.	Insufficient social amenities	30	88	4	12
2.	Difficulties in creating business plans	22	65	12	35
3.	A subpar power source	32	94	2	6
4.	Adverse policies of the government	28	82	6	18
5.	Insufficient finance	29	85	5	15
6.	Negative attitudes of society's members	30	88	4	12
7.	Inadequate ICT skills	12	35	22	65

8.	Low level of patronage	9	26	25	74
9.	Societal discouragement	27	79	7	21
10.	Inability to use technology	5	15	29	85

Table 5 confirmed that a subpar power source (32, 94%), insufficient social amenities (32, 88%), and negative societal attitudes (30, 88%) are the major perceived challenges associated with acquiring infopreneurship skills among LIS students.

#### 4. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study showed that LIS students are aware of infopreneurship, with the primary source of awareness being the internet. This finding aligns with the results of a similar study conducted at a Nigerian institution, which demonstrated that LIS students are aware of infopreneurship. Furthermore, academic writing was the most popular hard skill option among the LIS students. No wonder her study titled *Developing Learners' Academic Writing Skills in Higher Education: A Study for Educational Reform* emphasises the importance of academic writing [18].

Although communication skills were the most prominent soft skill option among LIS students, responses confirmed that they are aware that soft skills are essential. This supports the findings that students are aware, understand, and perceive that soft skills are important for education and employment. In addition, the students agreed that the deployment of media is one of the strategies required for creating awareness of infopreneurship. This may be a result of the fact that all of them have one means or another through which they access information via the media. However, a subpar power source is identified as one of the challenges facing the development of infopreneurship among LIS students. This finding aligns with the findings of Adeniyi et al. [15], who stated that inadequate power supply is the primary issue hindering the growth of infopreneurship in Nigeria. This negates Coulson-Thomas's [4] study, which found that one major obstacle to the growth of infopreneurship, especially among LIS graduates, is a lack of specialised training [19].

#### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Due to the current state of Nigeria, where white-collar jobs are not flowing as they once did, there is a need for greater emphasis on how an individual can translate acquired hard skills into self-reliance and employment through the acquisition of soft skills. Knowledge of infopreneurship among LIS students will help in this direction; hence, there is a need to create more awareness in this respect [20]. The findings of this study guided the submission of the following recommendations: skills acquisition should be encouraged among LIS students. All levels of the LIS curriculum should include infopreneurship as a course to study. There is a need for society to change its orientation regarding young adults exhibiting their acquired soft skills, especially content creators. Additionally, the LIS department should host talks featuring a variety of accomplished individuals who will present to students the range of prospects that arise from being infopreneurs through their soft skills. The government should invest more in the power supply sector to ensure that electricity is consistently available.

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