

PERCEPTION OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION OF UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC STAFF AND ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE UNDERGRADUATES IN TWO UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship has emerged as a key solution to graduate unemployment in Nigeria. However, industrial actions by university academic staff, leading to calendar disruptions and school closures, may discourage students from pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. Thus, this study explored the perception of industrial action by university academic staff and entrepreneurial intention among Library and Information Science (LIS) undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey research design, the study targeted 859 LIS students from the University of Ibadan (200) and the Federal University Oye-Ekiti (659). A proportionate stratified sampling technique was employed to select a representative sample of 258 students, which accounts for 30% of the total population. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings revealed that students demonstrated a high level of entrepreneurial intention, indicating strong aspirations to engage in business ventures in the future. Additionally, their perception of industrial actions, such as strikes, was generally positive, suggesting that they may view such actions as justified responses to institutional or systemic challenges. The study concluded that industrial actions by university academic staff have had significant impacts on the entrepreneurial intentions of LIS undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria. Therefore, educational institutions and policymakers need to recognise and support this entrepreneurial spirit and embrace it as a positive outcome of an otherwise challenging situation. The government should also uphold agreements made with labour unions to promote industrial harmony and stability in higher educational institutions.

Keywords: perception of industrial action, entrepreneurial intention, LIS undergraduates, university academic staff, South-west, Nigeria.

Word count: 246

Introduction

Entrepreneurship among undergraduates in Nigerian universities has garnered significant research attention, particularly in the context of graduate unemployment. The importance of entrepreneurship in driving economic development, wealth generation and improved living standards is widely recognised. Consequently, promoting entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduates is necessary. Scholars have defined entrepreneurship in various ways. Alvarez and Barney (2017) defined entrepreneurship as the pursuit of opportunities that create value through risk-taking, innovation, resource development and management, which drive economic growth and societal advancement. Inyang (2018) referred to entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of a person to search for investment opportunities and successfully establish a business with the available opportunities. Ogbidi (2020) opined that entrepreneurship is way beyond just providing goods and services in the hope of a profit, but to contribute to the social and economic growth of the society.

Undergraduate students, including those studying Library and Information Science, often engage in small-scale entrepreneurial activities. While these ventures primarily serve as a source of livelihood rather than full-time business endeavours, they reflect a strong entrepreneurial intention among the students. According to Dung and Tu (2021), entrepreneurial intention refers to an individual's self-belief in their ability to establish a new business and their commitment to doing so in the future. Awan and Ahmad (2017) emphasised that promoting entrepreneurial intention is an important step in the entrepreneurial process, as it transforms ideas into actionable initiatives. Entrepreneurial intention is considered a key predictor of future business activity, with undergraduates who exhibit higher levels of intention being more likely to start a business compared to those with lower entrepreneurial aspirations.

Several factors have been identified to influence students' entrepreneurial intention. For example, Brownhilder (2014) identified "push factors" such as unemployment, job security concerns and poverty as factors influencing entrepreneurial intention among students in Cameroon. Conversely, Malebana (2014) highlighted "pull factors" like financial independence and opportunities for creativity as motivators. While all these factors and more can influence

entrepreneurial intention among students, this study is specifically focused on how industrial actions by university academic staff affects entrepreneurship intention among students.

Industrial action, often taking the form of strikes, is a tactic employed by trade unions to pressure employers into meeting their demands. In Nigeria, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has a long history of industrial action, dating back to 1980s (Adeyemo and Okeme, 2021). Their primary grievance stems from the Federal Government's failure to address their concerns, including fair salaries and university autonomy. These strikes have become a recurring issue, which significantly affects Nigeria's higher education system. The consequences of these actions are far-reaching, including the suspension of academic activities, prolonged school closures, delayed degree completion, and disruptions to the academic calendar. Frequent disruptions in the academic calendar contribute to student disengagement, which may lead to an increase in social vices such as robbery, internet fraud and cultism. The uncertainty surrounding these strikes creates frustration among both students and parents, as lost time and academic progress are difficult to recover. Consequently, some students may choose to drop out or defer their studies, which further prolong their time in higher education.

The prolonged industrial actions by university academic staff have significantly impacted undergraduates seeking white-collar employment. Due to strike-related delays, many graduates exceed the age limits set by employers for entry-level positions, reducing their job opportunities. This challenge has been recognised as one of the top ten consequences of ASUU strikes (Aun, Oniye, and Ibraheem, 2023), which demonstrates the negative effects on employment trends, particularly in fields where age is a crucial factor. In response, some undergraduates, including those studying Library and Information Science, are increasingly exploring entrepreneurship. They view this as a strategy to regain control over their education and career trajectories. Instead of remaining idle or engaging in unproductive activities, these students are actively seeking alternative pathways, by leveraging their skills and knowledge to create their own professional opportunities.

Statement of the problem

Entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates is increasingly recognised as a vital component in preparing young people for the challenges of the labour market. For students in

Library and Information Science (LIS), cultivating an interest in entrepreneurship can open doors to self-employment and innovative service delivery in the information sector. As higher education systems in Nigeria continue to face recurring challenges, especially frequent industrial actions by academic staff, there is growing concern about how these disruptions shape students' perceptions of their academic experience and future career outlook.

Industrial actions, such as strikes, protests, and suspension of academic activities—have become common features of the Nigerian university system. These actions often result in prolonged academic calendars, disrupted learning, and increased uncertainty about the value and timing of formal education. For LIS students, who are training for professional roles in the knowledge and information sectors, such instability may influence how they perceive their academic journey and their preparedness for life after graduation. While studies have explored entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates in fields like business and management, there is limited research describing the perceptions of LIS students regarding industrial actions and their views on entrepreneurship. Understanding how these students perceive industrial action and the extent of their entrepreneurial intention is essential to inform curriculum reforms, policy decisions, and career support services tailored to their needs. Therefore, this study aims to describe the entrepreneurial intention and perception of industrial action among Library and Information Science undergraduates in two selected universities in South-west, Nigeria.

Research questions

The following questions were answered in the study:

1. What is the entrepreneurial intention of Library and Information Science undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of entrepreneurial intention of Library and Information Science students in South-west, Nigeria?
3. What is the perception of Library and Information Science undergraduates towards industrial action by university academic staff?

Literature review

Universities play a pivotal role in higher education, with academic staff forming a critical component responsible for ensuring the effective and efficient functioning of these institutions. These professionals are responsible for teaching, conducting research, as well as seeing to the development of academic programmes. Often referred to as lecturers, academic staff form the core of scholarly activities within tertiary institutions. According to Ogunode, Jegede and Musa (2021), the realisation of higher education objectives is largely dependent on the contributions of academic staff. Despite their important role, the situation in many Nigerian public universities reflects a disconnect between the value of academic staff and the conditions they face. Frequent industrial actions by the academic staff have repeatedly disrupted academic activities, which gradually undermine their essential roles in the educational system.

Scholars have investigated the causes of the incessant industrial action of university academic staff. One reason they all point out is the government's failure to follow through with their agreements. In Nigeria for instance, Frank (2022) identified factors like inadequate university funding, non-acceptance of UTAS (University Transparency and Accountability Solution) as a new payment platform, non-implementation of the 2009 agreement and lack of good working conditions, as causes of the industrial action of university academic staff in Nigerian universities. According to Alimi (2022), poor funding, non-payment of earned allowances and salaries, retirement age increments, among others, are also causes of the industrial action of university academic staff in Nigeria. It was also observed that right from when the academic staff formed their union (ASUU) in 1978, the underlying cause of their strike action has remained unchanged (Uzochkwu, Anierobi and Ezennaka 2021).

Students' perception of industrial actions by university academic staff varies. While some students see the industrial action as a delay and a bane to their academic existence, others perceive it positively and see it as an opportunity for personal development and to venture into entrepreneurship. Although entrepreneurship has been incorporated into the curriculum of Nigerian universities, however, it seems to have not yet yielded the desired results. In a study by Ibrahim et al. (2023) on entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention of undergraduate students in selected universities in Abuja, the findings revealed that entrepreneurship education has yielded no significant positive effect on student's intention to engage in entrepreneurship.

It has, however, been observed that there is a recent increase in entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates. The incessant industrial actions by university academic staff may have influenced this shift in entrepreneurial intention among students. Awe et al. (2022), in their study on the effects of academic staff strike actions on undergraduates in public universities in South West Nigeria, found that students have mixed views about the impact of these strikes. On the positive side, some students used the period to develop entrepreneurial skills. However, this came with a decline in their academic interest. The strikes, which often result to school closures, loss of time, disruption of academic calendars and delayed graduations, have caused many students to view education mainly as a path to obtaining a certificate rather than as a means for personal growth and professional development. Similarly, Sanchi et al. (2022) noted that many students who found jobs or financial opportunities during the strike period are now less motivated to return to academic life.

Lawan and Ogunode (2021), in their study, observed that industrial actions have adverse effects on students' academic performance. The Nation Newspapers (2022) also reported that there is a decline in learning culture, diminished interest in academics and reduced motivation among students. This highlights the multifaceted impact of industrial action on students, as it influences not only their perception of education but also their entrepreneurial intentions and overall academic engagement. While most students would have waited until after graduating before gathering skills and venturing into entrepreneurship, industrial actions by university academic staff often serves as an opportunity for students to equip themselves with requisite entrepreneurial skills while still in school. Oguezue, Nwune and Chukwuedo (2023) investigated the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by students in public universities during the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strikes in Nigeria. The study found that undergraduate students judiciously used their time to acquire diverse entrepreneurial skills during ASUU strikes. This suggests that students are proactively equipping themselves with essential entrepreneurial skills for survival, independence and competitiveness in the global labour market.

While industrial actions by university academic staff have motivated some students to explore entrepreneurship, they have also posed challenges to student business owners. Lateef (2022) investigated the impact of ASUU strikes on small-scale businesses within the campus of

the Federal University of Lafia. The study found that these strikes had a significant negative effect on small businesses, as it disrupted business operations and reduced sales. The author recommended that the government adopt effective strategies for resolving industrial disputes to prevent future prolonged strikes, which severely affect business performance. These findings suggest that student entrepreneurs may experience frustration and financial setbacks during strike periods, which can potentially lead them to abandon entrepreneurial activities altogether.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population under study consisted of 859 undergraduate students enrolled in Library and Information Science department, specifically 200 students from the University of Ibadan and 659 students from the Federal University Oye-Ekiti. To ensure that the sample accurately reflected the population, a proportionate stratified sampling technique was employed. This method facilitated the selection of a representative sample of 258 students, which accounted for 30% of the total population from both institutions. Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire, which served as the main research instrument. To ensure the reliability and content validity of the instrument, it underwent expert validation by professionals in the fields of educational research and Library and Information Science. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistical methods, including frequency counts, mean scores, percentages and standard deviation.

Results of analysis

Research Question one: What is the entrepreneurial intention of Library and Information Science undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria?

Table 1 provides insight into the entrepreneurial intentions of LIS undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria.

Table 1: Entrepreneurial intention of LIS undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria

S/N	Entrepreneurial intention by undergraduates	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.Dev.
1	I have a strong desire to start my own business in the future.	162 69.5%	66 28.3%	5 2.1%	0	3.67	.514
2	I am confident that I have the necessary skills and knowledge to be a successful entrepreneur.	117 50.2%	108 46.4%	8 3.4%	0	3.47	.565
3	I am constantly looking for new business opportunities that I can pursue.	128 54.9%	92 39.5%	12 5.2%	1 0.4%	3.49	.617
4	I enjoy taking risks and facing challenges in pursuing my goals.	104 44.6%	108 46.4%	20 8.6%	1 0.4%	3.35	.654
5	I prefer to be my own boss rather than working for someone else.	144 61.8%	74 31.8%	15 6.4%	0	3.55	.614
6	I have a clear vision of what kind of business I want to create and how to achieve it.	109 46.8%	101 43.3%	22 9.4%	1 0.4%	3.36	.670
7	I am willing to invest a lot of time and effort into starting and running my own business.	145 62.2%	81 34.8%	7 3.0%	0	3.59	.550

8	I seek feedback and advice from others who have entrepreneurial experience or expertise.	132 56.7%	94 40.3%	7 3.0%	0	3.54	.557
9	I am motivated by the potential rewards and benefits of being an entrepreneur.	132 56.7%	94 40.3%	7 3.0%	0	3.54	.557
10	I have a high level of creativity and innovation in generating new ideas or solutions.	88 37.8%	99 42.5%	41 17.6%	5 2.1%	3.16	.785
11	I can adapt to changing market conditions and customer needs quickly and effectively.	88 37.8%	129 55.4%	15 6.4%	1 0.4%	3.30	.607
12	I can overcome obstacles and setbacks that may arise in the entrepreneurial process.	89 38.2%	132 56.7%	11 4.7%	1 0.4%	3.33	.584
13	I have a strong sense of personal responsibility and accountability for my actions and decisions.	112 48.1%	118 50.6%	3 1.3%	0	3.47	.525
14	I can work well with others who share my entrepreneurial vision and values.	123 52.8%	99 42.5%	11 4.7%	0	3.48	.588
15	I have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship as a career choice.	142 60.9%	83 35.6%	8 3.4%	0	3.58	.561

Table 1 shows the entrepreneurial intentions of LIS undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria. The result revealed that the students have a strong desire to start their own business in the future ($\bar{x}$ = 3.67), and are willing to invest a lot of time and effort into it ($\bar{x}$ = 3.59). The students also have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship as a career choice ($\bar{x}$ = 3.58), and would prefer to be their own boss rather than working for someone else ($\bar{x}$ = 3.55). The students are equally motivated by the potential rewards and benefits of being an entrepreneur ($\bar{x}$ = 3.54) and would not mind seeking feedback and advice from others who have entrepreneurial experience or expertise ($\bar{x}$ = 3.54).

Research Questions 2: What is the level of entrepreneurial intention of Library and Information Science undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria?

Table 2a illustrates the level of entrepreneurial intention of Library and Information Science undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria.

Table 2a: Level of entrepreneurial intention of LIS undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria

S/N	Entrepreneurial intention by SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.Dev.
1	I have a strong desire to start my own business in the future.	162 69.5%	66 28.3%	5 2.1%	0	3.67 .514
2	I am confident that I have the necessary skills and knowledge to be a successful entrepreneur.	117 50.2%	108 46.4%	8 3.4%	0	3.47 .565
3	I am constantly looking for new business opportunities that I can pursue.	128 54.9%	92 39.5%	12 5.2%	1 0.4%	3.49 .617
4	I enjoy taking risks and facing challenges in pursuing my goals.	104 44.6%	108 46.4%	20 8.6%	1 0.4%	3.35 .654

5	I prefer to be my own boss rather than working for someone else.	144 61.8%	74 31.8%	15 6.4%	0	3.55	.614
6	I have a clear vision of what kind of business I want to create and how to achieve it.	109 46.8%	101 43.3%	22 9.4%	1 0.4%	3.36	.670
7	I am willing to invest a lot of time and effort into starting and running my own business.	145 62.2%	81 34.8%	7 3.0%	0	3.59	.550
8	I seek feedback and advice from others who have entrepreneurial experience or expertise.	132 56.7%	94 40.3%	7 3.0%	0	3.54	.557
9	I am motivated by the potential rewards and benefits of being an entrepreneur.	132 56.7%	94 40.3%	7 3.0%	0	3.54	.557
10	I have a high level of creativity and innovation in generating new ideas or solutions.	88 37.8%	99 42.5%	41 17.6%	5 2.1%	3.16	.785
11	I can adapt to changing market conditions and customer needs quickly and effectively.	88 37.8%	129 55.4%	15 6.4%	1 0.4%	3.30	.607
12	I can overcome obstacles and setbacks that may arise in the entrepreneurial process.	89 38.2%	132 56.7%	11 4.7%	1 0.4%	3.33	.584
13	I have a strong sense of personal responsibility and accountability for my actions and decisions.	112 48.1%	118 50.6%	3 1.3%	0	3.47	.525
14	I can work well with others who share my entrepreneurial vision and values.	123 52.8%	99 42.5%	11 4.7%	0	3.48	.588
15	I have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship as a career choice.	142 60.9%	83 35.6%	8 3.4%	0	3.58	.561

Weighted mean: 3.45**Criterion mean: 2.50****Grand mean: 51.88**

The level of entrepreneurial intention of LIS undergraduates is summarised in Table 2a. The result revealed a weighted mean score of 3.45, which is higher than the criterion mean score of 2.50, indicating a high level of entrepreneurial intention among the students. Additionally, all items examined under this construct had means scores higher than the criterion mean. This further proves the high level of entrepreneurship intention of the students.

Table 2b Test of norms for the level of entrepreneurial intention of Library and Information Science undergraduates

Interval	Level of entrepreneurial intention	Mean
1-20	Low	

21-40	Moderate	
41-60	High	51.88

Table 2b outlines the findings of a norm test conducted to determine the level of entrepreneurial intention of the LIS undergraduates. The assessment categorised the students' level of entrepreneurial intention into three intervals: low, moderate and high. Specifically, the intervals were delineated as follows: scores falling between 1 and 20 were classified as low, scores ranging from 21 to 40 were considered moderate and scores spanning from 41 to 60 were deemed high. With a grand mean score of 51.88, the result, therefore, indicates a high level of entrepreneurial intention among the students.

Research Question 3: What is the perception of Library and Information Science undergraduates on industrial action by university academic staff?

Table 3: Perception of Library and Information Science undergraduates on industrial action by university academic staff

S/N	Perception of industrial action by university academic staff	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.Dev.
1	The communication about the reasons for the academic staff's industrial action was clear and understandable.	78 33.5%	129 55.4%	21 9%	5 2.1%	3.20	.687
2	I believe the academic staff's decision to go on industrial action is justifiable.	69 29.6%	139 59.7%	23 9.9%	2 .9%	3.18	.631

3	I think the government is responsible for industrial actions.	109 46.8%	107 45.9%	17 7.3%	0	3.39	.622
4	The impact of the industrial action on my academic progress has been significant.	80 34.3%	103 44.2%	34 14.6%	16 6.9%	3.06	.874
5	I think the industrial action will lead to positive changes in the university system.	68 29.2%	104 44.6%	47 20.2%	14 6%	2.97	.858
6	The duration of the academic staff's industrial action has been reasonable.	38 16.3%	103 44.2%	66 28.3%	26 11.2%	2.66	.882
7	I think the industrial action will have long-term benefits for the university academic staff and students.	61 26.2%	117 50.2%	42 18%	13 5.6%	2.97	.817
8	I am willing to participate in peaceful protests or demonstrations to support the university academic staff.	55 23.6%	111 47.6%	50 21.5%	17 7.3%	2.88	.854
9	I support the methods and strategies employed by the academic staff during the industrial action.	55 23.6%	125 53.6%	44 18.9%	9 3.9%	2.97	.762
10	The university administration has taken sufficient steps to resolve the issues leading to the industrial action.	58 24.9%	115 49.4%	53 22.7%	7 3%	2.96	.773
11	The industrial action was necessary to achieve the desired outcome.	66 28.3%	132 56.7%	28 12%	7 3%	3.10	.718

Weighted mean: 3.03

Criterion mean: 2.50

The perceptions of the LIS undergraduates regarding industrial action by university academic staff is illustrated in Table 3. The consensus among the students is that the government bears responsibility for the industrial actions ($\bar{x}=3.39$). Majority of the students also found the communication about the reasons for the industrial action to be clear and understandable ($\bar{x}=3.20$). A significant number of the students believe the decision to undertake industrial action is justifiable ($\bar{x}=3.18$). Nonetheless, the impact of the industrial action on students' academic progress is notable ($\bar{x}=3.06$), suggesting that many students feel their studies have been significantly affected. Similarly, the duration of the academic staff's industrial action is viewed less favorably ($\bar{x}=2.66$), which implies that there are concerns among the students about the prolonged nature of the industrial action and its implications. Overall, the weighted mean score of 3.03 surpasses the criterion mean of 2.50, signifying a general consensus among the students in support of the industrial action, despite concerns about its duration and impact on academic progress.

Recommendations

The following are recommended based on the findings of the study:

1. During orientation week, university authorities should incorporate sessions on entrepreneurship to introduce fresh undergraduates to entrepreneurship and its opportunities.
2. Government should provide financial support and credit facilities to aspiring entrepreneurs among students.
3. The government and relevant stakeholders should devise sustainable solutions to end the incessant strikes in public tertiary institutions.
5. Various unions in higher institutions of learning should devise other means of resolving industrial conflict than incessant strikes that are counterproductive.
6. Public orientation programmes should be implemented to raise awareness that graduates should not rely on the government for employment but rather should use the knowledge acquired to create jobs for themselves.
7. Universities should strive to minimise the impact of industrial action on students by implementing effective communication strategies and alternative arrangements for classes and assessments. This can help maintain a sense of stability and minimise disruptions to students' education.

Conclusion

The industrial actions undertaken by university academic staff in Nigeria have had a significant impact on students, including LIS undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria. These disruptions in academic schedules and activities have inadvertently promoted an environment that encourages entrepreneurial thinking and initiative. As students face uncertainties in their academic progression, many are re-evaluating their career paths and considering entrepreneurship as a potential alternative. Undergraduates have now found entrepreneurship appealing and attractive as a career choice, and would prefer to be their own boss, rather than work for someone else. This shift in perspective is crucial for the development of a robust entrepreneurial community across the country. It is, therefore, very important for educational institutions and government to

recognise and support this entrepreneurial spirit shown by students and embrace it as a positive outcome of an otherwise challenging situation.

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