

INVOLVEMENT OF SMES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN LIS SCHOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE JOB CREATION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH-CENTRAL, NIGERIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study was carried out to investigate the involvement of SMEs in entrepreneurship education in LIS Schools for effective job creation among undergraduate students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Five objectives and five research questions were formulated to guide the study. A sample size of 141 LIS educators and LIS final year undergraduate students was used for the study. The instruments for data collection were structured questionnaire and interview. One hundred and forty-one (141) copies of questionnaires were distributed to LIS educators and LIS final year undergraduate students, with a return rate of 114 (81%). Data collected were analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation with SPSS version 22. On the scale, the average cutoff mean was 2.50, hence, an item was accepted if it was 2.50 or above. However, it is rejected if it is below 2.50.

Findings: The study revealed that revealed that: the entrepreneurship courses in LIS curriculum that are very appropriate for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students were database design and management, book production and publishing, and digital reference and information services; all the types of business skills are highly needed in LIS entrepreneurship fields among undergraduate students. The findings also revealed that most SMEs are willing to get involve and serve as trainers, consultants, and internship providers, which can enrich the students' learning experience and professional exposure. The findings further revealed that lack of funding was the major challenges associated with LIS entrepreneurship education for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students, followed by limited access to mentorship, networking opportunities, and other support systems in the LIS field in Nigeria.

Implication: The entrepreneurship courses in LIS curriculum are very appropriate for job creation. Involvement of SMEs is vital for practical learning. If SMEs are not involved, it will not enhances the students employability and rendering the students jobless, posing a threat to society.

Originality/Value: The study recommended that universities should seek funding through grants, crowd funding, industry sponsors, and alumni networks to improve program quality; efforts should be made to provide mentorship and networking opportunities for LIS students.

Keywords: SMEs, Entrepreneurship, LIS schools, Job Creation, Federal Universities, North-Central, Nigeria.

Paper type: Empirical research

Introduction

Nigerian universities have recently been recognized for significant progress in teaching undergraduate students about entrepreneurial opportunities. In Nigeria, according to Siyanbola et al., cited in John (2015) the National Universities Commission (NUC) mandated all universities, in 2006, to introduce a compulsory two-semester undergraduate

level course on entrepreneurship. The goal was to reinforce an entrepreneurial mindset among Nigerian undergraduates and to inculcate the necessary enterprise knowledge and skills. The course is offered under the "Entrepreneurial Skills Development Programmes (ESDP)" as a general subject for all students, irrespective of one's core discipline. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a

major role in most economies, particularly in developing countries. SMEs account for the majority of businesses worldwide and are important contributors to job creation and global economic development. They represent about 90% of businesses and more than 50% of employment worldwide (World Bank, 2023). These enterprises according to Agwu and Emeti (2014) are also “perceived as the key to Nigeria’s economic growth, poverty alleviation and employment generation”. However, by involving Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in educating LIS students, the students can acquire the skills and knowledge to support these businesses and generate job opportunities.

Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) are small businesses that have fewer employees compared to large corporations. These enterprises are often characterized by their flexibility and ability to adapt to changes in the market. Liberto (2022) defined SMEs as “businesses that maintain revenues, assets or a number of employees below a certain threshold”. Each country has its own definition of what constitutes a Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise and may also set different guidelines across industries to define what a small business is across sectors. SMEs can exist in almost any industry, but it is more likely they reside within industries requiring fewer employees and requiring smaller upfront capital investments. Common types of SMEs include legal firms, dentist offices, restaurants, or bars (Liberto, 2022). In line with the preceding statements, Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises includes in particular, self-employed persons, family businesses engaged in craft or other activities, and partnerships or associations regularly engaged in an economic activity.

Nigeria is blessed with many entrepreneurs operating in the SME sector. With the many factors militating against entrepreneurship, there are some Nigerians

that have braved it against all odds and are very successful today. Nigerian Library Association (2022) listed some of these SMEs in Library and Information Service industries include EBSCO Educational Services; Boldscholar Research Ltd.; MOSURO The Booksellers Ltd.; Library Aid Africa; SAMAPO Educational Ideal Books Ltd.; Ben Samson Global Resources and Littlemite Investments Ltd.; Bookshop House Ltd.; Eemediba Ltd.; Safari Books Ltd.; Havilah Group; and The Book Company Ltd. (Nigerian Library Association, 2022). Others include KANGDAVE Resources Ventures Ltd.

In the context of this work, entrepreneurship education can include instruction on identifying and exploring business opportunities, developing strategies for finding business opportunities, and providing the skills needed to successfully establish and run a business. In Nigerian, it is being included in college courses as a way to promote self-employment and job creation for sustainable development. Entrepreneurship education according to Akhuemonkhan et al., cited in Ede (2023) is defined as a specialized and all-round training programme designed by education authorities to change the worldview of students from job seekers to wealth creators by developing their latent talents and potentials. In the context of this work, entrepreneurship education can provide undergraduate students with the skills and knowledge they need to start and run their own businesses. The foregoing view is supported by Ngwuchukwu and Onyebuchi (2020) that:

Entrepreneurship therefore is the process of exploring opportunities and venturing into new growths for the purpose of making profits in order to be self-sustained. Entrepreneurship can occur in different professions like the

sciences, arts and social science disciplines such as Library and Information Science. It can also be in different agencies, in communities and organisations but the bottom line is that entrepreneurship contributes to economic progress through innovation, competence, job-creation and by generally improving the well-being of individuals and the society they live in (p.3).

Library and Information Science (LIS) entrepreneurship education refers to the ability of librarians and information professionals to develop innovative ideas and solutions that add value to their field, such as creating new services or products or finding ways to leverage existing resources to better meet the needs of their library or community. It involves the development of entrepreneurship skills that enable professionals in this field to identify opportunities and create value through innovation. Budd and Wilson, cited in Ede (2023) defined Entrepreneurship in Library and Information Science (LIS) as “the ability to identify and create new opportunities for innovation and value within the field, whether through the development of new services, products, or approaches to meet changing user needs or by identifying ways to leverage existing resources to create value for the library and its community”. From several definitions provided above, LIS entrepreneurship education can be defined as the process of imparting knowledge and skills to librarians and information professionals that enable them to identify and create new opportunities for innovation and value within the library and information profession.

Job creation involves creating new job opportunities. Sooriyaarachchi et al., (2015) defined job creation as “the process of generating new employment opportunities”. This implies that job creation is described as the activity or procedure of creating new opportunities for employment. The authors further stated that job creation is an important aspect of socio-economic development and is influenced by various factors such as the deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies (Sooriyaarachchi et al., 2015). In Vietnam, job creation is a priority in socio development policies, aiming to ensure the safety, stability, and development of society (Van, 2017). An empirical analysis of job creation in the European Union defined indicators such as job creation, net job creation, and net job creation rate to measure employment growth and labor market dynamism (Hallak and Harasztosi, 2019).

Involvement of SMEs in LIS entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities can be done in several ways, such as through case studies, on the hand approaches, mentorship, projects and guest lecturers, training sessions, industrial training, and featuring SMEs leaders. This will create job opportunities for Library and Information Science undergraduates. The Global Entrepreneurship Report according to Reynolds et al. (2016) asserted that “Undergraduates can learn about real-life SMEs and their challenges and successes through case studies”. This implies that SMEs case studies can be a valuable mode of instruction for LIS undergraduates in Nigerian universities as they can provide practical examples of entrepreneurship concepts and theories, exposure to diverse SMEs, opportunities for critical thinking and problem-solving and collaborative learning. In general, when Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) participate in the situation mentioned, their goal is to connect academic and business

environments. This connection can help create positive effects such as generating new jobs, developing skills, transferring knowledge, and fostering economic growth specifically for SMEs. Most Library and Information Science (LIS) Schools do not embark on this and it poses problem for undergraduates when they try to find jobs after graduation. The foregoing view is imperative as Mole and Dim (2022) maintained that:

In the University of Nigeria Nsukka, for instance, entrepreneurial courses have been introduced in all programmes of the department. Many other library schools have done the same in their curriculum. With this development, LIS graduates will be leaving the library schools with the orientation and relevant skills for self employment (p.386)

However, Library Schools have a crucial role in involving small and medium businesses in the curriculum for Library and Information Science Students in order to create job opportunities for them, in accordance with government policies. To ensure SME involvement in the LIS curriculum, Library Schools can take specific measures. They can integrate dedicated courses or modules focused on SMEs and entrepreneurship, covering the understanding of SMEs' unique needs and challenges, fostering entrepreneurial skills, and providing practical experiences through case studies or internships. According to Ma (2019), entrepreneurship education can equip LIS students with skills such as creativity, innovation, problem-solving, and business management, which can be applied in various roles within SMEs. These roles can include project management, product development, marketing, and sales.

In view of the numerous benefits already mentioned, this study aims to examine the involvement of SMEs in entrepreneurship education in LIS Schools for Effective Job Creation in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria. The universities included in the study are the University of Ilorin in Kwara State, Federal University of Technology Minna in Niger State, Federal University of Lafia in Nasarawa State, University of Jos in Plateau State, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi in Benue State (formerly Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi), Federal University Lokoja in Kogi State, and University of Abuja in Nigerian Capital.

Statement of the Problem

Opportunities in entrepreneurship encompass careers and positions within new businesses or ventures owned by individuals. Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in Nigeria's economy today. Entrepreneurs drive innovation, introducing new products and technologies that boost economic growth. They are essentials for creating jobs, particularly through startups and small businesses, helping to reduce unemployment. It is widely acknowledged that in recent times, Nigerian universities have made notable advancements in educating students on entrepreneurship opportunities within Library and Information Science (LIS).

However, the engagement of SMEs in this area has been limited and most Library Schools of Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria is yet to realize these great benefits. Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria can help Library and Information Science (LIS) students get real-world experience and create jobs by participating in entrepreneurship education. Undergraduates in LIS education may not recognize the significance of SMEs or the benefits of working in these small businesses. However, a gap often exists

between the education received and the available job opportunities in the field.

The researchers observed that, most graduates are jobless and searching for work on the streets. It seems that they may not have been taught through entrepreneurship education there and through SMEs, this culminated into not having business skills for job creation, thereby contributing to unemployment and underemployment challenges in the region. Therefore teaching entrepreneurship courses becomes imperative in LIS schools for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students; but engaging SME's is very crucial in the practical aspect of it. It is in this light that this current study will find out how LIS Schools can involve SMEs in entrepreneurship education for effective job creation among undergraduate students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Identify entrepreneurship courses in LIS curriculum appropriate for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria.
- ii. Identify SMEs engaged in LIS entrepreneurship education among undergraduates in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria.
- iii. Find out modes SMEs can be involve in entrepreneurship education in LIS Schools for effective job creation among undergraduates in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria.
- iv. Identify types of business skills needed in LIS entrepreneurship fields among undergraduate students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

- v. Ascertain the challenges associated with LIS entrepreneurship education for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria.
- vi. Identify the strategies for enhancing LIS entrepreneurship education for generating job opportunities among undergraduate students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What are the entrepreneurship courses in LIS curriculum appropriate for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria?
- ii. What are the SMEs engaged in LIS entrepreneurship education among undergraduates in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria?
- iii. What are the modes SMEs can be involve in entrepreneurship education in LIS Schools for effective job creation among undergraduates in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria?
- iv. What are the types of business skills needed in LIS entrepreneurship fields among undergraduate students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria?
- v. What are the challenges associated with LIS entrepreneurship education for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria?
- vi. What are the strategies for enhancing LIS entrepreneurship education for generating job opportunities among undergraduate

students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria?

Literature Review

Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) are small businesses that have fewer employees compared to large corporations. These enterprises are often characterized by their flexibility and ability to adapt to changes in the market. Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) are typically smaller in size and have limited manpower compared to larger companies. Moreover, they possess the capability to adjust their operations and strategies in order to align with market fluctuations. In Nigeria, the Small and Medium Industries Enterprises Investment Scheme, cited in Ebong, et al. (2017) defined Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) as any enterprises with a maximum asset based of N200 million excluding land and working capital and with a number of staff employed not less than 10 or more than 300.

SMEs are small and medium-sized businesses found in various industries. The types of businesses that is in the category of SMEs according to Roberts and Robinson (2020), Liu and White (2019), Oestreicher (2018) and Kim (2021) include in retail and wholesale, SMEs include independent boutiques, grocery stores, specialized shops, and small-scale distributors. Professional service SMEs offer expertise in legal, accounting, consulting, advertising, design, architecture, engineering, and IT. Technology startups focus on innovative solutions in software, mobile apps, e-commerce, and digital marketing. Creative industries SMEs cover areas such as art, design, media, advertising, publishing, film, music, and entertainment, distributing cultural products and services (Robinson, 2020; Liu and White, 2019; Oestreicher, 2018; Kim, 2021).

LIS entrepreneurship ventures in Nigeria according to Igbeka, cited in Ede (2023) includes indexing and abstracting

services; retrospective conservation; cataloguing and classification; literature reviews; online literature search; print searches for clients; private library services; bookshop and interlibrary loan; packaging information; editing and publishing; developing hyper media-products; translation and marketing management; organizing seminars, conferences and workshops presentations; creating databases and website design. Others are service to special group; compilation; newspaper distribution; bindery and lamination services can serve as revenue generation in LIS that meet the requirement of Nigeria's economic development (Malumfashi, 2011). Anyanwu, et al (2012) revealed that "Library and Information Science is undergoing immense transformation". This implies that the traditional roles and functions of libraries and information services are evolving, possibly due to advances in technology and changing user needs and expectations. The transformation of Library and Information Science may require new approaches and strategies to ensure that libraries and information services continue to meet the needs of their users in the modern age.

The Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) as further reported by National Universities Commission (2022), has been developed to train graduates with theoretical and practical knowledge of Library and Information Science, which is the area concerned with the acquisition, processing, preserving and disseminating of needed items of information and information itself. It is an improvement on the previous Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) because it is intended to produce graduates that have the requisite knowledge, skills, competencies and capacities to respond to the dynamic library and information needs of modern day users. It is tailored towards the production of graduates who can go beyond being passive organizers of other

people's knowledge to being ICT competent and active generators of knowledge such as institutional repositories, editing of Wikipedia entries, and other open access resources, thus contributing to the universal availability of information. Graduates of this programme can compete with their peers anywhere in the world. The foregoing treatises show that, it may be beneficial to incorporate entrepreneurship education in LIS curriculum to equip students with the skills needed to create job opportunities for themselves and others in the evolving profession. The involvement of SMEs can provide students with practical experiences and mentorship to develop their entrepreneurial skills and mindset.

The central focus on Entrepreneurship education usually concentrates on students. However, we encourage the inclusion of the entrepreneur and owner/manager of the small firm, who themselves are a critical mechanism for communicating their vision with students as to the reality of what entrepreneurship is about. Additionally, these same programmes can also be an effective mechanism for the provision of targeted training programmes for skills enhancement in the owner/manager and the creation and facilitation of linkages and working relationships with the small business community. Involvement in technology transfer and industry-based research activities also provides benefits to the small firm (Hynes and Richardson, 2007). The methods of engagement of SMEs in LIS entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities can be done in several ways. These methods include:

- ***SMEs Case Studies***

These case studies can be used to illustrate key concepts and theories in entrepreneurship education, such as market research, business planning, and financial management (Barringer et al., 2017). In the context of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), a case study would

examine the operations, challenges, and outcomes of a specific SME in order to gain insights into the broader context of SME development. There are various individuals and institutions that can teach case studies, including business schools, management consultants, and professional trainers. Professors and instructors in business and management studies often use case studies as a teaching tool to help students understand real-world business challenges and to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Management consultants and professional trainers also use case studies in their work to provide tailored advice and support to organizations. One management consultancy firm in Nigeria is Phillips Consulting. Phillips Consulting is a prominent business and management consulting firm with offices in Lagos and Abuja. They provide services to clients throughout Africa. Their website, <https://www.phillipsconsulting.net>, serves as a platform for showcasing their expertise and connecting with potential clients.

- ***SMEs Mentorship***

Mentorship in the context of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) refers to a relationship between a mentor and an entrepreneur or small business owner, in which the mentor provides guidance, support, and advice to the entrepreneur as they navigate the challenges of growing and managing their business. These examples highlight various mentorship firms and their platforms available in the Library and information science (LIS) field which include Library Pipeline Mentoring Program, American Library Association (ALA) Mentoring Program, Library Leadership & Management Association (LLAMA) Mentoring Program, Library and Information Science Education and Development (LISED) Network, LIS Career Mentoring, and Mentor Network (LMN). For example, a study by the Federation of Small Businesses (2015) found that SMEs that received mentoring

were 20% more likely to survive than those that did not. Additionally, SMEs that had a mentor reported increased revenue growth compared to those that did not have a mentor.

Undergraduates can work with SME owners or managers as part of their entrepreneurship education (Clarysse et al., 2015). This can involve shadowing the SME owner, assisting with tasks, and learning about the day-to-day operations of a small business (Kuratko et al., 2016). This mentorship program can be a valuable mode of instruction for LIS undergraduates in Nigerian universities, providing them with hands-on experience, networking opportunities, exposure to new ideas, and entrepreneurship education (Ede, 2024).

- ***SMEs Projects***

The term SMEs projects refers to projects undertaken by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). However, the individuals or organizations responsible for providing training and education on these projects could include business consultants, educational institutions, industry experts, or professional development organizations. Undergraduates can work on projects for SMEs as part of their entrepreneurship education. These projects can involve conducting market research, developing business plans, or creating marketing materials for the SMEs. SMEs owners or managers can be invited to speak to undergraduate students about their experiences starting and running a small business. This can provide valuable insight and inspiration for students interested in entrepreneurship (Clarysse et al., 2015; Kuratko et al., 2016; Barringer et al., 2017; Brouder et al., 2018). However, by engaging with SMEs in this way, undergraduate students in Nigeria can also contribute to the economic development of their communities by generating job opportunities and supporting the growth of local businesses.

- ***SMEs Guest Lecturers***

Guest lecturers refer to individuals who are invited to speak to students. Thus, the guest lecturers could be individuals who work for or represent Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, or they could be experts in a field related to such enterprises. The purpose of inviting these guest lecturers is to provide students with insights, knowledge, and practical experience in their chosen field of study. Some examples of SMEs that could be invited as guest lecturers in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) according to Liao (2015) and Ren (2018) include digital marketing agencies, information management consulting firms, technology startups, and independent publishers. These SMEs can share their expertise in topics such as digital marketing, information management, emerging technologies, publishing, and distribution with small businesses. Brouder et al., (2018) maintained that guest lecturers can provide valuable insight and inspiration for students interested in entrepreneurship. Hence, inviting SMEs guest lecturers to speak to LIS undergraduates in Nigerian universities can provide valuable insights, inspiration, and networking opportunities that can help students to develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed as entrepreneurs in the future.

- ***Hand Approaches***

Hand approaches refer to methods that rely heavily on manual labor, personal connections, and informal practices to conduct business operations. These approaches are often used by small business owners who have limited resources and cannot afford to invest in expensive technology or professional services. Examples of hand approaches in SMEs include personal networking, word-of-mouth marketing, cash-based transactions, and personalized service. There are different views regarding the effectiveness of hand approaches in SMEs. Some experts believe that hand approaches

are crucial for the success of small businesses, while others argue that these approaches can limit growth and competitiveness. Craig and Douglas (2015) argued that hand approaches can limit the growth and competitiveness of SMEs, as they may not be able to keep up with the technological advancements and professional standards of larger competitors.

- ***Training Session***

In the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), a training session refers to a structured learning experience that is designed to develop the skills, knowledge, and abilities of employees. These training sessions are typically conducted in a group setting, and may focus on a variety of topics including technical skills, soft skills, leadership, and management. One of the key benefits of training sessions for SMEs is that they can help to improve employee productivity and performance. According to a study by the Association for Talent Development (2016), stated that “organizations that invest in employee training and development see a 24% higher profit margin than those that do not”. There are many different types of training sessions that SMEs can offer, including classroom-based training, e-learning courses, on-the-job training, and coaching and mentoring programs. The type of training that is most effective will depend on the specific needs and goals of the organization, as well as the learning styles and preferences of the employees. The general benefits of training sessions in the aforementioned discussion can be apply to Library and Information Science field. For example, employees may need training in technical skills such as cataloging and database management, as well as soft skills such as communication and customer service. Offering training sessions on these topics can improve employee productivity and performance, as well as employee retention rates.

- ***Industrial Training***

Industrial training refers to a period of on-the-job learning that is designed to provide students or entry-level employees with the practical skills and knowledge needed to succeed in their chosen profession. In the context of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), industrial training can be particularly valuable as it allows trainees to gain hands-on experience in a real-world business setting, which may not be available in academic or theoretical environments. SMEs can benefit from industrial training by using it as a way to identify potential future employees. According to a study by Shaban and Ahmad (2013), industrial training can be an effective way for SMEs to evaluate the skills and potential of trainees, and to identify those who may be suitable for future employment within the company. Industrial training in SMEs can benefit both the trainees and the SMEs in several ways. For trainees, industrial training can provide an opportunity to acquire practical skills and experience in library operations, such as cataloguing, circulation, and reference services. This can help them to develop a deeper understanding of the field and be better prepared for future careers. For SMEs in the library and information science sector, industrial training can provide a source of skilled and motivated workers who can contribute to the success of the library. It can also help SMEs to identify potential future employees who have the required skills and potential for future employment within the company.

Nigeria introduced entrepreneurship education, but it faced challenges on this journey. Dangan and Moruf (2015) identified several hindrances to effective Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Library Schools. These include the inadequate coverage of entrepreneurial skills in the LIS curriculum, shortage of skilled and trained manpower to teach entrepreneurship in line with librarianship profession, insufficient funding for

entrepreneurship education, unfavorable government policies, lack of institutional support for entrepreneurship education, absence of librarianship-specific entrepreneurship workshops and seminars, absence of policies setting standards for entrepreneurship teaching in LIS schools, and lack of collaboration among the business sector, public sector, and universities. However, addressing these challenges is crucial to improving entrepreneurship education in LIS schools in Nigeria. In view of this, some of the challenges that may arise when incorporating SMEs into LIS entrepreneurship education include: SMEs often have limited resources, including financial resources and time, which can make it challenging to participate in entrepreneurship education programs (Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission, 2021). This can be especially true for SMEs that are in the early stages of development or that are facing financial difficulties. The foregoing discussions show that there are multiples obstacles preventing the successful implementation of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, including issues with curriculum implementation, funding, and negative perceptions of the subject among students and graduates. These challenges can make it difficult to achieve the goal of using LIS entrepreneurship education to create job opportunities for undergraduates through the incorporation of SMEs in the curriculum.

Involvement of SMEs in entrepreneurship education in LIS Schools for effective job creation among undergraduates has presented challenges. However, the challenges can be addressed by developing the following strategies by active participation and involvement of various stakeholders including the university administration, lecturers, private sector organizations, financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, and individuals who are focused on youth is crucial in fostering entrepreneurial skills in

LIS undergraduates. Nnadozie et al., cited in Ede (2023) agreed that Managers of Library and Information Science (LIS) Schools and heads of tertiary institutions in Nigeria should identify people to serve as entrepreneurial role-models for their students. In line with this, successful entrepreneurs, popular industrialists, small and medium scale private sector operatives and established librarians-turned-businessmen should be invited at regular intervals to interact and share their success stories and experience with Librarians-in-Training.

In addition, the education provided to students should include the acquisition of skills that will enable them to establish and run their own businesses, thereby contributing to job creation. In relation with above view, Maifata and Mohammed (2016) recommended emphasis on practical knowledge, establishment of entrepreneurship centre, and provision of adequate funding, supply of teaching gadgets for practical-orientated training, effective planning, supervision and evaluation of the programme across board. Therefore, this will go a long way in incorporating and enhancing of SMEs in LIS Entrepreneurship education for generating job opportunities among undergraduates.

Research Method

The study adopted descriptive survey as the design for the study. The population of the study consisted of all the 48 LIS educators and 467 final year undergraduate students of Library and Information Science in the five (5) Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria, that is, University of Jos with 147 students and 6 LIS educators as respondents, University of Ilorin with 168 students and 13 LIS educators as respondents, University of Abuja with 45 students and 11 LIS educators as respondents, while Federal University of Lafia with 57 students and 9 LIS educators as respondents and Federal University Lokoja with 50 Students and 9

LIS educators (Staff Nominal Roll and Class Roaster, 2023). A structured questionnaire titled "Involvement of SMEs in Entrepreneurship Education in LIS Schools for Effective Job Creation" (ISEELSJC), constructed by the researchers, and was used as an instrument of data collection. One set of questionnaire was used for both the LIS educators and LIS final year undergraduate students. Out of 141 LIS educators and LIS final year undergraduate students, 114 filled out and returned the questionnaire, giving a return rate of 81%. The sample size was drawn using multi-state purposive sampling technique. This according to Mole (2019) can be used when the population is in different strata. While no sampling technique was used for the LIS educators because the population was accessible and manageable. The data collected were presented in tables and analyzed using frequency, mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions following the four point rating scale.

The data collected was checked for completeness using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Real limit of numbers was used in interpreting the results as follows: 0.5-1.49 - Strongly Disagree - SD/ Very Low Extent - VLE/Not Utilized - NU/ NA - Not Appropriate/ Not Needed - NN; 1.5-2.49 - Disagree - D/ Low Extent - LE/Fairly Utilized - FU/ Fairly Appropriate - FA/Lowly Needed - LN; 2.5-3.49 - Agree - A/ High Extent - HE/ Highly Utilized - HU/ Appropriate - A/ Needed - N; and 3.5-4.49 - Strongly Agree – SA/ Very High Extent – VHE/ Very Highly Utilized – VHU/Very Appropriate – VA/ Highly Needed - HN. On the scale, the average

cut-off mean was 2.50; hence, an item was accepted if it was 2.50 or above. However, it was rejected if it was below 2.50.

The researchers also presented and analyzed the interview responses from the different private businesses (SMEs) through content analysis. As a powerful tool for researchers, content analysis is defined as scientific and systematic procedures for detailed analysis, examination and verification of the content of written materials (Maying, 2004 cited in Cohen et al., 2007). Content analysis is considered appropriate for this study as the private businesses (SMEs) interview responses are in written form and the researchers only sought to apply systematic procedures to analyze and interpreting the information. Ten (10) copies of private businesses (SMEs) interview questions were distributed and returned respectively. The researchers organized the information into a table format, focusing on key elements such as nature of business, years in business, relation to Library and Information Science (LIS), skills involved, willingness to teach, opportunities for students, roles offered, and impact on unemployment. This content analysis will help to compare and contrast the contributions each private businesses (SMEs) can make to LIS students.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the entrepreneurship courses in LIS curriculum appropriate for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria?

Table 1: Entrepreneurship Courses in LIS Curriculum appropriate for Creating Job Opportunities

N= 114 (representing number of LIS educators (39) and LIS final year students (75) in the sample of study)

S/N	Item Statement	LIS Educators		LIS Final Year Students		OVERALL			
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	DE.	R

Involvement of SMES in Entrepreneurship Education in Lis Schools for Effective Job Creation Among Undergraduate Students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria

1	Database Design and Management	3.87	.41	3.73	.55	3.78	.51	A	1 st
2	Book Production and Publishing	3.89	.31	3.64	.56	3.73	.50	A	2 nd
3	Digital Reference and Information Services	3.74	.59	3.69	.52	3.71	.54	A	3 rd
4	Computer Technology and Library Services	3.72	.56	3.69	.52	3.70	.53	A	4 th
5	Entrepreneurship and Innovation	3.85	.37	3.61	.49	3.69	.46	A	5 th
6	Information Entrepreneurship	3.79	.41	3.64	.56	3.69	.52	A	5 th
7	Business Information Services	3.82	.45	3.61	.52	3.68	.50	A	6 th
8	Data Analytics and Visualization	3.54	.79	3.75	.47	3.68	.60	A	6 th
9	Telecommunication and Networking	3.72	.60	3.64	.53	3.67	.56	A	7 th
10	Hardware and Software Technologies	3.64	.63	3.68	.57	3.67	.59	A	7 th
11	Indexing and Abstracting	3.54	.72	3.68	.49	3.63	.58	A	8 th
12	Students' Industrial Work Experience (SIWES)	3.59	.68	3.65	.51	3.63	.57	A	8 th
13	Introduction to Entrepreneurship-	3.64	.54	3.60	.55	3.61	.54	A	9 th
14	System Analysis and Evaluation	3.54	.79	3.65	.48	3.61	.60	A	9 th
15	Cataloguing and Classification I & II	3.72	.46	3.52	.64	3.59	.59	A	10 th
16	Information Architecture for the Web	3.51	.68	3.57	.55	3.55	.59	A	11 th
17	Library Marketing, Advocacy and Public Relations	3.51	.68	3.47	.64	3.48	.65	A	12 th
18	Reference and Information Services	3.28	.83	3.55	.53	3.46	.65	A	13 th
19	Venture Creation	3.33	.70	3.43	.57	3.39	.62	A	14 th
20	Collection Development	1.59	.88	1.99	.85	1.85	.87	R	15 th
21	Community Information Services	1.56	.82	1.87	.78	1.76	.80	R	16 th
22	Library and Information Services for Children and Adolescents	1.64	.99	1.71	.77	1.68	.84	R	17 th
23	Library Services for Special Groups	1.49	.72	1.67	.78	1.61	.76	R	18 th
Cluster Mean						3.63	0.59	A	

Key: VA- Very Appropriate, A – Appropriate, FA - Fairly Appropriate, NA- Not Appropriate, \bar{x} - Mean, SD - Standard Deviation, DE. - Decision, A — Accept, R —Reject, R- Rank

Table 1, which is on the entrepreneurship courses in LIS curriculum appropriate for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students as revealed in the mean scores of the listed items to a very appropriate, database design and management (3.78), book production and publishing (3.73), digital reference and information services (3.71), computer technology and library services (3.70), entrepreneurship and innovation (3.69), information entrepreneurship (3.69), business information services (3.68), data analytics and visualization (3.68), telecommunication and networking (3.67), hardware and software technologies (3.67), indexing and abstracting (3.63), Students' Industrial Work Experience (SIWES) (3.63), introduction to

entrepreneurship (3.61), system analysis and evaluation (3.61), Cataloguing and Classification I & II (3.59), information architecture for the Web (3.55). This is followed to an appropriate, library marketing, advocacy and public relations (3.48), reference and information services (3.46), and venture creation (3.39). However, collection development (1.85), community information services (1.76), library and information services for children and adolescents (1.68), and library services for special groups (1.61) are not appropriate as they each score below the acceptable average of 2.50. Each of these scores are therefore rejected (R).

Therefore, since the overall cluster mean was 3.63 and above criterion mean

of 2.50, the entrepreneurship courses in LIS curriculum for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students in the federal universities are very appropriate.

Research Question 2: What are the modes SMEs can be involve in entrepreneurship education in LIS Schools for effective job creation among undergraduate students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria?

From the interview conducted on the SMEs, the researchers found out that the organizations span diverse fields including publishing, data analytics, consulting, and retail. Publishing and book retail businesses like Cassava Republic, Parresia, MOSURO, and Evans Brothers are more aligned with traditional LIS roles. Experience ranges from 7 years to over 60 years, indicating a broad spectrum of established entities that can offer seasoned expertise. All companies are linked to LIS through different lenses such as information management, data analytics, publishing, and book retail. Their roles emphasize the intersection of information handling, distribution, and literacy promotion. As portrayed from the result of the findings every of the SMEs observes the skills vary widely, including editorial proficiency, digital publishing, data analysis, resource management, and customer service. This reflects the diversity of career paths available to LIS students. All organizations are open to engaging with students through teaching, workshops, and internships, highlighting a strong potential for educational partnerships. Some of the SMEs reported during the interview that the opportunities offered include hands-on training in publishing, data management, archival practices, and bookstore management, providing a practical complement to academic learning. Furthermore, most SMEs are willing to serve as trainers, consultants, and internship providers, which can enrich the students' learning

experience and professional exposure. Finally, each SMEs believes that their involvement can reduce unemployment by equipping students with practical skills and industry knowledge, enhancing their employability across various sectors including media, education, finance, and data analytics.

Research Question 3: What are the types of business skills needed in LIS entrepreneurship fields among undergraduate students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria?

Table 3: Types of Business Skills needed in LIS Entrepreneurship Fields

N= 114 (representing number of LIS educators (39) and LIS final year students (75) in the sample of study)

S/N	Item Statement	LIS Final Year				OVERALL			
		LIS Educators		Students		\bar{x}	SD	DE.	R
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	DE.	R
1	Knowledge Management Skills	3.89	.31	3.79	.41	3.82	.38	A	1 st
2	Information Literacy Skills	3.74	.44	3.79	.44	3.81	.42	A	2 nd
3	Strong Leadership and Communication Skills	3.85	.37	3.73	.45	3.78	.42	A	3 rd
4	Research Skills	3.87	.34	3.69	.49	3.75	.45	A	4 th
5	Information Technology Skills	3.74	.44	3.75	.47	3.75	.46	A	4 th
6	Persistence	3.82	.39	3.71	.51	3.75	.48	A	4 th
7	Self-discipline	3.67	.48	3.75	.47	3.72	.47	A	5 th
8	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	3.77	.43	3.68	.57	3.71	.53	A	6 th
9	Media Literacy	3.69	.52	3.71	.56	3.70	.54	A	7 th
10	Innovativeness	3.77	.43	3.65	.56	3.69	.52	A	8 th
11	Decision Making Skills	3.64	.58	3.69	.49	3.68	.52	A	9 th
12	Risk Taking	3.64	.58	3.65	.48	3.65	.51	A	10 th
13	Teamwork	3.67	.48	3.63	.56	3.64	.53	A	11 th
14	Financial Management Skills	3.64	.49	3.63	.51	3.63	.50	A	12 th
15	Business Planning	3.56	.50	3.60	.55	3.59	.53	A	13 th
16	Information Packaging Skills.	3.62	.49	3.57	.59	3.59	.56	A	13 th
17	Marketing and Branding	3.49	.56	3.61	.59	3.57	.58	A	14 th
18	Change orientation	3.59	.49	3.52	.55	3.54	.53	A	15 th
19	Managerial Skills	3.54	.51	3.53	.60	3.54	.57	A	15 th
20	Public Relations Skills	3.56	.50	3.52	.58	3.54	.55	A	15 th
21	Social and Cross-Cultural Skills	3.41	.75	3.44	.64	3.43	.68	A	16 th
Cluster Mean						3.68	0.52	A	

Key: HN - Highly Needed, N – Needed, LN - Lowly Needed, NN - Not Needed, \bar{x} - Mean, SD - Standard Deviation, DE. - Decision, A — Accept, R —Reject, R- Rank

Table 3 shows the types of business skills needed in LIS entrepreneurship fields. Items 1-20 have the highest mean values of 3.82, 3.81, 3.78, 3.75, 3.75, 3.75, 3.72, 3.71, 3.70, 3.69, 3.68, 3.65, 3.64, 3.63, 3.59, 3.59, 3.57, 3.54, 3.54, and 3.54. This shows that the business skills are highly needed on those 20 items – knowledge management skills; information literacy skills; strong leadership and communication skills; research skills; information technology skills; persistence; self-discipline; critical thinking and problem solving; media literacy; innovativeness; decision making skills; risk taking; teamwork; financial management skills; business planning; information packaging skills; marketing

and branding; change orientation; managerial skills; and public relations skills are significant. On the other hand, social and cross-cultural skills as item 21 have the least values of 3.43, and is said to be the areas of major weaknesses in skills among the students. Lacking these fundamental abilities, students will find themselves unable to pursue careers in prestigious institutions like libraries, banks, corporations, information centers, and non-governmental organizations, or to venture out as entrepreneurs on a global scale. Instead, they may be confined to roles such as owning a bookstore or compiling directories, which demand fewer social and cross-cultural skills within their familiar environment.

However, since the overall cluster mean was 3.68 and above criterion mean of 2.50, the undergraduate students' type of business skills required in LIS entrepreneurship fields among undergraduate students in the federal universities is strongly agreed.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges associated with LIS

entrepreneurship education for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria?

Table 4: Challenges Associated with LIS Entrepreneurship Education for Creating Job Opportunities

N= 114 (representing number of LIS educators (39) and LIS final year students (75) in the sample of study)

S/N	Item Statement	LIS Educators		LIS Final Year Students		OVERALL			
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	DE.	R
1	Lack of funding for LIS entrepreneurship education	4.00	.00	3.92	.32	3.95	.26	A	1 st
2	Limited access to mentorship, networking opportunities, and other support systems in the LIS field in Nigeria	3.79	.41	3.81	.39	3.81	.39	A	2 nd
3	Poor curriculum implementation across tertiary institutions	3.59	.68	3.68	.47	3.65	.55	A	3 rd
4	Limited awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship education among LIS undergraduates	3.72	.46	3.56	.59	3.61	.56	A	4 th
5	Emphasis on theoretical knowledge	3.38	.54	3.56	.59	3.50	.58	A	5 th
6	Insufficient teaching gadgets for practical-oriented training	3.26	.68	3.48	.66	3.40	.67	A	6 th
7	Poor enabling environment	3.23	.63	3.32	.74	3.29	.70	A	7 th
8	Ineffective style of instruction	2.92	.89	3.09	.96	3.04	.94	A	8 th
9	Poor planning, supervision, and evaluation of the program	3.00	.95	3.00	.90	3.00	.91	A	9 th
Cluster Mean						3.5	0.58	A	

Key: SA - Strongly Agree, A – Agree, SD - Strongly Disagree, D - Disagree, \bar{x} - Mean, SD - Standard Deviation, DE. - Decision, A — Accept, R —Reject, R- Rank

Result in table 4 revealed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of funding for LIS entrepreneurship education is a major challenge associated with LIS entrepreneurship education for creating job opportunities, with a mean score of 3.95. Another major challenge is limited access to mentorship, networking opportunities, and other support systems in the LIS field in Nigeria (3.81), poor curriculum implementation across tertiary institutions (3.65), limited awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship education among LIS undergraduates (3.61), and emphasis on theoretical knowledge (3.50).

This is followed by the insufficient teaching gadgets for practical-oriented training (3.40), poor enabling environment (3.29), ineffective style of instruction (3.04), poor planning, supervision, and evaluation of the program (3.00). However, since the overall cluster mean was 3.5 and above criterion mean of 2.50, the challenges associated with LIS entrepreneurship education for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students in the federal universities is strongly agreed.

Research Question 5: What are the strategies for enhancing LIS entrepreneurship education for generating job opportunities among -undergraduate

students in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria?

Table 5: Strategies for Enhancing LIS Entrepreneurship Education for Generating Job Opportunities

N= 114 (representing number of LIS educators (39) and LIS final year students (75) in the sample of study)

S/N	Item Statement	LIS Educators		LIS Final Year Students		OVERALL			
		\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	DE.	R
1	Secure funding through grants, crowd funding, partnerships, involving industry sponsors and alumni networks.	4.00	.00	3.91	.34	3.94	.28	A	1 st
2	Facilitate mentorship and networking opportunities for students.	3.85	.37	3.79	.41	3.81	.39	A	2 nd
3	Enhance practical training with proper resources and real-world projects.	3.82	.39	3.76	.49	3.78	.46	A	3 rd
4	Raise awareness about entrepreneurship education through workshops and success stories.	3.69	.47	3.79	.50	3.75	.49	A	4 th
5	Ensure quality curriculum implementation with faculty development and quality assurance.	3.67	.48	3.73	.53	3.71	.51	A	5 th
6	Train educators in innovative teaching methods for active learning.	3.59	.49	3.71	.56	3.67	.54	A	6 th
7	Advocate for a supportive environment through policies and collaborations.	3.77	.43	3.59	.62	3.65	.56	A	7 th
8	Update the curriculum with practical and entrepreneurship-focused courses.	3.62	.49	3.67	.57	3.65	.55	A	7 th
9	Implement effective program planning, evaluation, and continuous improvement.	3.59	.49	3.64	.58	3.62	.55	A	8 th
Cluster Mean						3.71	0.51	A	

Key: SA - Strongly Agree, A – Agree, SD - Strongly Disagree, D - Disagree, \bar{x} - Mean, SD - Standard Deviation, DE. - Decision, A — Accept, R —Reject, R- Rank

Table 5 above shows that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that all the strategies mentioned can enhance LIS entrepreneurship education for generating job opportunities. However, the major strategy strongly agreed upon is secure funding through grants, crowd funding, partnerships, involving industry sponsors and alumni networks with a mean score of 3.94. Other strategies include facilitate mentorship and networking opportunities for students (3.81), enhance practical training with proper resources and real-world projects (3.78), raise awareness about entrepreneurship education through workshops and success

stories (3.75), ensure quality curriculum implementation with faculty development and quality assurance (3.71), train educators in innovative teaching methods for active learning (3.67), advocate for a supportive environment through policies and collaborations (3.65), update the curriculum with practical and entrepreneurship-focused courses (3.65), implement effective program planning, evaluation, and continuous improvement (3.62). Finally, since the overall cluster mean was 3.71 and above criterion mean of 2.5, the strategies that could be employed in solving the challenges associated with LIS entrepreneurship

education for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students in the federal universities is strongly agreed.

Discussion of Findings

From the data analysis, the findings can be discussed thus:

The findings revealed that entrepreneurship courses very appropriate in LIS curriculum for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students in LIS schools are database design and management; book production and publishing; digital reference and information services. These LIS entrepreneurship ventures are attested to earlier in Igbeka, cited in Ede (2023) and Malumfashi, (2011). The finding further validates the assertion of Anyanwu, et al (2012), that Library and Information Science is undergoing immense transformation. However, integrating these entrepreneurship-focus courses into the LIS curriculum aligns with the evolving nature of the field; empowering students with a diverse skill set to create job opportunities and can contribute to the transformation of Library and Information Science

The place of skills in LIS entrepreneurship education is central and crucial for an entrepreneur to succeed. But the result of findings has shown all the types of business skills are highly needed in LIS entrepreneurship fields among undergraduate students. This implies that the skills for building capacity can help LIS students and companies make money and meet customer needs. This finding further corroborates National Universities Commission (2022) report on the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) that has been developed produce graduates that have the requisite knowledge, skills, competencies and capacities to respond to the dynamic library and information needs of modern day users. Therefore, emphasizing and integrating a broad spectrum of business skills in LIS entrepreneurship education is

imperative for fostering success among students and companies in this field.

There is a high level of agreement on the various challenges associated with LIS entrepreneurship education for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students. Lack of funding for LIS entrepreneurship education was identified as a major challenge associated with LIS entrepreneurship education for creating job opportunities. Most other factors are directly or indirectly linked to poor funding. In many cases, even the universities themselves struggle financially, and the funding for most Library and Information Science (LIS) schools seems to be at the mercy of school administrators, to the detriment of both educators and undergraduate students. These issues were bemoaned earlier in Dangan and Moruf (2015); Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (2021). Another major challenge is limited access to mentorship, networking opportunities, and other support systems in the LIS field in Nigeria. Study by the Federation of Small Businesses (2015) found that SMEs that received mentoring were 20% more likely to survive than those that did not. Additionally, SMEs that had a mentor reported increased revenue growth compared to those that did not have a mentor.

The major strategy strongly agreed upon is secure funding through grants, crowd funding, partnerships, involving industry sponsors and alumni networks. - The success and sustenance of every organization including the LIS schools is unarguably tied to funds. The better funding of tertiary institutions to carry out entrepreneurship training is captured in Maifata and Mohammed (2016). Finding by Nnadozie et al., cited in Ede (2023) also revealed that adequate budgetary provisions should be made for the implementation of entrepreneurship education by the heads of tertiary institutions and their founders/financiers.

The strategy to do with facilitate mentorship and networking opportunities for students; enhance practical training with proper resources and real-world projects was also aligned with the earlier study in the Federation of Small Businesses (2015). Hence, the integration of these strategies, backed by financial support, mentorship, and practical training, can form a robust framework for enhancing LIS entrepreneurship education, ultimately generating valuable job opportunities.

Conclusion

The LIS schools in Nigeria can enhance their students' readiness for entrepreneurial endeavors and play a role in fostering the country's economic growth by incorporating these suggested improvements. The study focused on the involvement of SMEs in entrepreneurship education in LIS Schools for effective job creation in Federal Universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

- The result of the study showed that
- Major entrepreneurship courses in LIS curriculum very appropriate for creating job opportunities among undergraduate students in LIS schools are database design and management; book production and publishing; and digital reference and information services.
 - All the types of business skills are highly needed in LIS entrepreneurship fields among undergraduate students in LIS schools.
 - Major challenges associated with LIS entrepreneurship education are lack of funding; limited access to mentorship, networking opportunities, and other support systems in the LIS field in Nigeria.
 - Leading strategies for enhancing LIS entrepreneurship education for generating job opportunities include secure funding through grants, crowd funding,

partnerships, involving industry sponsors and alumni networks; facilitate mentorship and networking opportunities for students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, and discussions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Universities offering Library and Information Science (LIS) programs should integrate entrepreneurship courses into their curriculum. This should include courses related to database design, book production, digital reference, and other practical skills that enhance job opportunities.
- LIS schools should diversify their teaching methods beyond lectures and seminars. Incorporating active learning, real-world projects, and industry partnerships can better prepare students for entrepreneurial ventures.
- Government should encourage and support students in pursuing entrepreneurial ventures after graduation. This can help students take the skills they've acquired and turn them into successful businesses.
- Adequate funding for LIS entrepreneurship education is essential. Universities should seek funding through grants, crowd funding, industry sponsors, and alumni networks to improve program quality.
- Efforts should be made to provide mentorship and networking opportunities for LIS students. Collaborations with industry professionals and alumni can help students gain practical insights and connections.

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