

ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING FINANCIAL STABILITY AND ACADEMIC COMMITMENT OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN JIGAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study is titled entrepreneurial activities and strategies for enhancing financial stability and academic commitment of federal university lecturers in Jigawa state, Nigeria. The study was guided by three research questions. The study targeted academic staff across various faculties and schools of the two federal universities in Jigawa state, Nigeria. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondents. Entrepreneurial Skills Questionnaire with reliability coefficient of 0.981 was used as instrument for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation with the aid of SPSS software version 23. The study revealed a wide gap of lecturers who are engaged in entrepreneurial activities but less than half of them delve in to businesses like agribusiness, consultancy, and small-scale trading to supplement their income. These activities contribute positively to their financial stability and, in turn, enhance their academic commitment. However, challenge identified is a severe lack of capital. The study recommends that universities should develop supportive policies that encourage responsible entrepreneurship among lecturers without compromising academic responsibilities.

Key words: Entrepreneurial Activities, Financial Stability, Academic Commitment.

Introduction

Nigeria's persistent economic downturn marked by inflation, currency devaluation and rising living costs has drastically affected the financial well-being of professionals, including those in academia. As salary packages that once provided stability are now insufficient to meet the growing demands of academics' personal and professional lives, entrepreneurship has increasingly emerged as a practical and necessary response to economic instability. Entrepreneurial activities not only offer a buffer against financial hardship but also serve as a strategic means for academics to preserve their livelihood while maintaining their institutional responsibilities and ensuring their academic commitment (Bermejo-Olivas, Soriano-Pinar & Pinillos, 2024). This commitment, which refers to the dedication and responsibility academics demonstrate towards their core duties such as teaching, research, mentoring students, and contributing to institutional governance, is essential for maintaining academic standards, fostering innovation, and ensuring the overall quality of higher education. Moreover, financial stability plays a critical role in supporting this commitment because when academics are secure in their financial situation, they can better focus on fulfilling these duties effectively without the distraction or stress of economic insecurity. Conversely, financial instability can lead to decreased motivation, reduced productivity, and, in some cases, compromised academic integrity as individuals seek alternative income sources that may detract from their scholarly obligations. Therefore, by enhancing financial stability through entrepreneurial activities,

academics sustain their academic engagement and uphold professional ethics within their institutions.

In Nigeria, academics engage in a wide range of entrepreneurial ventures, including consulting, agribusiness, educational publishing, online services, tutorial programs, and small-scale commerce, which are often driven by necessity and shaped by available resources, professional expertise, and local market conditions. Furthermore, the strategies that enable success in these endeavours include effective time management, business model innovation, use of social and professional networks, and leveraging academic knowledge for income generation (Braun & Suoranta, 2024). These forms of entrepreneurship often reflect an adaptive response to institutional and economic constraints and, in many cases, they contribute positively to community development and knowledge diffusion (Ciambotti, Pedrini, Doherty, & Molteni, 2023). Furthermore, balancing the role between entrepreneurial activities and strategies and academic commitment is essential, as it enables academics to maintain their professional status and effectiveness within tertiary institutions, including universities. This balance requires academics to effectively allocate time and energy between their scholarly responsibilities such as teaching, research, and administrative duties, and their entrepreneurial pursuits, which often demand substantial effort and dedication. According to Clark, Pidduck, Lumpkin, and Covin (2024), the pressure to fulfil institutional obligations like publishing, curriculum development, and service roles can sometimes conflict with the demands of sustaining successful entrepreneurial ventures. Moreover, academics frequently encounter additional challenges, including inadequate training in entrepreneurial skills, restrictive institutional policies that may limit business engagements, and prevailing societal attitudes that question whether entrepreneurial activities align with the core values of academic work. Consequently, these challenges highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of how entrepreneurial strategies can be designed and implemented to support financial stability while simultaneously preserving academic commitment and integrity. By structuring these strategies thoughtfully, academics can not only enhance their economic well-being but also uphold the quality and ethical standards of their academic roles without compromise.

This study specifically focuses on federal university academics in Jigawa state, North-west Nigeria, an area characterized by limited economic opportunities, underfunded educational infrastructure, and high dependence on government remuneration. In such a setting, entrepreneurship is more than a financial alternative; it is a survival strategy that supports professional continuity. By investigating the types of entrepreneurial activities pursued, the strategies used to manage them, and the institutional and personal challenges encountered, this research aims to offer practical insights for universities, policymakers, and development agencies. The goal is to support the development of frameworks that enhance both economic resilience and academic commitment in regions facing similar structural constraints.

Entrepreneurial activities and strategies have become increasingly important for academics seeking financial stability in the face of economic uncertainty. Academics often engage in ventures such as consulting, private tutoring, book publishing, agricultural enterprises, and tech-based services to supplement their limited incomes. These entrepreneurial initiatives are

not only responses to financial constraints but also align with broader economic and social shifts that encourage innovation and individual initiative (Bermejo-Olivas, Soriano-Pinar, & Pinillos, 2024). Strategies commonly employed include business model innovation, time optimization, leveraging academic expertise, and network utilization (Braun & Suoranta, 2024). Moreover, traits such as self-efficacy, risk tolerance, and proactive orientation are repeatedly cited as essential for entrepreneurial success in academic settings (Acharya & Berry, 2023; Covin & Wales, 2019). These activities, when strategically implemented, can help academics attain a more secure livelihood without completely departing from their institutional roles.

Nevertheless, balancing academic responsibilities with entrepreneurial pursuits poses a significant challenge. Academics must fulfil obligations such as teaching, research, mentoring, and administrative duties, all of which demand time and intellectual energy. The simultaneous pursuit of entrepreneurial activities can create tensions between professional duties and personal income generation efforts (Clark, Pidduck, Lumpkin, & Covin, 2024). Maintaining this balance requires discipline, clear goal-setting, and institutional support that recognizes the growing need for academics to diversify their income sources (Gordon & Hood, 2020). While financial stability gained through entrepreneurship can reduce stress and improve job satisfaction, it also has the potential to compromise academic performance if not managed effectively. Thus, striking an equilibrium between these roles is critical to preserving both academic quality and personal economic well-being.

However, numerous challenges hinder the smooth integration of entrepreneurial activities into the academic environment. These include institutional policies that discourage non-academic ventures, lack of entrepreneurship training among scholars, and societal scepticism regarding the compatibility of profit-seeking with academic values (Cabrera & Mauricio, 2017; Sherkat & Chenari, 2022). Additionally, many academics struggle with resource constraints, unclear legal guidelines for income-generating activities, and the absence of support systems such as incubators or mentorship programs (Ciambotti, Pedrini, Doherty, & Molteni, 2023). Furthermore, cultural and structural barriers may discourage especially younger or early-career academics from pursuing entrepreneurial paths (Gupta & Mirchandani, 2018; Oteme, 2022). These obstacles call for a more enabling environment within higher education institutions one that acknowledges and facilitates entrepreneurship not as a distraction but as a tool for resilience, innovation, and sustained academic commitment.

Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurial activities and strategies for enhancing financial stability and academic commitment have become increasingly pervasive among academics in Nigeria, largely as a result of the country's dwindling economic conditions. The persistent economic downturn, coupled with inflation and inadequate salary structures, has placed a significant financial strain on university lecturers, making it difficult for them to maintain a reasonable standard of living. It has been personally observed that a vast majority approximately 98% of academics working in federal universities are unable to rely solely on their monthly salaries to meet their basic needs and professional obligations. This growing financial pressure has pushed many into

engaging in entrepreneurial ventures as a means of supplementing their income. However, while these activities offer financial relief, they also raise important questions about how academics can balance such pursuits with their core responsibilities in teaching, research, and institutional service. Therefore, this study is set to investigate the nature of entrepreneurial activities and strategies adopted by federal university lecturers in Jigawa State, North-West Nigeria, and to assess how these approaches contribute to their financial stability and influence their commitment to academic roles.

Research Questions

The study set to answer three questions:

1. What types of entrepreneurial activities and strategies commonly employed to enhance financial stability and academic commitment among universities lecturers in Jigawa state?
2. How does lecturers balance their academic responsibilities with entrepreneurial pursuits in the quest for financial stability and commitment in Jigawa state?
3. What are the challenges associated with these entrepreneurial activities and strategies in the quest for financial stability and commitment in Jigawa state?

Methodology

The study adopted quantitative research method using descriptive survey research design and targeted all the academic staff across various faculties or schools of the two federal universities in Jigawa state, Nigeria. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select two hundred and sixty (260) respondents, and questionnaire using five way rating scale was used to collect the relevant data. Experts in the field and a statistician validated the instrument and reliability coefficient obtained was 0.981. Personal distribution of questionnaire was done and data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation using a mid-point of 3.0 and above indicate agreement while below 3.00 indicate disagreement with the statements. Additionally, the standard deviation was used to assess the consistency of the responses; a low standard deviation indicated that the responses were close to the mean, while a high standard deviation suggested greater variability. Analysis was carried out with the aid of SPSS software version 23.

Research Question One: What types of entrepreneurial activities and strategies commonly employed to enhance financial stability and academic commitment among universities lecturers in Jigawa state?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of responses on entrepreneurial activities among university lecturers.

Items	Mean	Std	Decision
Providing private tutoring for supplementary income	1.98	.91	Disagreed
Providing expert consultancy services to external organizations	2.26	1.1	Disagreed

Performing digital freelancing on global online platforms	1.83	1.1	Disagreed
Participating in small-scale agribusiness and retail ventures	4.23	.68	Agreed
Creating and selling original online educational content	1.93	.83	Disagreed

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the interpretation is that there is a clear and singular dominant strategy employed by university lecturers in the study area to enhance their financial stability: participating in small-scale agribusiness and retail ventures. This activity received strong agreement (Mean=4.23). In stark contrast, the lecturers collectively disagreed with the use of all other listed entrepreneurial strategies including private tutoring, expert consultancy, digital freelancing, and creating online educational content as evidenced by their mean scores all falling near or below the "disagree" benchmark (mean scores from 1.83 to 2.26). This indicates that while lecturers are venturing into business to pursue financial stability alongside their academic commitments, their engagement is limited primarily to non-academic enterprises, as knowledge-based or academic skill-exploiting ventures are not commonly employed.

Research Question Two: How does lecturers balance their academic responsibilities with entrepreneurial pursuits in the quest for financial stability and commitment in Jigawa state?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of responses on financial stability of university lecturers.

Items	Mean	Std	Decision
Integrating research into practical, paid consultancy	2.07	1.00	Disagreed
Scheduling entrepreneurial work during academic breaks	3.83	1.26	Agreed
Leveraging academic expertise for business ventures	2.26	1.1	Disagreed
Utilizing digital platforms for flexible income	1.56	.65	Disagreed
Blending teaching materials into marketable products	1.93	.83	Disagreed

Based on the data in table 2, the primary strategy lecturers in the study area employ to balance academic duties with entrepreneurial pursuits is to temporally separate these activities, as strongly evidenced by the high agreement (mean=3.83) with scheduling such work exclusively during academic breaks. Conversely, they strongly disagree with all forms of integrative strategies that blend their academic and entrepreneurial roles. This is clear from the disagreement with leveraging their expertise for business, integrating research into consultancy, utilizing digital platforms, and repurposing teaching materials into products (mean scores from 1.56 to 2.26). This indicates a clear preference for compartmentalization,

where entrepreneurial activities are conducted outside of the academic calendar, rather than being woven into their core academic functions.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges associated with these entrepreneurial activities and strategies in the quest for financial stability and commitment in Jigawa state?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of responses on the challenges faced by university lecturers.

Items	Mean	Std	Decision
Severe time constraints creating role conflict	2.98	1.49	Disagreed
Potential compromise of academic integrity, ethics	1.98	.91	Disagreed
Inadequate business skills and capital access	1.88	.86	Disagreed
Institutional policies discouraging external income generation	2.26	1.1	Disagreed
Lack enough capital	4.21	.83	Agreed

Based on the data in Table 3, the results present a striking contradiction: lecturers strongly agreed that a lack of enough capital is a major challenge, with a mean score of 4.21, yet they simultaneously disagreed that other fundamental challenges including severe time constraints, inadequate business skills, restrictive institutional policies, and ethical compromises are significant obstacles. This suggests that respondents perceive financial access as the single most critical hurdle, while either not experiencing or not acknowledging the typical operational, skill-based, and systemic challenges associated with entrepreneurial activities, potentially indicating a narrow view of the barriers to entry.

Discussion of Findings

What types of entrepreneurial activities and strategies commonly employed to enhance financial stability and academic commitment among universities lecturers in the study area? The finding indicate that lecturers in the study area primarily engage in small-scale agribusiness and retail ventures to enhance financial stability, while strongly avoiding activities that leverage their academic expertise, such as consultancy, freelancing, or creating educational content. The literature strongly agreed with Clark et al. (2024) and Covin and Wales (2019) who found strong connection between entrepreneurial orientation (EO) by innovation, proactivity, and risk-taking through leveraging one's unique assets in this case, academic expertise. Covin and Wales (2019) found that a majority of business owners sustain a higher standard of living compared to government workers.

How lecturers balance their academic responsibilities with entrepreneurial pursuits in the quest for financial stability and commitment in the study area? The finding revealed that to balance these pursuits with academic duties, they compartmentalize their efforts, strictly scheduling entrepreneurial work during academic breaks rather than integrating it with their teaching or

research roles. Research on career motivations (Delanoë-Gueguen & Liñán, 2019) and identity (Guerrero & Walsh, 2023) found that blending roles led to more sustainable and identity-congruent outcomes. The strict compartmentalization observed indicates a lack of institutional support mechanisms (e.g., flexible policies as noted by Gordon & Hood, 2020) revealed the synergistic integration of academic and entrepreneurial pursuits that the literature suggests is ideal.

What are the challenges associated with these entrepreneurial activities and strategies in the quest for financial stability and commitment in the study area? The finding showed that despite their engagement in business, the overwhelming challenge identified is a severe lack of capital. Interestingly, they do not perceive other typical challenges such as time constraints, inadequate skills, institutional policies, or ethical concerns as significant obstacles, suggesting a narrow focus on financial constraints as the principal impediment to their entrepreneurial activities. The literature unequivocally supports the finding that access to financial capital is a paramount challenges, especially in developing economies (Cabrera & Mauricio, 2017; Gupta & Mirchandani, 2018). However, the literature strongly disagrees as it found dismissal as other factors. A vast body of work highlights the critical importance of entrepreneurial traits (Acharya & Berry, 2023), business skills (Ciambotti et al., 2023), and a supportive institutional environment (Bermejo-Olivas et al., 2024) as fundamental to entrepreneurial success.

Conclusion

The study concludes that lecturers at federal universities in Jigawa state primarily engage in non-academic entrepreneurial ventures like small-scale agribusiness, strictly compartmentalized to academic breaks, due to a perceived critical challenge of limited capital, while dismissing other common challenges like time constraints or skill gaps.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following actionable recommendations are proposed to enhance the financial stability and academic commitment of lecturers:

1. To counter the overreliance on non-academic ventures like agribusiness, universities should establish dedicated Knowledge Transfer Offices (KTOs). These hubs would serve to mentor, train, and guide lecturers in identifying, developing, and commercializing their academic expertise. This includes launching consultancies, creating marketable online educational content, securing research-based contracts, and offering specialized freelance services. Aligning entrepreneurial activities with their core skills, lecturers can develop more profitable and sustainable ventures, thereby securing a better standard of living within Nigeria's challenging economic context.
2. There is a need for lecturers to proper balance and adopt a model of integrated time management where they should strategically schedule tasks, dedicating specific hours outside of core teaching and research duties to managed their ventures, such as offering consultancy services or developing digital content. This method moves beyond compartmentalization and fosters a more sustainable synergy between academic and entrepreneurial roles.

3. There is a need for universities to proactively collaborate with financial bodies (e.g., TETFund, CBN intervention funds), intergovernmental organizations, international development donors, and private financial institutions. The goal is to create a special venture Capital Fund or no-interest loan scheme specifically for lecturers. Access would be competitive and merit-based, awarded to those with the most viable and tangible business plans, particularly those that leverage academic expertise. The university's KTO could further support this by assisting with business plan development and ensuring proper oversight and execution for accountability and success

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