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# **Pedagogical Approach to Entrepreneurship Education in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions**

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## ***Abstract***

*There is no single educational paradigm to which entrepreneurship should be taught. What should be taught and developed are the abilities to use creative strategies, innovative tactics and courageous leadership. To do this, is to move beyond teaching the science of entrepreneurship only, towards teaching the art of entrepreneurship as well. The teaching approach cannot be a mere extension of existing practices. It should differ markedly from the regarded norm and this brings about a distinction between the conventional approach of teaching and the more entrepreneurial approach. It is therefore recommended that entrepreneurship studies in Nigerian tertiary institutions should not be carried out in a context which may undermine entrepreneurship qualities such as action-orientation and self-confidence.*

## **Introduction**

Agu (2006), notes that one major characteristic of the Nigerian economy is the dominant influence of government in investment and labour employment. Over the years the economy has been heavily driven by public sector spending with little or no private sector entrepreneurship initiative, culminating in over-dependence on government for employment. It is believed that this is wholly responsible for the sluggish economic growth rate, mono-cultural economy, rising unemployment and

poverty. The need to redress the trend has caused serious concern to successive governments at various levels in the country. What may be regarded, as the boldest frontal attack on the problem is the initiative of the past and present civilian administration, summarised in its economic reform programme christened National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).

The primary objective of the reform is to further liberalise the economy and encourage increased private sector participants as a basis for resting the economy on the wheels of the private sector. This philosophy anchors essentially on the culture of enterprise and entrepreneurism and their power to expand employment opportunities, empower the citizens and consequently, reduce poverty level in the country.

NEEDS envisages enormous role for the private sector and entrepreneurism in achieving its objectives. As a result, reforms in the educational sector becomes inevitable as it would be one of the cardinal pillars of the programme geared towards enriching the contents at all levels with entrepreneurial culture. This is the imperative of the revolution which is currently and gradually blowing across our academic institutions and the economic sector.

### **Concept of Entrepreneurship**

Esene (2006) defines entrepreneurship as the apparent willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully. The concept of entrepreneurship has been associated with several activities concerned opportunities, decision-making as to the opportunities to exploit promotion and establishment of the business enterprise, aggregation of the scarce resources required for promotion and distribution, organisation and management of the human and material resources for the attainment of the objectives of the enterprise, risk bearing and innovation. Obviously, an effective performance of the above activities is critical to the birth, survival and growth of the business enterprises. Thus, entrepreneurship is a vital factor in the process of economic development of any nation. From the above explanations, entrepreneurship is regarded as a term used broadly in connection with the innovative modern industrial business leader.

Egwuelu (2003) defines entrepreneurship as the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and actions with management and organisational skills necessary to mobilise the appropriate people, money, and operating resources to meet an identifiable need and create wealth in the process. Whether the process is undertaken by a single individual or a team of individuals, there is mounting evidence that growth-minded entrepreneurs possess not only a creative and innovative flair but also solid management skills and business know-how. Innovators are usually associated for their creative and innovative abilities. But their innovations seldom become commercial organisational realities because many inventors lack the motivation or the management and organisational skills to bring products or services to the market effectively.

Entrepreneurship is sometimes called enterprises or organisations or establishments. It consists of the organizing ability of the entrepreneurs and their willingness to bear financial risk. It embraces labour and its control and management.

Most scientific, technological and socio-economic development are essentially dependent on entrepreneurship which is aimed at bringing out the best in individuals. It is a clear manifestation of effective manipulating of human intelligence as demonstrated in creative performance.

Akhuemankhan (2005) sees entrepreneurship as a way of life, a way of seeing things or an attitude of the mind, which emphasizes, among others, that:

- (a) Success depends on ones willingness to work hard and accept responsibilities for one's problems and positions in life.
- (b) Individuals derive power or motivation from their own action and not from the actions of others.
- (c) Success results from persistent efforts.
- (d) Failure and mistakes are part of learning experiences which should be seen as challenges rather than discouragement.
- (e) Identification and emphasising one's strengths while playing on the weaknesses.
- (f) Self-confidence in initiating and implementing life changing plans and ideas.

Timmons (1999) defines entrepreneurship as a way of thinking, reasoning and acting that is opportunity obsessed, holistic in approach and leadership balanced. It results in the creation, enhancement, realisation and renewal of value, not just for owners, but for all participants and stakeholders.

The above definition gives a clear explanation of the multi-faceted nature of entrepreneurship. It deals with the process of entrepreneurship having a particular mindset for identifying or creating opportunities within the business environment, while risking resources in exploiting the opportunity for a potential reward that will eventually be distributed wider than the enterprise and owner. Timmons added further that entrepreneurship has evolved beyond the traditional confines of business start-ups: "entrepreneurship can occur in new firms and in old; in small firms and in large; in fast and slow growing firms; in the private, public and non-for-profit, in all geographic points, and all stages of a nations development, regardless of politics". In this regard, Jordaan (2000) refers to an infusion of entrepreneurial thinking into large bureaucratic businesses, even all businesses, transforming them through strategic renewal. This phenomenon of cooperate entrepreneurship, or intrapreneurship is increasingly found in established businesses, fostering individual and group entrepreneurship within a pre-existing organisational setting. The organisation provides support for exploitation and development of innovations that are strategically and financially consistent with the organisations mission.

Herbart & Brazeal (1999) note that earlier studies on entrepreneurship focused on the characteristics of entrepreneurs, attempting to distinguish entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs or from non-managers or from owner-managers. The general view is, however, that psychological characteristics are only parts of the picture as entrepreneurship is a dynamic process with various interacting elements, such as

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people, resources, businesses and the environment. Notwithstanding the above, an understanding of the attitudes, behaviours, and experience, know-how and management competences of entrepreneurs is important as it provides useful insight into those shared attributes that can be developed or learned. The better a phenomenon such as entrepreneurship is understood, the more likely is the success of fostering and improving its practice.

One important thing is the entrepreneurial paradigm that is shared by entrepreneurs and not so much the characteristics. Luczkiw (1998) states that leaders, managers, and everyday people are challenged by today's complex and chaotic global environment to develop new paradigms and mental models to cope with the economy. The entrepreneurial paradigm is becoming an integral part of the modern day knowledge economy.

Luczkiw (1998) came out with a list called "observations to help understand the entrepreneur's modus operandi, intrinsic motivation and individual sense of meaning".

- Entrepreneurs are agent of change who break with established ways of doing things in order to create what has not been created before.
- Entrepreneurial activities take place outside organisations as well as in the external environment (for example product and service innovation, process innovation, identification of new opportunities and niches)
- Successful entrepreneurs are in control of their destiny, transcending their culture and genetic determinants by becoming conscious of their uniqueness and differentiation.
- Entrepreneurs are experts at collaborating and networking, inside and outside their enterprises.
- Everyone has the capacity to internalise entrepreneurial habits.
- Entrepreneurs are found in all industries, inside large organisations and small.
- Entrepreneurs compete effectively in the global arena.
- Their success is determined by how effectively they exploit emerging niches and how closely they pay attention to delivering customer value.
- They deal effectively with chaos and crisis, viewing these as normal operating conditions.
- Many are family-owned businesses.
- Attitude is considered more important than knowledge and skills.

The above list not only provides some insight into the entrepreneurial paradigm, but also confirms Gibb's (1998) broader contextualisation of entrepreneurship being an interaction between the individual, organisation and society as one entity.

### **Concept of Entrepreneurship Education**

According to Agu (2006) entrepreneurship education is the type of education designed to change the orientation and attitude of the recipient and in the process equip him with the skill and knowledge to enable him start and manage a business enterprise. It is an area of study that includes those attitudes and skills essential for responding to one's environment in the process of conceiving, starting and managing a business enterprise. The primary focus of entrepreneurship education is to develop entrepreneurial skills and attitude or competences necessary for successful entrepreneurship. These qualities include entrepreneurial culture, enterprise spirit, technical and professional competences and managerial capabilities.

Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings. Variations of entrepreneurship education are offered at colleges of education, polytechnics and universities (Griffin & Hammis, 2003).

### **Educating Entrepreneurs**

For the purpose of economic growth, national development and job creation, it is increasingly expected from educational institutions to contribute to this by relevant and appropriate education programme (Laukkanen 2000). Very recently in South Africa, the Commission for High Education stated that institutions of higher education need to reconsider their entire curricula and introduce course/modules in entrepreneurship to each diploma or degree offering.

Although business and commerce educators and students are reasonably au fait with the concept of entrepreneurship, due to its origins in the economics and business disciplines, there is still some confusion on how it should be taught. Much scholarly debate and many research papers are produced on various ways of teaching entrepreneurship, the majority, however, focusing on the traditional "business school model". Business schools often approach entrepreneurship as capstone courses, putting it on top of functional management disciplines to bring together the parts (Jordaan, 2000). Curricula are mainly concerned with training managers and the teaching culture pre-supposes that the student is enrolled for a qualification that will guarantee him/her a job (Dolabela, 1999). Laukkanen (2000) refers to business school sterility, producing graduates that are too analytic, problem conscious and risk averse due to the emphasis on functional specialty. He observes that the dominant paradigm in entrepreneurship education seems to be one focused on educating individual entrepreneurs, by providing the individual with a set of personal capabilities. With the appropriate pre-programmed know-what, know-how, know-who and know-why capabilities developed within the confines of one educational institution, it is then tacitly assumed that these individuals will cross the institution environment" border and actually start new business or turn into economic actors in the business environment.

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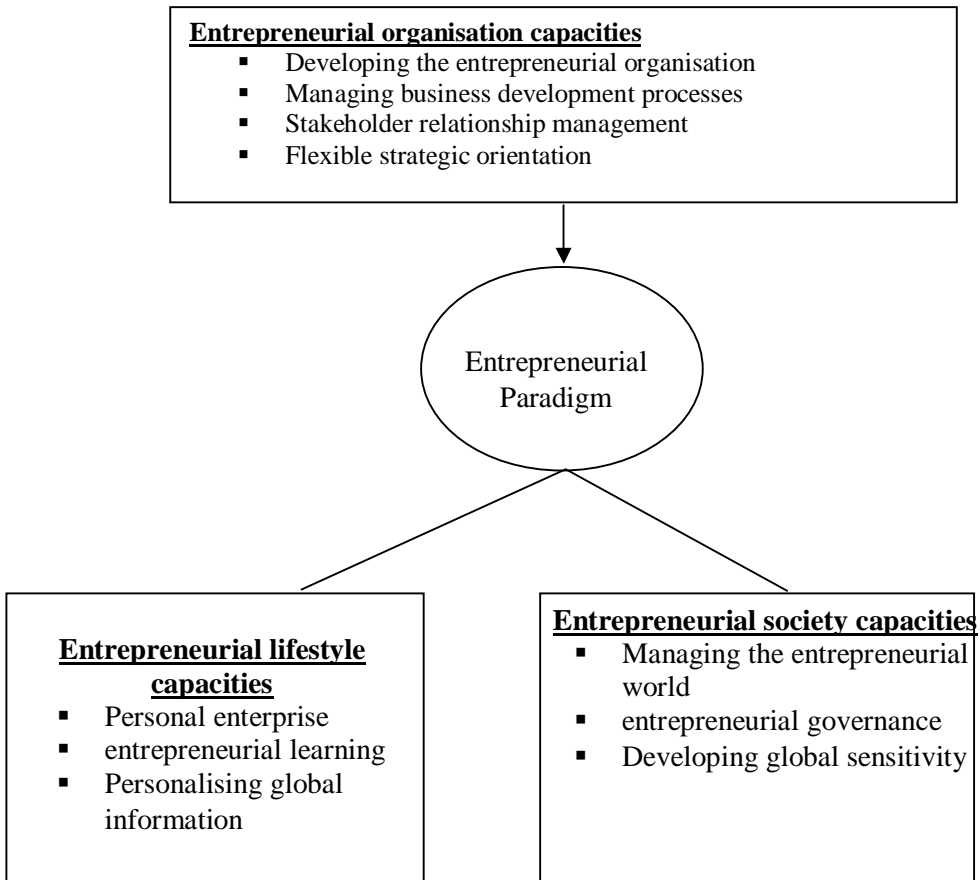
### **Model for Teaching Entrepreneurship in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions**

There is no single universal model according to which entrepreneurship should be taught. But for clarity, Gibb (1998) offer a set of entrepreneurial core capacities that should guide entrepreneurship teaching. He describes it as *“Those capacities that constitute the basic necessary and sufficient conditions for the pursuit of effective entrepreneurial behaviour individually, organisationally, and societally in an increasingly turbulent and global environment”*.

The following are ten entrepreneurial capacities offered by Gibb (1998):

- To understand and cope with a particular entrepreneurial lifestyle.
- To manage uncertainty in a global context.
- To cope with the social and community behaviours which form basis for the “civil society” in which the self-regulation of entrepreneurial activity takes place;
- To develop entrepreneurial organisations;
- To manage business development processes;
- To manage networks of stakeholders;
- To master strategic awareness;
- To develop personal entrepreneurial behaviours and attributes;
- To learn how to effectively learn from the interactions of the business with the environment.
- To manage enterprisingly the global information revolution.

Gibb (1998) classifies the entrepreneurial capacities to individual, organisational, and societal capacities, but acknowledge that they are linked together and can change over time in response to changes within the environment. A framework depicting this classification is presented in the figure below.



**Figure I:** Entrepreneurial core competencies (adapted from Gibb, 1998)

Shepherd & Douglas (1997) refer to the “essence of entrepreneurship” as being the ability to visualize and chart new courses of business by combining information’s from the functional disciplines and the external environment within the context of extreme ambiguity and uncertainty. What should be taught and developed are the abilities to use creative strategies, innovative tactics and courageous leadership.

The way to do this is to move beyond teaching the science of entrepreneurship only to teaching the art of entrepreneurship as well. Science refers to the theory of business which is based on the analysis of practical experience. It is regarded as rational and logic. The art of entrepreneurship, however, involves the ability to apply the theoretical knowledge creatively and with initiative. It deals with perception, creative thinking and learning by doing. To facilitate this, the teaching approach cannot

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be a mere extension of existing practices. It should differ markedly from the regarded norm (Fox & Maas, 1997). In this regard, Gibb (1998) draws a clear distinction between the conventional approach to teaching and the more entrepreneurial approach.

### **Gibb's Conventional Versus Entrepreneurial Approach to Teaching**

<b>Conventional Approach</b>	<b>Entrepreneurship Approach</b>
Major focus on contents	Major focus on process of delivery.
Lecturer dominated teaching.	Student-dominated learning/discovery/sharing.
Lecturer acts as knowledge disseminator	Lecturer acts facilitator/fellow learner
Emphasis upon know - that	Emphasis upon know-how and know-who
Students receive knowledge passively	Students discover and generate knowledge
Sessions heavily programmed and scheduled	Sessions flexible and responsive to needs
Learning objectives imposed	Learning objectives negotiated
Mistakes looked down upon	Learning from mistakes
Emphasis upon theory	Emphasis upon practice
Discipline/functional/subject focus	Multidisciplinary/cross functional focus.

Since entrepreneurship is a way of life, it cannot be promoted through traditional method or a crash course. Sustainable entrepreneurial behaviour can only be obtained over time and through an integrated system. Working rather from the basis of a common entrepreneurial paradigm, entrepreneurship education can then be adapted according to the particular audience, available resources or specific context.

### **Conclusion**

Entrepreneurship is an employment strategy that can lead to economic self-sufficiency. Self-employment provides people with the potential to create and manage businesses in which they function as the employer or boss, rather than merely being an employee. With entrepreneurship education, young people learn organisational skills, including time management, leadership development and interpersonal skills, all of which are highly transferable skills sought by employers.



### **Recommendations**

1. In this time of economic melt down, tertiary institutions in Nigeria should put in place relevant educational programmes that will help actualize government economic policy.
2. In order for Nigerian graduates to cross the institution environment border and start new businesses or turn into economic actors in the business environment educational institutions should develop an appropriate pre-programmed within their confines.
3. Entrepreneurship studies in Nigerian tertiary institutions should not be carried out in a context which may deny entrepreneurial qualities such as action-orientation and self-confidence.
4. Federal Ministry of Education in conjunction with NUC, NBTE and NCCE should reconsider the entire curricula and introduce courses/modules in entrepreneurship to each diploma and degree offering.

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