

# EXPERIENTIAL PEDAGOGY AND SHARED VISION: A FOCUS ON IDENTIFICATION OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES BY NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

*The goal of this study was to determine the effects of entrepreneurship pedagogy on students' shared vision and identification of business opportunities. The study adopted quantitative approach with a descriptive research design to describe the effects of entrepreneurship on university students based on the objective of the study. Survey was used as quantitative research method which enhanced the determination of statistically significant results. The population of this study included all students in the four selected universities in Nigeria. Data was analyzed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Hierarchical multiple regression was used as statistical tool of analysis to show the distinctive predictive effect of students' shared vision over and above the effects of entrepreneurship pedagogy on students' identification of business opportunities. The findings of the study revealed that the pedagogical approach adopted can stimulate a shared vision in students to identify business opportunities. Thus it was recommended that experiential pedagogical approach can be used to stimulate business opportunity identification potentials in entrepreneurship students.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurship Pedagogy, Shared Vision, Identification of Business Opportunity

## INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship pedagogies should engage students in practical activities that motivate a shared vision and focus for identification of business opportunities. This is in line with the study of (Saks & Gaglio, 2002) that focused on how entrepreneurship educator-practitioners conceptualize and instruct the opportunity identification process. The results of the research showed that seventy five percent of the educators revealed that they anticipated that their students would figure out how to recognize potential business opportunities. The authors posited that little is thought about whether and how opportunity identification is instructed in the entrepreneurship classroom. Similarly, (Detienne & Chandler, 2004) took a look at opportunity identification and its part in the entrepreneurial classroom. The goal of the study was to ascertain that opportunity identification is a competence that can be developed in the classroom with the

appropriate pedagogical approach. Using participants of 130 senior-level undergraduates at a university in Western United States and a variation of a Solomon Four Group Designed experiment, the results showed that individuals can learn the processes of opportunity identification in entrepreneurial classes. In a similar study carried out by (Kickul, Gundry, Barbosa & Whitcanack, 2009) on the critical role of various cognitive styles in opportunity identification and recognition, individuals with an intuitive cognitive style were observed to be more positive about their capacity to identify opportunities, while individuals with an analytical cognitive style were observed to be more certain about their capacities to identify, assess, plan and marshal resources. In another research by (Nab, Bulte & Pilot, 2013) on fostering the competence of science students in identifying business opportunities, an educational design research approach was employed using a case of 23 graduate students of Utrecht University. The findings showed that students were able to identify business opportunities and other entrepreneurial outcomes in pursuit of entrepreneurial goals and aspirations.

In the same light, (Kickul, 2006) illustrated a set of assignments for teaching students, particularly the aptitude of writing an opportunity proposal that determines how students ought to exploit business opportunities following an analysis of the industry. The assignments resulted in an increase of students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy and students were able to identify business opportunities. This is also similar to the study of (Muzychenko, 2008) on international opportunity identification. The author stressed the role of a competence-based and experiential approach to teaching. According to the author, this approach centers on opportunity identification and the self-perceived task competence (self-efficacy) of the entrepreneur, especially on the grounds that self-efficacy and opportunity identification are unequivocally connected and correlated.

In the same vein, the study of (Munoz, Mosey & Binks, 2011) examined how the development of students' capabilities for identifying business opportunities is underpinned by a change in their opportunity-identification mental frames. The research was based on a qualitative study consisting of two rounds of semi structured interviews including open-ended questions, an opportunity assessment, and pictorial representations. Fifteen students were investigated as they took part in an award-winning entrepreneurship module. "Entrepreneurship and Business" is an undergraduate module of the Nottingham University Business School. The authors concluded that entrepreneurship courses need to adopt more practical pedagogical approaches in order to help students interpret information and enable them to more effectively identify new business opportunities. This is in line with the study of (Piperopoulos & Dimov, 2014) that assessed the relationship between student's self-efficacy beliefs and entrepreneurial intentions in the pedagogy of the entrepreneurship course. The study was based on a survey of 114 students enrolled in different entrepreneurship courses at a major British university. The authors concluded that higher self-efficacy is associated with lower entrepreneurial intentions in the theoretically oriented courses and higher entrepreneurial intentions in the practically oriented courses. On the contrary, (Nkala & Wanjau, 2013) examined factors influencing implementation of the entrepreneurship programme conducted in tertiary technical institutions in Kenya. The study investigated the influence of teaching and assessment methods, teachers' network with entrepreneurship practitioners and availability of training resources. A census survey of entrepreneurship education teachers in technical training institutions in Nairobi County was conducted, using a structured self-administered questionnaire. The authors asserted that teachers use traditional pedagogical approaches that are not practical oriented. According to the authors,

this has a negative effect on students as regards entrepreneurial learning and identification of opportunities.

However, what these studies have not been able to explain is how the engagement of an appropriate pedagogy, motivate students to identify business opportunities. Therefore, the role of experiential pedagogical approaches in motivating a shared vision/focus and opportunity identification by entrepreneurship students cannot be over emphasized. Identification of business opportunities is consequent upon the fact that experiential approaches to pedagogy, can create a shared vision about real life scenarios as regards what entrepreneurship is about. Hence, understanding the main crust of the process of entrepreneurship in a real life context may motivate opportunity identification by entrepreneurship students. This implies that the place of entrepreneurship pedagogy, in creating a shared vision for identification of business opportunities by students in Nigerian universities, is not clearly established in related empirical literature.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

A school of thought believes that entrepreneurs are born and not made. This suggests that entrepreneurs are individuals with peculiar genes who emerge as a consequence of genetic inheritance (Nkala & Wanjau, 2013). However this myth has been demystified particularly because various studies have established the premise that every individual has the potential to become an entrepreneur especially through the process of education (Gelard & Saleh, 2011). It is important to state that entrepreneurship as a career offer individuals the opportunity to be financially independent, as well as enhance the achievement of professional and personal goals (Moses, Olokundun, Akinbode, Agboola & Inelo, 2016). The process of entrepreneurship can be very challenging in that it is characterized by a long term systematic process which involves identification of opportunities, development of business model, putting together a venture team, fund raising, financial management, as well as leading and motivating employees (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2004). Therefore the acquisition relevant knowledge, skill and expertise as regards the process of entrepreneurship become imperative for successful business startups (Clouse, 1990). Entrepreneurship education describes the scope of lectures, curricular or programmes that attempt to provide students with the necessary entrepreneurial competencies, knowledge and skills geared towards the pursuit of a career in entrepreneurship (Ooi, Selvarajah & Meyer, 2011). It also refers to the conscious effort of an educator targeted at inculcating entrepreneurial skills in learners (Ekpoh & Edet, 2011). (Fayolle Kryo & Ulijn, 2006) in their presentation defined entrepreneurship education as any pedagogical programme associated with inculcating entrepreneurial attitudes and skills as well as personal qualities in learners which suggests that the goal of entrepreneurship education is not exclusively hinged on the immediate creation of new businesses but also the development of attributes and skills salient to entrepreneurial dispositions and goals.

Most definitions of entrepreneurship education agree that one of the main goals should be inculcating entrepreneurship skills in learners which should culminate in eventual business startups, however two key words closely associated with education as a concept is information and skill hence a comprehensive definition of entrepreneurship education should incorporate information and skill as outcomes of the process (Nasiru, Keat & Bhatti, 2015). Therefore this study will adopt the definition of entrepreneurship education presented by (Alberti Sciascia &

Poli, 2004) which describes entrepreneurship education as the structured formal communication of entrepreneurship competencies which consists of skills and mental awareness employed by individuals in the process of establishment of growth oriented business start-ups. This definition indicates that entrepreneurship education provides individuals with relevant skills as well as information required for successful venture creation.

### **Entrepreneurship Pedagogy**

Entrepreneurship pedagogy can be described as a combination of knowledge and skills required for effective teaching in entrepreneurship. Although the more traditional definitions describe Entrepreneurship pedagogy as either the science/theory or art/practice of teaching entrepreneurship that makes a difference in the intellectual and entrepreneurial development of students (Krueger, Reilly & Carsrud, 2000). However new research defines Entrepreneurship pedagogy in the context of a highly complex blend of theoretical understanding and practical skill (Sahlberg, 2010). Different research and theories may underpin different models of Entrepreneurship pedagogy but it is not in contention that within a certain range of procedures, different teaching approaches work differentially with diverse communities of students; and effective teachers are aware of that (Agbatogun, 2013)

Effective teachers possess a rich understanding of the subjects they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subject is created, organized, linked to other disciplines and applied to real-life situations. Entrepreneurship pedagogy while faithfully representing the collective wisdom of culture and upholding the value of disciplinary knowledge, they also must develop the critical and analytical capacities of students (Reitan, 1997). However, it is pertinent to state that the incorporation of real life practices into entrepreneurship teaching activities is considered valuable and effective at motivating students towards application of entrepreneurial skills in proffering solution to real life issues as well as societal or social problems and challenges (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2011). Therefore with particular emphasis on entrepreneurship education the experiential learning incorporates other approaches and motivates the employment of holistic teaching pedagogies and practices that attempt to inculcate curriculum content knowledge, entrepreneurial skills as well motivate entrepreneurial intentions of learners (Neck & Greene, 2011). Thus the experiential pedagogical approach is considered more relevant and effective for entrepreneurship education.

### **Shared Vision**

Shared vision can be described as an individual's focus on learning. Consequently without a shared vision, learning by a group of individuals may be negated (Sinkula, Baker & Noordewier 1997). It implies that even if the members of a group are encouraged or motivated to learn, it becomes challenging to know what to learn without a shared vision (Hult, 1998). With particular reference to entrepreneurship programmes in universities, a common challenge is that innovative and creative ideas are hardly implemented by individuals owing to the absence of clearly defined course or direction. Laudable ideas fail to be executed or even translate into action as a consequence of varied interests (Verona, 1999). It is important to note that the design of entrepreneurship education programmes can affect an individual's focus hence a clear and concise goal for entrepreneurship education can motivate the entrepreneurial intentions of an individual (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1995). Generally a shared vision can provide coordination for the focus of entrepreneurship students which in turn enhances the quality of learning (Day,

1991). More so the concept of shared vision is closely linked with research driven approaches where individuals are encouraged to focus their energies on creating superior value for customers (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1995).

### **Opportunity Identification**

Opportunity identification is regarded as the bed rock of the entrepreneurship process, particularly because it involves blending observations, customers' opinion, invention and adaptation targeted at identifying a gap in the market place for a product or service to fill at an affordable or acceptable price (Dragan, 2012). Opportunity identification could be through the founding and formation of a new venture or the significant improvement of an existing one. Opportunity identification can be regarded as an entrepreneurial activity that can take place both before the establishment of a business and also after the establishment of a business (Wouter, 2010). Opportunities can be recognized or identified all through the life of an entrepreneur and a business (Klein, 2008).

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP PEDAGOGY, SHARED VISION AND IDENTIFICATION OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES**

(Solomon, 2007) in support of the place of experiential pedagogy in entrepreneurship education suggests that pedagogies should expose learners to the unstable and dynamic nature of entrepreneurial experience so that they can develop the focus and energy required for tackling the challenges of an entrepreneurship career. (Sexton & Upton, 1984) supported by (Ronstdt, 1990) also argue that entrepreneurship education programmes should feature more of individual over group activities in order to reinforce focus. Hence he stated that the design of these activities should not be monotonous but unstructured to give learners the opportunity to practice how to identify business opportunities as well as proffer creative solutions to challenges in situations of risk, and conditions of instability.

Very recently (Cubico, de Oliveira, Bellotto, Formicuzzi, Favretto & Sartori, 2015) also stated that theoretical and methodological uniformity, pedagogical fragmentation and segregation have been an issue of contention for entrepreneurship scholars. This motivates the need for more research and studies on the contents and pedagogy of entrepreneurship programmes consistent with the ultimate goal of motivating a shared vision in students towards acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and aptitudes such as identification of business opportunities. (Anderson & Miller, 2003) argue that teaching entrepreneurship requires a combination of the creative talents of the artist, the skills and ability of the artisan, as well as the applied knowledge of the technician with the know-what of the professional. Therefore, with particular reference to Nigerian universities, it is important to state that teaching entrepreneurship in Nigerian institutions requires an experiential approach to initiate focus and stimulate the energy necessary to achieve intended goals of entrepreneurship education such as identification of business opportunities by undergraduates and graduates of these institutions (Abdul, Van Wie, Babauta, Golter, Brown, Bako, Ahmed, Shide, Anafi & Olaofe, 2011).

There are often institutional pressures in Nigerian universities to offer pedagogies that yield concise quantitative outcomes in terms of how much students know, how well students performance in examinations, arguments in favour of using mainly theoretical pedagogical model, or method(s) to teach entrepreneurship. These questions the appropriateness and the effectiveness of the pedagogical models adopted in entrepreneurship education in Nigerian

universities (Suleiman, Hanafi & Tanslikhan, 2017). Therefore, based on the theoretical background conducted, eight key-issues as regards entrepreneurship education, experiential pedagogy and identification of business opportunities have emerge. These are gathered as follows:

- 1) The design of challenging learning activities motivates the development of creative problem solving abilities in order to enhance students' entrepreneurial intentions
- 2) Every individual has the potential to become an entrepreneur especially through the process of education
- 3) The acquisition relevant knowledge, skill and expertise as regards the process of entrepreneurship become imperative for successful business startups
- 4) Entrepreneurship education describes the scope of lectures, curricular or programmes that attempt to provide students with the necessary entrepreneurial competencies, knowledge and skills geared towards the pursuit of a career in entrepreneurship
- 5) Entrepreneurship education as any pedagogical programme is associated with inculcating entrepreneurial attitudes and skills as well as personal qualities in learners
- 6) Entrepreneurship education provides individuals with relevant skills as well as information required for successful venture creation.
- 7) Entrepreneurship pedagogy is contextualized as a highly complex blend of theoretical understanding and practical skill.
- 8) Good entrepreneurship pedagogy requires a broad repertoire of strategies and sustained attention to what produces student learning given a particular educator.

Upon this premise the researchers postulated the following hypothesis in null form:

*H<sub>01</sub>: Experiential pedagogy has no effect on students' shared vision and identification of business opportunities.*

## METHOD

The data for this study was collected from university students of four selected institutions in Nigeria offering a degree programme in entrepreneurship. The selected universities are Joseph Ayo Babalola in Osun State, Federal University of Agriculture in Abeokuta Ogun State, Federal University of Technology Akure Ondo State, and Lead City University Ibadan Oyo State. This study adopted descriptive cross sectional survey research design in which the research questionnaire was administered to participants based on stratified and simple random sampling techniques.

### Population

The study population size is given as Fifty thousand nine hundred (50,900) students, obtained from the field study of this research based on the information provided by the student affairs department of each selected university.

### Sample Size Determination

The sample size for this study was determined based on (Godden, 2004), which recommended a formula where the study population is greater than fifty thousand respondents. The formula according to (Godden, 2004) is stated as follows:

$$SS = \frac{Z^2 \times p(1-p)}{C^2}$$

Where:

SS=Sample Size for infinite population

Z=Z value (e.g. 1.96 for 95% confidence level)

P=population proportion (expressed as decimal) (assumed to be 0.5 (50%))

C=Confidence interval at 0.04

Therefore, Sample size=
$$\frac{3.8416 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.0016}$$

Sample size=600

Therefore a sample size of 600 students was used to represent the study population as computed above.

### Sampling Techniques

This study employed multi-stage sampling technique which involved purposive sampling, stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques. The first stage involved purposive sampling which was used to select the universities used for this study. The second stage involved stratified sampling technique which was used to categorize the study population (undergraduate students) in the four selected universities into different academic years. Hence all students in these universities regardless of their course of study were grouped into five according to their academic year of study. This enhanced the identification of sub-groups within the study population and also created a sample which adequately represented these sub-groups. The last stage involved simple random sampling which was carried out firstly by assigning a consecutive number from 1 to the population number for each selected university, secondly from the list of students in each academic year in the selected universities a sample was drawn using random number tables. Finally a total of 600 students were chosen from the selected universities as sample size for this study.

### Validity and Reliability Procedures

To ensure content validity experts on the subject matter of this study were provided with access to the measurement tool in order to provide feedback on the effectiveness of each question in measuring the constructs (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2002). Informed decisions were made based on their feedbacks. The test to determine the internal consistency of the research instrument was conducted on the retrieved questionnaire with the aid of the Cronbach Alpha Reliability procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

<b>Table 1</b> <b>RELIABILITY STATISTICS</b>	
Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.856	40

Source: Field work, (2016)

The result of Table 1 indicated that the instrument had a good internal consistency based on the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient value reported at 0.856.

## Data Analysis

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was applied to test the stated hypothesis in order to examine the effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable and to identify the unique predictive influence of the mediating variable while holding the independent variable constant in the model.

### HYPOTHESES TESTING AND RESULTS

*H<sub>02</sub>: Entrepreneurship pedagogy has no effect on students' shared vision for identification of business opportunities.*

#### Hierarchical Multiple Regression

*H<sub>03</sub>: Entrepreneurship pedagogy does not affect students' shared-vision for identification of business opportunities.*

#### Regression

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.421 <sup>a</sup>	0.177	0.176	0.58937	0.177	121.108	1	563	0.000
2	0.469 <sup>b</sup>	0.220	0.217	0.57442	0.043	30.696	1	562	0.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), pedagogy									
b. Predictors: (Constant), pedagogy, shared vision									

Source: Field Survey Result (2016)

This study revealed in Table 2 above that entrepreneurship pedagogy has effect on identification of business opportunities at  $r=0.421$ . R-Square is the proportion of variance of the dependent variable which can be predicted by the independent variable. This value indicated that there is a variance of 42.1% between entrepreneurship pedagogy and identification of business opportunities with the R square value at 0.177. The relationships between entrepreneurship pedagogy, students' shared-vision and identification of business opportunities were also established at  $r=0.469$  while the R-Square value changed to 0.220. The significance of the F-change was assessed and it was found to be significant (0.0001).



Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42.068	1	42.068	121.108	0.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	195.564	563	0.347		
	Total	237.632	564			
2	Regression	52.197	2	26.098	79.096	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	185.436	562	0.330		
	Total	237.632	564			
a. Predictors: (Constant), pedagogy						
b. Predictors: (Constant), pedagogy, shared						
c. Dependent Variable: oport						

Source: Field Survey Result, (2016)

The Table 3 above has the results of two models. The first model showed the effects of entrepreneurship pedagogy on identification of business opportunities. The F-value is the Mean Square Regression (42.068) divided by the Mean Square Residual (0.347), yielding  $F=121.108$ . From the results, the model 1 in this table is statistically significant ( $Sig=0.000$ ). The second model is about the effect of both entrepreneurship pedagogy and students' shared-vision on identification of business opportunities. The F-value is the Mean Square Regression (26.098) divided by the Mean Square Residual (0.330), yielding  $F=79.096$  at acceptable significant level of 0.0001.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.329	0.162		14.346	0.000					
	Pedagogy	0.444	0.040	0.421	11.005	0.000	0.421	0.421	0.421	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	1.801	0.185		9.756	0.000					
	Pedagogy	0.363	0.042	0.344	8.651	0.000	0.421	0.343	0.322	0.878	1.138
	Shared	0.215	0.039	0.220	5.540	0.000	0.340	0.228	0.206	0.878	1.138

a. Dependent Variable: oport

Source: Field Survey Result, (2016).

Based on the results in model 3, the Table 4 above revealed the contributions of entrepreneurship pedagogy and students' shared-vision to identification of business opportunities and their levels of significance. (Pedagogy;  $\beta=0.363$ ;  $t=8.651$ ;  $p<0.0001$ , shared v;  $\beta=0.215$ ;  $t=5.540$ ;  $p<0.0001$ ). The significance level of the variable is less than 0.01 and the level of significance of F change is also less than 0.01.

## **Decision**

Based on the findings above, it is justified that the null hypothesis should be rejected while the alternate hypothesis should be accepted. It can therefore be concluded that entrepreneurship pedagogy affects students' shared-vision for identification of business opportunities. In other words; students' shared-vision mediates the relationship between entrepreneurship pedagogy and identification of business opportunities.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The empirical findings of the hypothesis tested showed that experiential pedagogy significantly affects students' shared-vision for identification of business opportunities as indication of entrepreneurial intentions. This connotes that the approach to teaching and learning of entrepreneurship adopted in Nigerian Universities can motivate a sense of direction and channel focus of entrepreneurship students towards identification of business opportunities. This finding is supported by the works of (Bulte & Pilot, 2013) which indicated that science students involved in entrepreneurship education were able to identify business opportunities and other entrepreneurial outcomes in pursuit of entrepreneurial goals and aspirations. The study of (Detienne & Chandler, 2004; Saks & Gaglio, 2002) also showed that individuals can learn the processes of opportunity identification in entrepreneurial classes substantiating readiness for a career in entrepreneurship. Based on this study there is evidence to validate that the entrepreneurship pedagogical approaches adopted in Nigerian universities can motivate a sense of direction and channel focus of entrepreneurship students towards identification of business opportunities.

### **Theoretical Implications**

There is a need for a paradigm shift in the pedagogical approaches adopted from being largely theoretical to experiential and practical models. Problem Based Learning (PBL), Learning by Doing (LBD), or Do it yourself (DIY) pedagogical models are highly recommended for both theoretical and practical sessions of an entrepreneurship program. These approaches can motivate students' focus for recognition and identification of business opportunities. These Pedagogical approaches can also stimulate students' interest towards entrepreneurship in order to enhance the achievement of desired results.

### **Practical Implications**

The role of experiential pedagogical approaches in motivating a shared vision/focus and opportunity identification by entrepreneurship students cannot be over emphasized. Identification of business opportunities is consequent upon the fact that experiential approaches to pedagogy, can create a shared vision about real life scenarios as regards what entrepreneurship is about. Hence, understanding the main crust of the process of entrepreneurship in a real life context may motivate opportunity identification by entrepreneurship students. This implies that the place of entrepreneurship pedagogy, in creating a shared vision for identification of business opportunities by students in Nigerian universities is pivotal to the achievement of desired results as regards entrepreneurship programmes.

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