

## What Would the Required Entrepreneurial Competencies for Entrepreneurship Lecturers in Higher Learning Institutions?

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**Abstract:** The important role played by entrepreneur as an agent of economic transformation in every civilized society is mostly visible in terms of employment and wealth generation, competitiveness and economic strength of a modern nation. There is growing evidence to support the view that when people were exposed entrepreneurship trainings and education programs, they tend to be more inclined towards entrepreneurial actions, and sometimes even become more effective as entrepreneurs. The current economic realities in many developing economies have unavoidably forced policy makers and the academics to place very high priority on developing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through education. This paper attempts to give a critical review of various literatures and related studies on entrepreneurial competencies and shows how these competencies can be relevant and critical for lecturers teaching entrepreneurship courses in higher learning institutions. Based on the reviewed related literatures in the study, it was discovered that lecturers must possess some basic entrepreneurial competencies for effective teaching to their students as well as to develop students' entrepreneurial skills and knowledge which are considered necessary for new venture management and new venture creation. Three competencies that found to be very important for entrepreneurship lecturers are; entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes. It recommended that this area of research should be broadened and lecturers should develop their own competencies so that students aspiring in entrepreneurship can be aware of them which can have greater chances in their entrepreneurial success.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Competencies

### INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is now seen as an important component within contemporary economic development of a nation. Its critical role to the economy of nations is now widely acknowledged by both the policy makers and the academics. Scholars in this area of endeavor are of the view that entrepreneurship can be referred to as an encouragement for catalyst for economic growth, employment and wealth creation. In other words entrepreneurship is seen as a major driver of innovation, competitiveness and corner stone of a nation economy. Such governments depend on the development of entrepreneurship as the major source for their economic prosperity, growth and development. It is a kind of new concept which signifies not only quality education but also pay attention to the development of an individual practical ability.

Recently, the entrepreneurship education has been given high priorities on the agenda of many governments in the developing countries. Most developing countries have started to encourage entrepreneurship among students and graduate of higher learning institutions (HLIs) or strengthen their willingness to undertake some kind of enterprising projects. These institutions facilitate the acquisition of

appropriate competences as well as strengthen the entrepreneurial intentions. It is also described as a new method of teaching that promotes students innovative spirit, skills and attitudes which consequently make them after graduation to suitable career and become professional business creator [1]. The quality of education that students need is too sensitive to be left in the hands of inadequately trained lecturers no matter how small or large the number of the students may be. In order to successfully implement entrepreneurial learning, it is necessary to choose the right and competent lecturers. Therefore, the entrepreneurship education lecturers must have adequate knowledge, skills, attitude and self-efficacy in order to teach entrepreneurship courses effectively [2].

The idea behind entrepreneurship education is due to education and training has an important role in strengthening and encouraging entrepreneurial skills and attitudes, and providing the related knowledge. These roles of facilitating the development of entrepreneurial competencies among the entrepreneurial students are done by the lecturers teaching entrepreneurship courses [3]. For lecturers to be competent and relevant they need to possess such basic competencies necessary for effective teaching

performance. The perceived quality in higher learning institutions can only be sustained when the lecturers are competent and also willing to improve their teaching performance, at the same time choose the best method of teaching and adjust them to the objectives and competencies that the individuals should achieve. In recent years many scholarly works have been done on the concept of entrepreneurial education with specific attention to entrepreneurial competencies. However, there is little consensus amongst the academics on how certain skills, knowledge and attitudes are (best) acquired.

Hence, in this paper an attempt has been made to review some studies and related literatures on entrepreneurial competencies needed by the lecturers teaching entrepreneurship in HLIs. At the early stage of the development of entrepreneurship education courses in HLIs, the general concern was the teach ability and learnability of the entrepreneurship. The current debate is not whether entrepreneurship can be taught or not, the concern is how to get the most competent lecturers to handle the job effectively.

#### **WHAT IS COMPETENCIES?**

Presently, there is no any single definition of competency that is generally acceptable. Different writers and researchers have given their own definitions of competency but the definitions still discuss similar ideas with almost the same implications in its meaning. The concept of competency is mostly related to performance of an individual. The term was used in different approaches, at times referring to the same competency with various terms such as competency, skill, or a characteristic.

The concept of competency was first popularized by Boyatzis in 1982 [4]. In his model of managerial competency, he conducted a detailed study of over 2000 entrepreneurs and he identified and assessed over a hundred potential entrepreneurial competencies. He defined competency as, "A capacity that exists in a person that leads to behavior that meets the job demands within the parameters of organizational environment, and that, in turn brings about desired results [4]". The competency is considered to be an underlying characteristic that an individual brings to a job situation, which can result in effective performance in such job. Later, Spencer and Spencer [5] defined competency as an underlying attributes or characteristics of an individual that is causally related to

superior performance in a job situation. According to Gupta [6], competency is defined as "knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, motivation and beliefs which an individual need in order to enhance his teaching job successfully. He argued that it is not necessary that all competencies of lecturers must have the same extent of knowledge, skill and attitude. Some competent lecturers may have practical skills and little theoretical knowledge about a particular subject. It is very important to note that competency can be assessed from the performance of an individual lecturer.

It was argued that the emphasis should be on behavior and performance [7]. For example, Mitchelmore and Rowley [8] stated that a main component in the research of competencies is investigating the long-lasting qualities of the persons which result into a success or performance in a job and respectively in an organization. These characteristics possibly varying from a trait, aspect and motive of the individuals self-image or a skill, body of knowledge and a social role utilized by the entrepreneurs. Hence, competency can be seen as an effective performance of a task or activity in a job setting, due to the underlying characteristics of the individual such motives, traits, skills, self-image, social role, or knowledge and experience [7]. In reality, the concept is seen as a wider idea which includes the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills which help a person capable of transforming his ideas in to realities with an excellence in its performance in a given context. Competency does not refer to those activities which do not demonstrate exceptional performance. Therefore, they do not include knowledge, but do include "applied" knowledge or the behavioral application of knowledge that produces success within a given set up. Moreover, they concluded by saying that competencies do include skill, but only the expression of skills that produce success. Finally, competencies do not mean motives, but do include observable behaviors related to motives.

Based on the literatures, it was discovered that the definitions of competency can be drawn from the domain of knowledge, skill, attitude and performance indicators. The term competency has a number of definitions which depend on the specific task to be performed by individuals under different conditions. These definitions may differ on meaning and applications. Table 1 provides a summary of definitions of competencies.

**Table-1: A Summary of Definitions of Competency**

No	Author(s)	Year	Definitions
1	Boyatzis [4]	1982	Behavior that meets the job demands within the parameters of organizational environment, which brings about desired results
2	Spencer & Spencer [5]	1993	An effective or superior work performance in a job.
3	UNIDO [29]	2002	Seen as set of skills, related knowledge and attributes that can possess.
4	Le-Brasseur, et al. [7]	2002	An effective performance of a task or activity in a job setting
5	European Commission [1]	2006	Combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes.
6	Lans et al. [30]	2008	Seen as a mix of knowledge, skills and attitudes
7	Mitchelmore and Rowley [8]	2010	Behaviors, attitudes, characteristics, knowledge, skills

### WHAT IS ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES?

An appropriate starting point in conceptualizing entrepreneurial competencies is to first define the concept. Boyatzis [4] defined entrepreneurial competencies as underlying characteristics possessed by an individual which result in new venture creation and venture management and growth. Some of these characteristics may be even unconscious attributes of an individual or some are natural features which others may acquire through education and training. It is seen as a way of studying individual characteristics leading to the accomplishment of a job role or organization success. Bird [9] in his work has discovered what he called a range of "laundry lists" of entrepreneurial competencies mainly derived from management theories, and proposes a model of entrepreneurial competency development starting with antecedents to competency such as family background, education, industry experience and work experience. In their study on entrepreneurial competencies, Johannisson [10] has also proposed a framework for entrepreneurial competencies consisting of five levels of learning;

- Know-what, or knowledge;
- Know-when, or insight;
- Know-who, or social skills;
- Know-how, or skills;
- Know-why, or attitudes, values and motives.

Based on this framework, Johannisson [10] called for more contextual approaches in entrepreneurship teaching, involving qualified experience and social networks through action learning. Stuart and Lindsay [11] also defined entrepreneurial competencies as a person's skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics. In addition, entrepreneurial competencies can also be seen in terms of traits, skills and knowledge. They further summarized the definition of entrepreneurial competencies as individual characteristics that include both attitudes and behaviors, skills and knowledge

which enable entrepreneurs to achieve and maintain business success.

In early study Dixon *et al.*, [12] had revealed the critical entrepreneurial competencies required by instructors from a training academy in Jamaica. Their work was aimed at identifying the entrepreneurial competency gaps that may exist between the desired behavior of training instructors and the behavior that presently exists among the instructors who participate in institution based enterprise activities. A total of 29 entrepreneurial competencies were identified which they have considered as critical for the instructors of the training academy and their managers. Some of the competencies identified include team leadership, creativity, communication skills, basic business skills, perceptions of trustworthiness, personal traits and planning and organizational skills.

Later, Li [13] had examined the competence approach in defining entrepreneurs. In that work, the major pre-occupation was to identify the concept of competence in entrepreneurship with the view to establish the relationship between these competencies and the entrepreneurs. The work had established through empirical approach, the relevant of competency to the entrepreneur and how can this competency be more workable to the entrepreneurs than the earlier concept of personality traits approach. The work mainly centered on relevant competencies to entrepreneurship which entrepreneurial lecturers need to have in order to train his entrepreneurial students. Adeyemo [14] examined the mode and modalities for entrepreneurial skill acquisition as it affect the science teacher in Nigeria. The main thrust of his work is to give illumination of basic concepts, procedure stages and essential indices for acquiring entrepreneurial skills in globalized teaching enterprise by teachers and students alike. It also provides justification for inclusion and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in teacher education and the essential pedagogical strategies that can be used

by classroom teachers. This will ultimately promote employability of science education students in globalized economy.

In a study by Plamen and Antti [15] on entrepreneurial competencies needed by managers revealed that entrepreneurial competencies could trigger the actualization of the dreams of the company, and the managers as well. They have succeeded in identifying some entrepreneurial competencies which they regarded as very relevant for the survival of the company and its managers. They concluded that the future managers must have the competencies which will bring them success and promotions, they can rise through the ranks much faster than they ever could have dreamed of. This finding will therefore be arguably of great use for anyone who wants to become a manager or any person who want to perform his job effectively. Plamen and Antti's work is mainly concerned with the relevance of entrepreneurial competencies to the manager of a business in order to promote the company and its managers. The work is very relevant in identifying competencies that are also important to lecturers in their teaching job. In a recent study by Saddique [3] among higher learning institutions in Nigeria, showed that formal education, training and managerial experience can influence the development of entrepreneurial competencies. He has identified the following attitudinal, behavioral and managerial competencies that regarded as very relevant for lecturers teaching entrepreneurship as follows:

- Attitudinal competencies are those characteristics or attributes which lead to successful job performance in any given organization. These features include self-confidence, self-efficacy as well as locus of control.

- Behavioral competency describes how an individual can perform a given task, such as how to manage jobs in order to be successful. These characteristics also include the need for achievement, need for independence, risk taking, derived and energy, innovation and finally creativity.
- Managerial Competency of an entrepreneur is his ability to direct his staff and define the expected outcomes clearly and finally to get the things done at the best and cheapest ways and means. Some of the features of this type of competency includes; problem solving skills, persuasion, verbal and written communication skills, technical knowledge and social skills

In summary entrepreneurial competencies seem looking at competencies from different perspectives, but with similar meaning. Therefore, this paper do not intend to restrict the definitions based on an individual classification such as skills, abilities, characteristics, personality traits, knowledge, attitudes, attributes, behaviors, experiences, but rather grouped the competencies into three clusters of skills, knowledge and attitudes. It is worth noting that many authors have separately grouped these identified entrepreneurial competencies into three groups which consist of skills, knowledge and attitudes. This paper has concurred with these classification and findings from a large number of authors in order to identify some entrepreneurial competencies that considered important for lecturers teaching entrepreneurship courses. Based on literature entrepreneurial competencies can be seen from three perspectives; entrepreneurial knowledge, attitudes and skills.

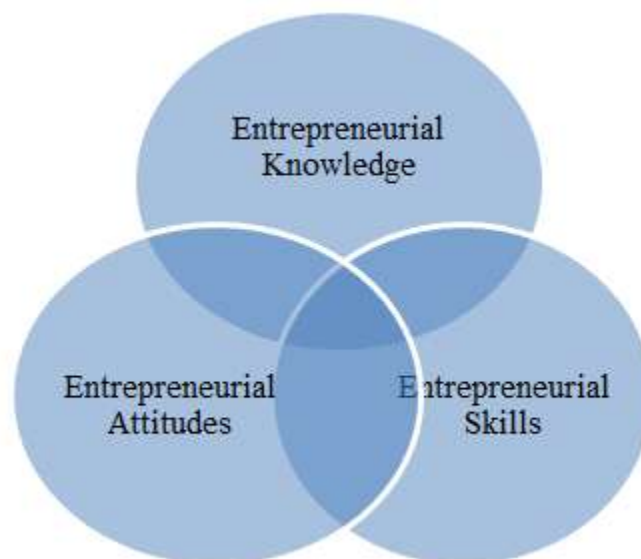


Fig-1: Entrepreneurial competencies adapted from Arshard [16].

Based on Figure 1 a competent lecturer in the twenty first century who can provide quality teaching and learning in such a way that the learners can achieve their goals successfully [16]. The following sections briefly review and discuss the above competencies respectively.

### **Entrepreneurial Knowledge**

According to Kilby [17] entrepreneurial knowledge is defined as a 'rarefied abstract type knowledge - the knowledge of where to obtain information (or other resources) and how to deploy it.' Acquired knowledge generates routines and decisional procedures. This shows how enterprising individuals continuously develop their entrepreneurial knowledge throughout their professional lives.

When talk about the knowledge, specifically knowledge in financial management, knowledge of engineering, knowledge of book keeping and accounting, knowledge of marketing, knowledge in new venture recognition and sales have been frequently cited as important factors responsible for the success of a business [18]. The European Commission [1] also of the opinion that skills, knowledge and behavioral/emotional attitudes linked to entrepreneurship can be fostered and nurtured through learning processes as well as through other processes. Attitudes such as being visionary, passionate or imaginative are also dependent upon other contextual factors, which are often linked to an individual's personal history (e.g. family, early childhood experience, peers, local community).

### **Entrepreneurial Skills**

Entrepreneurial skills are those skills needed to succeed in business, most especially in new venture creation [19]. In other words it refers to the basic skills necessary to enable an individual to start, develop, finance and succeed in an enterprise. Gibb [20] refers to entrepreneurial core skills as "those capacities that constitute the basic necessary and sufficient conditions for the pursuit of effective entrepreneurial behavior individually, organizationally and societal in an increasingly turbulent and global environment". These skills are based on several underlying qualities, such as self-confidence, self-awareness, a high level of autonomy, an internal locus of control, a high level of empathy with stakeholders, especially customers, a hard working disposition, a high achievement orientation, a high propensity to take (moderate) risks and flexibility. Bygrave and Zacharakis, [21] argued that the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills means possessing the ability to find and evaluate business opportunities, gather all the necessary resources, initiate appropriate action to ensure success; and implement actions to take advantage of the opportunities for rewarding outcome.

In a study conducted by Sofoluwe *et al.*, [22] three types of entrepreneurial skills that are required by business related graduates in starting are identified. These entrepreneurial skills are management, marketing and accounting skills. These skills are very necessary in developing and managing an enterprise. This includes skills in decision making control and negotiation, essential in creating and growing a new business venture. The acquisition of entrepreneurial skills means combining personal characteristics, financial resources within one's environment and taking advantage of them for rewarding outcome. In addition, leadership skills, communication skills, and human relations have also been seen as critical skills areas of knowledge to success. These competencies are regarded as very vital competencies for entrepreneurship because entrepreneur has to be capable to persuade and discuss with various stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, rival competitors as well as service providers and the like [23].

### **Entrepreneurial Attitudes**

The term 'attitude' is generally reserved for an opinion which represents a person's overall inclination towards an object, idea or institution. Attitudes can be positive, negative or neutral and also dormant & more generalized. Based on the theory of planned behavior [14] attitude is one of the main factors that influence one's behavior. It is defined as the beliefs and perceptions about the willingness to personal behavior, which in turn related to expectations about the impact of personal decisions as a result of behavior. It can be said that attitudes have a wide range of personality and indirect impact on certain behavior, the influence of several factors more closely associated with the behavior in question. Teachers' attitude toward a subject not only affects their choice to teach that subject and the quality of their instructional performance [24], but also influences students' attitudes toward the subject, their motivation to learn the subject, and their achievement [25]. In entrepreneurship context, attitude has been defined as the extent to which one perceives entrepreneurial behavior and its consequences as valuable, beneficial and favorable.

Robinson, *et al.*, [26] have identified four dimensions for entrepreneurial attitude including need for achievement, personal control over behavior, innovation, and self-esteem. Need for achievement reflects the perceived results and outcomes of new venture creation. An attitude is a complex mental state involving beliefs, feelings, values, and dispositions to act in certain ways. Attitudes tend to change across time and situations through an interactive process with the environment, and can offer a prediction about a person's future actions. Attitudes are habitual ways of reacting to situations. The attitude of the teacher toward teaching is an important variable. The primary attribute



of a good teacher is the ability to create a warm, friendly atmosphere in the classroom. Teaching should be geared to the needs of his students. The teacher must have a positive attitude toward teaching and their achievement, as well as try to locate the causes of antisocial behavior and help the students to improve

their personality. Based on various studies it is possible to identify a range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are often associated with entrepreneurship behavior or entrepreneurial persons. The table 2 provides a summary of characteristics of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and attitudes.

**Table 2: Summary of the Characteristics of Skills, Knowledge and Attitudes**

No	Competency cluster	Variables	Author(s)	Year
1	Skills	Problem Solving Skills, Strategic Thinking, Project Management, Time management Negotiating, Persuasion, Networking, and Business Recognition Skills	Gibb [31]	1998
2	Attitudes	Thinking, Project management Time management, Negotiating, Persuasion, Networking, and Business Recognition Skills	EU	2011
		Need for achievement and innovation, self-esteem,	Robbinson et al., [26]	1991
		creativity, sense of initiatives, desire for independence, risk taking, facing uncertainty, visionary and pro-activity	Ajzen [14]	2002
3	Knowledge	Business opportunity recognition, book keeping, financial management, human resource management, new venture management, and technical knowledge	Hood & Young [18]	1993

In addition, there are other competencies identified in the literature and are regarded as non-matching entrepreneurial competencies and are not considered as part of the three groups of entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and attitudes.

**DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The higher education institutions, especially universities, colleges and polytechnics, are generally labor intensive organizations; they solely depend on highly skilled people for the effective delivery of their services. The quality of the staff in higher education institutions is thus central to their effectiveness or otherwise. In business management and other related professions, there is a wide belief that the skills of their staff need to be continually strengthened and enhanced through training. In the face of challenges from national and international competitors the more companies are investing more resources in the continual training and re-training of staff at all levels the better. Hence, various initiatives by the policy makers and researchers with special emphasis on knowledge, skills and attitudes were proposed. The central focus is not only on the competencies of their staff, but also to give more time to stress the need for commitment to the organization’s goals and to promote a capacity to change. They are crucial to national aspirations for economic development and, if such capacity building aims are to be achieved, the institutions will have to make the most effective use of all their lecturers to

develop effective competencies necessary for effective teaching performance.

In any academic institution especially HLIs, a lecturer needs to improve his knowledge and skills to enhance, improve and explore his teaching performance. Many studies on this subject mostly focus on the teaching role of a lecturer rather than how to develop his individual competencies. The lecturers teaching the entrepreneurship courses need to have these entrepreneurial competencies in order to be effective in their teaching performance [27]. There may be some competencies of a lecturer which have the same extent of knowledge, skill and attitude. There may be some competencies involving more of knowledge than skill and attitude, whereas, some competencies may be skill/performance loaded. These entrepreneurial competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes) can be encouraged or acquired through formal education and training. In some cases, these competencies can of course also be achieved through other means (leisure activities, participation in sport, family environment, etc.).

For that reason, one of the first steps to be taken towards competency-based education in the entrepreneurship field is the identification of most important and relevant entrepreneurial competencies as they can predict business formation and success within and across cultures. Knowing what competencies need to be developed is crucial in trying to meet the training

needs of people in each phase of the entrepreneurial process. The lecturers teaching the entrepreneurship courses need to have such entrepreneurial knowledge and skills in order to impart the requisite knowledge and skills to their entrepreneurial students. The added dimension would be that the lecturer must have to be fully aware with the changing demands of the job market, where students have to be either self-employed or be employed in a competitive labor market. This complex situation required from the lecturer to create a balance between job market, educational institutions and their students. The traditional framework of the classroom skills was not enough for the highly competitive job market where students mostly focused on passing their examinations rather than facing the present situations in the labor market. To meet these divergent demands lecturer have to adopt the leadership style and use more competencies like skills, knowledge and attitudes in order to play his role successfully [28].

All the competencies identified in the literature (knowledge, skills and attitudes) are regarded as very important and relevant for entrepreneurship courses lecturers. Based on the findings in the literature, the lecturers who have the relevant competencies might be able to teach entrepreneurship courses successfully. But if they cannot possess the relevant competencies which lecturers need to have, they might not be able to handle the teaching of entrepreneurship courses effectively. It is recommended that all hands must be on deck by researchers and policy makers to ensure that all entrepreneurship lecturers are properly trained and well-motivated because the success of the entrepreneurship education program depends on their inputs. In order to achieve this, the paper recommends that policy must provide to lecturers good welfare package and enhanced salary structure. Attractive promotion guidelines as well as the provision of friendly working environment can also improve the lecturers' teaching performance. These can only be achieved through the possession of important entrepreneurial competencies and basic entrepreneurial trainings for the entrepreneurship lecturers.

It is also recommended that future research must focus its attention on investigating whether there are some additional competencies which might be added to the one already identified, or conversely if some of the three entrepreneurial competencies clusters will not find sufficient support and scientific prove should be discarded. This could be achieved by using different other research approaches. Future studies should also collect data from the side of the top management of HLIs and students of entrepreneurship education. This could give another broader perspective on the concept of entrepreneurial competencies needed by lecturers and different insights may be revealed.

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