

Parents' Perception of Early Vocational Entrepreneurship Education in Ekiti State

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Abstract

The study investigated parental perception of early vocational entrepreneurship education in Ekiti state. Being a descriptive survey research, the population consisted all the parents of pupils of the 1,278 public and private primary schools in Ekiti State. The study population is parents/guardians of (142,224) pupils. The multi-stage sampling technique was employed. A self-designed questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Parental Perception of Early Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education (QPPEVEE)", validated by experts and tested for reliability with a coefficient of 0.85 was used for the study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that parents have positive perception of early vocational and entrepreneurship education. It was concluded that early introduction of vocational and entrepreneurship education into the pre- and primary schools will improve entrepreneurship perception and intentions among children, and consequently, among older people. It was concluded that parents' perception of the value and benefit of vocational entrepreneurship will go a long way to influence children in taking vocations later in life. It was recommended, among others, that there should a policy statement on the inclusion of vocational entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of pre- and early primary schools; and effective implementation of policy should be enforced by all stakeholders – parents, teachers, school and students.

Keywords: Perception, Early Vocational/Entrepreneurship Education, Parents, Early Childhood.

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1. Introduction

Early introduction of entrepreneurship education to the basic school curriculum can go a long way to enhance the entrepreneurial spirit in children for sustainable development in any nation. This, however, depends on how parents perceive the effect of entrepreneurship on the development of individuals and the society at large.

Vocational and entrepreneurship education is germane to sustainable development in any nation, it is the driving force for enhancing sustainable development in any nation, and, especially in Nigeria, both now and in the future.

Riti (2015) sees entrepreneurship as a process through which individuals identify opportunities, allocate resources, and create value which is often through the identification of unmet needs or through the identification of opportunities for change. The act of being an entrepreneur is seen as "one who undertakes innovations with finance and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic goods. Entrepreneurs see "problems" as "opportunities," and then take action to identify the solutions to those problems and the customers who will pay to have those problems solved. Olokundun (2017) noted that one of the basic requirements for survival in our kind of contestable environment is to embrace the entrepreneurial spirit that can enable individual and nations to identify and exploit the various opportunities in it as well as positively approach the threat for improved job opportunities. An Austrian Economist, Schumpeter once argued that entrepreneurship was the engine of youth empowerment and national development.

In tackling the global crisis of graduate unemployment, policy makers and stakeholders in developed countries such as England, USA, and Germany, advocated a refocus of educational systems towards acquisition of vocational and technical skills to enhance smooth transition into jobs for school leavers particularly graduates of universities (Agi & Yellowe, 2013). Entrepreneurship acts as a catalyst for the economic prosperity of a nation as it leads to generation of employment, contribution in national income, rural development, industrialization, technological development, export promotion etc.

Unemployment, among graduates, has become a common experience globally, and especially in Nigeria. Olokundun (2017), citing Twumasi (2013) observed that the rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria has persistently been on the increase despite the enormous endowment of the country with human and natural resources. He noted, however, that this is not peculiar to African countries but indeed a long standing global phenomenon and hence a common trend in many countries to find graduates of universities not able to secure jobs several years after graduation.

For any nation to achieve sustainable development, effective human resources is needed. Boyi (2013) noted

that the most interesting aspect of sustainable development is the fact that it puts into consideration the present conditions of people as well as not compromising those that come later and therefore concluded that the concept of sustainable national development remains the modern parameter of measuring development. These are seen to be the duties of entrepreneurs, as identified by Riti (2005) which are ability to identify opportunities, allocate resources, and create value which meet the needs of the generality. He broadly defined, sustainable development as a systems approach to growth and development and to ability to manage natural, produced, and social capital for the welfare of the present and future generations. In other words, there is an additional focus on the present generations' responsibility to regenerate, maintain and improve planetary resources for use by future generations. Sustainable development deals with the carrying capacity of natural system with social, political and economic challenges faced by the society; which is believed to be a holistic approach to improving the quality of life through judicious use of available natural resources Hansa (2014) in Fasae, Ajayi and Olowe (2020).

In the context of business enterprise, sustainable development means adopting business strategies and activities that meet the needs of the enterprise and its stakeholders presently and developing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future. The ability to develop and manage natural, produced and social capital for the welfare of present and future generations lies with the entrepreneur and this is a huge task ahead. Antawati (2017) opined that to reach the level of prosperity is not an easy task; necessary changes, effort and hard work that is focused and systematic by the Government, and the family, especially for transforming individual people from the present condition to become entrepreneurs is needed. Being an entrepreneur should not be an alternative profession, but being an entrepreneur is a strategic choice that must be made with a strong determination.

OCDE (2005) in Fonseca, Goncalves, Barbosa, Peixoto, et al (2015) stressed that entrepreneurship education consists in developing entrepreneurial abilities that relate to individuals' attitudes and skills in their interaction with others, such as: the ability to communicate, persuade, negotiate and solve conflicts, solve problems creatively, work with others, be self-confident, flexible and able to adapt to new situations, manage time, accept criticism, analyse and learn from mistakes and generate "positive energy" in the working group among many other aspects. However, they asserted that a recent study (Portuguese) conducted in several European countries points out that young job seekers, despite their wide-ranging, graduate and post-graduate education (Masters and PhD degrees) do not show skills considered essential by employers and are, thus, not being hired to job vacancies. The skills lacking in candidates relate to verbal and written communication, teamwork, problem solving, leadership, initiative, flexibility/adaptability, enthusiasm, planning, determination and assertiveness, among others.

Intentions and perceptions are very important in choosing life career. One of the problems observed which results in graduates not being well equipped, is the poor perception of parents about their children being entrepreneurs. This is because the environment in which children develop contributes to their psychological and social intention which could go a long way to affect their choice of a career in future. Mulyasa (2012) in Suzanti and Maesaroh (2017) noted that the right environment can provide an opportunity for children to explore various experiences with different situations; paying attention to the uniqueness of children and adjustment to the stage of development of the child's personality. They emphasized that early childhood education can serve as a mirror to see the success of children in the future and that children who get good educational services from an early age have a greater hope in achieving success in the future. On the other hand, children who do not get ad-equate educational services require considerable struggle to develop their success.

Moy, Luk, and Wright (2003) in Olokundun (2017) noted that positive perceptions of stakeholders in education plays a critical role in vocational and entrepreneurship education as it is likely that such a programme will yield positive results. Individuals with positive perception of an entrepreneurship programme will perceive themselves as having what it takes to achieve the goals of the programme as it relates to the teaching and learning outcomes. Furthermore, Dirk, Benson, & Bruce, (2013) submitted that intentions provide ample evidence of the outcome of an entrepreneurship training programme and because intentions are good predictors of future behaviour, it implies that intentions could provide a reliable lead to future entrepreneurial behaviour and expression of actions. Obschonka, Silbereisen, & Schmitt-Rodermund, (2010), in Antawati (2016) investigated entrepreneurial intention as developmental outcome and found that entrepreneurial personality and early entrepreneurial competence were associated. It was noted that entrepreneurship can be developed through education and can start in early ages. The social environment and people around the person that involved in entrepreneurial activities, such as family or friends, can affect a person's attitude towards entrepreneurship.

Early childhood education is the first and foremost part of the children's development in terms of character, physical, cognitive, linguistic, artistic, social, emotional, spiritual, self-discipline, self-concept, and self-reliance. In Nigeria, observations have shown that many students graduate from the university without acquiring the necessary vocational and entrepreneurship skills for employability and self-reliance. Even among undergraduates, observations have shown that late introduction of vocational entrepreneurial education might be responsible for poor attitude of undergraduates towards entrepreneurship. Observing the Indonesia situation, Suzanti and

Maesaroh (2017) stressed that the education system, especially for the initial level is considered not enough to pay attention to the value of entrepreneurial learning. The orientation of municipal learning in educational institutions is limited to the theoretical level only. According to Khuluqo, (2016), the method of learning is still not able to build and create the character of a tough businessman.

Arminda & Maria (2011) emphasized that early childhood attachment processes that occur during early childhood years can be influential to future education. With proper guidance and exploration, children begin to become more comfortable with their environment, if they have that steady relationship to guide them. Evidence has shown that the pre-primary and primary school has a positive influence on a child's educational background later in life. Suzanti & Maesaroh (2017) averred that early childhood education should be able to form the strong trait, character, and personality of children in order to achieve their success in the future. The character of being independent, intelligent, creative and confident can be learnt through examples and encouragement given by parents and other adults.

The study investigated parents' perception of the introduction of early vocational and entrepreneurship education into the Basic School Curriculum in Ekiti State.

3.1 Statement of the Problem

Observation has shown that graduates in general and especially of vocational education seem not well equipped with the entrepreneurial spirit that should ginger them up to be entrepreneurs after graduation. This seems to be caused by poor perception of parents about entrepreneurship which, if positive, should have helped children to grow up to have good intentions about entrepreneurship and to have prepared their minds towards a particular vocation as an entrepreneur.

3.2 Purpose of the Study

The study investigated parents' perception of the introduction of early vocational and entrepreneurship education into the Basic School Curriculum in Ekiti State.

3.3 Research Question

1. How do parents perceive the early introduction of vocational and entrepreneurship into the Basic School Curriculum?

3.4 Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of parents on perception of early vocational and entrepreneurship education based on gender, and
2. There is no significant difference in mean responses on parents' perception of early vocational and entrepreneurship education based on location.

4. Method

The study investigated parental perception of early vocational entrepreneurship education in Ekiti state. Being a descriptive survey research, the population consisted all the parents of pupils of the 1,278 public and private primary schools in Ekiti State during the 2019/2020 academic session. The study population is parents/guardians of (142,224) pupils. The multi-stage sampling technique was employed. Three Local Government Areas from the three senatorial districts; five (5) schools randomly selected to give a total of 15 schools for the study; random sampling of 225 parents of 225 students (15 from each school) who filled the questionnaire for the study. A self-designed questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Parental Perception of Early Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education (QPPEVEE)", validated by experts and tested for reliability with a coefficient of 0.85 was used for the study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of percentages, means and standard deviation for the research questions and inferential statistics of t-test and ANOVA for testing the hypotheses.

5. Results

Research Question: How do parents perceive the early introduction of vocational and entrepreneurship into the Basic School Curriculum?

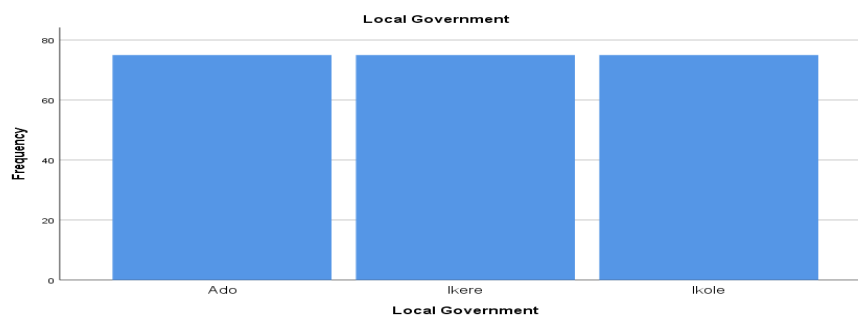


Fig. 1: Descriptive Analysis of Parents by Local Government

As shown in the figure 1 above, 75 (33.3%) represented each of the three local governments equally to give the total working sample of 225 parents used for the study. This implies an equal chances for the

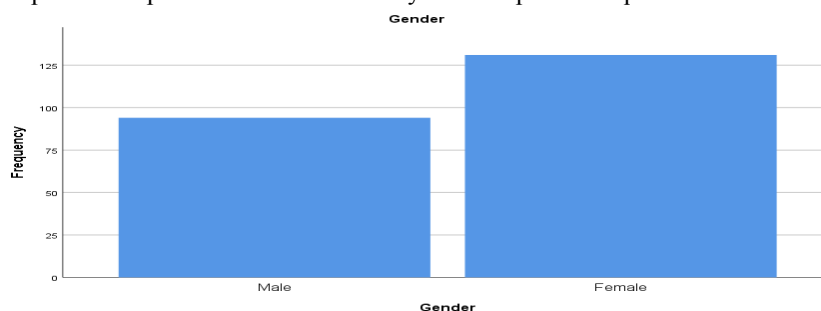


Fig. 2: Descriptive Analysis of Parents by Gender

From Fig. 2 above, the gender of the parents used in the study showed that 96 (42.7 %) and 131 (57.3%) female took part in the study, the figures fairly gave the majority score to the female gender. However, the responses are cleared on gender preferences.

Research Question 2: How do parents of pre-primary and primary school pupils perceive the teaching of early vocational and entrepreneurship education?

Table 1: Parents' Perception of the Introduction of Early Vocational and Entrepreneurship Education

S/N	ITEMS	FREQUENCY					Mean	St.D	REM
		SA	A	UD	D	SD			
1	Kids can be entrepreneurs	111	77	14	20	3	4.21	.995	A
2	Kids can have knowledge of vocation and entrepreneurship very early	83	123	11	7	1	4.24	.724	A
3	Parents can support kids in learning vocational and entrepreneurship education	108	99	14	3	1	4.38	.704	A
4	Parents with background knowledge in vocational and entrepreneurship studies should encourage their children to do same	104	103	15	3	0	4.37	.669	A
5	Home environments can support learning vocational and entrepreneurship education	107	95	16	5	2	4.33	.779	A
6	Vocational and entrepreneurship education at a young age will help kids in the future	115	84	18	7	1	4.36	.795	A
7	School and teachers can develop children to be kid entrepreneurs	81	106	22	10	6	4.09	.933	A
8	Parental support can encourage early teaching of vocational and entrepreneurship education	109	92	11	11	2	4.31	.846	A
9	Parents can support their kids to pick careers in vocation and entrepreneurship.	75	120	12	15	3	4.11	.875	A
10	Taking the subject will motivate kids to be entrepreneurs	99	87	14	13	12	4.10	1.099	A

Table 1 above reveals that when parents were asked about their perception of teaching early vocational and entrepreneurship education to their wards, their perception showed a positive view of starting the teaching of

vocational and entrepreneurship education to their kids, this revelation is backed as follows. Item 1 showed that 188 (83.5%) of parents agreed that kids can be entrepreneurs while 23 (10.2%) disagreed and 14 (6.2%) remain undecided. From Item 2, 206 (91.6%) agreed that their kids should have the knowledge of vocation and entrepreneurship very early, 8 (3.5%) disagreed to this while 11 (4.9%) are undecided in their opinion. In Item 3, on parental support for kids in learning vocational and entrepreneurship education, 207 (92%) of the parents agreed, only 4 (1.7%) disagreed and 14 (6.2%) remain undecided. Item 4 shows 207 (92%) agreeing that parents with background knowledge in vocational and entrepreneurship studies should encourage their children to do same, 3 (1.3%) think otherwise and 16 (7.1%) are undecided. From Item 5, 202 (89.8%) parents said that their home environment can support learning vocational and entrepreneurship education, 7 (6.1%) disagreed and 16 (7.1%) remain undecided. 199 (88.4%) parent respondents in item 6 believed vocational and entrepreneurship education at a young age will assist kids in the future, 8 (3.5%) disagreed and 18 (8%) are undecided. Also, in item 7, the analysis shows that 187 (83.1%) parents believed that school teachers can develop children to be kid entrepreneurs, 16 (7.1%) believed otherwise and 22 (9.8%) remain undecided. Item 8 indicates that when parent respondents were asked if parental support can encourage early teaching of vocational and entrepreneurship education, most respondents from all gender groups affirmed the statement, the analysis shows that 201 (89.3%) agreed, 11 (4.9%) undecided and 13 (5.8%) disagreed. Item 9 in Table 2 above reveals that when respondents were asked if parents can support their kids to pick careers in vocation and entrepreneurship, most respondents replied favourably to the statement. The analysis on the table shows that 195 (86.6%) agreed to the statement, 18 (8%) disagreed and 12 (5.3%) are undecided. Finally, item 10 saw 186 (82.7%) of the parent respondents agreeing that the subject will motivate their kids to be entrepreneurs and 25 (11.1%) disagreed while 14 (6.2%) stays undecided in their opinion. Overall, the parents have a positive perception of what early introduction of vocational and entrepreneurship education can do for their wards.

The results above on parents' perception of early vocational and entrepreneurship education in frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation show that the standard mean is 3.00 while the weighted mean is 4.27, this implies that the respondents strongly agree that parents have positive perception of early vocational and entrepreneurship education.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in mean responses of parents' on their perception of early vocational and entrepreneurship education based on gender.

Table 2: t-test for mean difference of parents' perception of early vocational and entrepreneurship education based on gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Parents' perception	Male	94	4.31	.354	1.734	223	.084
	Female	131	4.21	.492			

With reference to Pearson t-test in table 2, the significant value is 0.084 which is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean responses of parents on their perception of early vocational and entrepreneurship education based on gender. This means both male and female parents have positive perception of the early introduction of vocational entrepreneurship education into the primary school curriculum.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in mean responses on parents on their perception of early vocational and entrepreneurship education based on location.

Table 3: ANOVA for significant difference in the mean responses of parents on their perception of early vocational and entrepreneurship education based on location

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.392	2	2.196	12.415	.000
Within Groups	39.270	222	.177		
Total	43.662	224			

With reference to Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in table 3, the significant value is 0.000 which is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, therefore, there is a significant difference in the mean responses of parents on their perception of early vocational and entrepreneurship education based on location. This significant difference might be as a result of parents in local government headquarters and, especially from the state headquarters, who usually engage in some petty trading after work, knowing the economic value of the little trading they engage in. Such parents might have higher positive perception than those from rural areas.

Discussion

The study reveals that there is no significant difference in the responses of parents on their perception of the early introduction of vocational and entrepreneurship education into the curriculum of pre-primary and primary schools. The results revealed that both male and female parents have positive perception of the early introduction of vocational entrepreneurship education into the basic school curriculum. This might be as a result of the fact

that majority of parents are into one trade or another while only a few percentage of them are in the civil service. This result corroborates Marhaini, et al (2014) study which found a great tendency on the parents' age and education level in determining their children career's choice as an entrepreneur, and parents' intention of wanting their children to be entrepreneur and concluded that the role of good parents has a tendency to affect the children in choosing a career as an entrepreneur.

Furthermore, the results revealed that there is significant difference in the responses of parents based on location. This significant difference might be from parents in the State headquarters due to high level of entrepreneurial activities that take place. This is in line with Antawati (2016) study which investigated entrepreneurial intention as developmental outcome and found that the social environment and people around the person that involved in entrepreneurial activities, such as family or friends, can affect a person's attitude towards entrepreneurship. It is also in line with Obschonka, Silbereisen and Schmitt-Rodermund (2010) who found that the social environment and people around the person that involved in entrepreneurial activities, such as family or friends, can affect a person's attitude towards entrepreneurship.

Conclusion/Recommendations

The study concluded that parents' perception play significant roles in children's intention and perception of the value and benefits of entrepreneurship education.

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

- There should a policy statement on the inclusion of vocational entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of pre- and early primary schools.
- Effective implementation of policy should be enforced by all stakeholders – parents, teachers, school and students.
- Seminars and workshops should be organized for teachers on the need to inculcate entrepreneurship skills into learners.
- Learning activities should be designed to introduce and instill the values of entrepreneurship into students.
- Parents and teachers should model roles in motivating, evaluating, stimulating and appreciating their children.

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