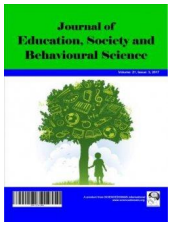

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Parental Factors Influencing Acceptability of Children's Involvement in Skill Acquisition Activities in Ondo State, Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author OOF designed the study and supervised the work. Author OO collected data, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The current global unemployment crises especially in Nigeria prompted the study's assessment of parental acceptability of children's involvement in skill acquisition activities in Ondo state. A multistage sampling technique was used to select 120 respondents (parents) in Akure South and Akure North Local Government Areas of Ondo State, Nigeria. Data collected were presented using simple descriptive statistics. Chi-square analysis was used to test the hypothesis of the study. Data revealed that mean age of respondents was 43 years old, 96.7% were literate and mean household size was five persons. Majority (70.7%) had one child involved in skill acquisition activities. Most children (52.9%) were made to involve in skill acquisition activities in order to secure a financially self-sufficient future. Majority (83.3%) of the respondents chose weekends as the most convenient time for children to acquire skills. Phone repairing (27.6%), Tailoring (22.4%), and Auto mechanic (20.7%) were the major skill acquisition activities involved in by children in the study area. Marital

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status (X^2 = 28.34, p ≤ 0.05), level of education (X^2 = 18.41, p ≤ 0.05), religion (X^2 = 66.88, p ≤ 0.05), primary occupation (X^2 = 51.28, p ≤ 0.05) and skill acquisition experience (X^2 = 13.31, p ≤ 0.05) of respondents influenced their acceptability of skill acquisition for children in the study area. Government and non-governmental organization should therefore develop skill acquisition and entrepreneurship programmes for children as it has acceptability among parents. This should be run on weekends and holidays.

Keywords: Skill acquisition activities; parent; acceptability; children.

1. INTRODUCTION

Skill acquisition can be defined as the form of training by individuals or group of individuals that can lead to acquisition of knowledge for self-sustenance. It involves the training of people in different fields of trade under a legal agreement between the trainers and the trainees for certain duration and under certain conditions.

Children on the other hand, are regarded as economic assets given their potential, economic roles and productive contribution in the generation of income in rural communities. Studies have found positive associations of assets with better child outcomes [1]. [2,3] and [4] have noted the practical contributions of this category of Nigeria's population to the economy of farm and families through provision of farm labour. Beyond this however is the need to develop the capacity of this category of persons based on the economic realities of the times. The need to empower individuals to earn a living for themselves is therefore in the front burner of economic discourse. Impartation of skills remains the greatest avenue for empowering children and many children in Nigeria are with the potential to make things happen economically, if exposed to the right knowledge. In the late 70's and early 80's, formal education used to guarantee future employment and financial stability for majority of Nigerians. However, the down turn in the country's economy due to years of corruption coupled with military dictatorship, adverse policies and mismanagement of resources have made it difficult even for PhD holders to get employment. The scenario has turned the attention of some caregivers to the acquisition of skills by children alongside formal education. Skill acquisition is, however, a way of ensuring a steady stream of income in the future. It is important to expose children to a deliberate and skillfully conducted or carefully designed socialization and education programmes aimed at giving them the right frame of mind for effective decisions and actions for productive adult live. This study is believed not only to be capable of providing a good reference material to policy makers at the national and state levels, but also guide organizations like children in Agriculture Programme (CIAP) in designing training programmes for Human Capital Development and capacity building of children. The study will also provide a useful blue print for policy makers at government level in fashioning out children-oriented training programmes. The study was thus designed to assess parental factors influencing children's involvement in skill acquisition activities in Ondo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study ascertained the personal characteristics of the respondents, examined parent's acceptability and preferences of children's skill acquisition activities and assessed parents opinion on modalities for children skill acquisition.

Skill acquisition is needed in the education sector. It contributes to the development of the nation's human capital and is seen as essential for preparing one for employment. Thus an educated man is expected to manifest worthwhile disposition in the society, for his own development and the development of the society. Reference [5] share the view that the productive capacity of any nation depends solely on her ability to recognize the capacity of manpower. The development of ideas, science advancement, technological breakthrough, economic development, political stability, e.t.c, is made possible by educational theories and practices. Whatever the skill, attitudes, competencies, knowledge and understanding one acquires will enhance the development of the individual and the nation. According to [6], one of the goals of education is the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live and contribute to the development of his society. Reference [7] submits that; 'we need skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant. We need skilled people who can understand and adapts to changes in the increasing complexity of technology. We need people who can apply

scientific knowledge to the improvement and as solution to environmental challenges for the use and conveniences of man'.

The growing concern over globalization, among other things, has made the acquisition of lifelong skills imperative for all categories of people. This is considered very important for future professionals' growth because it will determines how successful and productive a person will be in the work place. Reference [8] observes that human capital is created when they acquire transferable skills that can be applied in many settings and occupations. It is an important index of sustainable development of any nation. In view of this, [8] considers it as both a social prerogative and an economic necessity. With skill acquisition, one acquires capabilities to compete favourably within the context of globalization. A lot of children possess innate abilities and creativity, but only need an opportunity and enabling environment to put the endowments to work [9,10,11]. Investing in children who turn out to be productive, does not only improve the lots of the individuals, but also national productivity. This has a multiplier effect on the economy and remains a sure way of maximizing the use of funds, which otherwise would be spent on less productive ventures. Therefore empowering children to be self-reliant is a step that guarantees economic sustainability, security, morality and entrepreneurship.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Ondo State. Ondo State is located in the Southwest of Nigeria. The state is located in the southwest zone of Nigeria and is made up of 18 Local Government Areas (LGAs). The State lies between latitudes 5°45' and 7°52'N and longitudes 4°20' and 6°5'E. Its land area is about 15,500 square kilometres. Presently the state has a total population of about 3.4 million inhabitants [12]. Agriculture is the dominant occupation of the people of Ondo State providing income and employment opportunities for over 70% of the population. Primary data were used for this study. The data were collected from the respondents with the aid of a structured questionnaire. A multistage random sampling technique was used to select 120 respondents. In the first stage, ten percent of the eighteen (18) Local Government Areas in Ondo state were randomly selected which accounted for the two local government areas; Akure South and Akure North. In the second stage, four (4) schools were randomly selected consisting of two primary and two secondary schools from each local government area. In the final stage, twenty (20) respondents were selected from each school. Children within the age of 7 and 18 years were given the questionnaire to give their parents/guardian at home and which were later collected back after they had filled. This was done to reach parents who have children. In each Local Government Area, eighty (80) respondents were selected and a total of one hundred and sixty (160) respondents were interviewed for the study but only one hundred and twenty respondents (120) were found useful. Data were collected using well-structured questionnaire and interview schedule. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Chi-square analysis.

2.1 Measurement of Variables

The population of the study includes all the parents in Ondo State, Nigeria. A total of one hundred and twenty (120) was the sample size for the study. The instrument for data collection was subjected to face validity test to ascertain whether the instrument was able to measure the variables it was designed to measure. This was given to the teachers in primary and secondary schools and the necessary correction or modification was incorporated into the instrument before data collection. The reliability test was done using test retest method. This was done by administering the questionnaire to parents who were not part of the sample for this study twice at different interval to measure the consistency of the instrument.

Variables	Measurement
Sex	Male=1, Female=0
Age	Years
Household Size	Number
Level of Education	Number of years spent in school
Believe in the need for children to acquire skill	Perception of five-point likert scale at Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree(D) and Stongly Disagree(SD) was used.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Personal Characteristics of Respondents

Among respondents who accepted skill acquisition for children, 6.3% were below 30 years, 41.5% of the respondents fell between 31-40 years while 52.2% were above 40 years. Mean age for this category was 43 years old. For the respondents who did not accept the concept of skill acquisition for children, 14.3% were below 30 years, 57.2% fell between 31-40 years, while 28.5% were above 40 years. Mean age for those in this category was 35years old. Data presented indicates that a larger percentage (52.2%) of the parents in the study area who accepted skill acquisition for children were old (i.e. above 40 years) and a larger percentage (71.5%) of the parents who did not accept skill acquisition for children were less than 40 years. Though the summary reveals an almost equal representation of those over 40 (50.8%) and below 40 (49.2%). This likely indicates that age could be a factor in the acceptance of this phenomenon as those in the lower age category (71.5%) were more among those who did not accept. This could be as a result of the experience or exposure of the respondents with regards to what they have seen happen to people over time in terms of searching for job.

Among respondents who accepted skill acquisitions for children, males were 44.2% and females were 55.8%. Among those who did not accept skill acquisition for children, 42.9% of the respondents were males while 57.1% were females. Furthermore, for the respondents who accepted skill acquisitions for children, 15.9% were single, highest proportion (71.7%) were married, 2.7% were widowed, 7.1% were divorced while 2.7% were separated. This signified that the majority of the parents who accepted skill acquisition for children were married and could therefore, be said to be found responsible. For the respondents who did not accept skill acquisition for children, 14.3% of the sampled parents were single, 14.3% were married, majority (42.9%) were widowed and 28.6% were divorced. The percentage of those married who accepted skill acquisition were higher than those who did not which could signify that marital status could predispose children to skill acquisition activities. Majority of those who did not accept the idea were either widowed or divorced which could imply that they would not be willing to release the children whom they cherish as single parents. Also, about 59.3% of the respondents were civil servants, 20.4% were traders while 20.4% were business men, for those who consented to skill acquisition for their children. For those who did not consent to skill acquisition for children, 28.6% of the respondents had no response, 4.3% engaged in farming while the largest percentage (57.1%) were civil servants. This signified that the civil servants know the importance of skill acquisition since they are educated and they know the benefit of getting their children involved in skill acquisition activities.

In addition, among those who accepted skill acquisition for children 1.8% of the sampled parents had no formal education, while 4.4% had adult education, 17.7% had primary education, highest proportion (41.6%) had secondary education and 34.5% had tertiary education. For the respondents who did not believe in skill acquisition for children, 28.6% had no formal education, 14.3% had primary education while 57.1% had tertiary education. This signified that the majority of the parents were highly educated and they could be of the view that involvement of their children in skill acquisition activities would reduce the level of concentration on their education. Finally, the household size distribution revealed that for respondents who accepted the idea, 60% had small size families while 40% had moderate sized families. Majority (57.1%) of those who did not believe in skill acquisition for children had moderate household sizes and 42.9% had small sized households.

3.2 Parent's Acceptability and Preferences of Children's Skill Acquisition Activities

Table 2 shows that skill acquisition and entrepreneurship activities were acceptable to 94.2% of the respondents and not acceptable to 5.8% of the respondents in the study area. This shows that skill acquisition and entrepreneurship activities were acceptable to the majority of the respondents. Out of one hundred and thirteen respondents that accepted skill acquisition and entrepreneurship activities, 51.3% had their children involved while children of 48.7% of the respondents had not yet been involved.

3.3 Skill Acquisition Activities of Respondents

Various skill acquisition activities of the respondents are presented in Fig. 1. The skills

which parents permitted their children to be involved in were shown in Fig. 1. "Phone repairing" was the skill with the highest percentage (27.6%) of those involved. This was followed by "Tailoring" with (22.4%) and "Auto mechanic" (20.7%). Others were "Hairdressing" (15.5%), "Bead making" (8.6%) and hair barbing (5.2%).

Table 1. Personal characteristics of respondents (n=120)

	Acceptable		Not acceptable		Merged data	
Variables	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Total frequency**	**Total percentage**
Age (years)						
< 30	7	6.3	1	14.3	8	6.7
31- 40	47	41.5	4	57.2	51	42.5
> 40	59	52.2	2	28.5	61	50.8
Total	113	100.0	7	100.0	120	**100.0**
Sex:						
Male	50	44.2	3	42.9	53	44.2
Female	63	55.8	4	57.1	67	55.8
Total	113	100.0	7	100.0	120	100.0
Marital Status						
Single	18	15.9	1	14.3	19	15.8
Married	81	71.7	1	14.3	82	68.3
Widow	3	2.7	3	42.9	6	5.0
Divorced	8	7.1	2	28.6	10	8.3
Separated	3	2.7	-	-	3	2.5
Total	113	100.0	7	100.0	120	100.0
Primary occupation						
No response	-	-	2	28.6	2	1.6
Farming	-	-	1	14.3	1	0.8
Civil servant	67	59.3	4	57.1	71	59.2
Trading	23	20.4	-	-	23	19.2
Business	23	20.4	-	-	23	19.2
Total	113	100.0	7	100.0	120	100.0
Household size						
1-4 (small)	69	60	3	42.9	72	60.0
5-8 (moderate)	44	40	4	57.1	48	40.0
Total	113	100.0	7	100.0	120	100.0
Educational level						
No formal Education	2	1.8	2	28.6	4	3.3
Adult Education	5	4.4	-	-	5	4.2
Primary Education	20	17.7	1	14.3	21	17.5
Secondary Education	47	41.6	-	-	47	39.2
Tertiary Education	39	34.5	4	57.1	43	35.8
Total	113	100.0	7	100.0	120	100.0

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to acceptance and involvement of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship activities among children

Acceptability of skill acquisition and entrepreneurship activities by children	**Respondents whose children are involved**		**Respondents whose children are not involved**		**Total**	
	Freq.	**(%)**	**Freq.**	**(%)**	**Freq.**	**(%)**
Acceptable	58	100	55	88.7	113	94.2
Not acceptable	-	-	7	11.3	7	5.8
Total	58	100	62	100	120	100

(n = 120) accepted skill acquisition
(n= 113) involved in skill acquisition

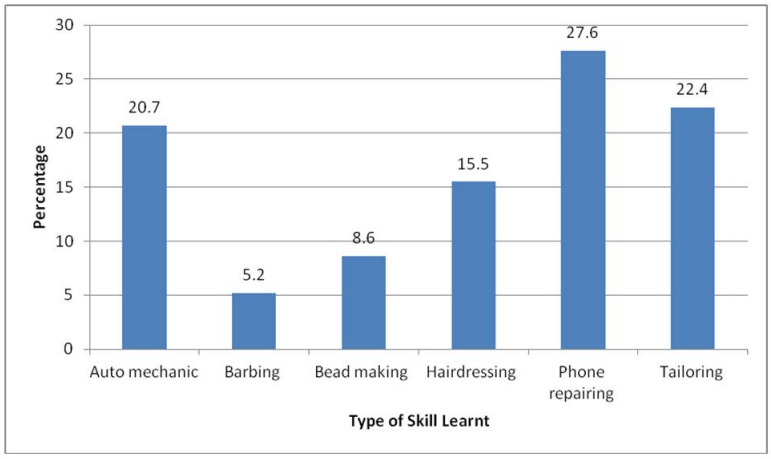

Fig. 1. Skill acquisition activities of respondents

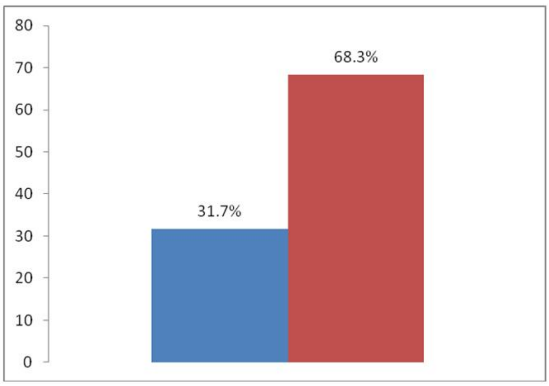

Fig. 2. Distribution of respondents according to their involvement in skill acquisition when young

3.4 Involvement in Skill Acquisition when Young

Fig. 2 shows that 31.7% of the respondents were not involved in skill acquisition activities when they were young, while the majority (68.3%) were involved when they were young. This might likely influence them in getting their children involved in skill acquisition activities.

3.5 Parents Opinion on Modalities for Children Skill Acquisition and Current Practices of Skill Acquisition among Respondent's Children

3.5.1 Period of skill acquisition

Table 3 shows that 74.1% of the respondents had their children involved in skill acquisition activities on weekends, 6.9% after school hours while 19.0% of the respondents had their children involved in skill acquisition activities both on weekends and after school hours. This signified that the majority of the respondents had their children involved in skill acquisition activities mostly on weekends. This would possibly enable the children concentrate on their formal educational activities during the week and prevent distractions to home work and home studies.

3.5.2 Time of skill acquisition

According to Table 2 above, 58 respondents had their children involved in skill acquisition activities. Table 3 shows that 39.7% of the children involved in skill acquisition activities on weekends did so before 12 noon, 20.7% were involved between 1-3 pm while 13.8% between 3-6 pm. This signified that the majority of the respondents who had their children involved in skill acquisition activities on weekends do so after 12 noon. This would likely enable them give a helping hand with domestic activities early in the mornings before they go for their apprenticeship. Results further shows that 8.6% of the children who were involved in skill acquisition activities after school hours, went between 2-4 pm while about 17.2% were involved between 4-6 pm.

3.6 Chi-square Analysis of the Relationships between Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents and Acceptance of Skill Acquisition

From Table 4, it could be observed that acceptance of skill acquisition has no significant association with age and sex. We could however,

see that acceptance of skill acquisition has a significant association with level of education and occupation of the respondents. This might be as a result of the specialization in knowledge which education brings to the parents. In other words, the higher the level of education, the higher the level of exposure to the outside world and the more parents see the reasons why children should be involved in skill acquisition activities. In a similar manner the occupations and entrepreneurship activities, in other words, a respondent who is a civil servant and whose secondary occupation is trading will like his/her children to be involved in skill acquisition activities as not to fall the victim of unemployment and also to acquire other skills apart from the one being acquired in school.

Also, acceptance of skill acquisition has a significant relationship with marital status of the respondents, a married respondents with a family has the tendency of believing in skill acquisition and allowing the children to get engaged in one skill acquisition activity or the other. A single respondent may not believe in skill acquisition because she has no children yet. Also acceptance of skill acquisition has a significant relationship with religion of the respondents. This could be as a result of values that religious adherents are exposed to. Thus most religion encourages industry and hard work and hence adherents of such religion will tend to abide by such teachings depending on the level of their commitment to their religious teachings.

In addition, Table 4 shows that acceptance of skill acquisition has a significant relationship with experience of skill acquisition when growing up. A respondent, who was involved in acquiring skills when growing up, would like his children to acquire skills also, this is because of the experience he had acquired when he was young and he would want to inculcate such into his children as they grow up.

Table 3. Parents opinion on modalities for children skill acquisition

Modalities	Frequency	Percentage
Period of skill acquisition		
Weekends only	43	74.1
Only after school hours	4	6.9
After school hours and weekends	11	19.0
Total	**58**	**100.0**
Time of skill acquisition		
Weekends		
Before 12 noon	23	39.7
1-3 pm	12	20.7
3-6 pm	8	13.8
After school hours		
2-4 pm	5	8.6
4-6 pm	10	17.2
Total	**58**	**100.0**

Table 4. Chi-square analysis of the relationships between socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and acceptance of skill acquisition

Variables	X^2 value	DF	p-value	Decision/Remark
Acceptance of skill acquisition and age	1.75	2	0.111	Not significant
Acceptance of skill acquisition and sex	0.01	1	0.943	Not significant
Acceptance of skill acquisition and marital status	28.34	4	0.000*	Significant
Acceptance of skill acquisition and level of education	18.41	4	0.001*	Significant
Acceptance of skill acquisition and religion	66.88	3	0.000*	Significant
Acceptance of skill acquisition and primary occupation	51.28	4	0.000*	Significant
Acceptance of skill acquisition and skill acquisition experience when growing up	13.31	1	0.000*	Significant

Note: *DF means Degree of Freedom*

**significant at the 0.05 level of significance as p-value is less than 0.05*

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding of the study, it was clear that majority (94.2%) of the respondents believed in early skill acquisition by children but few had their children involved presently. Despite the majority's agreement on weekend involvement, there were diverse views as to when it should be done though majority decided for before 12 noon. Results of the chi-square showed that there is significant relationship between the level of education, skill acquisition experience of the respondents when they were growing up and respondents' acceptance of skill acquisition. It can therefore be concluded that respondents in the study area are in support of children being involved in skill acquisition activities.

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations are hereby made

1. Government and non-governmental agencies should be encouraged to develop skill acquisition and entrepreneurship programmes for children.
2. Children should be allowed by their parents to be involved in skill acquisition activities on weekends after 12 noon to enable them concentrate on their education as well as assist with domestic chores on weekends before going for such activities.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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