PARENTAL FACTORS INFLUENCING ACCEPTABILITY OF CHILDREN'S INVOLVEMENT IN SKILL ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study assessed parental acceptability of children's involvement in skill acquisition activities in Ondo state. Multistage sampling technique was used to select 120 parents. Data collected were presented using simple descriptive statistics. Chi-square analysis was used to test the study's hypothesis.
Weekends was perceived as the most convenient time for children to acquire skills (83.3%). Phone repairing (27.6%) and Tailoring (22.4%) were the major skill acquisition activities involved in by children in the study area. Marital status ($X^2 = 28.34$, $p \leq 0.05$), level of education ($X^2 = 18.41$, $p \leq 0.05$), religion ($X^2 = 66.88$, $p \leq 0.05$), primary occupation ($X^2 = 51.28$, $p \leq 0.05$) and skill acquisition experience ($X^2 = 13.31$, $p \leq 0.05$) of parents influenced their acceptability of skill acquisition for children. Government and non-governmental organization should therefore develop skill acquisition and entrepreneurship programmes for children as it has acceptability among parents.

Keywords: Skill Acquisition, Entrepreneurship, Acceptability, Unemployment, Children

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Children are regarded as economic assets given their potential, economic roles and productive contribution in the generation of income in rural communities. Fadipe (1970), Orubuloye (1987), and Jibowo (1992) 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. A lot of children possess innate abilities and creativity, but only need an opportunity and enabling environment to put the endowments to work (Nixon and Aldwinckle, 2003; Centre for Learning Innovation, 2006; River Springs Charter, 2007). 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, or simply kept in an account to yield small interest. Therefore empowering children to be self-reliant is a step that guarantees economic sustainability, security, morality and entrepreneurship. Hence, it addresses situations which would have been characterized by a high dependency ratio and low level of creativity.

National Bureau of Statistic (NBS, 2012), have estimated that over 100 million Nigerians are living below poverty level. The percentage of Nigerians living in poverty has since risen from 54.7% in 2004 to 60.9% in 2010, translating to 112 million Nigerians living in poverty, despite a 7.6 gross domestic product GDP) growth in the country's economy. This situation if not addressed and our growing number of jobless youths gainfully employed, Nigeria may

sooner than later become engulfed in a social crisis of unimaginable proportion, even as the political class continues to engage in wasteful spending and mindless corruption. Accordingly, the NBS estimated that this trend may rise further if the potential positive impact of several anti-poverty and employment generation intervention programmes of government falls through. Since poverty and unemployment in Africa strongly correlated, it will not be surprising to assume that the unemployment rate is in excess of 40%. The official figure is nevertheless about 23% which analysts consider a gross under-estimation. Recent data from the National Bureau of Statistics (2012) placed the country's misery index at 34 per cent, a development which analysts described as "horrible and terrifying." The misery index which measures the level of hardship in a country is calculated using the unemployment and inflation rates of that economy. According to the bureau, the figure of unemployed Nigerians in the first half of 2011 was 23.9 per cent, up from 21.1 per cent in 2010 and 19.7 per cent in 2009. According to the NBS, Nigeria also had a population of over 67 million unemployed youths as of 2011 (NBS, 2012) with 112.519 million Nigerians living in relative poverty conditions (Tucrivers, 2010; NBS, 2012; Subair, 2012). This is staggering when compared with the country's estimated 163 million population. Although Nigeria's economy is projected to continue growing, poverty is likely to get worse as the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. The Nigerian unemployment report 2011 prepared by the NBS also shows that the rate is higher in the rural areas (25.6 percent) than in the urban areas (17.1 percent) (NBS, 2012).

Sequel to this national scenario embroiled in poverty and unemployment, there is a need for individuals and families to begin to consider alternatives to the most clamoured option of government jobs. Since it is evidently clear that government cannot provide adequate employment for the teeming masses, individuals must begin to take their destinies in their

hands. It is in this light that this study was designed to examine the option of skill acquisition by citizens and more so at an early age such that they can become self reliant and enterprising thereby becoming job providers thus contributing their own quota to national productivity. Children however cannot take and execute decisions on their own; as they are influenced and need to be guided by parents and guardians. This is why the study examined parental factors influencing children's involvement in skill acquisition activities.

The main objective of this study therefore was to assess parental factors influencing children's involvement in skill acquisition activities in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study;

1. ascertained the personal characteristics of the respondents,
2. examined parent's acceptability and preferences of children's skill acquisition activities, and
3. assessed parents opinion on modalities for children skill acquisition

1.1.1 Hypothesis of the study

The hypothesis which was tested in the study at the 0.05 level of significance is presented in the null form below:

H_o: There is no significant relationship between selected personal characteristics of the respondents and their children's involvement in skill acquisition activities.

2.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Ondo State. Ondo State is located in the Southwest of Nigeria and the people are predominantly Yoruba. 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 each of the local government area, four

(4) schools were randomly selected consisting of two primary and two secondary schools. In each school, twenty (20) respondents were selected. Ten of the twenty respondents were purposively selected to capture those who are involved in entrepreneurship and skill acquisition activities while the remaining were randomly selected to represent those who were not involved. Children were given the questionnaires to give their parents/guardian at home and which were later collected back after they had filled. 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 questionnaires (120) were found useful.

Data were collected using questionnaire and interview schedule. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies tables, percentages and means. The inferential statistics used was the Chi-square analysis.

3.1 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1.1 Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 show that skill acquisition and Entrepreneurship activities was 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.

Table 2 shows that out of those who accepted skill acquisition and Entrepreneurship activities, about 51.3% of them had their children involved presently in skill acquisition while 48.7% had their children not involved in any skill acquisition and Entrepreneurship activities.

Table 3 shows that among respondents who accepted skill acquisition for children, 6.3% were below 30 years, 41.5% of the respondent 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. This reveals that the majority of the respondent in the study area 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, and 7.1% were divorced and 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 believed in skill acquisition for their children. For those who did not believe in 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 servant. 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 the phenomenon, figure 1 shows that 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.

Figure 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.

3.2 Involvement in Skill Acquisition Activities

The skills parents permitted their children to be involved in according to figure 3 were hairdressing (15.5%), hair barbing (5.2%), tailoring (22.4%), auto mechanic (20.7%), phone

repairing (27.6%) and 8.6% in bead making. This reveals that the majority of the respondents had their children involved in phone repairing, followed by auto mechanic.

3.3 Current Practices of Skill Acquisition among Respondent's Children

3.3.1 Period of Skill acquisition

Table 5 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 will possibly enable the children concentrate on their formal educational activities during the week and prevent distractions to home work and home studies.

3.3.2 Time of Skill acquisition

Table 5 shows that 48.3% of the children involved in skill acquisition activities on weekends do so before 12 noon, 31.0% are involved between 1-3pm while 20.7% between 3-6pm. 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 will likely enable them give a helping hand with domestic activities early in the mornings before they go for their apprenticeship.

Table 5 shows that 31.0% of the children who were involved in skill acquisition activities after school hours, go between 2-4pm while the majority (69.0%) were involved between 4-6pm. This signified that the majority of the respondents, who had their children involved the skill acquisition activities after school hour do so between 4-6pm.

3.4 Test of Hypothesis

From Table 6, 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 6 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.

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 belief in 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 to involve 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.

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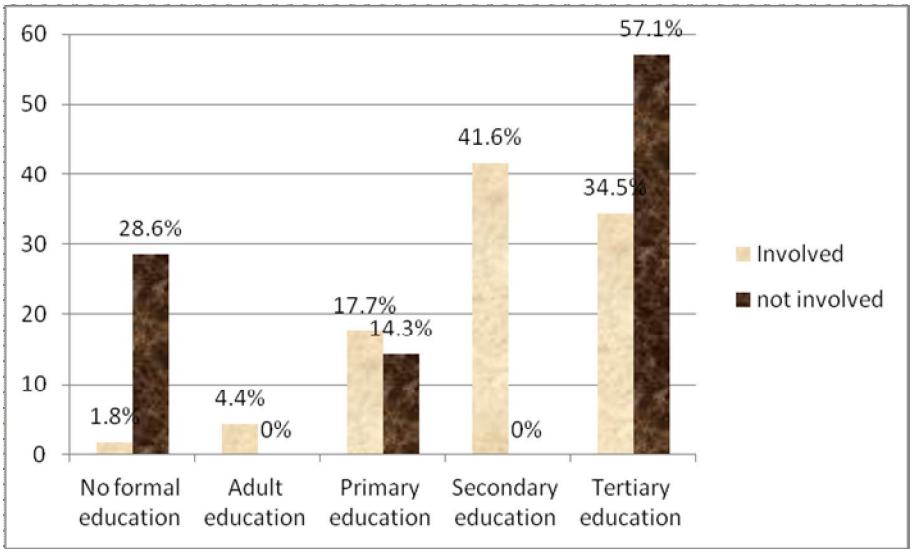

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents according to their involvement in skill acquisition when young

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

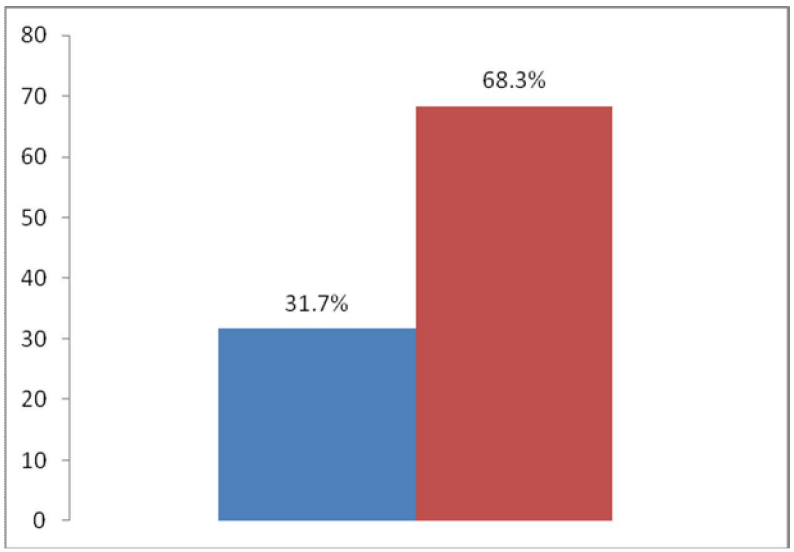

Figure 2: Distribution of respondents according to their involvement in skill acquisition when young

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

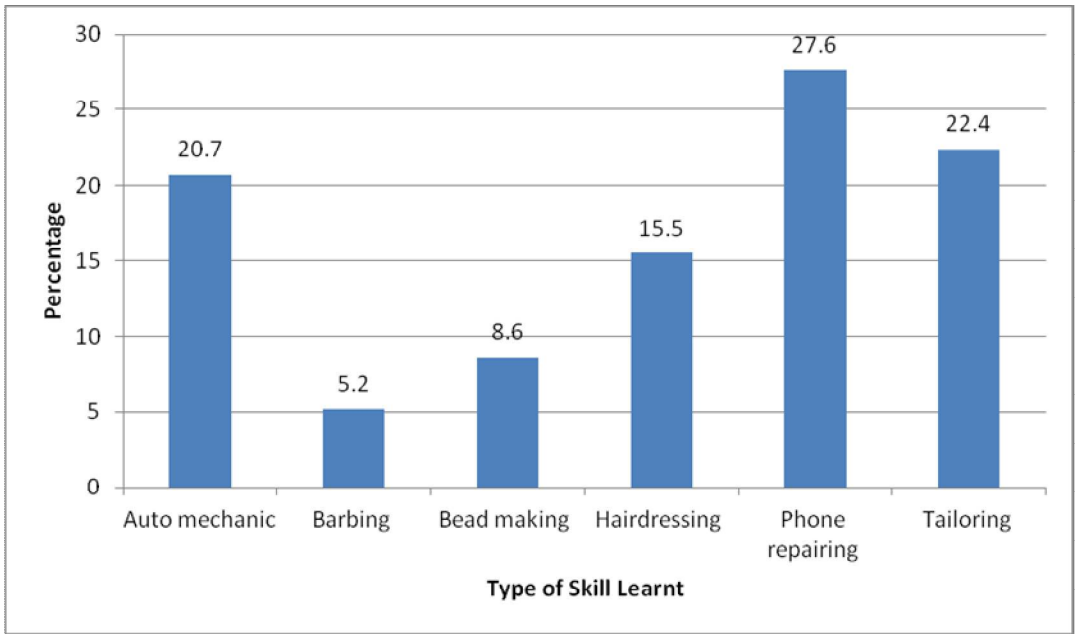

Figure 3: Distribution of Respondents According to Type of Skill Learnt by their Children

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Acceptability of Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Activities among Children.

Acceptability of skill acquisition and Entrepreneurship Activities by children	frequency (n = 120)	Percentage
Accepted	113	94.0
Not accepted	7	6.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Table 2: Involvement of Children in skill acquisition and Entrepreneurship Activities

Involvement status	Frequency (n= 113)	Percentage
Involved	58	51.3
Not involved	55	48.7

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Table 3: Personal Characteristics of Respondents (n=120)

	Acceptable		Not acceptable		Sample summary	
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
Sex:						
Male	50	44.2	3	42.9	53	44.2
Female	63	55.8	4	57.1	67	55.8

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
Primary Occupation:	-	-	2	28.6	2	1.6
No response	-	-	1	14.3	1	0.8
Farming	67	59.3	4	57.1	71	59.2
Civil servant	23	20.4	-	-	23	19.2
Trading Business	23	20.4	-	-	23	19.2
Household Size:						
1-4 (small)	69	60	3	42.9	72	60.0
5-8 (moderate)	44	40	4	57.1	48	40.0

Table 4: Involvement in Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Activities when Young

Involvement in Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Activities when Young	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
No	38	31.7
yes	82	68.3
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents according to Current Practices of Skill Acquisition among their Children

Period of Skill Acquisition	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
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 12noon	23	53.49
1-3pm	12	27.91
3-6pm	8	18.60
Total	43	100.0
After school hours		
2-4pm	5	33.3
4-6pm	10	66.7
Total	15	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2009.

Table 6: Chi-square Analysis of the relationships between socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and Acceptance of skill acquisition.

Variables	X^2 calculated 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

Source: Field Survey, 2009