

# PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON CREATIVITY DEVELOPMENT AND VOCATIONAL INTEREST OF CHILDREN IN EKITI STATE NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

Creativity is a natural endowment which can easily be displayed by children at home. Children are often seen playing with objects and drawings because of their natural quest and inward disposition to explore and come out with creative ideas or products. It is therefore imperative for parents to encourage and develop children at home to achieve this to greater heights. The aim of this study, therefore was to determine the influence of parents in development and vocational interest of children in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study was carried out using 400 Junior Secondary School students of age eleven to thirteen as samples. Specifically, the study sought to identify the types of creative activity the students normally engage in; their vocational interests and the influence their parents had in their creativity development and vocational interest. A Child-Creative Inventory Form (CCIF) was used as an instrument for quantitative data collection. Data collected was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study reveal that children in Ekiti State, Nigeria love to engage in creative activities mostly in technical and vocational skills, and that they are motivated by their parents to do so. The study also found that even though the students do engage in creative activities in vocational activities, yet their vocational interest is much more on other disciplines order than vocational subjects as influenced by their parents. It is therefore recommended that parents and teachers should encourage children whenever they are engaged in creative activities at home and in schools and help those to develop their career based on the children's areas of interest.

**Keywords:** Creativity; Technical vocational; Career; interest; parental influence.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Creativity and vocational education can be described as two phenomena that contribute immensely to the growth and development of a nation. Vocational education is aimed at fighting against economic depression as noted by Oke (2001), while creativity on the other hand, is intended to facilitate production of skills or ideas that are new, novel and original (Kaufman, 2008).

In defining vocational education, Oziengbe (2009) opined that ‘vocational / technical education is any form of education whose aim is to prepare person(s) for occupation or group of occupations’. The Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) in its educational policy described vocational education as education obtainable in the technical college equivalent to the Senior Secondary Education; but designed to prepare individuals to acquire practical skills, basic scientific knowledge and attitude required for craft-men and technicians at sub-professional levels. At technical college level, its major aims are to develop skills and stimulate the creativity among the youth.

Creativity on the other hand, is seen by some authors such as Gardner (2008) and Singer (2004) as the novelty or originality that is involved in the outcome or final product of an idea. The outcome is usually at two levels, which are sublime creativity and everyday creativity. The sublime creativity according to Crospley (2001) is that creativity possessed professionals whose creativity has been validated and recognized by the entire world. On the other hand, everyday creativity, according to Crospley (2001), is regarded as a normally distributed trait that is found in everybody although in various degrees. Plucker et. al (2004) and Kaufman & Beghetto (2009) referred to every day creativity as ‘Little-c’.

The Little-c creativity can be attributed to the children who are the future creators, innovators, workers and leaders (Sharp, 2004). Children have the tendency to explore their environment in order to discover their talents and create. The exploration is done by bringing forth the unconscious symbols and images from imaginative realm to assimilate into conscious awareness (Mancewiz, 2013). Thus the stages are referred to by Donald Super as growth and exploratory stages of career/vocational development and the period is characterised by ages 0-14 or 15 and ages 15-24 respectively (Abernathy, 2000).

Therefore, Craft, Jeffrey and Leeibling (2001) opined that it is the duty of adults to help children discover their creative strength and aid them to choose subjects relating to their areas of creativity in school.

## 2. CREATIVITY DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN

In quest for creativity development in children, Sharp (2004) emphasised the need to ensure the discovery of originality among them. Children who show outstanding ideas among their age groups, are said to be exhibiting originality (McWayne, Fantuzzo & McDermott, 2004). Thus, at this level emphasis can be on creative product rather than creative process (Fantuzzo, Bulotsky, McDermott, Mosca & Lutz, 2003); Fantuzzo, Sekino & Cohen, 2004).

Most theorists of child’s development have agreed that children are naturally creative, but the creativity is not usually maintained throughout the childhood to adulthood (Runco, 2003). The continuity and discontinuity in creativity can be as a result of chances in life and environmental or parental influences (Russ, 2004). Thus, motivation from parents or adults through play is very vital and fundamental to creativity (Runco, 2003; Amabile, 2012). Hence, a playful person is seen as an individual who can easily be creative (Capps, 2012).

The problem with most African parents and especially the Nigerians appears to be the inability to assist children to think creatively by engaging them in play. Most parents appear

to be in a hurry or see play as a waste of time. (Kenneth, et. al, 2007). Some parents prefer that their children read their books or engage in household work to encouraging creativity in them through play (Sharp, 2004).

### **3. VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN**

According to Shanhnasarian (2006), the theory of vocational choice developed by John L. Holland is based on the premise that personality and environmental factors underline career choices. Applications of this theory involve matching the respective types with the environmental aspects of potential careers. The personality types include realistic, imaginative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (Riani, 2011; Capps, 2012).

In addition to Holland theory of career development, Donald Super recognized that people go through changes in career choice and development as they mature. Thus the career choice of the children is determined by social economic factors, physical abilities, personal characteristics and opportunities to which people are exposed (Leung, 2008).

### **4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite the importance of vocational technical Education, its image was seen to be generally poor globally and especially in Nigeria (Awang, Sail, Alavi, & Ismail, 2011). Many perceived that the program is meant for low academic achievers; the school dropouts and the youth having curriculum challenges (Hoxer, 2002; Beltran, 2007).

In Ekiti State Nigeria, the statistics obtained from the Board for Technical education in year 2013 as reported by Oke and Musta'amal (2013) showed a very low enrolment of students in the entire technical colleges. Also, Oke and Musta'amal (2013) found that lack of adequate guidance and intrinsic motivation of students contributed to low enrollment into the programme as most students found themselves in the programme circumstantially.

The problem of low enrolment into vocational education can therefore be solved by first finding out what transpires at home with the parents who are the primary creativity developer and career initiators.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study was carried out to:

1. determine the career / vocational areas where the children in Ekiti state normally carry out creative exercises.
2. identify what use to be the reactions of their parents whenever they are engaging themselves in creative activities.
3. carry out investigation on the career / vocational interests areas of the children as influence by their parents.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study was carried out to answer the following research questions:

1. In what career / vocational areas do children in Ekiti state normally carry out their creative exercises?

2. What are the reactions of their parents anytime they get themselves involved in creative activities?
3. What are the career / vocational interest's areas of the children as influenced by their parents?

## 5. METHODOLOGY

This study was a descriptive research design utilizing quantitative method for data collection.

### 5.1 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sample consisted of 232 boys and 168 girls, of ages 11-13 making a total of 400 students in the Junior Secondary School 1 and 2 who were randomly selected for this study. The choice of children at these academic levels was because they fall within the Growth age of Vocational Development as identified by Donald Super and they are wise enough to respond to the questionnaire given to them.

### 5.2 DATA COLLECTION / ANALYSIS

The study used an open ended questionnaire named Child-Creativity Inventory Form (CCIF). The instrument was subjected to face and content validity and its reliability coefficient was found to be 0.75. Data collected was analyzed using percentages and Bar chart, while hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Chi-square with percentage deviation and residual standardization.

## 6. RESULTS

### 6.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1

In which vocational/career areas do the children normally carry out their creative activities at home?

**Table I:** Classification of objects created by vocational trades

CLASSIFICATION OF OBJECTS BY VOCATIONAL TRADES	BOYS		GIRLS		TOTAL	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Automobile / Mechanical	92	24.49	55	32.73	147	36.75
Building / Woodwork	17	5.25	5	2.98	22	5.50
Electric / Electronics	97	30.03	47	27.98	144	36.00
Home Economics / Others	12	3.72	24	14.29	36	9.00
No indication	14	4.33	37	22.02	51	12.75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table I above, it could be observed that 36.75% of the children indicated that they usually carry out creative activities on objects related to automobile / mechanical; 5.50% in building / wood work; 36.0% in electric / electronics and 9.00% in home economics and non-vocational areas. In addition, 12.75% of the students could not indicate where they carried out their creative activities.

### 6.2 HYPHOTHESIS 1

There is no significant difference in the responses of boys and girls on the vocational / career areas where they carry out creative activities.

**Table II:** Chi-square table showing the level of significance difference of boys and girls in their responses to career areas where they carry out creative activities

CLASSIFICATION OF OBJECTS BY VOCATIONAL TRADES	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	df	X <sup>2</sup> c	P Value
Automobile / Mechanical	92	55	147	4	38.33	P< 0.0001 < 0.05
Building / Woodwork	17	5	22			
Electric / Electronic	97	47	144			
Home Economics / Others	12	24	36			
No Indications	14	37	51			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>400</b>			

From Table II above, the X<sup>2</sup> calculated is 38.33 > P value. While P < 0.0001 < 0.05. Hence, the Null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance.

**Table III:** Percentage Deviation and Standardized Residual for Career Areas of Creativity

CLASSIFICATION OF OBJECTS BY VOCATIONAL TRADES	PERCENTAGE DEVIATION		STANDARDIZED RESIDUAL	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Automobile/ Mechanical	+7.9%	-10.9%	+0.73	-0.86
Building/ Woodwork	33.2%	-45.9%	+1.19	-1.39
Electric/ Electronics	+16.1%	-22.5%	+1.48	-1.73
Home Economics/ Others	-22.5%	+58.9%	+1.94	+2.28
No Indication	-23.3%	+102.1%	-2.86	+3.37

The major contributors to rejection of the null hypothesis are the responses of girls in the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> cells i.e. home economics shows Percentage Deviation of +58.9% and Standardized Residual of +2.28. For the response of girls on No indication, the Percentage Deviation is +102 % with +3.37 as Standardized Residual.

### 6.3 RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the parents’ reactions to the children anytime they get themselves involved in creative activities?

**Table IV:** Summary of children’s response on their parents, reactions to them any time they get themselves involved in creative activities

PARENTS’ FORMS OF REACTION	BOYS		GIRLS		TOTAL	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Motivational Reactions	134	57.76	80	47.62	214	53.50
Discouraging Reactions	53	22.84	63	37.50	116	29.0
Passive (No) Reactions	45	19.40	25	14.88	70	17.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

From table IV above, it could be seen that 53.50 % of the students indicated that they were motivated by their parents whenever they carry out creative activities at home. 29.0% of the respondents indicated that they are faced with negative reactions while 17.50% indicated that that their parents do remain passive while carrying out creative activities.

### 6.4 HYPOTHESIS 2

There is no significance difference in the level of response of boys and girls on their parents' form of reactions whenever they carry out creative activities at home.

**Table V:** Chi-Square Table showing gender responses on the level of reactions of parents to creative activities

PARENTS FORMS OF REACTIONS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL	Df	X <sup>2</sup> c	P value
Motivational Reactions	134	80	214	2	10.22	P=0.0006 < 0.05
Discouraging Reactions	53	63	116			
Passive (No) Reactions	45	25	70			
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>400</b>			

The X<sup>2</sup>c calculated value is 10.22. The P value = 0.0006 < 0.05. Hence the Null Hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 level of significance.

**Table VI:** Computed Percentage Deviation and Standardized Residual on the reactions of the parents of boys and girls

PARENTS' REACTIONS	PERCENTAGE DEVIATION		STANDARDIZED RESIDUALS	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Motivational Reactions	+8%	-11%	0.8	-1.04
Discouraging Reactions	-21.2%	+29.3%	-1.4	+2.05
Passive (No) Reactions	+10.8%	-15%	+0.69	-0.81

The value of +2.05 Standardized Residual which is >2.0, with deviation of 21.2% are obtained for parents, discouraging reactions towards the girls. Hence, the discouraging reactions towards the girls form the major basis for rejecting the Null Hypothesis.

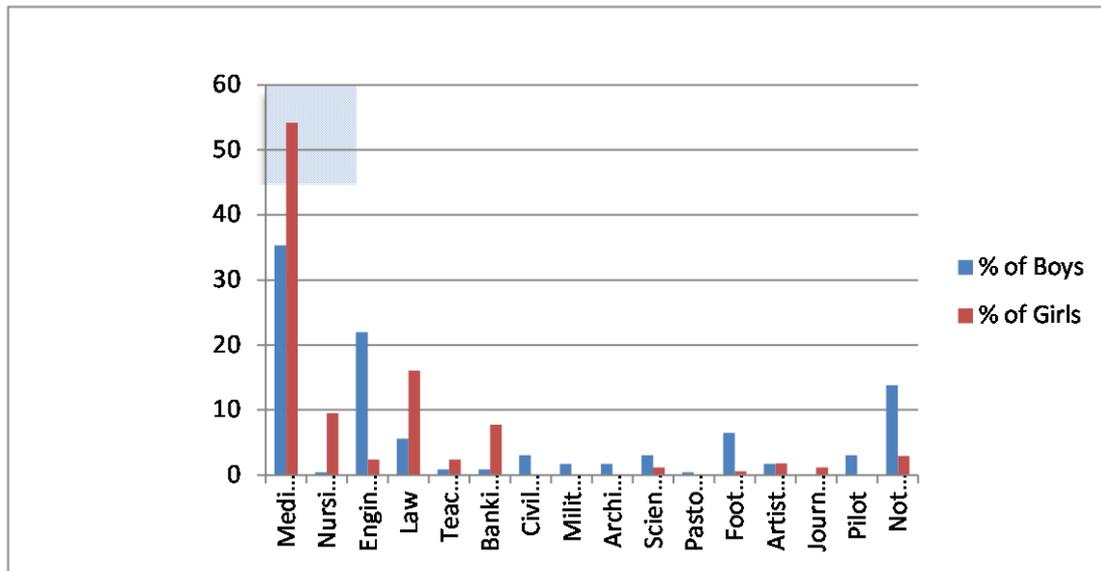
### 6.5 RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What are the vocational / career interest areas of the children based on the influence of their parents?

**Table VII:** Vocational / Career Interests of the children as influenced by their Parents

PARENTS CAREER/ VOCATION	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Medicine/Pharmacy	82	35.35	91	54.16	173	43.25
Nursing	1	0.43	16	9.52	17	4.25
Engineering	51s	21.98	4	2.38	55	13.75
Law	13	5.60	27	16.0s7	40	10.00
Educator/ Teaching	2	0.86	4	2.38	6	1.40
Banking/Accountancy	2	0.86	13	7.74	15	3.75
Civil Servant	7	3.02	-	-	7	1.75
Military Officer	4	1.72	-	-	4	1.00
Architecture	4	1.72	-	-	4	1.00
Scientist	7	3.02	2	1.19	9	2.25
Pastoring / Priesthood	1	0.43	-	-	1	0.25
Footballing	15	6.47	1	0.60	16	4.00
Artist / Actor (Actress)	4	1.72	3	1.79	7	1.75
Journalism	-	-	2	1.19	2	0.50
Pilot	7	3.02	-	-	7	1.75
Not Decided Yet	32	13.79	5	2.96	5	37.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Table VII above is the summary of vocational career interest of the children. It can be seen from the table that 43.25% of the students showed interest in medicine as their career choice and it has the highest percentage; while 0.25% of the students showed interest in pastoral or priesthood career as it has the lowest percentage of interest. It can also be seen from the table that 37.00% of the children were still unable to indicate their area of vocational interest.



**Figure 1:** Vocational Interest of Boys and Girls

Figure 1 above shows the difference in vocational interest of boys and girls. Girls showed more interest in careers such as medicine (54.16%), nursing (9.52%), law (16.07%), banking (7.70%), teaching (2.38%), and acting (1.79%). Boys on the other hand showed more interest than girls in engineering (29.98%), civil service (3.02%), military (1.72%), architecture (1.72%), pastoring (0.43%); sciences (3.02%), footballing (6.47%), and piloting (3.02%).

**7. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings of this study reveal that most of the children do engage in creative activities in vocational trade related areas such as automobile, building wood work, electrical electronics, home economics and other areas. Though the study shows that 9.0% of the respondents have more preference for Home Economics and other non-vocational areas, but the majority of them are girls. This result however, caused a major base for significance difference in the responses of boys and girls. The engagement in vocational areas shows that the children have potential or natural creativity in the domain of technical and vocational education.

The study further reveals that generally the children are motivated to engage in creative activities; though a significant difference was found in the level of motivation given to boys and girls. In support of Kenneth et. al (2007) assertion, the study reveal that parents do not encourage girls to take to creative activities at home during their leisure time like they do for boys. They may probably be engaged in domestic works like cooking, fetching of water, serving food, cleaning et cetera which generally are the roles of women and girls in the family as the case is in Africa. It should be noted that children’s creativity should be regarded at home because it leads to expertise especially if the creative activities are found interested and enjoyable (Aron, 2011).

Finally, the study reveals that the vocational interest of the children influenced by their parents. It was found that despite the fact that they normally engage in creative activities, their career interest fall majorly within seventeen areas such as: medicine, law, engineering, teaching, banking, piloting, footballing, nursing, civil servant, military, architecture, scientist, Pastoring /priesthood, acting and journalism. This study is able to provide an empirical support to the assertion of Aron (2011) that children's creativity involves construction of imagery to uncover what they found easy and difficult with the aim of either showing interest or dislike at the end. The study also agrees to the assertion of Jackson et. al (2004) which shows that children can exhibit creativity in the areas where they are naturally talented. Non-interest in vocational careers also supporte the view of Mancewiz (2013) that creative mind begins to shift when children begin to learn about the real world. This is because they get exposed to pressure together with societal recognition (Terenzin, 2005; Tepper, 2004 & Tepper, 2006). One of the ways by which they find places in the society is to seek career that can offer them prestige and money, like medicine and engineering without minding whether they are talented in that line or not.

## 8. CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATION

This study found that children in Ekiti State Nigeria do engage in creativity in vocational skill areas and that they were encouraged by their parents in that regard. But the study found that the children's career interest area, as influenced by their parents, does not attract technical/vocational subjects. Therefore, there is a need to find out the factors that are responsible for that and how the children who are naturally creative in vocational / technical skills could be assisted in developing their careers in those areas.

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