



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***GENDER ANALYSES ON ACCEPTANCE LEVEL OF REGGIO EMILIA
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AMONG PARENTS IN
RURAL AREAS, KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA***

IBRAHIM ABDULLAHI

FEM 2021 16



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By

IBRAHIM ABDULLAHI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

December 2020

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DEDICATION

This my research work is dedicated to my entire family particularly my late mother Fatima Yahya and my father Malam Abdullahi Babankowa, as well as my children for their love, patience, sacrifices and support towards the realization of my dream into this work.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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IBRAHIM ABDULLAH

December 2020

Chairman : Associate Professor Zumilah Zainalaludin, PhD
Faculty : Human Ecology

The early childhood development is critical for any country in the world. Thus, the readiness of parents in rural areas of developing countries for acceptance of early childhood development program is essential. Reggio Emilia Approach in Early Childhood Development (REA-ECD) was launched by Nigeria in 2014, and Katsina state in 2015. This REA-ECD proved to be successful within rural communities in the face of parents' acceptance. This study aims to examine by sex disaggregate the backgrounds of the parents who accepted and enrolled their children in REA-ECD program, their households' backgrounds, their acceptance level, and REA-ECD acceptance predictors. The significant predictors would be useful in future programs and acceptance studies. The main theories underlined this study were Gender Role, Technology Acceptance and Innovations Diffusion Theories, supporting sex-disaggregated measurement of REA-ECD acceptance (dependent variable). Besides, Vygotsky Sociocultural Learning Theories were used to support the respondents and households' backgrounds as (independent variables). The background of the study was the parents who enrolled their children in REA-ECD program. They were selected from six Local Government Areas (LGA) of the state. The instruments for data collection were developed through adaption from the previous studies. The data were collected through the administered questionnaires. The total of 405 questionnaires (93.75%) from respondents were screened and considered for the research analyses. Respondents and households' backgrounds were captured in descriptive analyses. The REA-ECD acceptance levels were through mean and S.D, and association of respondents' sex with acceptance was determined by Chi-Square test. Binary Logistic Regression with dichotomous dependent variable; scores $\geq 80\%$ (1) was used to measure models' predictors of REA-ECD acceptance. Major findings show Means age of respondents was 38.99 years, monthly income for males and females were USD 154.6 and USD122.3. respectively, and years in marriage is 13.6. Findings show 50.8% of males and 30.4% of females' respondents were employed.

Male at 59.2% and females at 30.9% attended tertiary education. Male-headed household means monthly income is USD304.2, while the female-headed household is USD292.3. Households at 62.4% have 3-6 members, 80.5% enrolled children at 4-5 years and 74.3% prepared REA-ECD.

There is no significant association ($p>0.05$), between the level of acceptance and respondents' sex. The four models of the study were significant ($p<0.05$), BLR statistics obtained $p\leq 0.05$ in Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients. This indicates that components variables of Models were sufficient, and models fit to predict the likelihood of high REA-ECD acceptance. Hosmer and Lemeshow test of goodness of fit statistics at $p>0.05$, indicates the variables in models were linearly related with log odds of REA-ECD acceptance. The findings revealed the needs for policy to focus more on both females and males for development programs like REA-ECD. This study may be useful guidelines for rural areas in northern Nigeria policies.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**ANALISIS GENDER PENERIMAANTINGGIIBUBAPA DI REGGIO
EMILIA PROGRAM PEMBANGUNANAWAL ZAMAN KANAK-
KANAKNYA DI KAWASANLUAR BANDAR NEGERI KATSINA,
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Pembangunan awalanak-anakadalahkritikalbagi mana-mana negara di dunia. Oleh itu, kesediaan ibubapa di kawasanluar bandar di negara membangun terhadap penerimaan program pembangunan awal kanak-kanak adalah penting. Pendekatan Reggio Emilia dalam pembangunan awal kanak-kanak (REA-ECD) telah dilancarkan di Nigeria pada tahun 2014, dan negeri Katsina pada tahun 2015. "REA-ECD ini terbukti Berjaya dalam kalangan masyarakat luar bandar terhadap penerimaan ibubapa. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menilai perbezaan jantina latar belakang ibubapa yang menerima dan mendaftarkan anak mereka dalam program REA-ECD, latar belakang isi rumah mereka, tahap penerimaan mereka, dan peramal REA-ECD. Peramal yang signifikan ini amat berguna dalam program yang akan datang dan kajian penerimaan. Teori utama yang digariskan dalam kajian ini adalah peranan gender, penerimaan teknologi dan teori penyebaran inovasi, sokongan perbezaan jantina yang tidak diagregatkan daripada penerimaan REA-ECD (pembolehubah bersandar). Di samping itu, teori pembelajaran Vygotsky Sociocosi, telah digunakan untuk menyokong responden dan latar belakang isi rumah sebagai (pembolehubah bebas). Latar belakang kajian yang digunakan adalah ibubapa yang telah mendaftarkan anak mereka dalam program REA-ECD.

Sebagair esponden, mereka telah dipilih daripada enam kawasan kerajaan tempatan (LGA) dalam negeri. Instrumen pengumpulan data telah dibangunkan melalui penerimaan dan adaptasi daripada kajian sebelumnya. Data tersebut dikumpulkan melalui boring soal selidik yang ditadbirkan. Jumlah 405 soal selidik (93.75%) daripada responden telah ditapis dan dipertimbangkan untuk analisis penyelidikan. Latar belakang isi rumah dan responden telah digunakan dalam analisis deskriptif. Tahap penerimaan REA-ECD ini adalah melalui min dan sisi hanpiawai, dan

penentuan penerimaan jantina responden telah ditentukan oleh Ujian Chi-Square. Penduaan Regresi Logistik dengan pemisahan pemboleh ubah bersandar; skor $\geq 80\%$ sebagai 1 telah digunakan untuk mengukur 'penerimaan model peramal REA-ECD. Penemuan utama menunjukkan min umur responden adalah 38.99 tahun, pendapatan bulanan lelaki dan perempuan adalah masing-masing USD 154.6 dan USD 122.3, dan tahun perkahwinan ialah 13.6. Dapatan menunjukkan 50.8% lelaki dan 30.4% responden wanita telah bekerja. Sebanyak 59.2% adalah lelaki mendapat pendidikan tertiary dan perempuan sebanyak 30.9%. Min bagi ketua isi rumah lelaki pendapatan bulanan sebanyak USD 304.2, manakala ketua isi rumah wanita adalah sebanyak USD 292.3. Sebanyak 62.4% isi rumah mempunyai 3-6 bilangan ahli, mendaftarkan 80.5% anak-anak di sekolah pada 4-5 tahun dan sebanyak 74.3% disediakan oleh REA-ECD.

Tiada hubungan yang signifikan ($p > 0.05$), antara tahap penerimaan dan jantina responden. Manakala empat model kajian adalah signifikan ($p < 0.05$), statistik **BLRd** diperolehi $p \leq 0.05$ dalam Pekali Ujian Model Omnibus. Ini menunjukkan bahawa pemboleh ubah komponen Model adalah mencukupi, dan model sesuai untuk meramalkan kebarangkalian penerimaan yang berkualiti tinggi REA-ECD. Hosmer dan Lemeshow menguji kebaikan statistik adalah sesuai di $p > 0.05$, menunjukkan pemboleh ubah dalam model selanjar berkaitan dengan log masuk kedalam penerimaan REA-ECD. Dapatan kajian ini mencadangkan keperluan dasar untuk memberitumpuan kepada kedua-dua ibubapa dengan perhatiannya khusus kepada wanita berbanding lelaki untuk program pembangunan seperti REA-ECD. Kajian ini amat berfaedah sebagai garis panduan bagi dasar kawasan luar bandar di Nigeria Utara.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABOTD	Above two daughters
ABOTS	Above Two Son
ANIHU	Animal Husbandry
BLR	Binary Logistic Regression
BTR	Batsari
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
COEs	Colleges of Education
CRC	Charanchi
DMS	Dan-Musa
DTM	Dutsinma
DV	Dependent Variables
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECDI	Early Childhood Development Initiative
EYDCC	Early Years Development Consultative Committee
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
FMOE	Federal Ministry of Education
FPROS	Food Processing
FRM	Female Respondents Model
FTTSS	Female Teachers Training Scholarship Scheme
FVSEN	Five Years School Entry
FYSEN	Four Years School Entry
G4G	Girls for Girls
GRT	Gender Roles Theory
HBM	Household Background Model

HHSIZ	Households' Size
HNDW	Hand Works
HUMIC	Husbands Monthly Income
HUSED	Wives Tertiary Education
HUSOC	Husbands Occupation
HUTED	Husbands Tertiary Education
HUYIM	Husbands Years in Married
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDT	Innovation Diffusion Theory
IECD	Integrated Early Childhood Development
ISLMY	Islamiyya Schools
IT	Information Technology
IV	Independent Variables
JBV	Jibia
KTSG	Katsina State Government
LGA	Local Government Areas
LGEA	Local Government Education Authority
MA	Mothers Association
MGA	Multi-Group Analysis
MKO	More Knowledgeable Others
MLR	Multiple Linear Regression
MOE	Ministry of Education
MRM	Male Respondents Model
NBS	Nation Bureau of Statistics
NCCE	National College of Education Commission
NCE	National Certificate in Education

NERDC	National Educational Research and Development Council
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NGT	Nominal Group Techniques
NPC	National Population Commission
NPE	National Policy on Education
PEOU	Perceive Ease of Use
PLS	Partial Least Square
PRETD	Presence of 1-2 daughters
PRETS	Presence of 1-2 Son
PRISCH	Primary Schools
PTTP	Pivotal Teachers Training Program
PTTRD	Petty Trading
PU	Perceive Usefulness
RBM	Respondents Background Model
REA	Reggio Emilia Approach
REAEC	Reggio Emilia Approach Centre
REA-ECD	Reggio Emilia Approach in Early Childhood Development
RPA	Reasonable Productive Age
SD	Standard Deviation
SFN	Safana
SHG	Self-Help Group
SLT	Social Learning Theory
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
SYSEN	Six Years School Entry
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model

TRA	Theory of Reasoning Action
TYSEN	Three Years School Entry
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPM	University Putra Malaysia
USA	United State of America
USD	United State Doller
UTAUT	Unify Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology
VST	Vygotsky Sociocultural Theory
WHO	World Health Organization
WIFOC	Wives Occupation
WIMIC	Wives Monthly Income
WISED	Wives Secondary Education
WITED	Husbands Secondary Education
WIYIM	Wives Years in Married
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) program for children aged 0-5 is proven critical beyond any doubt on children ability in their entire stages of lives. (Amali, Muhinat, & Ijeoma, 2016; Ejieh, 2006; Lella Gandini, 2011; Moss, 2006; Odiagbe, 2015; Salami, Childhood, & Unit, 2016; Udenigwe, 2013; UNESCO, 2007). The ECD prepare children for school readiness, ability and resilience, as it is one of the major determinants of the future success of individuals and societal development (Alizadeh et al., 2011; Ejieh, 2006; A. Fairani & Mariani, 2016; Fernandez, 2017; Gandini, 2011; Moss, 2006; Udenigwe, 2013). One notable conducive places where these skills for such development can be acquired were the ECD centres and schools (Pence & Ashton, 2015). Ironically in the rural areas of the developing countries and some other developed regions, this opportunity is neglected (Meryem, 2018; Nupponen, 2005; Nura & Adamu, 2017).

The literature about this phenomenon in rural areas is very scanty (Anna, 2010) as if there were no important acceptable number of human being therein. The volume of literature about the phenomena of ECD its approaches and practices are more common within the scope of urban context all over the world (Amali et al., 2016; Ejieh, 2006; Lella Gandini, 2011; Moss, 2006; Odiagbe, 2015; Salami et al., 2016; Udenigwe, 2013; UNESCO, 2007). The awareness about ECD and its impact on children by parents in rural areas need to be considered as important issues by both researchers and development partners (Amali et al., 2016; Sadker David et al., 2014; Ejieh, 2006; Moss, 2006; Udenigwe, 2013; UNESCO, 2007). This is necessary considering vital roles it plays in individuals and societal development as well as in nations building (Gandini, 2011; Odiagbe, 2015; Udenigwe, 2013). Importantly, there is a need to consider a large number of children population in rural areas on a global scale (Jackie, 2006). The parents have roles to play on the children right to education, and national development (UNESCO, 2007). The teaming children population in rural areas all over the world need to be considered with ECD centres (Anna, 2010; Nura & Adamu, 2017; Rinaldi et al., n.d.; Roberta, 2000; Salami et al., 2016).

The Reggio Emilia Approach in Early Childhood Development program (REA-ECD) was introduced in Nigeria in 2014, with a focus on early childhood development. Some of the state governments use this opportunity for children in rural areas, where early childhood development is neglected. In the rural areas that are considered with the REA-ECD program for development, there is an expectation from the children parents and the whole community to support the program, by accepting it and enrolling their children. This may encourage governments and development agencies to put more efforts and resources (Miatta, 2017; UNECEF,

2015; UNESCO, 2019; UNESCO, 2007) into the program. How the children parents considered the REA-ECD program on the enrolment of their children is encouraging.

Therefore, this study used a gender perspective to identify predictors of REA-ECD acceptance by parents of the children. This is based on considering the rural folks of Katsina and their conservative nature on the enrolment and sending children, particularly girls (Abdullahi & Maiunguwa, 2014; Abdullahi, Zainalaludin, & Paim, 2013; Garba, 2017; Ibrahim, 2014; Mohammed, Nggada, & Abdullahi, 2013; Wycliff, 2014) into the formal school system. This may be one reason for selecting Katsina state to be in selected states in northern Nigeria for REA-ECD.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The strategies in the collaborative programs avowed commitment to curtailing gender inequality even in rural areas of developing regions. REA-ECD program is introduced by UNICEF and ECD Initiative in collaboration with the Nigerian government. The program through its strategies brought some changes by exposing the ideal gender issue among rural parents of REA-ECD children in Katsina state in northern Nigeria. The REA-ECD program was first, an Italian rural parents' initiative introduced under Loris Malaguzzi after World War II. As learners cantered & experiential approach, the program proves to be critical among rural parents in the Katsina state of Nigeria, for their considering enrolling their both boys and girls. This program was faced with a little socio-cultural challenge that militates against gender equality compared to other previous educational programs in the areas. Among these challenges are the girls' early marriage, the child-labour and the child-street-hawking that are all linked to poverty which affects more females than males in rural areas. Furthermore, girl early marriage is amongst the highest world key indicator for gender inequality (UNESCO, 2019). The rural girls also suffer one or more form of violence; physical, sexual or emotional; with only a few reporting that they receive help.

Initially, the ECD program in Katsina state was only provided by private investors (Mohammed et al., 2013; Odiagbe, 2015; Wycliff, 2014), and was only dominant in urban areas (Ejeh, 2006; Udenigwe, 2013; UNESCO, 2007). This is because, the rural societies especially females are poor and turn more conservatives (Zumilah, 2010), they rejected many educational programs and innovations for their children especially girls (Amina et al., 2017). Historically, this is true with the rural society of Katsina state (Ibrahim, 2014); as there are historic encounters over enrolling and sending the girls children into formal school system (Ejeh, 2006; Mohammed et al., 2013; Udenigwe, 2013; UNESCO, 2007; Wycliff, 2014). Nigeria as a nation with a poor functioning policy on ECD for the rural children, despite 13.2 million out of school children (UNECEF, 2019, Garba, 2017, Salami et al, 2016). The introduction of the REA-ECD program and its subsequent acceptance by the rural parents espoused improvement in enrolment and gender equality. The enrolments have reached the apex stage in REA-ECD centres with a ratio of boys and girls at 61:49% in almost every local government.

However, national school statistics show the number of ECD centers within urban and semi-urban areas as of 2008 was 434. But currently, the state of Katsina has over 2,188 REA-ECD centers in schools with children enrolment of 1,351,032 with a gender ratio of 61:49% among boys and girls (UNESCO, 2019). This is possible because the program views both rural boys and girls children equally as innovative, capable and competent in the development as well as resilient in expanding knowledge (Amali et al., 2016; Ejieh, 2006; Lella Gandini, 2011; Moss, 2006; Odiagbe, 2015; Salami et al., 2016; Udenigwe, 2013; UNESCO, 2007). There is an increase in adult literacy education attainment among rural parents by 39.24% within the last five year as a result of the REA-ECD introduction. Female parents' enrolment proportion was 50.35% more than that of the male parents. With this development, both females and males rural parents and teachers are making a collaborative effort with REA-ECD children and use local environmental resources to explore and expand knowledge and skills (Garba, 2017; Gandini, 2011; Moss, 2006; Odiagbe, 2015; UNESCO, 2019). The local environmental resources and pedagogical documentation as explained by Edward and Joseph (2014), are making children learning visible and interested.

The program seems imperative in making both parents adjust from a traditional gender role perspective to focus on a new paradigm shift for the future of both boys and girls children (Van Dam, 2017). This may stabilize the future workforce in the development of Katsina state and Nigeria at large (Anna, 2010; Katsina State Government, 2011; Roberta, 2000).

The present study with the use of gender-disaggregated data has measured the predictor variables from socioeconomic factors such as age, marital status, occupation, education and income as well as years in married of the respondents as the predictors of REA-ECD acceptance. The household background variables such as household size, number of children, year of school entry among their children and type of school for children as well as household income were also part of these predictors. The gender role theory of Lindsey & Mize, (2001), which explains parents' expectations on gender roles (masculine and feminine) behaviours, particularly parents-child-learning-plays was used, as this theory underlines the theoretical foundation of this research. This is because the success of the REA-ECD program must depend on whether parents' acceptance to enrol their children has considered gender equality among the children.

This theory in the study can be linked to the outcome of previous studies conducted on gender and development in the study area. These studies showed that rural traditional gender perspective by most adults, especially among parents and teachers affect girls-child education (Abbas & Bukar, 2017; Aisha, 2016, 2017; Aisha & Yahuza, 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2015). There were also reports of the development agencies such as UNICEF and other studies that showed, the development promises cannot be fulfilled unless gender questions are taken seriously (Abbas & Bukar, 2017; Adamu, 2017; Aisha, 2016, 2017; Anderson & Hodgkin, 2015; Eger, Miller, & Scarles, 2018; Giora, 2002; Ibrahim et al., 2015; Iversen, Rosenbluth, & Soskice, 2005; Jorge, Heckman, & Ziff, 2017; Legewie & DiPrete, 2012; McLeod, 2016;

Sadker, David., Sadker, Myra., Zittleman, 2009; Safuwan, 2017). This was confirmed by many studies that showed no differences in performances between girls and boys in education programs (Bristish, 2012; Giora, 2002; Hausmann & Tyson, 2017; Jorge et al., 2017; Legewie & DiPrete, 2012; Lynch & Feeley, 2009; Trembath et al., 2016). There are even studies such as (Australian, 2017; Cameron, 2006; Sadker David et al., 2014; Jackie, 2006) on gender and education that found girls performing better in many areas than boys.

However, the enrolment in primary schools in Katsina as reported in the World Bank report by (Akunga, 2010; Legewie & DiPrete, 2012; Mohammed et al., 2013), showed that the boys are more than doubled number of the girls in Katsina state. Furthermore, the spouses' influence in the household's decision to enrol children was not suitably captured in acceptance studies. The present study with its conduct based on gender perspectives has considered this factor as subjective norms that strongly affect parents' decisions making on children enrolment in schools especially that of mothers in rural setting.

The REA-ECD acceptance by rural parents for the children in Katsina state also highlights increasing concern by governments, NGOs and other development agencies. The rural parents' acceptance through the enormous children enrolment is probably what leads to putting more efforts and resources into the rural REA-ECD program. This is because, there is a noticeable increase in the appreciating the REA-ECD program by the rural parents and general communities (Pence & Ashton, 2015). However, the REA-ECD acceptance by rural parents especially based on gender roles perspective has not been previously studied. Even though, there are several acceptance studies conducted worldwide, for example, (Aklin et al., 2018; Al-Sayyed & Abdalhaq, 2016; Bradley, 2009; Dermont et al., 2017; Dusyk et al., 2018; Hsiao & Chen, 2016; Komendantova & Battaglini, 2016; Lai, 2017; Liu, 2014; Olumide, 2016; Patric et al., 2017; Tabi & Wüstenhagen, 2017; Yuan et al., 2017). There is no study on the predictors of the REA-ECD acceptance with a focus on gender perspectives conducted. The REA-ECD acceptance study in the rural context with gender perspective was not traced from all the literature reviewed. This is one reason that prompted the current study to be conducted.

To identify useful factors (predictors) of REA-ECD program acceptance by rural parents based on the gender perspective was a strong rationale for the conduct of this study. Also, there is no available literature on REA-ECD program acceptance (Anna, 2010 Salami, et al.) in Africa, Nigeria and Katsina state in particular (Wycliff, 2014; Odiagbe, 2015) (Butler, 2004; Jeffrey, 2015; Yee & Woo, 2004). The former is due to the nature of the rural society about their response to previous education programs as their belief shows that western education, particularly for the girls, is the gateway to immorality (Aisha, 2016; Aisha & Yahuza, 2018; Ibrahim, 2014; Mohammed et al., 2013; Salami et al., 2016). Furthermore, the responsibility of educating children was solely rested in the hand of the parents (Aisha, 2016, 2017; Aisha & Yahuza, 2018; Ibrahim, Talib, Bint, Paim, & Gill, 2015). These indicate that no functional constituted laws and authorities enforced parents to educate their children. (Aisha, 2017; Aisha & Yahuza, 2018; Ibrahim, 2014; Ibrahim et al., 2015).

Therefore making the identified predictors of REA-ECD acceptance more feasible could be useful both theoretically and practically for expanding REA-ECD acceptance and other similar useful programs among other similar rural communities (Meryem, 2018). This could also complement the efforts of various agents that are investing efforts and resources in such programs (Patric et al., 2017). Hence, the low rate of acceptance on any program can lead to delay of success and or total failure of the program to reach the target (Comendantova & Battaglini, 2016; Liu, 2014; Yuan et al., 2017). Therefore, there is a need for more studies in these contexts, especially in rural areas of developing countries with their high rate in out of school children. The present study identified domains of REA-ECD acceptance that could be useful in bridging the existing research gap and increase the volume of literature in this field of study. These domains were facilitating condition, awareness, participation, motivation, hope, attitude, satisfaction, perception beliefs and subjective norms as under the REA-ECD acceptance. These were identified from the preliminary scoping study and the literature reviewed in this study. These statements led to the general research question -: what are the predictors of REA-ECD acceptance from socioeconomic backgrounds, among rural households in the Katsina state of Nigeria? To details the research enquiry, the following specific research questions were prepared.

- i. What are the socioeconomic backgrounds of the male and female respondents as predictors of REA-ECD acceptance in rural areas of Katsina state?
- ii. What are household backgrounds variables as predictors of REA-ECD among the male and female head of households in rural areas of Katsina state?
- iii. What are the levels of REA-ECD acceptance among male and female respondents in the rural area of Katsina state?
- iv. What are the predictors' variables on the likelihood of REA-ECD acceptance in the models of the study?

1.3 The objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to identify and examine the acceptance level, and predictors of REA-ECD acceptance among male and female respondents of this study. The specific objectives of the study are:

- i. To profile socio-economic backgrounds of the respondents by sex-disaggregated
- ii. To identify household backgrounds of respondents by sex of the household heads
- iii. To determine the level and association between levels of REA-ECD acceptance and sex of respondents
- iv. To examine the predictor variables on the likelihood of REA-ECD acceptance in the models of this study.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

HA1. There exist an association between REA-ECD acceptance levels and the sex of the respondents.

HA2. There exist predictor variables on the likelihood of REA-ECD acceptance among the socioeconomic background variables in respondents' backgrounds Model

HA3. There exist predictor variables on the likelihood of REA-ECD acceptance among the household's background variables in household backgrounds Model

HA4. There exist predictor variables on the likelihood of REA-ECD acceptance among the variables in male respondents' Model

HA5. There exist predictor variables on the likelihood of REA-ECD acceptance among variables in female respondents' Model.

1.5 Significance of the Study

There were concerted efforts on implementation and expansion of the REA-ECD program into rural areas by the Katsina state government, NGOs and LGAs. The efforts were involved in training and employing qualified teachers and caregivers as well as mentors and nannies. These logistics were conducted at the initial stage of the REA-ECD program. These were in the continuing process of equipping rural children with basic knowledge and skills through the Reggio Emilia approach. Therefore, there is robots need for supports and acceptance of the program by the parents as part of stakeholders. This study investigates the factors and predictors of acceptance of the REA-ECD program by parents to enrol their children. The findings from this study can serve as policy guidelines for the same and other similar programs by the state government and then extended beyond. The neighbouring states, NGOs and LGAs may find the findings of this study very useful toward similar efforts in other communities. Furthermore, the finding from this study is also helpful as a guideline for values and modules developed for the implementation of the REA-ECD program.

The research finding can be a gateway for future studies by other researchers in the related fields of studies. The current study has contributed in areas of theoretical development, expansion of works of literature in the areas of Reggio Emilia approach, gender and development, and acceptance perspectives. The research framework of this study forms a model that seeks to predict and expands the knowledge in understanding the relationship between REA-ECD acceptance and the predictors, particularly from the socio-economic background of the respondents and household's backgrounds. Many scholars have agreed that the existing theories of technology acceptance have to some extent succeeded to contribute to the

understanding of acceptance phenomena (Al-Sayyed & Abdalhaq, 2016; Alto et al., 2018; Bradley, 2009; Chuttur, 2009; Dusyk et al., 2018; Lai, 2017; Li et al., 2017; Olumide, 2016; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

However, most of the TAM models were used only to predict acceptance behaviour in technology-related products and services in an objective manner (Al-Sayyed & Abdalhaq, 2016; Hsiao & Chen, 2016; Lai, 2017; Li et al., 2017; Lim & Ting, 2012; Olumide, 2016). There are very little studies that subjectively predicted the acceptance behaviours (Dermont et al., 2017; Komendantova & Battaglini, 2016; Picatoste et al., 2018). Therefore, REA-ECD acceptance by rural folks was subjectively measured by this study among rural parents. Thus, they explain the variations in reasons for their acceptance of the program differently (Sahin, 2006).

This study contributed to filling this literature gap in the area of acceptance, through identified predictors of REA-ECD acceptance among rural parents in Katsina state, Nigeria. As mention earlier, the acceptance studies in most African countries were still scared. The main identified predictors that lead to REA-ECD acceptance by parents for their children can be further extended. Furthermore, the study highlights some gender issues among spouse on the enrolment of their children in schools, specifically in rural areas of Katsina. The findings from this study also revealed some implications of the implementing REA-ECD program in Katsina rural areas. Thus, identified predictors of REA-ECD acceptance can serve as a new paradigm shift in the acceptance field of studies. In most of the developing countries, particularly in Africa, leaders use limited resources in the educational sectors. As such REA-ECD program recommends the use of low and no-cost resources from local environments. Thus, the success of this type of program is possible with open and rich environments resources in sub-Saharan Africa, where these REA-ECD resources are abundant and needlessly wasted.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study covers six (6) local government areas (LGAs) of Katsina central zone. The villages with REA-ECD centre were identified from each selected LGA in Katsina central zone. The villages were mapped, and six (6) were selected based on the zoning and distribution. The research coverage considered the homogeneous nature of the research population (Plöger et al., 2018), as well as time frame and resources, constrains. Thus, with believing that, these randomly selected LGAs were fully representative. The main purpose of the study is to describe the population and identify the relationship between the variables based on collected data from the sampled population. The study was carried out based on sample size and representativeness observed from samples. Also, the appropriate sampling procedure was taking into consideration. The emphasis of this study was laid, on identifying the level of acceptance and factors that predict and influence the REA-ECD acceptance in the rural areas of Katsina state. The population (respondents) of the study were male and female parents of children who were directly the stakeholders

in the REA-ECD program in the selected local government areas (LGAs) (Chigona & Licker, 2008).

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The study was limited to explore and examine predictors of REA-ECD acceptance from the socioeconomic backgrounds of respondents and their households in rural areas of Katsina state. The best predictors among the three family backgrounds were identified. This study also employed multi-stage stratified random sampling techniques, due to nature and steps involved in the selection of samples. This study was not mixed-mode but quantitative focusing on the use of structured questionnaires. However, it employs NGT as a scoping study to strengthen the factors of REA-ECD acceptance. Moreover, it explored respondents as well as households' socioeconomic backgrounds. The instruments used in this study have been previously used by other researchers. Hence, adapted and re-tested through a pilot study and factor analysis to ensure its reliability and validity, as well as workability on the target population. The researcher employed male and female research assistants for cultural considerations.

1.7.1 Definitions of the Terms

To reach a common consensus of understanding, there are several important terms used in this study, these terms were conceptually and operationally defined in the context of this study. The terms operational definitions will guide readers of this research, as well as guides the researcher in the conduct of data collection, data analysis and discussing the finding. Besides, the operational definition of key terms had provided to the readers of this work, a clear picture for understanding the study. The defined key terms are as follow:-

1.7.2 Gender

Conceptual

Gender according to United Nation Security Council (2010) refers to the social attributes on opportunities of being a male and or a female as socially constructed and learned through the socialization processes in different specific context and time that are always changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued from females and males in the context of societal decision making, opportunities, responsibilities, activities, as well as access to and control over resources.

Operational

Gender in this study is defines based on United Nation Security Council (2010) definition, however, this is about rural male and female parents' decision making for

enrolling both their male and female children for REA-ECD access and opportunities.

1.7.3 Gender Analysis

Conceptual

The European Commission (2001) defines gender analysis as ‘the study of differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers among others between women and men in their assigned gender roles.

Operational

Gender analysis in this study is an analysis used to identify different socioeconomic predictors and their relationship and links with male and female rural parents that influenced them to enrol their boys and girl children in REA-ECD program centres for development.

1.7.4 Reggio Emilia Approach (REA)

Conceptual

Reggio Emilia Approach according (Rebecca, 2007) is a teaching approach used in preschool or ECD centres, in which teachers, parents and children collaborate using the cultural environment to make thinking and learning visible. This was via drawing, moulding, and stories telling, as well as mapping ideas, composing poetry and exploring creativities in play ways. In this approach, (Gandini, (2011) added that the creative elements of children increase with their interactions with open-ended materials, other children and adults like the teachers, parents and others within the environment. Reggio Emilia approach was defined by Anna, (2010) as a modern preschool approach with the goal being to educate children with critical thinking and democratic based skills, values and rules.

Operational

The Reggio Emilia approach (REA) in this study refers to the practical inclusive methods within the cultural environment of the rural area where young children (age 4-5) in REA-ECD centres and homes will acquire basic critical thinking and collaboration skills from the identification of objects to the expression of ideas as the signs of readiness to school for learning.

1.7.5 Early Child Development (ECD)

Conceptual

The early child development program is a holistic play-based approach to introducing young children to organized learning supports from within and outside the family context, aiming to support their cognitive, social and emotional and language development from infancy to school entry age (UNESCO, 2019). Early Child Development in the Nigerian context is an educational program meant for children aged 3 to 5 before school entry (FMOE, 2013).

Operational

In this study, the early child development (ECD) refers to innovative play-based learning introduced into rural areas of Katsina to help children age 3-6 acquire and develop all skills needed for learning and school readiness before school entry using the Reggio Emilia Approach.

1.7.6 Acceptance

Acceptance is defined as psychological assent of an individual to the particular situation as found in most of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) studies by various scholars (Alharbi & Drew, 2014; Bradley, 2009; Chigona & Licker, 2008; Chismar & Wiley-Patton, 2003; Lai, 2017; Legris et al., 2003; Olumide, 2016; Sun et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 2013; Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

Operational

This study defines acceptance/ acceptance level as commitment level of rural couple parents through facilitating conditions, participation, motivation, satisfaction and perception that lead them to awareness, raising hopes, good attitudes and subjective norms for enrolling their both girls and boys children in REA-ECD program centres to acquire skills and school readiness for future development.

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