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**Factors Influencing the decisions of Parents towards
Vocational education in Jos-North Local Government,
Plateau State, Nigeria**

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**A Thesis submitted to Cardiff Metropolitan University in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

Declaration

This thesis is a product of my own work and no part of it has been submitted in support for another degree to this university or other institutions of higher learning. The contents of this thesis are not the result of anything done in collaboration and the author takes responsibility of any errors herein contained.

Dedication

Dedicated to my entire support system most especially to the invisible hand, the strong force that has kept me going this far.

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It takes a village. Indeed, I had a village who all contributed to the success of this research. To Chioma Kene Offodile, Chris Mbanugo, Emmanuel Ojih, Umar Dan Sulaiman II who assisted in the questionnaire distribution, and to Tony Chukwu who contributed in the transportation of materials.

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Abstract

Vocational education enhances an individual's chances of finding gainful employment and equips individuals with knowledge and technical skills as well as behavioural competencies needed to increase the chances of gaining and remaining in employment. Despite all these qualities, vocational education has continued to witness low engagement in Plateau state, especially in Jos-North which has witnessed bursts of conflicts since 2001. With a 74.1% rate of poverty resulting in a large population of unemployed youth from poor background, Jos-North being the largest local government, records the largest percentage of unemployed youths. One of the problems identified is that parents are not enrolling their children in vocational education, evidenced by the low enrolment rate into vocational education which was less than 3% as at 2009/2010 and as at 2016/2017, out of the expected 800,000 enrolments into vocational and technical colleges, only 74,299 students were enrolled.

Guided by five objectives, this research set out to explore the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education; the factors which influence the decisions of parents more than others, parent's preferences for vocational or general education, and the circumstances under which parents would change their preference.

The research adopted the interpretivist philosophy and a mixed method approach. 400 semi-structured questionnaires were distributed using stratified and snowballing techniques. Using saturation method, 41 responses were selected for thematic content analysis and discussions. The Social Ecological Model was used as a key theoretical position to build towards the rationale and purpose of the study.

Result shows that the decisions of parents in Jos-North are influenced by several factors which includes socio-cultural, socio-economic, socio-political, and environmental factors. Results also reveal that some factors influence the decisions of parents more than others and that more parents are willing to change their decisions if some factors change.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Researchers have continued to research on and analyse the role of parents in different aspects of life, especially as it affects the education of their children. Parents have been said to play important roles in the prevention of overweight and obesity in children (Lindsay et al., 2006). The idea is that there is no aspect of life where a parent's influence is not felt. From involvement in sports and physically active activities (Digby-North, 2009), to influencing how children perceive achievements (Frome & Eccles, 1998), or how children cope with stress (Power, 2004), down to how children socialise in the society (Maccoby, 1992). Some researchers posit that a parent's socio-economic status can indirectly influence the expectations they have towards their children (Davis-Kean, 2013). Research has also argued that through cultural capital, parents have been able to influence the growth of policy initiatives especially in the area of education (Reay, 2004).

This thesis argues that parents influence the growth of vocational education through their own personal circumstances and decisions they make as a result of their circumstances, be it directly or indirectly. This thesis further argues that the primary decisions made by a parent regarding their child's schooling in vocational education, directly or indirectly affects the state of, or direction of education and growth in a society. It is not enough for the government to invest time and money into revamping the state of vocational education in the country, they also need to carry out research

into the role parents play in the growth of education. Parents should be viewed as key stakeholders when it comes to vocational education. Parents should be viewed as an important group without whose support and contribution, the decline of vocational education will continue. It is important to understand that the decisions made by parents are influenced by many factors which this research seeks to explore.

There is scarce research conducted on the factors that influence decisions made by parents especially as it affects the growth of, or lack of growth in the vocational education sector in Nigeria, particularly in Jos North local government. Various research has been carried out on the problems faced by vocational education and how to tackle such problems. Problems such as wrong policies, curriculum inadequacies, inadequate facilities, and bribery and corruption (Okoye & Arimonu, 2016; Chinyere Shirley et al., 2015) were identified as problems affecting the growth of vocational education. Recommendations have also been put forward by researchers on ways to tackle the challenges facing vocational education, some of which includes the government increasing funding in the vocational education sector to encourage greater participation, rebranding the face of vocational education and investing in teachers (Inyiagu, 2014; Ajufo, 2013; Chijioke, 2014; Ogbunaya & Udoudo 2015).

While this research agrees that the challenges and recommendations stated by previous researchers remains valid, this research adds to existing knowledge by exploring deeply into the influence of parent's decisions towards vocational

education in the growth of vocational education. This research investigates the role played by a parent's level of education, a parent's level of income, a parent's type of occupation, government policies regarding vocational education and how they influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North Local Government of Plateau state, Nigeria.

1.1 Background to the Research

In the context of this research, parental influences are those influences which directly or indirectly affects the growth of vocational education. The important task is to dig deeper behind the wide and broad tag of socio-economic and socio-cultural factors to identify specific elements and substances which shape the nature and content of growth and development in education, specifically vocational education. There is no single definition of parental influence, but as earlier stated, parental influence has mostly been studied from the angle of how it affects the child directly and not how it affects the growth of education or even government policy. Parental influence has been researched to discover its impact on children's social development (Feldman, 2015). It has also been studied to investigate the influence of parents in children developing social skills (Beauchamp & Anderson, 2010), and how it affects children's aspirations and career trajectories (Bandura et al., 2001).

Because of the gap identified in pre-existing theories, it is difficult to identify a single theory or model which addresses the questions raised in this research. Taking that into consideration, one model appears to be the best approach to answer the research questions and issues raised in this research. The Social Ecological Model has been

chosen as a worthy model for this research. The Social Ecological Model (SEM) was developed from the works of eminent researchers including Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979); McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler et al. Ecological Model of Health Behaviours (1998); and Daniel Stokols' Social Ecological Model of Health Promotion (1992, 2003).

With the understanding that both individual and social environmental factors contribute to decision making, The SEM is a useful tool for exploring the multiple factors involved (Soderlund, 2017). To carry out a comprehensive study of the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education, the SEM will be used as an organising framework to explore the determinants of parent's decisions towards vocational education. The Social Ecological Model (SEM) provides a comprehensive approach to understanding education-based choices and influences. It encourages an in-depth examination of personal attributes and environmental circumstances that affect human behaviour and decisions (Dunn, Kalich, Henning, & Fedrizzi, 2015). The Social Ecological Model assume that multiple levels of influence exist and that these level are interactive and reinforcing (Golden & Earp, 2012).

Decision making is a process of judgement which is an essential activity needed to reconstruct the world, make sense of it and adapt to it (Krueger, 2012). Decisions can be value oriented, comparative, absolute or preferential. In this research, I agree that parents go through similar processes when making decisions concerning their child's or ward's education. The decisions made by parents do not occur in a vacuum; they are most likely influenced by factors which this research intends to explore. The SEM explores five levels of influence spanning from Intrapersonal factors, interpersonal

factors, institutional factors, community factors and public policy factors. These factors can also be categorised along socio-economic, socio-cultural, and socio-political factors.

Using the SEM to explore the role of multiple factors in the decisions of parents towards vocational education, another question comes up which is, do all these factors have the same influence on the decisions of parents? if yes, under what circumstances would one factor hold more influence than another? Under what circumstances would a parent choose vocational education instead of general education and vice versa? Does the most influential factor have the power to decide or change the face of vocational education in Jos-North local government? Do parents even have any type of influence to decide the growth of vocational education? it is against this background that this research is undertaken.

1.2 Rationale behind the Research

This research developed from observations of the state of the Nigerian nation, and the immediate community, Jos-North, where **the researcher** grew up. It developed with pressing questions which has expanded over the years. Based on observations and personal experiences, this research asked broad questions such as why is unemployment rampant? Why has the crisis in Plateau state, especially in Jos North persisted? Why are the vocational schools around plateau state being shunned in favour of general education schools? Why is unemployment high among graduates of general education? a review of several literature (Okoye & Arimonu 2016; Kennedy et al. 2017; Igbiniedion & Ojeaga 2012; Chinyere Shirley et al. 2015) reveal that amongst other problems,

parents have a negative perception towards vocational education, therefore, do not engage with vocational education.

The major question, therefore, is: why are parents not engaging with vocational education? This research is important because it is a topic born out of personal experiences and observations. The research is also significant because it is aimed at filling in gaps found in the literature. The research expects that the set objectives guiding this research will contribute to finding lasting solutions to the problem of lack of engagement with vocational education, by exploring the role of parents as decision makers in the educational choices of their children, and to examine the factors which influence the decisions of parents, specifically as it concerns vocational education in Jos-North local government, Nigeria. Undertaking this study will also contribute to the professional development of the researcher as an education enthusiast, as well as the achievement of long-term career goals in the education sector. It is expected that the outcome of this research will add to the literature in vocational education.

This research believes that to better understand the rationale behind the research, it is important to tell a story explaining how personal experiences influenced this research. The story intends to reveal how interaction with different parents, revealed the strong roles played by parents and why it is important to understand the factors that drive them. It is assumed that once these factors are understood, then it can be ascertained whether viable change can be introduced or whether the situation has come to stay. The story begins in the researcher's home in Jos-North local government, in a typical middle-class Nigerian home. The third child of five children, the first female child, with two older brothers and two younger sisters. Education and growing up was almost like a textbook

which begins with being enrolled in primary school when a child comes of age, sit for the common entrance examination into secondary school, get admission into secondary school, interaction with siblings, chores and a few external visitors now and again.

As a young female child of about thirteen years old, who had just rounded up junior secondary school examinations (JSS3), it was the practice then to wait a minimum of 2-3 months for the results to be released before senior secondary school begins. To keep busy **the researcher** decided to ask permission to keep busy by learning a skill at a tailoring shop. This opportunity to work or learn a skill was denied; reasons given by the parent for refusing includes: the parent believed that sending a child out to work or learn a skill was simply a way of telling people around the neighbourhood, that the family could not fend for the children; hence, had to engage the child in skill learning so that the children can contribute to the family income. Secondly, it was also believed that allowing a girl child to go out to learn a skill or engage in any form of work especially at that age, was a way of attracting negative attention from the opposite sex.

Vocational training was thrown around the house as a threat to the male siblings whenever they performed poorly in their academics, or whenever they behaved badly. This tactic always worked as it was clear that they feared they would lose face or their reputation if they became apprentices with the carpenter or the mechanic. The outcome of that decision was that **the researcher** completed secondary education without any form of formal skill or work experience acquired. After secondary education, admission was gained into the university and life continued with academics and going back home during holidays. During a strike action embarked upon by the Association Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), which forced undergraduates to remain at home for more than

seven months, the researcher hoped to keep busy by applying for a short-term job. This was also refused by the parent who gave the similar reasons as before. The researcher ended up spending the rest of the compulsory holiday reading and waiting for yet another semester of schooling.

As a university graduate and a teacher in a secondary school, the researcher noticed that the perceptions, attitude, and opinion of parents towards vocational education still had not changed. A good example was the personal experience and encounter with a student who was well talented in the art of making/creating things with his hands. He had once designed a cardboard house with a working elevator in it. He could fix just about anything at the age of thirteen. Yet he was a student struggling to make a C grade in his tests and examination. It was a similar case with four other students who were obviously gifted and talented in different areas like dress making, hair making, cosmetology, making of exotic accessories with beads, as well as carpentry. This observation was affirmed by other class teachers who also had similar cases in their classes.

To the conventional secondary school, these students were struggling students. The researcher was sure these students would excel if transferred to an appropriate vocational school. When it was suggested to the students' parents that vocational education would be a better educational option to help build them up and stand them out in their chosen profession, the child's parent did not accept this suggestion, explaining that while she understood that her son had the talent, she did not believe that vocational education would send him to a university. She said that the certificate from a good secondary school, whether with bad results, was much better regarded than a certificate from a vocational institution, therefore, her son would have to continue to

struggle with academic education. In the researcher's opinion, the student was meant to excel in vocational education and not to struggle through academic education. Discussions with other parents within the school environment showed that majority of the parents had a negative perception towards vocational education.

From the researcher's perspective as a child, it was easy to blame parents in those days. All the researcher could see was being denied the opportunity to learn a skill or gain work experience. It was also easy to blame the parents of those kids as a teacher for denying their children the opportunity to excel in a vocational school. The question which the researcher failed to ask was whether the children wanted to be transferred to a vocational school. This perspective changed when the researcher became a parent.

Being a parent meant that reflecting on future decisions which would be made on behalf of the child was inevitable. Would the child be allowed to study a vocational course? What factors would influence a parent to choose or not choose a vocational course? There was a realisation that there were reasons which made her mother then, to deny access to skill acquisition and work experience. It was understood that there was a reason why those parents gave a negative answer to transferring their child to a vocational school. There was a realisation that these factors played very huge roles in the decisions made by parents concerning the education of their children.

More questions arise which demands attention. Do parents still have the same perceptions as the researcher's mother and those parents? have perceptions towards vocational education changed since then? If parents still have negative perceptions towards vocational education, is it enough to affect the growth of vocational education and government policies concerning vocational education? if parents belonged to a

different socio-economic or socio-cultural class, would they make a different decision concerning vocational education?

From the initial review of literature which formed the background of this research, it was established that vocational education is a topic which has been and is still being explored by researchers in different disciplines, and locations. Davis-Kean (2005), studied the influence of parents' education and income on the achievement of a child. Cianci et al. (2013), discovered that parental education was more important than parent's gender in influencing the cognitive abilities of children. Similar research by Wamala et al. (2013); Eccles, (2005); Constantin (2013); Ojeda and Flores (2008), revealed that the education and socio-economic status of parents affects school outcomes, career choices and cognitive abilities of children. What the researcher noticed is that no research explored the topic of vocational education from the perspective of parents.

A critical gap in the study of the subject of parental decisions towards vocational education, revealed that the studies which were mentioned in section 1.1 of this research identified various reasons ranging from environmental, political, socio-economical, and cultural; which influenced the decisions of parents towards vocational education, but only as it affects the outcome of the child. It has also been established that decisions made by parents because of how they perceive vocational education influences the child, but what are these factors, how do they influence the parents? No single study looked at what factors influences the perceptions of parents more than the other. No single study explored how these factors affects parents individually, based on their education, environment, level of income, and even family composition; eventually

influencing the decisions they take concerning the child's education. It is this gap that this research aims to address.

It is expected that the outcomes from this research would help to combat the problems of lack of engagement by parents with vocational education. It is expected that the outcome of this research will provide answers to the question of how to improve the poor state of education in Nigeria, especially around gross neglect of vocational education by parents, and government of the day. It is the expected that this research would make meaningful, workable, and effective contributions, and recommendations. It is expected that the outcome of this research would also help in tackling the problem of lack of employment which arises because, individuals shun vocational education for academic education that is already over-crowded and lacks the resources to accommodate every job seeker. The problem statement of this research will be discussed in detail in section 1.3 of this research

Finally, it is expected that undertaking this research, will improve credentials, and highlight strengths as a researcher. As an education enthusiast, it is expected that undertaking this study should contribute to increasing the levels of professional development, as well as contribute to the achievement of short and long term career aspirations, some of which include but not limited to, being a teacher, a consultant, and to establish and manage an educational institution which is inclusive and caters for the learning needs of every individual. The outcomes of this research will give a head start on what to look out for, how to carry out market research, who to target in advertisements, how to reach out to individuals, especially parents, and how to strategically map out the achieving of long-term goals.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Since independence, efforts have been made by different governments to promote vocational education in Nigeria, beginning with the publication of the Ashby Commission report in 1960 (Nduka 1982). Since then more efforts birthed the issuing of the first national policy on education by the federal government in 1977 to favour the development of vocational education in Nigeria since its introduction. Agents of quality assurance, namely, National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and National Universities Commission (NUC) were also set up by government to monitor efforts in achieving quality learning (Okoro 1993).

The National Council on Education (NCE) along with National Education Research and Development Council (NERDC), approved and restructured the national curriculum in 2005, aimed at achieving the objectives of: developing interest in science and technology; acquiring basic skills and knowledge in science and technology; and applying the acquired scientific knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the society. Despite all these reforms and efforts by government, vocational education has continued to witness low engagement from the society. It is obvious that for vocational education to improve, a different approach to decision and policy making needs to be adopted, hence the need for this research which explores the place of parents in decision making, influenced by the personal factors which the parents experience.

The foundation of Vocational education, in the opinion of Kennedy (2012), is based on the philosophy of self-reliance and self-employment of individuals. This means that vocational education can solve the rising level of unemployment in Nigeria through the

entrepreneurial activities of self-employed individuals who create labour. Idialu (2007), added that Vocational education also plays a vital role in the production of skilled and competent manpower for industrial, economic and social development. Despite the obvious importance of vocational education, it does not receive adequate attention and recognition in Nigeria. Maduekwe (1993), observed that Nigerians tend to regard vocational education as training meant for the poor, handicapped and less intelligent in the society. This pervasive negative attitude towards vocational education has led to low regards, low engagement, and poor remuneration for vocational occupational workers.

Enrolment into vocational and technical colleges has remained low. In the opinion of Yakubu (2014), the total enrolment figure into vocational and technical colleges as at year 2006 was less than three percent (3%). This figure is below the percentage set aside by the 3rd edition of the National Policy of Education (2013), which prescribed the following transition rates at the end of basic education: 60% for senior secondary school, 20% for technical colleges, 20% for vocational training centres, and 10% for apprenticeship schemes. The sad reality as noted by Igberadja (2014), was that, as at 2009/2010, out of the expected 800,000 enrolments into vocational and technical colleges, only 74,299 students were enrolled, made up of 63,528 males and 20,771 females. This means that vocational and technical institutions were only able to enrol barely 9.3% of their target.

The causes of this low enrolment apart from that identified by Maduekwe (1993), are the points raised by Igbiniedion and Ojeaga (2012), which include, but not limited to poor societal perceptions, discrimination against graduates of vocational education,

government lukewarm attitude, poor entry level, and lack of candidate interest. One important factor responsible for low enrolment is the point supported by Igberadja (2014), which stated that an average Nigerian parent would not want their son or daughter to engage in full time farming, plumbing, carpentry, brick/block laying, and auto-motor mechanic, due to the low societal estimation of vocational education as education for people of low intelligent quotient, education as a last resort, education for people of low economic status, and education for people who lack career awareness.

Human capital development has been recognised by Enyakit et al. (2012), as a process that produces vocational and technical education knowledge, and skills embodied in people. This means that the constant neglect of vocational education also affects the development of human capital. Lack of development of human capital leads to issues such as poverty and social instability caused by unemployed youths. According to Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa (2012), Nigeria was ranked 158th on the human development index, which is considered unacceptable. Salami (2013), also identified that there is a link between unemployment and entrepreneurship. The lack of entrepreneurship is what vocational education aims to address, but unfortunately, is being neglected and shunned.

The avowed disapproval of vocational education by parents has led some parents to force their children into schools even when they are academically unable, while others who can afford to, send their children abroad to study (Okocha, 2009). The alarming reality per Lovsin (2014), is that, the high rate of employment recorded at 13.3 percent (13.3%), by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2016), in the second quarter of 2016 (up from 12.1%) is found amongst graduates with academic qualifications. It is, therefore, suprising according to Nilsson (2014), that despite the continues failure

encountered in the line of academic education, other forms of education such as vocational education has still been relegated to the background .

The lack of attention given to parents as primary stakeholders alongside businesses, employers, industries, and policy makers in matters of enrolment, causes a problem. Reagor and Rehn (1995), opined that despite this lack of recognition, it is parents who play the important role of making decisions, on whether to enrol in a vocational course as adults or to enrol their children in a vocational course. Nobody notes that it is parents who make the educational choices for their children. Therefore, whatever the improvement made in vocational education, if the perceptions of parents towards vocational education remains negative, enrolment will remain low, unemployment will continue to be a problem and human capital will remain undeveloped. It is, therefore, important that the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education, be examined to solve the alarming problems associated with negative perceptions towards vocational education.

The many attempts by government to improve the face of vocational education, often fails, or is hardly recognised. Some of the schemes and programmes set up by government as identified by Adebisi and Oni, (2012), include: National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Youth Employment Program, Small Scale Industries and Graduate Program, Resettlement Loan Scheme, and Agricultural Sector Employment Program. Others as identified by Omofonmwan and Chukwuedu (2013), include The National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS), Entrepreneurship Creation (Small Scale Enterprise), Special Public Works Program, School-on-wheels, Youth

Employment and Vocational Skills Development Program amongst others. This proves that there are other factors which influence the success of these programs.

Plateau state was counted by the National Bureau of Statistics NBS, (2012), amongst the poorest states in Nigeria with a 74.1% rate of poverty, with a large population of unemployed youth from poor backgrounds. Since 2001, the Land of peace and tourism which had enjoyed the utmost level of peace and attracted tourism both internally and externally, burst into series of conflicts and violence. One of the reasons for this outburst as noted by Adesina (2013), is the high rate of unemployment and the lack of engagement of youth. In the opinion of Okocha (2009), parents are aware of the benefits of vocational education, yet they prefer to conform to the supposed superiority of socially prestigious professions like law, accountancy and medicine even when the child shows no interest. It is important that the factors which influence this attitude towards vocational education is clearly examined. The statement of the problem is segmented and illustrated in figure 1.1.

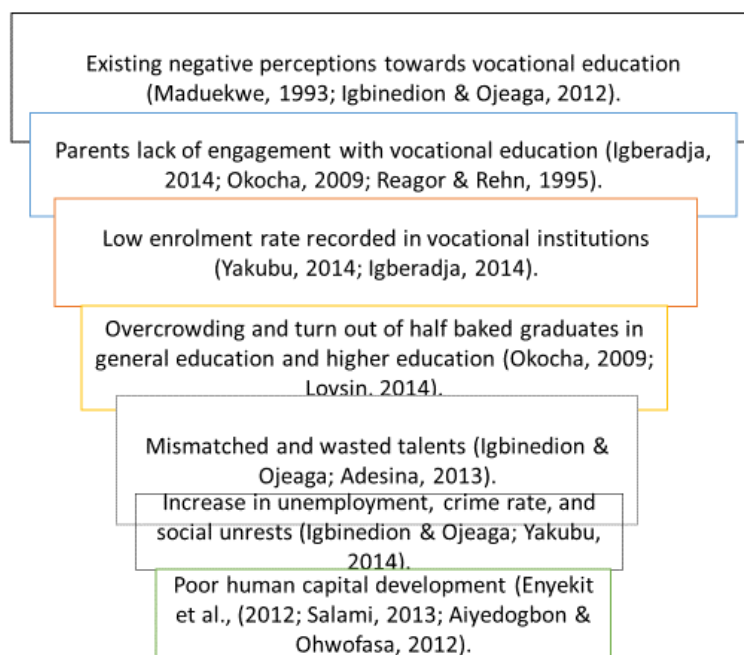


Figure 1.1: Statement of the Problem

Previous studies have focused on finding out the opinion of high school students and their parents on choices made in secondary, with emphasis on contextual factors that may help or hinder vocational (Rodríguez Menéndez et al., 2016). Others have focused on the influence of the school on student's decisions for further education (Foskett et al. 2008). Other studies explored the social and cultural effects of lack of vocational skills in a community (Lowe et al., 2020). Other studies explored the factors which influenced adult immigrants in Akeshu county of Norway to peruse vocational programme of study (Alhassan, 2018). None of these researches focused on the factors which influence the perceptions of parents towards vocational education, neither did they undertake any study in Jos-North Local government of Nigeria.

Furthermore, previous studies concentrated on how decisions are made and not how decisions are made especially as it concerns spirituality and religion (Superdock et al., 2018). Others explored which factors influence parents to accept or refuse immunisation

more than others (Chung et al., 2017). (Chiang et al. 2015)Chung et al., 2017; Chiang et al., 2015). Another research explored who was more likely to miss or reduce work between husband and wife and between married couples or singles (DeRigne & Porterfield, 2017). None of the studies mentioned examined whether there were factors which influenced decisions more than other. While some touched on factors which influenced the decision of parents, none of them focused on such level of influences regarding decisions towards vocational education. In addition, none of these studies were set in Jos-north local government, Plateau state, Nigeria.

In addition, more research explored circumstances under which students leave school earlier than expected (Kende & Szalai, 2018). Another research focused on circumstances under which parents would move cities in search of specialist healthcare (J., 2010). Again, these studies explored circumstances responsible for certain decisions, but none of them explored specific reasons why a parent will choose one option over another and most importantly, none of those research were carried out in Jos-North local government of Plateau state, Nigeria.

Again, other research noted that court decisions can cause a parent to change their decisions (Ginn et al., 2015). Changing school trends can also influence parents to change decisions from private to government or otherwise (James & Woodhead, 2014). Others explored circumstances under which parents will change childcare arrangements (Huskinson et al., 2013). These studies mentioned different circumstances why parents would change decisions previously made. None of them were specific to vocational education and none of them were specific to Jos-North local government of Plateau state, Nigeria.

Having identified the problems surrounding vocational educational, and the gaps in research, the approach adopted is to explore the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education, and through the findings, plausible solutions would be recommended to tackle the problem of low engagement with vocational education.

The problem statement and the background to the research brings to the fore front, more questions such as: 1) what are the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos North local government of Plateau state Nigeria? 2) are there factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education more than others in Jos-North local government? 3) do parents prefer vocational education to general education, if so, what are the reasons for parent's preference for a type of education? 4) would parents change their mind about their preferred choice of education? if yes, under what circumstances would parents change their mind? These research questions gave rise to the research objectives stated in section 1.4 of this research.

1.4 Research Aim/Objectives

This research aims to adequately understand why there is low engagement with vocational education in Jos-North local government of Nigeria, this study has set up one aim and five specific objectives which are presented below:

1.4.1 Research Aim

To identify and discuss the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North Local government of Nigeria.

1.4.2 Research Objectives

1. To review existing literature on the underlining factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education and the theoretical underpinnings surrounding factors that influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education.
2. To identify and discuss the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government.
3. To investigate whether some factors influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education more than others.
4. To understand parent's preferences either vocational or general education and the reasons for their preferences.
5. To determine circumstances under which parents will change their mind about their mind about their preference for either vocational or general education and reasons why they would change of mind.
6. To recommend probable solutions and contribute to theoretical research.

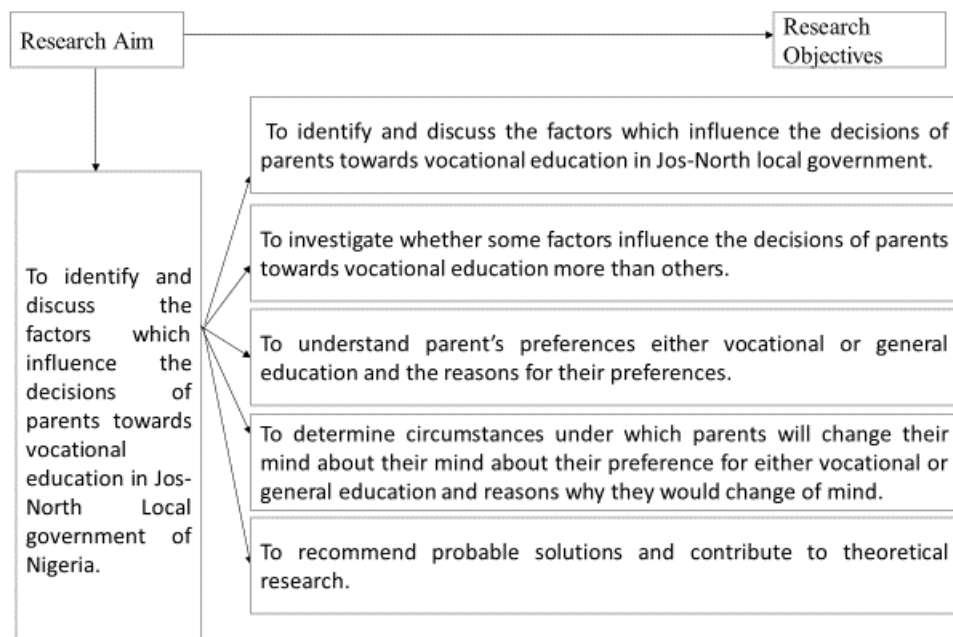


Figure 1.2: Research Aim and Objectives

1.5 Assumptions, Limitations, Scope and Delimitation

This research assumes that participants who are present and have agreed to participate willingly in this research will answer truthfully and accurately to the questions in the questionnaire based on their personal experience and to the best of their individual abilities.

There are certain aspects of this research which **the researcher** has no control over. Although much effort has been made to ensure that the research remains objective, elements of bias and perceptual misrepresentations may be experienced, since **the researcher** and participants are all humans. There may be limitations to the capability of the instrument to adequately record data.

The scope of this research involves participants within the Jos-North metropolis. Jos-North local government was stratified into academic institutions, places of worship,

places of business, and residential homes. Generalizability of the data is based on the general demographics of Jos-North.

Because it is impossible to study all the factors that affect the decisions of parents towards vocational education, the research adopted four very important socio-economic factors namely: educational level, type of occupation, income level and government policies. This is so, to critically analyse every aspect of the factors and to ensure that complete and robust work is done. Because it is also impossible to collect data from the entire population in Jos-North, the researcher has chosen three hundred and eighty-eight as the sample size, using Scott (2013) formula for the determination of sample size for an unknown population and a mix of stratified random and convenience sampling, so that the time frame for this research would be met. The research will collect data only from those who qualify as parents either by conception, adoption, or legal guardianship.

1.6 Definition and Operationalization of Terms

Parenthood/parents: Bainham (2007) cited the speech by Baroness Hale of Richmond. In her speech, she identified three ways in which a person qualifies or becomes a natural parent of a child. – by genetic, gestational and social or psychological contribution. For this research, a parent is defined as an adult who has legal rights, either through conception, adoption or financial obligation to make decisions for a child, such as choice of school. It includes married and single individuals.

Child: A child in this research is restricted to those within the age of secondary school and above, who are still under the authority of their parents.

Vocational Education: As far as this research is concerned, vocational education is any form of education that involves practical skills, tailored to meet the changing dynamics of the global work force and to give participants a place in the labour market. It is any education which can infuse practical learning, skill acquisition, expertise and the building of entrepreneurs. Vocational education will often be referred to as VE in subsequent chapters of this research.

Occupation: For this research, occupation or is any work or job engaged in by a parent from where he or she earns their daily living. It can be self-employed, private employee or public servant. Occupation will be measured through satisfaction in current job and position, satisfaction with income, expectation for child to engage in same job or not.

Educational level: The educational level of a parent is the level of formal schooling attended by a parent. It includes all training from which a certificate was obtained, and which played a decisive role in current job and expectations. Educational level will be categorized into higher, and lower level of education. Higher level of education will include every education completed with a certificate by a parent after secondary school, while lower level of education is every education acquired from secondary education and below.

Income level: money or something of equivalent value that a parent receives in exchange for providing goods or services (Kagan 2020). For this research, the income level of parents is categorised into low, middle and high earners.

Government Policy: a rule or policy aimed at guiding better decisions and achieving positive outcomes that enhance a society. Government policies state how things are to

be done and reasons why they should be done in a certain way (Hendren, 2020). In this research, government policies are centred only on policies around vocational education school aged children.

1.7 Scope and Location of Study

Plateau state is recorded as the twelfth largest state in Nigeria and is strategically located in the centre (middle belt) of the country. Plateau state is bordered by Kaduna state in the North- West of Nigeria, Bauchi state in the North East, Taraba state in the South-East, and Nasarawa state in the South West. Based on the 2006 national census, Plateau state has a population of 3.179 million people. The city of Jos, which is the capital and administrative capital of Plateau state has a population of 900.000 residents, based on 2006 national census (NBS, 2007). The city of Jos is divided into three local government areas of Jos-North, Jos East, and Jos-South. Plateau state has over forty ethno-linguistic groups, made up of predominantly farmers with similar cultural and traditional ways of life (PSG, 2014). In terms of the diversity of the population, Plateau state has attracted people from other parts of the country because of the use of English as an official language and its motto as the “land of peace and tourism”.

The population of Jos-North as recorded in the 2006 national population census, was 429,300 (NBS, 2007). This figure indicates that almost half of the people in Jos city live in Jos-North local government. The heterogeneous composition of Jos-North local government is part of what informs its choice as a case study. This is because the outcome of this research can be generalized to reflect other parts of Nigeria. The choice of Jos-North as the location of this research, also takes into consideration the time and cost involved in a research of this nature. Most importantly, the researcher is a part of

the community, and understands the dynamics and composition of the society. The researcher speaks English and Hausa, which are the two-major language of communication in the city. This will aid in making data collection a lot easier than normally obtained. Figure 1.1 shows the location of Jos-North local government.

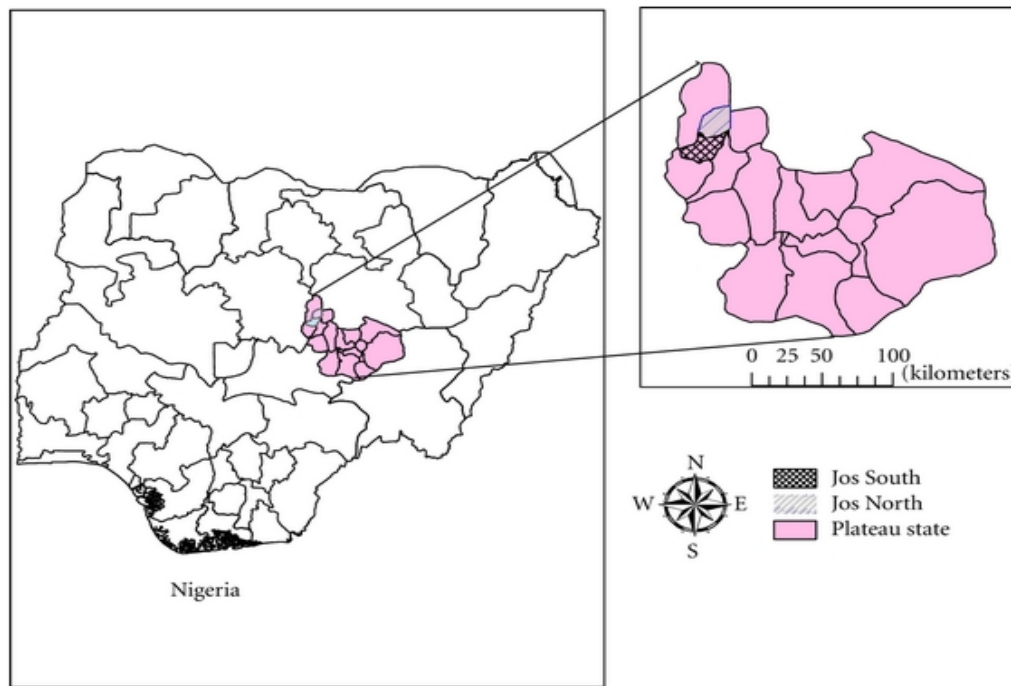


Figure 1.3: map of Nigeria Showing Location of Jos-North Local Government

Source: FRN Website

In the last decade, Jos has been known as an explosive city laden with conflicts and violence. The centre stage of this violence is usually the Jos-North local government (Ojukwu and Onifade, 2010). The incessant conflicts are said to be caused by poverty, unemployment, and manipulation by the ruling class and elites, in their quest for political power. Asemah and Asogwa (2012), added that the fear of domination by the minority group, ethnic structured systems and individual identification along ethnic lines, have further contributed in fuelling the crisis.

Various solutions have been recommended by researchers ranging from improved social capital (Ojukwu and Onifade, 2010), and a vibrant public relations practice (Asemah and Asogwa, 2012). Taking these solutions as viable solutions, this research takes into consideration the fact that many of these problems arise because youths are not properly engaged, vocational education is not being encouraged, and parents will rather have their children get educated in an academic oriented school rather than vocational schools, despite the high rate of unemployment recorded amongst graduates with academic qualifications (Lovsin, 2014). Parents have a wrong but understandable perception of vocational education, which leads to decisions and eventual actions taken by parents; Some of which affect children negatively or positively, therefore, it is important to investigate these factors as a way of solving the neglect of vocational education, through the perspective of parents. These factors also affect the development of human capital either negatively or positively. Considering the importance of vocational education to a nation, this is a very important topic to explore.

1.8 Plan and Organisation of the Study

Chapter 1: Chapter one of this research gives a general introduction of the research. Section 1.1 gives the background of the research. Section 1.2 discusses the rationale behind the research, while section 1.3 gives a vivid account of the research problem. Section 1.4 states the research questions while section 1.5 presents the research aim and objectives. Section 1.6 discusses the assumptions, limitations, scope and delimitation of the research. Section 1.7 defines and operationalizes key words used in this research.

Section 1.8 explains and describes the location of the study, and section 1.9 lays out the structure and organization of the research and concludes with summary and conclusion.

Chapter 2: This chapter explores relevant literature on the concept and philosophy, historical overview of vocational education in Nigeria, role and importance of vocational education, perceptions of vocational education, of vocational education, and concludes with a critical review of the concept of human capital development, with a critical look at importance, drivers, types, barriers and indicators. This chapter explores the literature on factors that influence vocational education, with a critical exploration of the issues of educational level and type of occupation, level of income and government policies surrounding vocational education.

Chapter 3: This chapter examines relevant theories on decision making, parental influence, vocational education and gender, and develops a conceptual framework from the different variables identified in the review of literature.

Chapter 4: This chapter of the research describes methodology adopted for this research. An inductive approach, a case study and survey strategy, and semi structured questionnaire.

Chapter 5: presentation of findings.

Chapter 6: data analysis, discussion of findings.

Chapter 7: The research concludes with contributions and recommendations from the research, contribution to knowledge and areas for further research.

1.9 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has thus far laid the foundation to the research. The background to the research was discussed based on the researcher's personal experiences and the works of researchers such as (Atkins and Flint, 2015); (Jossberger et al., 2015); and (Koski-Heikinnen et al., 2014); stating that parents view vocational education negatively. The origin of the negative perceptions towards vocational education in Nigeria was traced, and the factors causing these factors was also explored. The statement of the problem went ahead to identify problems of unemployment, lack of development and a low standard educational system, caused by over dependence on general education. Based on the background and problem statement, this chapter outlined various research objectives, questions, and hypotheses, research methodology, and theoretical frameworks. Chapter one also defined major concepts as it is used in this research and concluded with the plan and organization of the research from chapters one to seven.

Chapter Two: A Review of Literature on the Concept of Vocational Education and Factors that Influence Decision Making

2.0 Introduction

This research seeks to investigate and explore socio-economic factors such as gender, cost, educational level and type of occupation influencing the perceptions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government. Chapter two presents the concept and philosophy of vocational education as well as exploring the role of vocational education and its place in human capital development. Chapter two of this study also explore topics on the perceptions of vocational education, myths and realities surrounding vocational education, the debate about vocational education and general education and the challenges faced by vocational education.

To successfully answer the research questions raised in this study, and to achieve the aims and objectives set out for this research, it is important to give special attention to the core of this research which is to critically explore literature on the influence of gender, cost, educational level, and type of occupation on parents' perceptions of vocational education. To achieve this, each factor has been selected and treated separately so that an in-depth knowledge of various studies and knowledge can be ascertained. The approach is also meant to establish a common ground from the review of each literature. The literature review seeks to find answers to the research questions, thereby laying a foundation for the rest of the research. Because vocational education is treated as a key factor in human capital development, chapter two continues with an in-depth and critical analysis of the concept of human capital. The section will cover

the importance of human capital development, barriers to human capital, and the relationship between human capital and vocational education.

2.1 The Concept and Philosophies Surrounding Vocational Education

The meaning and place of vocational education both at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels have attracted several views, opinions and arguments over the years. One of such views is presented by Moodie (2002), who observed that the identity of vocational education is founded on four types of characteristics: teleological, epistemological, pragmatic and hierarchical; as such, no single characteristic is adequate to define vocational education across historical periods and jurisdictions. Despite this limitation, Colley et al. (2003), went ahead to define vocational education as training which emphasis is based on the acquisition of knowledge and technical skills, to foster behavioural competence in the workplace.

Vocational education is also defined based on its specificity. Such definition like that presented by Davies and Ryan (2011), who stated that vocational education is a type of education designed to prepare students for specific subjects and disciplines such as home economics, agriculture, commerce, and industry at the senior secondary or lower tertiary level. A similar definition is offered by Oni (2007), who defined vocational as, education which provides the recipient with the basic knowledge and practical skills needed for entry into the workforce; adding that it nurtures skills necessary for agriculture, industrial, commercial and economic development. The Nigerian National Policy on Education (2008), defined vocational education as the educational process which in addition to general education, involves the study of technologies and related

sciences, and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sector of economic and social life.

The definitions of vocational education lay emphasis on practical activities, which leads to a specific type of job, that acknowledges the skills and contribution of every individual (Okocha, 2009; Sakellariou, 2006). The definitions of vocational education seem to suggest that vocational education is the best thing that could happen to an individual and economy at large. However, not every researcher agrees with this idea. Higham and Farnsworth (2012), noted that despite the usefulness of vocational education, it can also be institutionalized, haphazard and unorganized. Shavit and Muller (2000), also noted that working class students, use vocational education as a social reproductive mechanism which serves as a diversion to avoid higher education and its professions. A good way to understand the concept of vocational education, is to understand the philosophies which surround the practice of vocational education.

There are various philosophies which surrounds the concept of vocational education. Philosophy, in the opinion of Hornby (2000) is defined as a system of beliefs which results from a search of knowledge about the universe and the essence of life. Philosophy presents opinions of various individuals on an issue, in this case, the opinions of individuals concerning issues surrounding vocational education and training. According to Davies and Ryan (2011), the philosophy of vocational education was laid on the foundation of self-employment and self-reliance of individuals. Kennedy (2012), added that sociological influences, and societal recognition has made vocational education a subordinate discipline to other disciplines.

2.2 Historical Overview of Vocational Education in Nigeria

2.2.0 Vocational Education in Pre-Colonial Nigeria

Vocation or vocationalism is not a new word in the history of Nigeria. Before the advent of colonial influence in the education of Nigeria, the indigenous and traditional system of education already existed, this system was prevalent in most African societies (Oni, 2006). The aim of traditional education in Nigeria was to build character and job orientation (Seyi, 2014). In the words of Owolabi (2003):

“Technical and vocational education thrived in Nigeria before the advent of western education”.

Technical and vocational education took the form of fishing, farming, weaving, handcraft, leatherwork, iron and gold smiting, knitting, and trading. Traditional education in pre-colonial Nigeria, encapsulated vocational education and training in various ethnic groups (Owolabi, 2003). Education in pre-colonial Nigeria laid emphasis on the acquisition of skills. It was organized in form of apprenticeship where children learn, grow into and subsequently take over and practice the family occupation directly from their parents, relations or master craftsmen (Olumade, 2013; Owolabi, 2006). The idea was to ensure discipline and concentration from the learner. The traditional apprenticeship system was a part of a wider educational system where members of an indigenous society or ethnic group, pass on or transmit their cultural heritage from generation to generation (Seyi, 2014).

Generational traditional professions such as priesthood, medicine, law and even military administration was not left out as a cardinal aspect of traditional vocational and technical education. Traditional agricultural practices were also developed to suit the cultivation of agricultural species which was predominant in the different ecological and geographical locations in the country. The coming of the missionaries and colonialist introduced a difference phase of vocational education in Nigeria.

2.2.1 Vocational Education in Colonial Nigeria

The British system of Education was adopted in Nigeria, but this did not work because of the cultural difference between both countries and the inability of the British system to meet the developmental needs of Nigeria. While the British culture encouraged elitism, hierarchy, and privilege, Nigeria had no such socio-cultural structure. According to Oni (2006), the Nigerian environment lacked the environmental characteristic which supported this type of influence.

During the colonial period, vocational education was not encouraged. This was because the early missionaries, built schools primarily for evangelism. Education was geared towards convert winning, training interpreters and clerks. The missionaries produced letter writers for the community; literacy was the focus of the missionaries, therefore vocational education was not initially practiced by the missionaries (Owolabi, 2003). Because the missionaries did not accord much recognition to vocational education in the beginning, those who were considered as educated people were those who read the classics.

A form of vocational training began to take shape in 1908 from the colonial government. In 1909, the Nassarawa School was opened in the North with a technical wing attached

to it where carpentry, leatherworks, weaving, black smiting and book binding were taught. Marine training school was established in 1928, the railway, post and telegraph training schools were established in 1931 (Olumade 2013). In the light of the foregoing, it can be ascertained that vocational education had a poor beginning in Nigeria. There was simply no formal recognition of vocational education by missionaries in the curriculum until 1909.

The British colonialists were initially not involved in educational provision in those days. In fact, they supported the missionaries in the institution of literacy training. The involvement of the missionaries in education brought the attention of the local people to education; this was because it offered occupational opportunities to the youths (Akpan et al, 2008). The popularity of grammar schools increased but they only offered training in fine arts, literature and language. This made the entry of science, and vocational education late into the curriculum of formal education in Nigeria. Because the missionaries were prominent in the introduction of western education into Nigeria, it was therefore not a surprise that they led the way in the introduction of vocational and technical education in Nigeria (Igbinedion & Ojeaga, 2012). The missionaries already had primary and secondary schools operating in most parts of the country especially in the southern parts, they expanded the curriculum to include vocational and technical education (Owolabi, 2003).

A memorandum was issued in 1925 on education policy in British tropical Africa. The statement called on the colonial government to take more active part in the provision of technical education which required costly equipment and more qualified staff (Owolabi, 2003). The memorandum also encouraged the colonial government to create

departments for training technicians needed for national development in post and telegraph department, public works, railways, and other industrial and commercial ventures for the development of vocational technical education in Nigeria (Odu, 2011). A ten-year development plan was established in 1946 which encouraged the expansion of technical and vocational education after the opening of Yaba higher college which offered medical, engineering and teacher training colleges. Considering this, fourteen craft centres were established in the North, nine in the East and two in Lagos. The plan was recommended to meet the increasing demands for technicians and craftsmen (Akpan et al, 2008).

The Phelps/Stokes commission brought about the re-emergence and re-engineering of vocational education, which at some point had been smothered by wrong perception and the realities of the time (Wodi and Dokubo, 2012). The initiation of vocational and technical education by the missionaries did not fit into the existing and prevailing liberal curriculum, therefore the products of such schools had little or no chance of securing white collar jobs. As a result, parents and students alike believed that in a society where upward mobility was based purely on academic achievement, vocational education was for low achievers who were prepared for blue collar careers (Seyi, 2014).

The Phelps/Stokes commission recommended a skill-oriented curriculum for the natives. The colonial government directed that the curriculum be adapted to the aptitude and occupations of the natives and at the same time, preserve the culture of the natives (Odu, 2011). The initiative failed because the colonial government did not establish industries to absorb students who graduated from the vocational and technical schools. Various commissions were established which encouraged the revamping of vocational

education until the handing over of power to a democratically elected Nigerian president and prime minister. This ushered in the post-colonial era of vocational education.

2.2.2 Vocational Education in the Post-Colonial Era

The publication of the Ashby commission in 1960 brought about the opening of universities in the North, West and East of the country. The first organised vocational and technical education programme in West Africa started in the University of Nsukka in the East. Technical and vocational colleges were referred to as either craft or technical school or trade centres, offering pre-vocational training in specific trades while commercial schools offered business and management support training (Akpan et al, 2008). According to Akpan et al (2008), The Ashby report made various recommendations:

1. Introduction of technical streams into secondary schools.
2. Three levels of technical education in the country (pre-vocational and pre-technical levels of training for secondary schools; craftsman training for technical colleges, trade centres and vocational schools and technical training for polytechnics and colleges of technology.
3. Establishment of two additional universities.
4. Integration of the college of arts, science and technology into the university.

The Nigerian government issued the first national policy on education in 1977 (Igbinedion and Ojeaga, 2012). Since then to the current policy 2004, it's been aimed at the development of vocational education and the achievement of the five goals that emphasize technological development and subsequently provide solutions to the

prevailing economic problems. Igbinedion and Ojeaga (2012) also added that some of the National policies on education (NPE) which touched on vocational education are

1. To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agriculture, industrial, commercial and economic development.
2. To give training and impart necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technician and other skilled young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology.
3. To provide trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce particularly at sub-professional levels

Agents of quality assurance were set up to help achieve these goals, such as National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and the National Universities Commission (NUC). Owolabi (2003), notes that The Nigerian Education Research and Development Council (NERDC) were mandated to re-structure the curriculum to contain objectives aimed at developing interest in science and technology, acquiring basic knowledge and skills in science and technology, and to use such knowledge acquired to meet the needs of the society (Owolabi, 2003). The federal government came up with the strategy of using the education trust fund set up by law in 1993 to fund and upgrade the quality of vocational and technical education in Nigeria.

Every move by the government indicates that vocational education is recognised as a key to national development (Odu, 2011). Vocational education is encouraged at the upper level with goals aimed at exposing students to the world of work and to develop

their interest in vocation, also to promote positive attitude towards work as a source of livelihood, power and human identity.

The development of technical and vocational education seems to have been left in the hands of the federal and state governments due to the heavy investments and resources required to run a vocational institution; this trend has continued till this day (Seyi, 2014). So far there has been tremendous expansion in technical education with more polytechnics, mono-technics and student enrolment (Odu, 2011).

Vocational education in Nigeria has seen tremendous attempts to revamp and re-position vocational and technical training programmes towards adopting relevant roles in national and human capital development.

2.3 The Importance of Vocational Education and its Role in Fostering Human Capital Development

The importance of vocational education to an individual and the society at large cannot be overemphasized. Shavit and Muller (2000); Polat et al (2010), believed that vocational education enhances a students' chances of finding gainful employment. In addition to this, Colley et al. (2003), asserted that vocational education does not only increase the chances of gaining employment, it also equips the individual with the knowledge and technical skills as well as behavioural competence needed to increase the chances of employment and remain in employment. Apart from helping in getting the job and keeping the job, vocational education helps in creating the job which, as noted by Toner (2010), is achieved through innovation (technology diffusion), production, research and development.

The philosophy of vocational education as noted by Kennedy (2012), is to enable participants to become self-reliant. On the national level, Wallenborn (2010), stated that a sound vocational education leads to the design and implementation of training programmes which promotes the achievement of socio-economic goals. Franck (2012) also added that vocational education can reduce crime, and social vices, also, to achieve political and economic independence at an international level. It is with this knowledge of the crucial role of vocational education in economic and social development that Oluwale et al (2013), observed quite sadly that Nigeria has neglected vocational education, yet those who are paid millions to build infrastructures like roads and bridges in Nigeria are graduates of vocational education from abroad.

Vocational education has received significant interest in the current decade amongst the international policy community, such that vocational education has been recognized as a key player in development (McGrath, 2012). Apart from its role in preparing student for different occupations, Hyslop (2001), added that it also plays crucial life in their social lives. Igbiniedion and Ojeaga (2012), posited that vocational education addresses the issue of poverty and added that it increases opportunities for international competitiveness. Uwamaiye and Clark (2003), stated that vocational education breeds professionalism because it exposes recipients to the specifics of a job and equips them with the skill required for the job. Apart from work experience, Ajokporise (2010), added that recipients acquire procedural knowledge needed for skill acquisition.

Vocational education has been described as the best tool to catch the attention of children. This, in the opinion of Saunders et al (2005), is because it takes advantage of their eagerness to learn, therefore, helping them to focus their talent on critical domestic

issues of development in a practical way. This is a move, Okocha (2009), describes as satisfying for children. Adults are also not left out in the benefits of vocational education; Okolocha (2009), stated that vocational education can provide rehabilitation needed to update skills for technological improvements. Lewin (1993) in Alam (2008:33), stated that vocational education allows us to kill several birds with the same stone. Mustapha and Greenan (2002), explained that this is so, because it has become a tool for addressing political, social, and economic crises in a nation.

2.3.1 The Role of Vocational Education in Human Capital Development

Vocational education has played very important roles in the national development strategies of countries. Ojimba (2012), explained that it is due to its impact on human capital development. From the analysis of Enyekit et al. (2011), The skills of a workforce are built upon the vehicle of vocational and technical education. This, in the opinion of Arthur-Mensah and Alargarja (2013), means that there is hope for a country which can produce self-reliant graduates with the required skills needed for sustainable human capital development; skills which are reliant upon the effective implementation of vocational and technical education. Wallenborn (2010), also noted that global, social, ecological and political development trends have shown the rationale for vocational education and human capital development. The rationale shows that sustainable development requires a better skilled labour force, as a pre-condition for coping with ecological issues, using appropriate technologies and proper infrastructural maintenance.

Technical and vocational education, in the opinion of Ayuba and Gatabazi (2009), plays a vital role in any country which has evolved technologically because of the vital

role of skilled manpower and the issue of sustainability. Oloruntegbe et al. (2010), identified countries like Singapore, Korea, Thailand, and Japan, who have made significant progress due to the quality of their human capital. Considering that the emergence of globalization, nations are expected to meet the international standard of doing things. It is based on this that Chich-Jens et al (2009), asserted that vocational education could open a plethora of opportunities for the human capital base of a country, and to enrich such countries. Inayat et al. (2013), added that for a country to remain relevant in the global scheme of economic development, a country must be ready to provide a level playing ground for vocational education to thrive.

For third world countries, Dike (2010) believed that a sustainable economically developed third world country cannot be achieved except human capital and technical knowledge is built and combined with social skills. Shavit and Muller (2000), noted that doing this will serve as a safety net for vocational and technical education to enhance the skills of the workforce. Governments are increasingly becoming aware of the importance of vocational and technical education to economic development; therefore, countries like Brunei have made vocational and technical education a vital part of its human capital approach to manpower development (Minnis, 2000). In Malaysia, Leong (2011), observed that the country has adopted Vocational education and training as a way of addressing the lack of highly skilled human capital workforce needed for its economic transformation. Figure 2.1 gives a summary of the roles of vocational education in human capital development.

2.4 Vocational/Technical Education versus Academic/General Education

The debate for or against vocational and general education has been ongoing especially in terms of returns on investment. Returns in general education for males, exceeds those in vocational/technical education which is said to be predominantly for females (Horowitz and Schenzler, 1999). In the opinion of Sakellariou, (2006), men with polytechnic diplomas benefit much more than women with the same qualifications. Taking an opposing view, Bennell (1996), asserted that there is no convincing evidence to show that the social rates of return (ROR) to vocational education is generally lower than that of general secondary education. Contrary to the opinion that vocational qualification is for the benefit of those who have not achieved the requirement for the general education curriculum.

The vocationally trained suffer, earning penalties relative to their academic counterparts. This, as observed by Conlon (2005), has nothing to do with the student's ability as earlier thought, but has more to do with family circumstances and government policies. The difference between academic and vocational education tends to be prominent in terms of gender. In a study of global self-esteem relating to vocational and general education, Houtte (2005), discovered that boys in vocational education had significantly low self-esteem compared to their counterparts in general education. Girls, however, showed no difference based on school type. In a similar research by Houtte et al. (2012), students in academic education were found to have higher self-esteem than their counterparts in vocational education. This is enlarged by within-school tracking and more rampant in multi-lateral schools.

It was also discovered that in terms of study involvement, students in general education were more involved in studies than their counterparts in vocational education. This disparity, as noted by Van Houtte and Steven (2009), was more obvious in multilateral schools than categorical schools in the Flemish region. In terms of individual support for either vocational or general education policies, Busemeyer et al. (2011), identified that individuals tend to support the concentration of resources on those areas closer to their own personal experiences. In terms of mobility from one type of education to the other, Malamud and Pop-Eleches (2010), discovered that it was easier for the marginal student to shift from vocational to general education, but not so easy for the average student, adding that marginal students are more likely to be affected by policy changes encouraging general over vocational education.

Due to the high-risk of return experienced in both vocational and academic education, Tuor and Backes Tellner (2010), noted that the mixed method of education seems more viable and beneficial to employees and entrepreneurs. The establishment of more American styled community colleges was also recommended by Wang and Seggie (2013), as a solution to the low sides of both vocational and academic education. Malamud and Pop-Eleches (2010), discovered that the difference in labour market returns between graduates of vocational education and graduates of general education were largely driven by selection. Table 2.3 shows a summary of arguments for and against vocational education.

Category	Vocational education	General education
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Returns for females is lower (Horowitz & Schlenzer, 1999). - Higher wages for females and lower wages for men (Sakellariou, 2006). - Higher self-esteem for females. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Returns for male is higher. - Higher wages for women with secondary and post-secondary education. - Higher self-esteem for males.
Educational level	-Earnings increases for participants with increase in level of qualification	- Participants suffer earnings penalty at every level of qualification (Conlon, 2005)

Occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gain specific skills and expertise (Conlon, 2005). - Higher wages. - Immediate and fast employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gain general knowledge and adaptive skills. - Better income. - Delayed employment.
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost is higher for private and public investors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost is higher for families and students (Malamud & Pop-Eleches, 2010)

Table 2.1: Summary of vocational versus academic education

Source: Author

Despite the many arguments for and against vocational and academic education in terms of understanding, relevance, reputation, gender, cost, returns, occupation and level of education, the general perception of vocational education is that it attracts people from low socio-economic background; 54% in Hungary and 52% in South-Korea (UNESCO,

2012). Compared to the middle- and high-class background found in the general education setting, it does not suggest that it is a general phenomenon.

2.5 Challenges Faced by Vocational Education

Four major problems have been identified by Enyekit et al. (2011), as problems which face vocational education especially regarding human capital development. They are as follows: inadequate infrastructures, inadequate time for lecturers to carry out research, learn new skills and abilities and generally upgrade themselves; lack of sponsorship from tertiary institutions for lecturers to attend seminars and conferences; and lack of reward for excellence. Ainsworth and Roscigno (2005), added that the likelihood of dropping out of high school is increased with involvement in vocational education, and it also decreases college attendance. Wallenborn (2010), also identified three constraints encountered by vocational education as: ineffective management and planning expertise, both by teachers and trainers; incoherent political framework and a lack of decentralization of management policies for formal and non-formal vocational education and training; poor performance of vocational education in terms of relevance to labour market, and quality organizational capabilities.

Research carried out by Barnett and Ryan (2005), showed that in-trainings in vocational education was of low quality due to difficulties in developing the curriculum, because of lack of opportunities for learning in the workplace, cultural incompatibilities, and inadequate delivery methodologies. Reforms and innovations no matter how small, always encounter serious problems at the stage of implementation. In Nigeria, Ajokporise (2010), observed that the neglect of vocational education has led to a lack of bricklayers, skilled technicians, painters, carpenters and auto mechanics. Vocational

education as opined by Feng and Luo, (2010), faces a lack of systematic planning, a lack of heritage in humanities in the higher colleges, weak teaching ability, and a lack of mechanism for evaluation.

The challenges faced by vocational education in Nigeria, is such that, old vocational institutions are fast changing their status into degree awarding institutions. Ajokporise (2010), stated that personnel in these institutions are not catching up with global trends and their attitude towards innovation is quite poor. Igbiniedion and Ojeaga (2012), also stated that vocational education is challenged by a general lack of understanding and poor perceptions of the scope, importance and content of vocational education, which leads to low enrolment in vocational schools. Odu (2012), explained that the philosophy of vocational education is not judiciously executed; leading to lack of societal recognition, inadequate funding and parental/children choice of general education. Also, many of the vocational schools and even polytechnics are poorly equipped and lack the deliverance of quality education.

In what is described as ‘cancerworms’ by Ajokporise (2010), corruption has been identified as the main reason why all good initiatives fail in Nigeria. The federal, states and local governments are not left out of the blame for the present situation in Nigerian vocational institutions. Ohiweri and Nwosu (2013), believed that the government only play lip service to vocational and technical education programs. They added that there was non-supervision in vocational and technical education programs as well as a lack in infrastructure. In Malaysia, Leong (2011), observed that the growth of vocational education is hampered by the perception that it does not represent careers of choice, that

it caters for only the academically handicapped and that it is saddled by a hugely fragmented delivery system.

In a study carried out by Usman and Pascal (2011), they posited that some of the challenges facing vocational education is that, it is perceived as a second-class education. They also identified that the high cost of equipment, including the provision of, and maintenance of training materials which are consumable, poses as a major problem. Ojimba (2013), observed that the condition of service for Vocational education teachers is different from those in the academics, hence it serves as a demotivating factor to those intending on coming aboard the vocational education train. In what is described as teething problems, Alavi et al. (2013), identified several challenges faced by Vocational education: such as poor funding, lack of or inadequate facilities and low staff training and retention.

Other challenges faced by vocational education as identified by Toner (2010), include: sustained budget cuts, exclusion of vocational education and training from national innovation policy, and poor advisory structure and programs. Vocational education face neglect by political office holder's/law makers, a lack of practicality of the curriculum, and an inadequacy on the part of staff, both qualitatively and quantitatively (Ojimba, 2013). The problem, as stated by Okocha (2009), is that all attempts to implement vocational programs are either only partially done or neglected; coupled with Society's apathy and parents avowed disapproval of vocational education.

The challenges are not different in Bangladesh. Alam (2008), stated that parents force their children into schools even when they are academically unable, while those who can afford it, send their children abroad. World Bank (1991), recorded that the quality

of vocational and technical education was poor and often located far from rural areas; this means that students in the villages cannot have access to them (Alam, 2008:35). Higher education is also very limited for the graduates of vocational education. Bandias et al. (2011), observed that even those who manage to get into higher education have limited opportunities for jobs, compared to their counterparts in general education discipline who can work anywhere. Williams (1999), added that top authorities respect and favour graduates of general education rather than vocational education graduates.

The social neglect of graduates of vocational education has led the bright students to lose interest in studying any form of vocational course (Sakellariou, 2006). Because the provision of practical workshop facilities require money, World Bank (1991) in Alam (2008:36) noted that practical subjects like vocational education relating to teaching, have unusually varied expensive requirements such as equipment, curriculum, resources and support systems; personnel, management requirement, which are not easily met. Bilboe (2011), also identified various weaknesses faced by vocational institutions in Kuwait; stating that Vocational institutions lack quality assurance; they lack strong links with industry and thus, are unable to tackle the shortage of skilled and semi-skilled manpower in Kuwait.

Various technical institutions have no clear mission and lack systematic curriculum assessment. Polesel (2010), discovered that the curriculum for vocational education does not meet the needs of the industry, thus, students graduate with very low standards and aptitude. Vocational education was introduced as a way of reducing the waste of talent often associated with conventional schools, but despite the growing awareness of this fact, there seems to be a lack of information linking education and working life

(Okocha, 2009). Okolocha (2013), the future is unpredictable. In view of this, Okolocha (2013), presented evidences of the constant innovative changes in education, especially in the areas of technology, skills, and competencies, which are considered as the bed rock of economics, social and political mobility and growth of nations. As such, nations ought to step up and invest in the right type of education to give them the edge.

2.6 Factors Which Influence the decisions of Parents

2.6.0 Socio-Economic Factors

2.6.0.1 Influence of Educational level

Individuals tend to support that resources be concentrated on the sectors which are closest to their level of education (Busemeyer et al., 2011). The educational level of parents transcends every aspect of our lives including decisions based on gender. In the Asian cultures, such as China, Hou and Leung (2011), discovered that a parent's educational background was found to be influential on the students' ability level, student's career aspiration and parent's career aspiration for their child. On a similar thought, Aypay (2003), discovered that parental educational level was an important predictor of educational attainment for the child, however a warning indicated that it may affect educational outcomes indirectly because parent-child discussion of school may lead the student to follow school rules instead of parents.

The influence of parents' level of education tend to differ from place to place. In the words of Dormeier and Giang (2012), parents with limited educational background allow their children decide what and where to study because they perceive that they are unable to make the right choice, added with the lack of material and immaterial capital

to assist in elaborating such choice. The freedom of choice in their opinion, is influenced by the parent's own educational background. Education and working experience had more to do with parental control on educational choice. Higher educated and more experienced parents seemed to have more control on the educational path of the children. Dormeier and Giang (2012:253), asserted that:

“Parents with a more extensive educational background tend to have higher expectations for their children's studies and express a stronger desire for them to climb the social class ladder which will eventually benefit the whole family”.

Having a parent with a certain education or occupation means that the children take interest in the field that these represent. They view their parents as role models and get exposed to their parent's occupational interest (Laftman, 2008). On a slightly similar thought, Kaupinnen (2008), discovered that higher parental education, higher socio-economic status, and high level in occupation increases the chances of a young person choosing upper secondary school. In a rather opposite view, Ali and McWhriter (2006), noted that parent support and self-efficacy were factors that moved Appalachian students to attend college, however, parental education and occupation did not predicate college attendance. What this means, per Behnke et al., (2004), is that the effects of parental educational level to a child is not only limited to academic achievement but also has long-term implication in adulthood.

The level of education of a parent is independent of other socio-economic status and family process, such as paternal occupation and negative interactions in the family, (Dubow et al., 2009). The effect of parent education in the long run is indirect. Davis-Kean (2005), discovered that parent's education affects children's educational

aspirations and their actual achievement education wise. Dubow et al. (2009), has shown that parental education is linked to the provision of a more engaging and stimulating cognitive, physical and emotional environment within the home and a more assured belief in their child's actual achievement. An important determinant of school choice is parental education. Suryadarma and Newhouse (2011), posited that children of highly educated parents tend to select general education (private), instead of general education (public). Private vocational school is a last resort which serves students from least educated parents and have the least test scores. On a specific note, research by Pappas and Kounenou (2011), revealed that there was a significant relationship between a mother's level of education and the career decision and self-efficacy of the child. Abiola (2014), posited that the socio-economic status of a parent affects the educational aspirations or vocational choices for females in secondary schools.

In some cases, parents had no influence in the choices made by children. In a study about women in Saudi Arabia, and their decisions concerning higher education, Al Yousef (2009), discovered that contrary to other research findings, few women, especially those whose parents had no previous higher education experience, mentioned their parents as a source of information for higher educational choices. Also, in a research by Garcia et al. (2014), the result revealed a significant difference in task performance between the children of parents with college degrees and children of parents without college degrees. Another research by Knobel and Lima (2014), discovered that parents' educational level had little influence on the knowledge, behaviour and preferences of children regarding noise.

Parent's educational level seems to revolve around education, career and cognitive abilities of their children, but does not influence other areas such as parenting styles. This was the case in the research by Garaigordobil (2005), where a negative correlation was found between a parents' educational level and their level of sexism. The mother's level of education was found to negatively correlate with the daughter's sexism. From a different angle, Johnston and Padez (2010), discovered that the influence of a parents' level of education was stronger than that of geographic residence. On a specific note, Von Marees and Petermann (2010), discovered that low parental education was a significant predictor of a child's bullying status. A parent's level of education could also be traced to the food and nutrition of their children as evidenced by Lehto et al. (2015), who discovered a positive correlation between parents' level of education and the fruits and vegetables intake of a child.

A parents' level of education is said to influence a child's level of intelligence. Fischer (2013), found a statistical significance in the relationship between a parents' level of education and the student's computer literacy. The intelligence of adolescents was traced to the educational level of their parents and not the income of the family. The research by Lemos et al. (2011), showed that differences in income was strongly predicted by parental education. The result of the research indicated that bright parents reach higher levels of education, allowing them secure better occupations and create higher incomes. Ojeda and Flores (2008), discovered in their research that perceived educational barriers significantly predicted the educational aspirations of Mexican American students above and beyond the influence of parents.

2.6.0.2 Influence of Parent's level of Income

A feature of most socio-economic factors is that they are mostly interconnected. A parent's level of income is connected to their level of education because it gives them access to jobs which brings better income (Lemos, Almeida et al. 2011). The income of parents tends to influence the decisions they make, including access to facilities like internet connections which may aid decision making (Katz, Gonzalez 2016). While it has been found that level of income affects decision making, it does not feature in most decisions such as decisions to vaccinate a child (Elran, Yaari et al. 2018, Bocquier, Fressard et al. 2018). Although parent's level of education is said to influence decision making and actions taken by parents, the level of income of a parent can influence decision making for a child. Sattin-Bajaj, Jennings et al. (2018) found that children from low income families tend to be on their own when making school choices.

Parent's decision extends to perceived importance of fruits and vegetable intake in the home. Children from high income families were found to prefer fruits and vegetables and had access to them at home (Bere, van Lenthe et al. 2008). When it comes to income, it is understood that there is inequality, mostly caused by education and socio-economic status of the parents (Ionuț Constantin 2013). It is evident that once a parent has been identified as a low-income earner, education of the parent and duration of the program are mere associates when it comes to enrolment decisions for the child (Okech 2011). It seems some faulty decisions are not only made by parents in low income categories, since it is found that parents who earn high incomes are more likely to take their child to the emergency department instead of the primary care physician (Burokienė, Raistenskis et al. 2017).

While it may seem that parents on high income also make decisions based on their level of income, low income families take cost saving but risky decisions, even in choosing treatment options (Katrak 2010). Along with factors like parent's involvement, attitude, educational background, level of income has a strong influence in determining the achievement of children in simple matters like English scores (Hosseinpour, Yazdani et al. 2015). When parents make decisions that are economic based, the children are affected. This is illustrated when low income and low education were found to relate to the increased presence of caries in children (Cianetti, Lombardo et al. 2017). When it comes to decision making, parents in low income neighbourhoods would only alter their school choice decision if there was new information but not if the cost remains the same (Friesen, Javdani et al. 2012). Influence of parent's income on decision making is important.

Parents have become the targets of policy efforts towards educational reforms. In the process of designing these initiatives, parents have been construed as a deficit group that lack the knowledge to make appropriate decisions, meaning that choice decisions do not always reflect the decisions of parents (Acosta, 2015). Parents involvement has been associated with positive outcomes for students. It is found that making the decision is a conscious decision made by parents aided by several factors (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Socio-economic factors including income has been found to indirectly children's academic achievement through parents belief and behaviours (Davis-Kean 2005). In a study to find out if income affects student's college decisions, it was found that low family income does not appear to restrict students who are interested from applying for

places in exclusive and expensive institutions (Toutkoushian 2002). It is left for government to take into consideration the importance of parents in policy decisions.

2.6.0.3 The Cost of Vocational Education

Recently, development agencies such as the World Bank have recommended more investment in general and basic education for developing countries such as Nigeria (Aypay, 2003). The reasons for this recent development, as opined by Mupinga and Livesay (2004), is because of the high cost of vocational education, the low rate of return to vocational education and the weak relationship between graduates of vocational education and the labour market. Hamidi (2005), added that governments of developing countries like Nigeria were advised by development agencies to reduce public expenditure on vocational education and training, and leave it to the private sector and enterprises. In the opinion of McMahon (1988), it is feared that due to the high cost of capital investment needed to sustain quality vocational education, it cannot be left to the market forces alone. Private sectors generally lack the capacity and vision to provide optimal training needed to produce a quality and skilled work force.

Tight budgets and unfulfilled demands for education and training have increased the need for better information concerning the cost of vocational education as well as its economic feasibility (Farias and Sevilla, 2015). The direct and indirect resources devoted to vocational education such as instructional materials, instructor's time, physical facilities and equipment; all constitute to the cost of vocational education. It can be difficult to effectively cost vocational education; but an alternative proffered by Shephard (1970), involves relating the output of training to the minimum cost of training while taking account of the training technology and price of the inputs. The

training cost function framework implies that vocational education becomes internally and externally more efficient when it costs less to produce a high amount of benefit. Tsang (1997), explained that the cost of vocational education is dependent on the expected benefit from investment.

Furthermore, Kau (1998), explained that the benefits of vocational education cannot be assessed except the cost is first accounted for. In other words, the economic costs of vocational education will only be understood through the economic benefits of vocational education. Patel (2012), identified that there are also societal, social and cultural costs and benefits to vocational education. Billet (2015), explained that to analyse the cost of vocational education, the benefits needs to be analysed at three levels. Firstly, is the benefit to labour productivity and profit, secondly, is benefits to the employee in the shape of higher wages and salaries and lastly is the benefits to the state in the shape of revenue and taxes, duties and low spending on welfare and social security payments. Although nothing is mentioned about the costs and benefits at the micro-economic level (Family), Kau (1998), asks the question, what costs? what benefits? And who benefits?

In their analyses of the cost of vocational education, Mupinga and Livesay (2004), compared state run four-year colleges and community colleges in the region of Indiana; they discovered that vocational education costs less per credit hour at four-year universities. The question posed by McMahon (1988), is whether the benefits of vocational education is worth the cost? The answer is conditional. Vocational education is not likely to be cost effective if there are outdated programmes, internal inefficiency, high drop-out rate, slow completion rate, and high cost of room and board. Busemeyer

et al. (2011), observed that the benefits of vocational education outweigh the cost, if vocational education complements with general education. If this balance is achieved between vocational and general education, then the benefits will outweigh the costs.

In a situation where a balance cannot be achieved due to external forces or internal deficiencies, McMahon (1988), advised that attention should be diverted to the economic benefits of general education, and while this is done, the expansion rate of vocational education should be slowed down. Still about benefits, Stern et al. (1989), discussed on the cost of vocational education from the angle of prevention of drop-out rates. Ohiwerei and Nwosu, (2013), stated that although there are costs incurred when students drop out of a vocational programme, such as additional teacher time, waste of facilities, and waste of an employer's time and resources, the main benefit is that, it increases the volume of output produced by graduates as opposed to drop-outs. Dormeier and Giang, (2012), added that it also reduces the risk of incarceration.

2.5.0 Classifying the Costs of Vocational Education

Classifying the cost of vocational education can be done in terms of the sources of finance which supports the input or functioning of such inputs (Polesel, 2010). There are no standardized systems of classifying the cost of vocational education as every country has its unique classification system (Yang, 1998). Tsang (1997) mentioned that classification of the cost of training in vocational education can be complicated because training modes vary in terms of sponsorship, length of the programme, location and content of the programme. Table 2.4 shows a breakdown of classifications of costs.

Type of Cost	Cost to whom	Cost items	Measurement method
Institutional vocational cost	Institution: (government or private).	<p>Direct costs:</p> <p>Recurrent costs: the costs of administrators, teachers, staff (personnel), cost of instructional materials, scholarship, student welfare (non-personnel).</p> <p>Capital costs: buildings, equipment, furniture, and land.</p>	<p>Accounting records, direct expenditure on input items.</p> <p>Measured by taking estimates of the years of use and discount rate choices collected from accounting records, annualised expenditures on capital inputs.</p> <p>Measured by taking estimates of</p>

	Individual (trainee or student)	<p>Direct private costs: expenditure or money spent on books, tuition, and transport.</p>	<p>the years of use and discount rate choices, collected from accounting records, annualised expenditures on capital inputs</p>
	Society	<p>Indirect Private cost: time spent in training, which serves as opportunity cost.</p> <p>Direct resources devoted by society</p>	<p>Estimates from institutional records and general survey of participating individuals.</p> <p>Earnings forgone based on information on from the individual</p>

			<p>and the labour market.</p> <p>Measured by taking estimates of institutional private costs</p>
Enterprise vocational costs	Enterprise	Off the job: operating costs, instructor's costs, cost of training materials and supplies, administrative cost.	Measured via information retrieved from enterprise's records, costs of administration

			which counts as part of departmental training.
		Capital costs: cost of setting up training programme, building, facilities and equipment, instructors.	Measured from enterprise's record, based on estimates and calculation of how long an instructor would last, cost of buildings and equipment,
	Trainee	On the job: cost of trainee wages, losses due to error, damaged done by trainees, breakdown of	discount and depreciation rate choices.
	Society	equipment, cost of	Measured based on trainees learning

		<p>paying for extra insurance.</p> <p>Training time which serves as opportunity cost.</p> <p>Costs of off-the job training, direct private cost of training by trainee, opportunity cost of trainee's time.</p>	<p>curve and information on enterprise production.</p> <p>Opportunity cost in the form of estimated forgone earnings which occurs during the period of off the job training.</p> <p>Opportunity cost during period of off-the job training estimated by forgone earnings.</p>
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Table 2.2: classification of costs in vocational education, adapted from Tsang (1997).

State funding for vocational education comes in different categories. Klein (2001), explained that they are classified into foundation grants, unit cost funding, which is further divided into funding by further technical education (FTE) student participation, funding by instructional unit, and funding by cost reimbursement. The other categories of cost for vocational education as identified by Pimpa and Suwannapirom (2008), include weighted funding, and performance funding. State foundation grants are used to ensure that all students in a state receive the minimum level of basic education services.

People from lower socio-economic background tend to choose vocational education instead of general education because they believe that obtaining a university education is more expensive in the form of higher risk of failure, and lower benefits. Besides they do not need to complete higher education to maintain a class position relative to that of their parents (Busemeyer et al., 2011). The cost of vocational education in the opinion of Tsang (1997), is determined by the size of the class, the technology used for training, salary of teachers, condition of the labour market, length of the training programme, drop out level or wastage, the extent to which training inputs are underutilized and the scale of the operation.

2.6.0.4 The Influence of Occupation

Occupations can be positive or negative, healthy or health compromising. The concept and notion of occupation should be considered as a positive and life affirming influence; and includes facets of our lives which are not commensurate with health and well-being such as anti-social behaviour, illegal activities and immorality. What matters as opined by Twinley (2013), is that the individual engaged in such occupation finds meaning and

purpose in it. The occupation of an individual plays a significant role in shaping their confidence, personality, and finance. One of such occupation which is part of a highly visible and important occupational group, is the blue-collar work. Baruch et al. (2016), observed that despite the importance ascribed to blue collar jobs, its workers have been underrepresented in careers research till date. Blue collar jobs are not only perceived from the outside in, but from blue collar workers themselves. Heigl et al. (2011), noted that blue collar workers worked mainly for their families, but did not want their children to end up in the same occupations as them.

The type of occupation engaged in, is often mixed with existing culture. One of such culture is the gender culture. Min (2015), discovered that there was a cultural discomfort in portraying women as competent professional blue-collar workers even in the advertisement of work clothing. Byrne (1983), had earlier identified the difficulties experienced by females' in male dominated occupations like mining which served as a symbol of male power in the society. It is not only gender that features in occupations, mobility into higher positions differs between white collar and blue-collar jobs; it also differs along racial lines. Wilson and Maume (2014), observed that differences in race, especially referring to whites was greater amongst those identified as working in blue collar jobs than white collar jobs. The level of stress and strain between blue- and white-collar work also differs. Michael et al. (1999), stated that blue collar workers exerted more physical activities, exhibited more mental strain than white collar workers. White collar workers on the other hand, had more stress at work and outside work than blue collar workers.

Perception of the level of work also differed amongst blue collar and white-collar workers. Findings by Harrell (1990), revealed that blue collar workers felt more at risk in their jobs than white collar workers, based on the type of equipment used. Blue collar workers constantly must prove their worth, therefore, they constantly make use of inner determination. In what is described as *sisu* by Lucas and Buzzanell (2004), miners construct a sense of pride and hierarchy around their work, aimed at establishing milestones of success for themselves and others in their group. In support of this view, Torlina (2003), added that the performance of a job depended on the level of positive experience, and that most working-class men regarded white collar work to be less desirable than blue collar work. Cowan and Bochantin (2011), observed that most research tends to focus solely on white collar work without much consideration for other types of jobs. This perhaps is why important metaphors are often missed in the description of blue-collar work.

Parental occupations tend to facilitate similar interest in future careers by their children. Such interest extends to early interest in science through motivation, modelling, encouragement, and engagement in science activities. Dabney et al. (2013), believed that such interest will be fostered when there is a strong parent-child relationship, and a positive attitude towards science by parents. Kalff et al. (2001), did not only agree that parental occupation affects decisions in education, they concluded that behavioural problem in children were tied to the low level of parental occupation and education as well as single parenthood, and low maternal age at time of delivery. Research by Wang (2013), discovered that the proportion of occupation among the parents of vocational student comprised of agricultural labourers or rural migrant workers as compared to

parents of children in regular high schools who were administrators, businessmen, technicians and officials.

A parent's career interest was related to the career interests of their young adult children. In an interesting twist by Wong et al. (2011), they discovered that there was a strong attachment between the parent's gender and the interest developed by the child on their occupation. The research by Ermisch and Francesconi (2001), revealed several evidences on the influence of parent's occupation on children; albeit, disparity was made between the impact of a mother's engagement in work and a father's time at work on children. In support of the positive effect of a parent's employment, Heinrich (2014), revealed that a parent's employment generates income which is a key factor to the promotion of the health and wellbeing of the children's prospects of productivity in the future, success in nurturing the next generation, and a quality environment. Wamoyi et al. (2015), observed that there is however a downside to the role played by the occupation of the parent on the family.

Apart from the apparent income that is generated because of having a job, Wamoyi and Wight (2014), posited that the job quality of a parent can increase or decrease the wellbeing of a child. The low quality of a parent's job tends to reduce self-esteem, reduce family income, and reduce the self-esteem of the children, leading to dissatisfaction in the job and eventual job loss. In the same vein, Julian et al. (1999), agreed that when children perceived that their parents were insecure about their jobs, they became cognitively distracted which in turn negatively affects their academic performance. Research by Kaspi-Baruch (2013), also reveals that there is a correlation between

parent's occupation and the career choices of their children, and that difficult childhood experiences affects the way some managers perceive management.

The bottom line, in the opinion of OECD (2014), is that while evidence shows a strong relationship between parent's occupation and the performance of students, the fact remains that regardless of the parents' occupation, some students in some educational system outperform children of professionals in some other countries. This shows that it is possible to provide the same high quality of education to children of factory workers that the children of lawyers and doctors receive. A slightly different angle by Fagan et al. (2005), showed that the external factors including the status of parents in blue collar jobs, low level of educational achievements by parents, and parental smoking, were related to offspring taking up smoking as adults. Through the framework of the social cognitive career theory, Dabney et al. (2013), could prove that a parent's occupation had the ability to shape the early interest in science of a physical scientist.

Parent's occupation can influence their children's occupational choices by acting as role models. Morales-Alonso et al. (2016), discovered in their research that self-employed parents acted as positive entrepreneurial influences and role models for their children's entrepreneurial intentions, while parents who work in the civil service served as negative influences for a child's entrepreneurial intentions. In a study of African-American parents, by Diamond and Gomez (2004), they discovered that middle classed parents of African-American origin were more likely to participate in selecting their children's schools, assess of such schools favourably or unfavourably, and supporting them, while working class African-American parents assessed schools less favourably and adopted reform-based orientation towards them. Albanese et al (2016), stated that

the influence of parents in general is often transmitted to the coming generations in terms of income and wealth, entrepreneurship and productivity Gouskava et al. (2010), concluded that parental influences are like investments which takes the forms of health capital, financial capital and human capital.

2.6.1 Socio-Cultural Factors

2.6.1.0 The Influence of Gender

Gender means different things to different people. Anyogu and Umobi (2015), defined gender as those visible characteristics, ranging from social roles, sex and identity, that distinguish males and females. It connotes the roles placed on both males and female by society and their acceptance of such roles. Genyi (2008), also defined gender as the categorizing of biologically born males and females into social categories beyond biological difference and attribution of feminism and masculinity of men and women. Gender is a psychological term that describes behavioural attributes ascribed to individuals based on being born as male or female (Bassow 1991). Gender reflects itself in the act of doing; thus, Emeka and Onyeka (2012), explained that when a task becomes associated with a certain gender, it automatically defines who one is and what it means to be either male or female.

Human behaviour systematically differs in terms of age, cultural background, and gender. Heidi et al. (2013), discovered that there was gender difference between males and females in risk taking, where women were found to take more features into account in their decision making than their male counterparts. A similar result was arrived at by Walker and Latosuo (2016), who found no significant difference between the personal

risk tolerance level of males and females but found that females were perceived to have lower risk tolerance. In cases of discrimination, Blodorn et al. (2012), discovered that gender influenced how individuals responded to institutional and individual forms of discrimination; where women were more likely to rule in favour of the plaintiff.

In matters of business and ethics, Heidi (2014), found a significant difference between males and females; where females showed more concern for ethical situations than men. Powell and Greenhaus (2010), posited that the difference between males and females is not necessarily about sex difference, but decisions based on the level of femininity present in both males and females. Gender differs across culture. An angle of difference between males and female is in the matter of health. Alder (2013), explained that the biological differences between males and females makes their health patterns different. Males and females also act differently when making migration choices. As stated by Hoang (2011), men sought extended networks for practical support while females sought family networks for information, practical support and protection. An important point raised by Li and Yu (2010), stated that conclusions based on gender relations especially about family relations differ in most cases. The outcome depends on the method of data collection

There are varying accounts as to whether a parents' gender influences the educational choices they make for their children. (Ahiakpor & Swaray (2015), submitted that the gender of a parent played a significant role in school enrolment decisions made for the child. UNESCO (2003), explained further by stating that such decision-making power lies in the hands of who holds the final authority, which could be the father or the mother. Yaacob et al. (2015), observed that the role of a parent transcends gender. It

encompasses protecting the child from harm and shaping the identity of the child. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1997), also observed that the influence of a parents extends to sport, where parents encourage male and female participation in different sports, regardless of the accrued benefits. Research seems to show that it is not always the gender of the parent that matters, but the gender of the child.

Parental role models are often the reason for children choosing gender atypical educational routes (Dryler, 1998). A research by Eccles et al. (1990), recorded that the gendered nature of parents perceptions had a low correlation when compared to self and task perceptions. This point of view was backed by Gil-Flores et al. (2011), when they discovered that the influence of gender also played a less significant role in the academic aspirations of school aged children as compared to educational attainment.

A similar result was arrived at by Ojeda & Flores (2008), who discovered that perceived educational barriers played a more significant role in predicting student's educational outcome than gender. Another research by Pappas & Kounenou (2011), also recorded no gender differences regarding parental influence on decision making. The information from the recorded literature seems to indicate that gender plays a low or almost insignificant role in the decisions of parents concerning educational choice and career paths. In terms of decisions, Sanz et al. (2007), found statistical differences in male and female decision-making process, due to factors of gender and age. Some research has recorded some influence of gender albeit in a different field and topic.

The gender of parents was found to correlate with parent-child relationships but was said to have minor but significance effect on children's psychological adjustment and social issues (Biblarz & Stacey 2010). In terms of consumer buying styles, males were

expected to have different buying styles than women. Bakewell & Mitchell (2006), discovered that males displayed traits of store-loyalty and low price-seeking, confused time-restrictions and store promiscuity. Research by Yang & Wu (2007), also showed that there was a gender difference in the purchasing decisions made by male and female online internet users.

The influence of the father in decision making has been very instrumental in every facet of life especially in the life of his children. The influence of a father when displayed in household labour, plays an immense role in the career decision of the daughter (Croft et al. 2014). When fathers display an egalitarian approach to household labour, their daughters showed interest in working outside and engaging in a less stereotypical occupation. The gender of a parent tends to influence the decisions made by children in different ways. It was discovered by Dryler (1998) that sons were more likely to follow in the paths of their fathers working or educated within a specific field.

In a study carried out in Uganda, it was discovered that 26.5% and 39.9% of the final decisions in the urban and rural areas respectively were taken by the fathers as opposed to the 24.7% and 16.5% of final decisions taken by the mothers in the urban and rural areas respectively (UNESCO, 2005). It is evident that the role of the father as the key decision maker and the head of the household is a key factor influencing the decision for boys and girls to enrol in certain schools, most especially, the rural areas. The absence of a father has long term effect on the child especially on the girls in their interaction with men and marital choices (Hetherington and Parke, 2003). In a research on parents who influence their children to become scientists, Sonnert (2009), recorded that fathers were more likely to be mentioned as influencers.

Fathers have also been identified as key players in the athletic experiences of the child as well as carrying out disciplinary actions (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). The role of a father especially in the life of a son is said to serve an etiological factor in relation to specific form of psychopathology throughout the male life cycle (Blos, 1984). A father's involvement was discovered to influence adolescent behavioural outcomes. Carlson (2006), however, found that the involvement of fathers did not affect sons and daughters differently. The role of a father is often influenced by many factors. Factors such as age, social background, and religion were identified by Johansson & Klinth (2008), to influence Swedish men's role as fathers; the ideology of gender equality also played a strong role in how men relate to issues.

The involvement of a father is also affected by race, gender, economic considerations, and the relationship between the father and the child's mother as well as others in the community. Reflected appraisals of others may also affect how a man perceives himself as a father (Marsiglio & Cohan 2000). Despite the identified factors which may negatively or positively influence the role and influence of a father, a fathers' involvement is said to have positive consequences for child development. Mothers experience stronger role expectations than the fathers in the day to day involvement in the child's upbringing with things like homework or signing off completed projects and checklist (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Research has also shown that female parents do not show gender preference (Ahiarkpor and Swaray (2015).

In a study carried out in Uganda, mothers were said to be responsible for only 24.7% and 16.5% of decisions in the urban and rural areas respectively as compared to the 26.5% and 39.9% decisions taken by male parents (UNESCO, 2005). This also shows

that mothers have the least authority in taking the final decisions in matters of school enrolment especially in the rural areas. A mother's school choice making constitutes an important part of cultural resistance and empowerment called mother-work. According to Cooper (2007), mothers are able to achieve this despite the inequities faced in the educational marketplace and agencies. Data collected from 326 children aged 7-13, revealed that the explicit beliefs held by mothers about domestic gender roles affected and predicted similar beliefs held by the children (Croft et al., 2014).

The influence of a mother is said to influence the choice of students in the selection of natural science and technology programmes. As indicated by Løftman (2008), in the Swedish environment, children in mother only households were found to be less likely to choose natural science/technology programmes. The influence of a mother was also determined by her level of education as revealed by Pappas & Kounenou (2011), in the research carried out on the impact of parents in the career decision making of Greek post-secondary vocational students. A slightly different result was revealed in Smith (2006), who discovered that African-American parents who were females had a higher aspiration for daughters and encouraged their daughters to consider four year college courses. It was also discovered that they showed equal level of support for the sons.

From a Latin perspective, Latino mothers were placed as experts in their children's development and education (Durand 2011). The nature of relationship between an adolescent woman and her mother was also discovered to affect the career orientation and career choice of the adolescent. According to O'Brien & Fassinger (1993), young women who showed interest in math and math related careers exhibited moderate degrees of attachment with their mothers. While the above result indicates that mothers

are responsible for their daughters sticking to traditional gender specific careers, Simpson (2003), emphasized that the mothers influenced student's choice of academic major most readily through normative and emotional channels.

Gender stereotype is an extensive and complex concept. Stereotypes are based on assumptions by a large group or a smaller group (Baucom and Epstein, 1990). Assumptions are based on perceptions, and perception is the interpretation of information by an individual based on situations and events witnessed, which is then fitted into a category that has meaning to him or her (Hoffman and Pasley, 1998:194). Gender stereotype is so deeply engrained and rooted in our cultures, language, and entire lives; it is very easy for personal and societal preconceptions from past experiences to influence the development of stereotypes (Hadjar and Aeschlimann, 2015). Gender inequality extends to beliefs in ability to perform well in mathematics. Constantinou (2008), explained that women are conditioned to accept that the males are better in mathematics than females, but a high performance in mathematics is experienced amongst women who are conditioned to belief otherwise.

Gender inequality exists in workplaces (Acker, 2006). A pay gap exists among men and women, where women are paid less than men for comparable positions in the health sector, in voice and authority (Read and Gorman, 2010), in education and mortality (Mills, 2003), and in political representation and economic activity (Karpowitz et al., 2012). Empirical studies presented by Robeyns (2003), show that it is not all a lose situation for women, as they are better off than men in some dimension. Adeyeye and Akinbami (2010), commented that gender inequality exists in all societies but are more prevalent in developing societies. There exists a gap in male-female ratio in vocational

education and the study of science subjects. This gap in the opinion of Egun and Tibi (2010), is caused by various complex and dynamic factors such as perception, belief system, existing knowledge, goals, lifestyles, needs and drive, and deep-rooted prejudice.

It is believed that females who venture into vocational careers find it difficult to get married. (Colding 2006). In Kuwait, Bilboe (2011), discovered that women faced problems when selecting courses for vocational studies because the private sector offers low wages and the public sector offers mostly posts that require academic qualifications. Female educators in vocational education perceive or experience more sexism than their male counterparts. The reason for this as stated by Kokogianis (2013), lies in the social construction of gender identity and the segmentation of the labour market into gender roles. Some of this gender constructs are also unexpressed and internalized. The place of gender and vocational education tutoring is so strong that it can affect students into choosing a course or showing more interest in a career.

Female students are more likely to show interest in mathematics if the teacher is female (Hadjar and Aeschlimann, 2015). The factors which affect vocational education in terms of gender and work as explained by Sidiropoulou et al. (2012), are rooted in common practice, persistent beliefs, control, self-direction, fatalism and socio-economic status. Colley et al. (2003), summed up the discussion in what is termed vocational culture and vocational habitus. It is implied that the cultures which surround vocational education and training can transform participants, but the deep-rooted cultures surrounding work, sensibility, morals, feelings and emotional labour are hard to transform. The argument portrayed by the various authors and research is to prove

that the society is rife with gender biases and stereotypes, which although is harder on the females, affects both sexes, nonetheless.

In the opinion of Shmuel (1994), gender stereotypes create a gender stratified society where females are relegated to the lower strata. Social constructs presume that masculine skills are far better than female skills especially at the negotiation table (Kray and Thompson, 2005). Gender inequality is traced to inequality regimes that produce a continuous process of inequality practices over time (Acker, 2006). Gender disparities often produce other forms of subordination such as ethnicity and nationality, exploitation and unnecessary struggles (Mills, 2003). Gender inequalities are created by sexist ideologies, it legitimizes the societies' status quo and makes it difficult for the society to break free of its shackles (Brandt, 2011). Poverty has been identified by Senadza, (2012); Adeyeye and Akinbami (2010), to abound where gender inequality exists.

Corruption is also a product of gender inequality especially in politics as pointed out by Agbalajobi, (2010). Gender stereotypes also affects manpower development grossly (Emeka and Onyeka, 2012). Gender inequality has fuelled social and national problems; it has retarded political empowerment and encouraged, educational backwardness, as well as low employment for women. All these factors as observed by Johnson & Markham (2004), culminate in the inability of a nation to achieve sustainable economic development. While certain benefits such as the provision of a sense of security, and the facilitation of decision making, exists in support of gender inequality, the cons far outweighs the pros (Witt, 1997). This is because opportunities are limited for both boys

and girls alike, talents are neglected or ignored, and unfairness is perpetuated in the society.

As explained by Shmuel (1994) both sexes are trapped in traditional professions which limits their choice of profession and career development. A wide range of options are thereby lost on them. Shmuel (1994), added that it creates a sense of confusion by sending out double messages which says that both sexes have a right to equal education, and equal opportunities, but the same agents of socialization expect students to adapt to their different gender-based destinies and orientations. Witt (1997), advised, it is left for society to correct such misconceptions and allow children to make choices based on the self-discovery of their abilities and capabilities. To address the issue of gender inequality several solutions have been recommended by several researchers and scholars.

Authorities can change their theoretical platform; this solution, as stated by Kofi and Markham, (2004), can be ineffective because it results in continuous discrimination of women, and widens the socio-economic gap in the country, effects of which can be quite disastrous. With the awareness of constraining factors such as culture, Para-Mallam (2010), observed that due to the configuration of power, religious bias and the inability to ensure institutionalized and legislative processes, women especially those in leadership positions are advised to take the battle into their own hands and form a united front to extract more benefit from the state. Taiye (2009), advised the government to democratize the political space to encourage more access to political power, leadership and participation.

Strategic planning in public policies such as budgeting is a good way of addressing gender inequality (Adeyeye and Akinbami, 2010). In classroom teaching, female learners need to be guaranteed the supply of learning resources, backed up by a national framework (Abdullahi, 2010). The federal government of Nigeria is advised to legislate free compulsory education from primary to junior secondary school (Genyi, 2005). Parents at the same time are advised to send their children to schools, backed up by strict legislation such as jail term for defaulters (Emeka and Onyeka, 2012). Because political, socio-economic and institutional interactions are complex, Anyogu and Umobi, (2009), noted that the promotion of women's political life at local and national level is not enough to solve corruption in gender practices, rather, an in-depth culture-based analysis is recommended for custom designed gender policies in Nigeria.

Practical policy implementation is key to gender issues said Senadza (2012). It will address between gender and spatial inequities and within gender and spatial inequalities. Sallop and Kirby (2007), advised that a general awareness on the part of employers, that ability, knowledge and experience is most important in the work place, will help employers attract, locate, hire and retain the most qualified women and ultimately gain great advantage in the global economy. Para-Mallam (2010), explained that religion plays its role in promoting gender bias, through redemptive movement hermeneutic (Interpretations) within the Christian faith and interpretation of biblical texts along sexists' lines. Dorius and Firebaugh (2010), observed that population grows at a faster rate in countries where gender inequality is rampant, therefore, they recommended population control in global studies as a way of curbing gender inequality.

Carter (2014), stated that gender is a socialization process, therefore, if males and females behave differently, it is because the family, and the society have set a standard in terms of gender identification and characteristics. Kray and Thompson (2005), added that individuals conform to the social order of gender roles to avoid negative emotions like depression and distress, which comes with being sanctioned. Updegraff et al. (2014), added that when males and females (especially adolescents) adapt to these traditional gender roles ascribed to them, it inadvertently affects their aspirations and choices of carving out and choosing career pathways for themselves. The research by Heinz et al. (2014), showed that parents placed greater value on sports for sons than daughters. This proved the point raised by Witt (1997), that parents are the strongest impact on role development for a child. A role which is passed on either overtly or covertly. This consequently affects the ability of girls to reap the benefits from sports both financially and ideologically.

Male parents are more likely to invest in the education of boys than girls because of the expectation of a significantly higher return from the investment made in boys (Ahiarkpor & Swaray, 2015). Kasente (2003), believed that fathers have the power to enhance girl's access to basic, further and specific education. In support of this point of view, Hetherington and Parke (2003), explained that boys and girls are viewed differently especially by their fathers, who teach the boys to be strong and play rather roughly with them; but treat the girls with possessive protection and less autonomy than the boys. (Pleck 2007). A father's education was found to be important as a non-traditional outcome in impacting the career choice of his daughter. Williams (1995),

added that a father's socio-economic status was also found to be related to the career choice and college attendance of daughters.

2.6.1.1 Influence of Perceptions

Perceptions are shaped by several factors which may be external or internal, such as geographical, economic, social, geographical, cultural, demographic, psychographic and behaviouristic factors (Reisinger and Turner, 2003). Various research has been done on the relationship between these variables. One major element, identified by Samovar and Porter (1991), which influences perception, is culture. They explained that culture is responsible for teaching people how to perceive, interpret, and give meaning to their various experiences; adding that culture determines which reactions or stimuli are important, based on people's responses. Velde and Cooper (2000), opined that cross-cultural variations in perceptions creates barriers in social interaction. Huyton and Ingold (1999), explained that the cultural perceptions of a people are often conditioned by their social interactions, the differences which exists amongst them is also determined by culture. This sometimes, creates problems in cross-cultural social interaction.

An understanding of cultural factors responsible for social interactions, is what Reisinger and Turner (2003), opined, as needed for the facilitation of social interaction across boundaries, including around secondary schools. In the opinion of Alavi et al. (2013), secondary schools which operate vocational training programs always have a negative image among teachers and parents, in respect to career paths in the vocational field; adding that, vocational and technical education has a low image problem amongst parents and teachers in the United States and Malaysia. Hartung et al. (2005), observed

that the mere mention of vocational education gives an automatic negative image to parents. Some perceptions of vocational education are good, especially around on-the-job-training, however, after identifying perceptions of poor quality in-training in the field of vocational education and training. Barnett and Ryan (2005), commented that the perceived benefit accrued to vocational education due to on-the- job training, was grossly overvalued when compared to general education.

There are several myths surrounding the acquisition of vocational education. In Malaysia at one time, people considered the image of vocational secondary school as a place for bad boys, blue collar and second-class people (Eyre, 2011). The situation is no different amongst Greek parents. Saiti and Mitrosoli (2005) stated that Greek parents believe that a university degree is a golden key to greater opportunities in life. In Nigeria, Odu (2011), observed that vocational education has not been recognized by society, therefore it is viewed as a subordinate discipline. Saiti and Mitrosoli (2005), observed that parental attitudes towards education and career decisions of their children does not appear in an empty socio-economic environment, they explained that such perceptions are structured by factors such as socio-economy, status, and receptive attitudes.

The perceptions towards vocational education are mostly negative. Eyre (2011), mentioned that most people believe that vocational education is for dropouts and special students. Others, believe that graduates of vocational education earn less than the academically streamed students (Alavi et al., 2013). These perceptions have made parents to encourage their children to pursue a four-year program, or more of academic courses, to guarantee them a better future. The main reason for this attitude by parents

in the opinion of Saiti and Mitrosoli (2005), is a general preference for general education which is perceived to cater for the needs of young people with higher abilities. Mushabab (2012), added that the negative perceptions towards vocational education is because: vocational education is perceived to limit opportunities for career development, and prevent children from continuing into higher education.

It is not all doom for vocational education. This is because, the perceptions towards vocational education has changed over the years. Part of the reason for this change as explained by Mushabab (2012), is because parents and school counsellors have understood the influence of decisions, they take on a students' career. Alavi et al. (2013), believed that parents have a significant impact in changing the mind of students who wish to pursue a course in vocational education. The negative perceptions towards vocational education, have changed over the years in Malaysia, but the attitude of Greek parents have not changed much. Saiti (2005), explained that, allowing their children into vocational education gave the impression that their children had low abilities.

The change in the perceptions towards vocational education also reflects in peoples' attitudes towards wages and opportunities. Alavi et al. (2013); Mushabab (2013), observed that the number of vocational graduates finding jobs upon completion of training is on the increase, and their salaries is comparable to graduates pursuing academic training. They also observed that there has been an increase in career opportunities for graduates of vocational education, more than there are, for those pursuing academic education. Meer (2007), observed that despite the serious stigmatization of vocational education as an anachronistic dead-end part for students, Jones and Williams (2011), found that even in primary education, parents and

stakeholders perceived the introduction of practical vocational training as a worthwhile venture which produced significant effect on students for knowledge, self-variables and performance.

Parents perceive that vocational education in schools is an important issue which provides opportunities for children to visit various places of work and grasp the need for a rapidly developing labour market (Alavi et al., 2013), yet, they also perceive that vocational education is not encouraging and that it has low status in terms of career parts and jobs. Odu (2011); Alavi et al. (2013), added that parents perceive that vocational education attract and train students who possess low level of discipline, break tables and chairs, skip school, smoke, play truancy and engage in various social ills. The review of literature has so far revealed that parents have both positive and negative image towards vocational education. Section 2.3.1 attempts to review existing misconceptions and realities surrounding vocational education. Table 2.1 presents a summary of the negative and positive perceptions of parents towards vocational education and the factors which influence these perceptions.

<u>Negative</u> <u>Perceptions</u>	<u>Positive</u> <u>perceptions</u>	<u>Factors</u> <u>Influencing</u> <u>Perceptions</u>
-Attracts students with	-It provides opportunities for children to understand the	-Culture

<p>low level of discipline</p> <p>-limits opportunity for career development</p> <p>-prevents children from continuing with higher education</p> <p>-For dropouts and special students</p> <p>Low wages compared to the</p>	<p>world of work and to grasp the need for a rapidly developing labor market</p>	<p>-Status</p> <p>-Socio-Economic status</p> <p>-Environment</p> <p>- level of education</p> <p>-Demography</p> <p>- recognition of the growing importance of vocational education</p>
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academically streamed students.		
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Table 2.3: negative, positive, and factors influencing parental perception towards vocational education.

Source: Researcher.

Issue	Misconception	Fact
- Academic and vocational integration	<p>- New learning theories may take over the value of integration.</p> <p>- Coordinating academic and industry skills promotes integration</p> <p>- Integration will lose ground to prep-school-to-</p>	<p>- Promotes enhanced relevance not enhanced learning. Integration promotes constructive learning.</p> <p>- Operation and assessment are done in isolation of each other.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career Options and wages - Post-Secondary school options - Solving the problem of High-risk populations 	<p>work programs (Brown, 1998).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited employment options and low wages (Mupinga and Livesay, 2004; - For non-college bounds, and no degree earned (Logan, 1964) - Aim and outcome is to reduce dropout rate (Brown, 1998; Logan, 1964). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both are not in competition. But aim at enhancing each other for the benefit of student, teachers and employer. - Qualify for any job and can earn up to 40-77,000 annually and even more. - Range of higher education courses available in Health and life sciences, business and marketing, services and other unique courses. - Improved performance not reduced dropout rate.
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	Increased employment opportunity and earnings (Brown, 1998).	Not always a success because most group lack basic academic skills.
-Eligibility	Concentrates only on skill development (Brown, 1998).	Because of range of dysfunctionality associated with group, needs more attention to motivation, personal development and social skills.
-Employability		
-Control	- For people with poor academic record. For misfits, dummies and disabled (Wonacott, 2000).	-Implies wrongly that only people with high intelligence attend college.
-Subsidization	- Employers prefer to employ people with four-	-Employers prefer good work habits, cognitive

		skills to deal with dysfunctionality in high risk populations.
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Table 2.4: Breakdown of myths and realities surrounding vocational education.

2.6.1.2 Influence of Religion

Religion is expressed in different scenarios in life. In health, death, education, social interaction, childbearing, love and even in pain. In death, the religion of the families is often expressed in their approach to the death of a loved one especially an infant (Peng, Liu et al. 2012, Geros-Willfond, Ivy et al. 2016). Religion also impacted on coronial decision making, even after death because it determines the level of invasion chosen during autopsy (Carpenter, Tait et al. 2011). Parents themselves consider religion and spirituality to be fundamental in decision making, but they apply the concepts of religion and spirituality in vague ways. This means that religion and spirituality impacts on how decisions are made rather than what decisions are made (Superdock, Barfield et al. 2018) While decision making involved both parents, it was the father who was the main person.

In matters of health such as decision to vaccinate children, parents in the orthodox protestant religion either maintained a tradition of non-vaccination, or deliberately choosing not to vaccinate. Those who chose to vaccinate expressed fear that God will be angry with them in case of any side-effects. The effect of this was the spread of

vaccine preventable diseases (Ruijs Wilhelmina, Hautvast Jeannine et al. 2012). Similar research carried out by (Mupandawana, Cross 2016), (Balogun 2018), revealed that religious values and cultural norms influenced vaccine decision making, with fathers being the main decision makers. People who identified closely with their religion tend to perceive advance medical procedures like posthumous conception to be inappropriate (Hans, Dooley 2013). Religion plays important roles to the extent of choosing life-saving treatment such as hematopoietic stem cell transplant (Haude, Mccarthy Veach et al. 2017).

In cases where religion is given as a reason for objecting to vaccination, health care professionals tend to provide medical information, discuss the decision-making process, or they adopt an authoritarian stance (Ruijs, La Hautvast et al. 2012). Policy makers may want to adopt any of these styles in decision making. Religion was mentioned as a strong asset in adolescent's non-smoking habits (Atkins, Oman et al. 2002). Still on habit, religion is said to influence the habit of individuals towards self-employment or deciding not to (Audretsch, David B., Bönnte et al. 2013). Religions like Islam are said to be more favourable towards self-employment than religions like Hindu. Religion has strong impact on the theory and study of management, leadership and its practices (Broom, Service 2014). Religions influences organisational behaviour and economic growth such that it has been found that countries with higher levels of religiosity exhibit lower investment and less growth because of lower degrees of risk exposure measured by variances in equity returns or returns in asset (Hilary & Hui 2009).

The decision-making processes of top-business executives have been found to be influenced by their religious backgrounds. It is compared to a tug of war as executives

negotiate and rationalise unethical circumstances (Chan, Ananthram 2017). To support Broom (2009), (Audretsch, David, Bönte et al. 2007), also found that religion influences the decisions of people to become entrepreneurs, stating that religions such as Islam and Christianity support entrepreneurship, while others such as Hindu inhibit entrepreneurship. Religion is referred to as a variable which is unique to the individual decision maker (Ford & Richardson 2013). This means that to a large extent, the individual has control over religion-based decisions. People will most likely make decisions which may not be the best, but because of religious rituals and perceived threat to the group (Sheikh et al., 2012).

2.6.1.3 Influence of number of Children

Impact factors such as income, education and infrastructure are constantly examined, the role of family structures is often ignored (Hou et al., 2019). Children tend to influence the purchasing decisions of their parents which is dependent on the profession, income, education and whether the parents are single parents or living together (Kumar, 2013). Adolescents from dual-income homes are said to influence and be more involved in decisions for travel destinations for vacation more than single-income homes (Ashraf & Khan, 2016). Along with income, the influence of the number of children in the family often influence the propensity for post-secondary education, which further affects the total number of children at school (Anon, 2001). In Kenya, women in high positions than their husbands were found to have less children because of their option to adopt family planning methods (Gwako, 1997). The decision for wives in high positions to have less children is linked to career and income.

The number of children was also found to influence the decision of women to have induced illegal abortion alongside education level, family income, religion, age at marriage and ethnicity. The reasons for these decisions was to reduce family economic problems and also to stop or postpone childbearing (Ranji, 2012). In Semarang, family size along with education level, and husband's income level was found to influence the decisions of married women to work (Majid & Handayani, 2012). In the analysis of factors affecting household decisions of paddy farmers, number of family members and number of school children was found to influence decisions alongside allocation of work time, income, expenses and wages, input and output prices, age, education and family labour force (Panjaitan et al., 2018). In Vietnam, the number of children present in a family alongside price, income, education, and age was found to significantly affect consumer decisions to use safe vegetables (Hoang & Nakayasu, 2006).

The number of children have been found to affect how affluent couples are; with children couples being more affluent than single or multi-child couples (Li et al., 2020). Household size, age and sex of oldest child, mother's age, education, income, sex role orientation, employment status, number of years since mother's separation, divorce or widowhood were found to be characteristics of interest in influence of children in decision making in female headed single parent homes (Ahuja & Stinson, 1993). Contrary to Gwako (1997) research by Priyono (2014) found that the number of children and income did not influence the decisions to have small family units in Sumberejo and Ngalas, rather education was the influencing factor. Although it was not specific on the influence of children, socio-economic variables of family income, female wage, female employment and education were found to influence the demand for children in Malaysia

(Kamaruddin, 2017). This further points to the multi-level analysis of factors which influence decisions.

2.6.1.4 Influence of Age

Plenty of research has been carried out to investigate the effect of age on decision making. Hafer, J. (2015) discovered that older adults were more sensitive to loss and that age affected sensitivity to potential loss and gain amounts. (Lee, Hess 2016), also discovered that while cognitive demands influenced the extent to which all individuals took shortcuts in decision making, but older adults made shortcuts in decision making based on self-relevance. Age has also been discovered to influence how people make decisions regarding treatment for serious medical conditions; choosing aggressive treatment options for older patients than for themselves or younger patients (Zikmund-Fisher, Lacey et al. 2008). Age and decision making are important in education and eyewitness testimonies. Older adults were found to be more vulnerable to false memory, this means that the older an adult is, the less likely they are to remember the reason for the decision they take about their child's education (Kumar, Gupta 2017).

Decision making is associated with choice and with choice, comes the use of cognitive functions. Healthy elders between 65 and 90 showed inconsistency in their decision making as well as in choice rationality. On the other hand, both elders and adolescents were more risk averse than individuals in midlife (Tymula, Belmaker et al. 2013). In search strategies especially in education, older adults played it safe by using simpler strategies with minimal self-implications (Hess, Queen et al. 2013). Aging is a developmental phase where individuals navigate through changing social milieu where they must consider how their decisions affect others. Age was found not to influence

decision making especially if it came to making decisions to benefit a parent at the expense of a friend (Guassi Moreira, Tashjian et al. 2018).

Decision making tends to be equated with age. It is assumed that the older an individual gets, the less risky decisions they make. Adolescents have also been marked as a group most likely to take risky decisions. New studies into factors that predict adolescent decision making reveal that youths are experiencing more cognitive development and are more inclined towards risky decision making and behaviour (Albert & Steinberg, 2011). Taking risky decisions decreases with age. People who take risky decisions do so because they are interested in the benefits and not the cost. They tend to take riskier decision under peer influence than when alone. Gardner & Steinberg (2005), agreed that adolescents and youths were more inclined to take risky decisions than adults. Recent studies of brain development reveals that adolescents are relatively more approach related when responding to positive feedback and less avoidant in response to negative feedback (Cauffman et al., 2010).

When it comes to age and decision making, the age of an individual has been identified as a variable which is unique to the individual decision maker, along with sex, religion, education, employment, and personality. Other types of decisions are situational based on rewards and sanctions, codes of conduct, organisational effects, industry and business competitiveness (Ford & Richardson, 2013). In making optimal decisions such as choice of health insurance, and retirement saving plans, older people made choices which were less than the highest standard of quality when faced with more choices or options (Besedeş et al., 2012). Research also revealed that individuals themselves

identified their age and gender as factors which influenced their decision making processes (Sanz et al., 2007).

Decisions regarding education are investments. Investments skills seems to deteriorate with age due to the adverse effect of cognitive aging. Older investors also exhibit bad investment skills especially if they are less educated, earn lower income and belong to minority ethnic or racial groups (Korniotis & Kumar, 2011). The age of a parent has been identified to influence the intelligence, health outcome, and longevity of a child. The age of a parent can also affect the dominant characters, sex ratios, personality and development process of an offspring (Liu et al. 2011; Fisch et al. 2003; Priest et al. 2002). Age differences in the expression of sensitivity to reward value and risky decision making may depend on pubertal and motivational state (Westbrook, Hankosky et al. 2018).

2.6.2 Socio-Political Factors

2.6.2.0 The Influence of Government Policies

Governance involves coordinating relationships among a wide range of participants. Governance focuses attention on how the electorates and the elected perceive their roles and chart a direction towards achieving outcomes. Governance encompasses the mechanisms of economic, social and political relationships (Smith 2017). In any civil society, governance is mainly seen as a realm within which people can work collectively towards achieving a common interest (Van, Barrett 2006, Brunner 2005). This will connote that government need the electorates to make decisions that will be sustainable. Many government policies have been incorrectly adopted under decentralisation,

however, approach to decision making needs to take into control, factors of length, breadth, range and control (Edwards 2010).

Governance tends to reflect what the society is about. The type of governance can determine the way homes are run, for example representation of women in decision making (Marija, Čičkarić Lilijana 2010). The strength of government has been found to have a marginal effect on decision making (Cohen, Holder-Webb et al. 2017). Since education is seen as an investment, it means that it also affects parental decision when parents venture into educational investments for their children. The key to good governance is citizen participation in decision making processes. It may be costly and ineffective, but with a more informed approach to guide policy makers, communities needs will be met (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). When government explore variables such as history of conflict or cooperation, incentive for stakeholders to participate, and dialogue breeds a virtuous cycle of collaboration (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

When it comes to government and decision making, it is understandable that the scope of control is wider, but government may need to copy the big data (Janssen et al. 2017) techniques used by big companies (Janssen et al. 2017). Government can also take cues from decision making styles used by organisations where decisions are made by groups, teams or committees; giving them the advantage of more knowledge and expertise to solve problems (O'Leary, 2012). Transition management has been used by countries like Netherlands to solve persistent problems like the lack of growth in the vocational sector experienced in Nigeria (Loorbach 2010). The aim is to promote sustainable development. Even in family firms, there are different levels of decision making, both

on a formal and social level (Mustakallio et al., 2002). This is an example which governments need to put into consideration in decision making.

The role of parents in decision making has been established, therefore, it is right to include them as stakeholders in governance because of their voice in operational, managerial and strategic issues (Spitzeck & Hansen 2010). When the environmental preferences of actors are put into consideration, the outputs or outcomes become positive (Newig & Fritsch, 2009). This again reiterates the fact that for government to change the face of education in Nigeria, they need to consider the environmental situations of other decision makers in their own field. The influence of government policies on family focused decisions reach as far as how families interact with each other in mental illness (Grant, Reupert 2016). Government have always promoted the involvement of parents in their children's schooling by enacting statutory rights, however, parents social class location continues to impact on their ability to impact in their child's schooling (Crozier 1997).

The influence of government on parent's decision making requires changes in government policies in the workplace (Stipek, McCroskey 1989). This will put parents under less pressure to make financial decisions which may affect the education of their children. Positive influence such as family support initiatives including job protection, child care support and good pay, influence parents financially to make better decisions regarding their children (Ng, Julià et al. 2017). The influence goes both ways. Government policies tend to influence parent's attitudes towards government because it shapes their political orientation (Lavery 2017). The accountability of government policies influence parents' attitudes and participation in government and involvement

in their child's schooling (Rhodes 2015). Governance influence the decisions and actions parents take in every aspect of their lives including schooling for their children.

Government policies influence the labour market, which in turn influences how employers employ workers in workplaces. This is the reason why a universal tool for cooperation between vocational institutions and enterprises is encouraged. (Terentyeva et al., 2018). In a place like Netherlands where academic education and higher professional education EQF level 5-8 coexist alongside secondary vocational education at EQF level 1-4, it creates a gap between higher professional education and secondary vocational education where professional education graduates are prepared for international labour market while employability pressure is put on lower skilled employees, thereby creating unequal employability opportunities for vocational education graduates (Van Houten, 2018). Similar research by Kintu (2019) also reveal that despite the role of vocational education to equip young people with skills for the world of work, graduates of vocational education in Uganda still experience difficulty in their transition to the world of work implying major labour market entry problems.

The Importance Performance Analysis has been used by researchers to measure the priority areas in developing employability of graduates in vocational education institutions in Latvia from the perspective of employers (Līce, 2018). Employers consider emotional intelligence such as the ability to work, solve problems and be motivated in their recruitment process. These skills such as work placements and international events are only represented in supplement educational programmes in vocational education rather than the core curriculum (Līce & Sloka, 2019) Educational policies where all involved stakeholders are considered appear to be more grounded on

a wide consensus because companies, union representatives, administrators of education and labour, political parties and employers are involved. This is the situation in Spain where employers have great decision making power in terms of defining vocational qualification (Martínez-Morales & Marhuenda-Fluixá 2020).

Contacts between contacts and employers are substantial; this is where government policies come in to facilitate such contacts (Bruin et al., 2019). The importance of history cannot be over emphasized. This was used in West Germany especially as it pertains to human capital theory and the life-course perspective used to investigate how economic modernisation and development in the labour market impacted employers supply of further education and training on the job (Becker, 2019). Government policies have also been implicated in university-labour market links and skill mismatches which impact both the student and the labour market (Chavan & Carter, 2018). Government policies influence the labour market, and the ability of the labour market to integrate recent graduates is further influenced by the economic situation of the country, the quality of their university education and the demands of the labour market (Pineda-Herrero et al., 2018).

In comparing the vocational education system in Nigeria and Malaysia, Mohammad & Ismail, (2019), found that while vocational education curriculum of Malaysia was equipped with employability skills, core skills, generic skills, and personal attributes which contributes to their human development, the Nigerian vocational education curriculum has not been integrated with employability skills which is the reason why parents will rather engage with general education than vocational education in Nigeria. Government expenditure on education and unemployment rate have significant effects

on the prevalence of poverty in Nigeria, meaning that government should invest more in education and integrate vocational training programmes as part of academic curriculums in schools at all levels (Babasanya et al., 2018). The abandonment of vocational education by government which can offer skills to youths (TamBari, 2019), is the reason for the high unemployment rate.

Governments in Nigeria have been accused of placing too much emphasis on liberal education devoid of vocational entrepreneurship education. Despite policies regarding funding of businesses and providing enabling infrastructure, implementation of those policies is always crippled by corruption (Onifade, 2010). Several attempts to alleviate poverty has failed because the government have failed to inculcate socio-economic policies where educational policies are given priority (Justine, 2012). There is a need for government to work with the organised private sector to improve the face of vocational and training programs (Ebiringa, 2012). In Nigeria, successive regimes and administrations have used education as a political tool in their manifestoes leading to inconsistencies in education policies and programmes (Adedayo, 2015). These inconsistencies in government policies is enough to discourage parents further.

Section 2.2.2 of this research outlined the many attempts by subsequent regimes and administration in Nigeria to improve the face of vocational education, but none of these policies and programs have been successful as observed in the state of vocational education in Nigeria at present.

2.6.3 Are Socio-Economic Factors more influential?

The review of socio economic and socio-cultural factors reveal that these factors operate on a multi-level basis where factors are dependent of each other. However, it is important to explore further to find out if there are circumstances under which one factor is found to be more influential in decision making or events happening in the environment.

In a study of human-carnivore conflict in South Africa, it was found that the conflict in the North West province was driven more by social and environmental factors than economic factors (economic losses). In this case, cultural group was by far more influential in carnivore persecution (Thorn et al., 2012). In assessing perceptions of outdoor thermal environment, Shooshtarian (2015), stated that investigators and decision makers have failed to understand the inter-relationship between cultural, climatic, geographical and socio-economic concepts; but strongly believed that socio-economic elements can take decisive role in the perception of outdoor thermal environments. In a study of mental health, cultural integration was associated with better mental health among Black Caribbean, black African Male students and female Indian students before demographic, ethnic group, parenting style, perceived racism and socio-economic status (Bhui et al., 2012).

Perceptions of factors that influence or which factors influence more differs among groups. some groups may rate certain factors as less influential while same factors will be rated more influential to others (Wyatt et al., 1983). In a study of obesity among adult Tunisian women, socio-economic factors were found to be more influential because obesity was more prevalent among the wealthy than the poor (Beltaïfa et al.,

2009). Other opinions reveal that the influencing factors depend on what is being analysed, however, in Tabriz, the most proper dimension is socio-cultural because it takes into account beliefs, family structure, ideology, religion, ethnicity, attachment sense, cultural capital and social capital (Farzad Behtash et al., 2013). Research by (Abdul-Aziz, 2003), supports the opinion that factors work interdependently to influence where economic model, socio-cultural traits, institution, mix of construction demand and changes in political landscape all act as inhibitors to construction entrepreneurship.

The strength of influencing factors is also determined by differences in destination (environment), differences in community and differences in household level (Mannan, 2017). In a comparison of Chinese and Korean consumers, when convenience dimension was considered, differences in socio-economic background were more important in Chinese consumers than in cultural background (Anon, 2009). Among the Baduy people of Indonesia, the preservation of the forest has everything to do with cultural factors which is deeply rooted in spiritual values (Hakim, 2006). In a study of citizens attitude to re-establish permanent water flow, parenthood and perception of received benefits from the river (cultural factors) were the most significant factors (Hernandez Morlan, 2007). In a study of thinness among preschool children Arambagh, West Bengal, India, it was found that parity (socio-economic factor) was more influential than the gender of the child (socio-cultural factor), making it further clear that the more influential factor depends on what is being studied (Mandal & Bose, 2012).

2.6.4 Circumstances Under Which Individuals Make Decisions.

Different factors are considered when making decisions, especially as it pertains school choice decisions for parents. decision making is not left only for parents. it cuts across different age groups, status and circumstances. It also cuts across different subjects ranging from education, food, buying, selling, family relationships, human health, animal health architecture, building, construction, research and politics.

Amongst young adults making choices for a university to study, future job prospects ranked high followed by teaching quality, staff expertise, and course content with parents being the most influential information source (Le et al., 2020). In a study of the market value of football players, sports value was found to be the most influential factor followed by personal skills (Poza, 2020). In another study where elementary school teacher's preferences for interventions for students with emotional and behavioural problems, intervention outcomes were the most important (Egan et al., 2019). In Penang, Malaysia, concerning matters of health, Dawood et al., (2017) found that consulting a physician for health problems was more important to participants than self-medication.

Safety and security conditions constituted the most important choice factor among student's decisions to choose private higher institutions (Bezuidenhout et al., 2016). Family relationships, connections, values are the most integral factors needed towards achieving indigenous health goals in New Zealand (Masters-Awatere et al., 2019). For people living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), engagement in specific activities like walking, household maintenance and driving was most important to them (Williams et al., 2007). For services to people living with autism, what was

found to be most important to them is being involved in determining how services which support them should be shaped and delivered (Povey, 2015).

When it comes to food, the sensory properties in food is more important to people because it determines the desire to eat or dismiss the food as state, unappetizing or inappropriate from a cultural point of view (Chambers, 2019). The factors important to lung cancer screening decisions for patients varied by patient characteristics (Lillie et al., 2017). In construction, safety and incident risk, acoustic and visual comfort are the most important factors to consider (Sanmi & Ayodeji, 2019). Again, no single factor plays more important role in decision making, rather a combination of factors leads to decision making made by individuals. Even in research, one of the most important factors to researchers is the choice of an appropriate study size (Cui et al., 2007). (Baladrón et al., 2018). In marine studies also, one of the most important factors to consider when assessing the impact of a predator on the ecosystem is the metabolic rate which is dependent on several environmental factors such as temperature (Whitney et al., 2016). When all these examples are compared with circumstances under which parents will choose vocational education, one can assume that several factors matter.

In food choice surveys, it was found that colour, overall freshness and price were the most important factors for consumers (Altintzoglou et al., 2018). Different factors were found to matter for individuals who chose to engage with Sequential Bilateral Cataract Surgery, chose not to engage or chose to stop (Mills et al., 2019). Law enforcement are said to make decisions in stressful circumstances, with costs being associated with errors being high and sometimes fatal (Fridman et al., 2019). Most decisions are based on rationality; but what is rational under one theory may be considered irrational in

another, therefore context is of the essence and no one model of rationality fits all contexts (Djulbegovic & Elqayam, 2017). Common sense dictates that cost and benefits should be carefully weighed before deciding on a course of action; however, some individuals known as blind co-operators even if conditions change (Pérez-Escudero et al., 2016).

People make decisions and define themselves based on a complex network of social relationships (Osamor & Grady, 2018). People make decisions based on real and idealistic circumstances as is seen as the cause of strange resource allocation outcomes (Clackson, 2008). Individuals make decisions under uncertain conditions, and this decisions are done with or without consideration for future changes (Gunaratne & Nov, 2017). When making decisions, individuals, individuals tend to use reason and intuition, which can be impacted by age related changes in cognition and emotion (Mikels et al., 2013). There are certain circumstances which will make an individual consider additional professional help especially for individuals taking care of relatives with dementia (Frewer-Graumann, 2020). Decisions are also made under circumstances which consider who is affected by such decisions (Haghani & Sarvi, 2019). The level of such decisions may be micro or macro in nature.

2.6.5 Factors that Influence Changes in Decisions

People have the power to make others make or change decisions based on unique experiences and knowledge (Zimmermann, 2019). According to the principles of emotional coherence, attitudes change because the values attached to the system of concepts, beliefs and goals have also changed (Thagard, 2018). This view is supported by Anon (2019), which stated that when there is a shift in core beliefs, people change

along with it. To expand this line of thought, it is believed that for individuals to change their minds, policy issues need to be reframed rather than appealing to facts (Meyer, 1995). Other reasons why people change their decisions is if they are equipped with new information which reveals the risks and dangers of certain behaviours and decisions (Marteau, 2018). It is obvious that people can change their minds if certain conditions change.

Apart from individuals, companies also change their goals if they decide it is not realistic enough. They may also change how they hire people if the way they did it before did not yield desirable result (DeSimone et al., 1995). When it comes to land use, parcel characteristics, accessibility to activities, current and historical neighbourhood conditions are factors that influence land use (Tepe & Guldmann, 2020). Farmers also change land use decisions and farming styles with shifts in economic and governance incentives such as changes in agricultural prices, production cost and frequency of environmental monitoring (Nascimento et al. 2019). For farmers, climate changes like rainfall disturbances, shortening of the dry season, increasing temperatures and violent winds make farmers change farming styles formerly used (Fadina & Barjolle, 2018).

Sometimes, the factors that we expect to lead to change may not be what we expected, a result revealed in the experiment with bacteria and amino acids in food (Leitão-Gonçalves et al., 2017). Some individuals have intention to change but may need encouragement to change their mindsets. For veterinarians, gaining new knowledge, receiving new stimuli, exchanging with peers and support helped them to change their minds (Pucken et al., 2019). People can also decide to change location (migration) due to climate change and economic, social, political and demographic factors (Shi et al.

2019). Some individuals may decide not to change their decisions for several factors because what they have is working. This is the case with consumers intention to continue using a health app (Vaghefi & Tulu, 2019). Other people refuse to change their decisions due to uncertainties and fear of the unknown (Steiner, 2001). It does not matter the subject or the area of life, some people change decisions while others don't for many reasons.

2.7 Summary and Conclusion

Chapter two of this research has explored the concept of vocational education in section 2.1. the historical overview of vocational in Nigeria was explored in section 2.2 where the practice of vocational education was traced from precolonial to post-colonial Nigeria. Section 2.3 explored the importance of vocational education while section 2.4 compared vocational education and general education. the challenges faced by vocational education was explored in explored section 2.5.

The research went ahead to explore and review the factors which influence decisions in section 2.6. Socio-economic factors of education level, level of income, cost of vocational education and type of occupation was reviewed in section 2.6.0.1 – section 2.6.0.4. chapter two went further to explore socio cultural factors which influence decisions in section 2.6.1.0 – 2.6.1.4 where gender, perceptions, religion, number of children/family size, and age were discussed.

Section 2.6.2 explored socio-political factors where the influence of government policies on decisions were explored. Chapter two went further to in section 2.6.3 – section 2.6.5 to analyse whether socio-economic factors are more influential than socio-

cultural factors, circumstances under which individuals make decisions and factors which influence individual, companies, and families to change their mind about a decision they made.

Chapter Three: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

3.0 Introduction

Chapter three of this research explores theories which explains the factors that influence the decisions of parents towards the choice of vocational education in Jos-North local government of Plateau state, Nigeria. These theories, in addition to the review of literature, facilitated the mapping out of variables embedded in the research topic, research questions and research objectives. Chapter three of this research is a continuation of chapter two which is the literature review chapter.

Chapter three will explore different theories to focus on a key theoretical position required to build towards the rationale and purpose of this study. Theories and models such as The Cultural Capital Theory, The Rational Choice Theory, The Iceberg Theory, The Cultural Ethical Model and the Social Ecological Model will be explored. A conceptual framework will be designed to guide the study and answer the research questions towards achieving the aims and objectives of this research.

3.0. Reviewing Relevant Theories

The theories of gender have clearly been tagged as one of the strongest predictors of behaviour compared to income, education, and age (Walter and Tumath, 2014; Olliet al., 2001). However, studies on gender differences has been inconsistent. Research from Gracias et al., (2012); Lee at al., (2013) indicate that women are more sensitive to environmental issues than men. Others such as Walters and Tumath (2014) Mmopelwa (2007) found no differences between males and females in terms of attitudes and

decision making. The argument which sums up the inadequacy of the gender theories as best fit to drive the subject matter of this theory is from Bandura (1986, 1999), which stated that there are other factors which dictate the behaviours, attitudes and decisions of people, including socio-economic class and opportunities.

Based on the limitations of the gender theories, the Socio-cultural Theories were explored. The Cultural Capital Theory by Bourdieu (1984) explained that level of education determines socio-economic status, therefore, determines the type of decisions an individual take. The cultural capital theory also stated that through cultural capital, cultural wealth is created, thus, making recipients make decisions which furthers the cultural wealth of individuals and families. The Cultural Capital Theory also suggests that the level of education attained by an individual is influenced by family and socio-economic status. This suggests that a parent who acquired a high level of education will automatically transmit the same values to the child. This also means that a parent who schooled in the general education setting will not encourage vocational education for their child. The cultural capital theory explains the influence of education on decision making but does not address other factors which this research is interested in.

The Social Cognitive Career Theory by Lent et al., (1994) is built on three variables of self-efficacy, beliefs, outcome expectations, and goal expectations. These goals and expectations are factors which determines the type of decision parents make towards vocational education. If it does not match their expectations, they will not engage. The social cognitive theory explains why and how parents may take certain decisions, yet it fails to explain how these factors influence parents. The Career Related Parent Support concentrates on parents and how they influence the achievements of their children

(Bandura, 1997). Based on vocational education, The Career Related Parent Support has been hypothesised as the key source of children around vocational and educational development (Turner et al., 2003). The Career Related Parent Support fails to address the role of external factors such as the government and the role it plays in supporting careers in vocational education.

The Rational Choice Theory which is used to explain micro-economic and sociological phenomenon in history asks why and how people make certain decisions. Despite the attractions of scholars such as Scott (2000), Frank (2006), Becker (1976), and Friedman (1953), it has been criticised for generally ignoring the social determinants of decisions and choices. The rational choice theory is also limited by bounded rationality and bounded will power. It states that money is the main motivator for decisions taken, but sociologists argue against this, stating that there are other motivators to decision making. Just like the other theories mentioned above, The Rational Choice Theory explains how people make decisions and why people make decisions, but it fails to explain how these factors influence decisions made by individuals and how these factors interrelate with each other.

The Stake Holder's Theory touched on important subject of the important roles of parents in the growth of an organisation. The definition by The Stanford institute of research (1963), Freeman (1984), points at a two-way relationship between the individual and the organisation. It places parents at a strategic spot, without which the growth of vocational education may not be realised. While parents are considered as stakeholders, managers (government) are also tasked with having the right approach to strike a balance between the role of a stakeholder and that of a shareholder. Freeman

and Reed (1983) also explained the multiple roles played by parents who can be parents, shareholders, employees as well as managers at the same time. These gives a closer indication to the subject matter of this research. It touches on factors which influences decisions made by parents. It also explains the interdependent relationship between policy makers and parents. What the Stakeholder's Theory failed to do is that it did not name the interdependent relationships which exists between parents and other key players.

The Cultural Ethical Model of decision-making touches on the solution aspect of the research. It concentrates on the importance of culture. Based on the knowledge-based approach to policy governance proposed by Tecker et al. (1999), it includes the role of government in acknowledging the importance of culture in decision making. To understand culture, the role of parents as custodians of culture should be taken into consideration. If culture affects decision making in favour or lack of favour of vocational education, then appropriate decision and actions is carried out. Tecker et al. (1999) also outline four critical questions which includes the needs of the stakeholder, the position of the organisation, the current realities of members and the consequences of any decision which will be taken. The model proposed by Meneghetti and Seel (2001) also adopts a similar approach which involves identifying the problem, involving stakeholders, acknowledging difficulties as well as resistance.

The Cultural Ethical Model tackled the influence of an important player which is the government but failed to include the multi-Level analysis which the SEM provides. Based on extensive review of literature, concepts, frameworks and related theories, this research realises that vocational education is important to the individual, economy, and

nation at large (Shavit and Muller, 2000; Polat et al, 2010; Kennedy 2012). It has also been discovered that perceptions towards vocational education is mostly negative (Eyre, 2011; Alavi et al., 2013). It also discovered that vocational education faces many challenges which spans across perceptions, neglect, low quality, corruption, and preference for general education (Enyekit et al., 2011; Ainsworth and Roscigno, 2015; Barnett and Ryan, 2005). Although the problems facing vocational education has been identified, none have looked at the intricate role played by parents in the growth of vocational education as a result of factors which can be personal or otherwise.

The theories which attempted to explain these concepts did not completely cover the subject matter of this research. Therefore, the proposed conceptual framework developed after careful consideration of the literature, theories, models and fieldwork proposes that parents are important factors in the growth of vocational education. This research delves deeper into the socio-economic and socio-cultural situations which surround parents, such as the state of their finance, the type of occupation they are engaged in, their religious orientation, their gender, their level of education, and their age. This research takes an exploratory and a solution-based approach; therefore, it acknowledges the interdependence between factors. The reason for delving into the socio-cultural and socio-economic conditions of parents is to give policy makers an insight into the reason for the lack of growth in the vocational education sector.

3.1 The Social Ecological Model (SEM)

The Social Ecological Model (SEM) Mc Leroy; Bibeau; Steckler and Glanz (1988) argues that individual behaviour is shaped by factors at multiple levels, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, community, institutional and policy levels. The SEM is

widely used in health-related research, however, previous research in the health sector focus predominantly on attitudinal variables at the intrapersonal levels. Kumar et al. (2012), pointed that although the Social Ecological Model is widely accepted, rarely do researchers examine each level in the analysis of health behaviour decisions. In a comprehensive study of factors correlated with vaccine uptake in the United States, Kumar used the SEM as an organising Framework. The idea is in line with what was presented by Wyatt et al. (1983); Beltaifa et al. (2009).; and Ferzad Behtash et al.; (2013), which stated that how factors influence depends on the group and what is being analysed.

Following the Social Ecological model Dunn et al. (2014), used the SEM to address factors that determine a woman's decision to breastfeed. Barriers and contributors to breastfeeding were addressed at individual, interpersonal, community, organisational and policy levels. Using thematic content analysis, the factors were separated into positive and negative influences the same way Mushabab (2012); Alavi et al. (2013); Saiti and Mitrosoli (2005); and Eyre (2011) mentioned that there are both negative and positive factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education. The SEM as used by Dunn et al. (2014) stretched further than that used by Kumar et al. (2012) which only analysed influencing factors based on levels. This highlights one of the advantages of the SEM being that it is flexible and can be stretched to suit the researcher's line of enquiry.

The SEM has worked with different methods of enquiry and produced relevant results (Dunn et al., 2014; Kumar et al. (2012); Nyambe et al. (2016). The SEM is an essential framework for studies which employ multi-level interventions and measurement

strategies. Elder; Lytle; Sallis et al. (2007) identified two concepts of the ecological perspective which is: 1) behaviour both affects and is affected by multiple levels of influence and 2) that behaviour shapes and is shaped by the social environment. The SEM is a multi-level model which incorporates different social and ecological factors that affects behaviour in one single model. While it has been used to study health behaviour and the social environment, it can also be used to study parent's decision making towards vocational education and the factors that affect them.

The SEM was developed out of the work of eminent researchers including Brofenbrenner's Ecological System's Theory (1979); Daniel Stokol's Ecological Model of Health Promotion (1992,2003) and McLeroy; Bibeau; Steckler et al. Ecological Model of Health Behaviours (1998) which is the most popularly used. For intrapersonal level/resources Fleury & Lee (2006), considers individual characteristics such as socio-economic status, perceived functional abilities, educational level, motivational variables and employment. The focus of Fleury (2006) is to treat variables as resources. This can be translated to means that parent's decisions towards vocational education can be influenced by the level of access they have to resources present in Intrapersonal, interpersonal, community, environmental, organisational and organisational levels.

The SEM framework has also been used successfully to address and improve issues (Nuss et al. 2016). Using the multi-level approach to identifying factors also gives easy access to arriving at a solution-based research where recommendations and policies are or can be influenced. SEM has been used to study and replicate level of interventions used in previous studies and also to track individual and social environmental interventions that have been successful (Soderlund, 2017). The SEM recognises that

programs, behaviours, and attitudes exist within the context of a broader environment, therefore, it can best be described through an ecological perspective which directs attention to broader political and environmental factors that shape individual and interpersonal characteristics within the community and organisational setting (Langille & Rodgers, 2010).

It is almost impossible to study factors which influence an individual, a community, a family, an organisation or policy makers without looking at decision making. Decision making is an essential activity for an organism to psychologically reconstruct the world and make sense of it and adapt to it (Krueger, 2012). Decisions are concerned with preferences which are necessarily comparative, therefore this research also aims to find out what parent's preferences are. Parents need to do a comparative analysis to be able to identify what factors influence their decisions more than others. Social Ecological Models visually depicts the dynamic relationship between individual, groups and their environment (Golden et al., 2015). SEM fosters efforts to change policies and the environment in which people live, work and play.

Studies seldom quantify the combined contribution of various elements, rather, they often investigate the independent contribution of one or more elements of the community. The problem with this method as identified by Ohri-Vachaspati et al., (2015), is that variables which correlate or attributes to other layers are completely missed out. The importance of multi-level analysis was revealed by Mannan (2017) which stated that the strength of influencing factors is also determined by differences in destination (environment), differences in community and differences in household

level. Mandal and Bose (2012) also added that the level of influence of a factor depends on what is being studied.

3.1.0 The Intrapersonal/Individual Level

The intrapersonal level measures attitudes, beliefs, perceptions (Kumar et al., 2012). The intrapersonal level which is also called the individual level investigates factors which affects individuals (Dunn et al., 2014). Intrapersonal or individual factor focuses on factors for individual characteristics such as developmental history, knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, self-concept and skills (Nyambe et al., 2016). Intrapersonal level also has to do with access to resources which includes perceived functional ability, socio-economic status, educational level, employment status, and motivational variables (Fleury & Lee, 2006). Intrapersonal level of the SEM also places emphasis on education, training, skills enhancement and cultural tailoring (Soderlund, 2017). The intrapersonal level describes the development of individuals within nested environmental subsystems (Golden et al., 2015). It is then left for the researcher to identify what level they intend to study.

Intrapersonal levels deal with perceptions, history, attitudes and beliefs. A point noted by Reisinger and Turner (2003) that Perceptions are shaped by several factors which may be external or internal, such as geographical, economic, social, geographical, cultural, demographic, psychographic and behaviouristic factors. Exploring the factors on an in-depth basis can only be done using the multi-level style presented by The SEM. The SEM gives room to create a framework for research into several factors at the same time. It also outlines solutions on the same level (Kumar et al, 2012; Nyambe et al., 2014; Languille and Rodgers, 2010). One major element, identified by Samovar

and Porter (1991), which influences perception, is culture (Samovar & Porter, 1991). Culture is responsible for teaching people how to perceive, interpret, and give meaning to their various experiences; adding that culture determines which reactions or stimuli are important, based on people's responses.

The cultural perceptions of a people are often conditioned by their social interactions, the differences which exist amongst them is also determined by culture (Huyton and Ingold, 1999). This sometimes creates problems in cross-cultural social interaction. The SEM solves by exploring the many levels of perceptions, the barriers and the contributors to decisions taken as a result of their perceptions. Attitudes, history and belief become variables which can be measured. In the case of the influence of perceptions on the decisions made by parents towards vocational education, the SEM gives room to measure the attractiveness of parents towards vocational education, whether negative or positive. It can measure how parents perceive the relevance of vocational education to their child. If these beliefs are negative, they can act as barriers to the growth of vocational education, but if positive, it can promote the growth of vocational education. The level of knowledge parents have about vocational education can affect their perception of vocational as well as their reactions to government policies regarding vocational education.

The literature has already identified that majority of parents and teachers have a negative perception towards vocational education (Alavi et al., 2013; Hartung et al., 2005; Barnett and Ryan, 2005). The type of Data collected by SEM allows the research to find out if this attitude and perception has changed or has remained the same. Attempting to disentangle all the many inter-connections between factors that influence

decisions towards vocational education is a tasking feat. Perceptions are influenced by socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political factors (Eyre, 2011; Saiti and Mitrosoli, 2005; Odu 2011). Socio-cultural factors are also influenced by other factors, thereby, creating a web which one can get entangled in. The literature revealed that parents will rather encourage their children to pursue a four-year degree course (Alavi et al., 2013). The SEM allows for parents to state whether they will rather their children to general education or vocational education and why.

The flexibility of interpretation presented by The SEM is such that several factors can mean different things to different people. This is reflected in Fleury & Lee (2006), approach to explaining the intrapersonal level where they considered individual characteristics such as socio-economic status, perceived functional abilities, educational level, motivational variables and employment. This means that this research can also approach the research objectives on a single level by exploring parent's how parents think their level of education and employment (tied to level of income) will influence their perceptions, belief, and perceptions towards vocational education. If parents believe that vocational education limits opportunities for career development which can be tied to their income, then they will not engage with vocational education.

Based on the position of Fleury & Lee (2016) and supported by Saiti and Mitrosoli (2005), parental attitudes towards education and career decisions of their children does not appear in an empty socio-economic environment, they explained that such perceptions are structured by factors such as socio-economy, status, and receptive attitudes. This can be explored by comparing the income and educational level of parents with their perceptions towards vocational education. The parents who indicated

cost as a major factor that influenced their decision towards can be analysed using their stated level of income. Parents may think vocational education to be expensive because they cannot afford it (Mupinga and Livesay 2004). Therefore, the multi-level approach of the SEM is important for this research.

3.1.1 The Interpersonal Level

In the SEM the interpersonal level deals with social influence from friends and family and norms within social networks. They are primary groups which consist of social networks and support systems which are culturally relevant. The interpersonal level also includes social norms that may facilitate behavioural capacity and health behaviour change. They are social influence which influence individual and community goals strategies and opportunities for behavioural change (Kumar et al., 2012; Dunn et al., 2014; Nyambe et al; 2016).

The interpersonal level involves modifications to the home and family environment and consists of social institutions. Interpersonal processes provide identity and support. The interpersonal level determines household roles and structures, kinship system, public and private domains and peer education especially in low income countries (Ohri-Vachaspati et al., 2015; Golden et al., 2015; Krueger, 2012). In factors which influence parent's decisions towards vocational education, interpersonal level would be the influence of family members, peers and kinsmen.

The interpersonal level is concerned with the influence of social networks including friends and family. Based on the cultural capital theory of Bourdieu (1984) which suggests that the family a person comes from can influence the socio-economic status attained by an individual. the interpersonal level addresses this factor by exploring the

role of family members and friends in the decision parents make towards vocational education. Since class is tied to the Social Capital theory, it suggests that a family where the history of its wealth is tied to formal education will not support diverting to vocational education, while parents who are poor will either choose formal education to uplift their status or choose vocational education because it is what they are used to. Questions at interpersonal levels can include asking parents if they operate a nuclear family or an extended family system, if their family and friends matter in decisions they make as parents, the type of decisions influenced by family and friends, the power of family and friends to change the decisions they make towards vocational education.

The interpersonal level which deals with the influence of social networks as well as the influence of family and friends also connects with the gender theories. In a family where the females have always adhered to gender assigned roles, the decision for a parent in that social network to change the norm and enrol a female child in vocational education can cause problems (Heidi et al., 2013; Walker & Latosuo, 2016; Blodorn et al., 2012). Sometimes, family, friends and social networks can influence the decisions parents make towards vocational education if they are the one sponsoring the education. This can also determine whether they choose to sponsor a female child or a male child. In this case, the decision-making power lies in the hands of who holds the final authority (UNESCO 2003). A family who have a long history of men in sports may not support the enrolling of a female child in a sport related vocational school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1997), especially in a sport believed to be predominantly meant for males.

3.1.2 The organisational/Institutional Level

Organisations often reflect the connections in a community. Such connections take place through services and access to opportunities (Henderson and Ainsworth, 2003).

Organisations are social institutions with rules and regulations for operations (Hesch et al., 2000). Organisation operating at that level determine how well services are provided to an individual or group (Heyler et al., 1998). Organisations have the resources to reach more people in the community.

The organisational or institutional level include educational institutions, family institutions, religious institutions, business organisations, and government institutions.

The religious institutions can be explored based on its influence on the decisions of parents towards vocational education as well as their contribution to the growth of vocational education. religion often dictates how decisions are made and not what decisions are made (Superdock, Barfield et al., 2018). This may translate to deciding to seek divine guidance first before deciding or leaving the decision to the head of the family as dictated by religious belief. Religions like Islam which supports self-employment may have parents who will engage in vocational education, and parents of Hindu background who are not supporters of self-employment may decline (Audretsch, David B.; Bönke et al. 2013). The SEM gives room to explore the influence of religion at the interpersonal level as well as at the institutional level.

Religion also influences the economic disposition of a community, society or country at large asset (Hilary & Hui, 2009). Religion has been said to determine the decision of people to become entrepreneurs. Top executives who run these institutions are also influenced by different factors. Religion may influence the way they manoeuvre around

ethical decisions (Chan, Ananthram, 2017). Religion as a variable is said to be unique to the individual decision maker (Ford & Richardson, 2013). Therefore, the decision made by one individual based on religion would be different from the type of decision made by another person based on the same religion. This means that to a large extent, the individual has control over religion-based decisions (Sheikh et al., 2012). People will most likely make decisions which may not be the best, but because of religious rituals and perceived threat to the group, they will make the decision. Reason why an Islamic father may refuse to allow his daughter to participate in sports even if the child shows great talent towards that area. The levels of analysis can be done at an individual level or at an organisational level. The SEM gives the freedom to choose which level of analysis a researcher chooses to use.

3.1.3 The Community Level

The community level can be a culmination of various organisations in an area. Communities often come together to carry out a project and achieve common goals (McElroy, 2002). E.g. building of vocational schools, hospitals and even market halls. Community levels addresses the contexts in which social relationship occur (Stokols, 1996). It focuses on places like schools, neighbourhood and workplaces. The community factor can be influenced by unemployment and population density (Hompel et al., 2002). The environment is not only meant to be a potential source of safety hazards, it is also meant to be a provider of resources to enable people achieve higher levels of well-being.

The community level of the SEM deals needs a high level of cooperation in an environment to thrive. It requires members in the institutional level to work together

towards projects and provision of services within their immediate community and is successful, extend to other communities. The SEM can be used to trace the success of projects and the necessity to make changes or use same method for a different community. There are other agents according to (Sienkiewicz (2014); Parrilli & Elola, (2012) that can make the community level work; they include high level business services capable of helping manufacturing firms face a growing need for abilities. Regional development and a strong service sector which all play important roles in driving the development of human capital.

For factors which influence the decision of parents towards vocational education at the community level, religious organisations can form a community, business organisations can form a community, educational institutions can form a community, and of course the cluster of people living in the same location (Son, 2010). . It is not as large as a state or region. For this to work, they must place the bigger picture such as development of human capital ahead of their personal differences and goals (Buys' and Bosman, 2010). Communities are made up of households. Households and firms have been identified as key drivers of human capital development according to Sackey (2011). Households and firms are considered as micro-economic determinants of economic growth. Households are saddled with the important decision of reproduction, savings and the transfer of assets and knowledge to the next generation.

Firms on the other hand, use the factors supplied by households to deliver on production requirements and make investment decisions (Sackey, 2011). At the household level, education plays an important role, and the key drivers to educational attainment are parental education, quality school infrastructure, educational attainment, improved age

and health status which add value to individual characteristics (Bryson and O'Neil, 2009). Human capital development as an action and even as theory develops and thrives under a well-organized and skilled workforce, with adequate education, a sustainable technology base, a highly professional business and service sector, a good tourism base, a corrupt free economy and a legitimate government capable of enacting policies which will positively affect the people (Moore and Daday, 2010). These are the resources that the community level can provide if they qualify in most or all these areas.

3.1.4 The Public Policy Level

The enabling environment provided by local, state and national government (Vincent, 2009). It includes policies regarding the allocation of resources e.g. higher budget towards vocational education. it may include access to quality vocational education as determine by federal policy (Pena-Purcell et al., 2011). Making quality vocational education affordable and embedding societal values into policies because it influences the overall culture of the society.

The role of governance as a factor in the decision parents make is one of the objectives of this research. Governance encompasses the mechanisms of economic, social and political relationships (Smith 2017). In the SEM the Policy level is dependent on the government. Governance tends to reflect what the society is about. The type of governance can determine the way homes are run, for example representation of women in decision making (Marija, Čičkarić Lilijana 2010). The policies government enact can shape the decision and perceptions of people in a society.

Government have always promoted the involvement of parents in their children's schooling by enacting statutory rights, however, parents social class location continues

to impact on their ability to impact in their child's schooling (Crozier 1997). The influence of government on parent's decision making requires changes in government policies in the workplace (Stipek, McCroskey 1989). This will put parents under less pressure to make financial decisions which may affect the education of their children. Positive influence such as family support initiatives including job protection, child care support and good pay, influence parents financially to make better decisions regarding their children (Ng, Julià et al. 2017). The strength of policies depends largely on how well they communicate with the intrapersonal level.

The influence goes both ways. Government policies tend to influence parent's attitudes towards government because it shapes their political orientation (Lavery 2017). The accountability of government policies influence parents' attitudes and participation in government and involvement in their child's schooling (Rhodes 2015). Governance influence the decisions and actions parents take in every aspect of their lives including schooling for their children. with government policies that encourage training, is pro education, and extends the dependence on agriculture to other no agricultural products, the human capital will grow, and unemployment will be a thing of the past in Jos-North local government (Sackey, 2011)

Source: Adapted from Nuss et al., (2016)

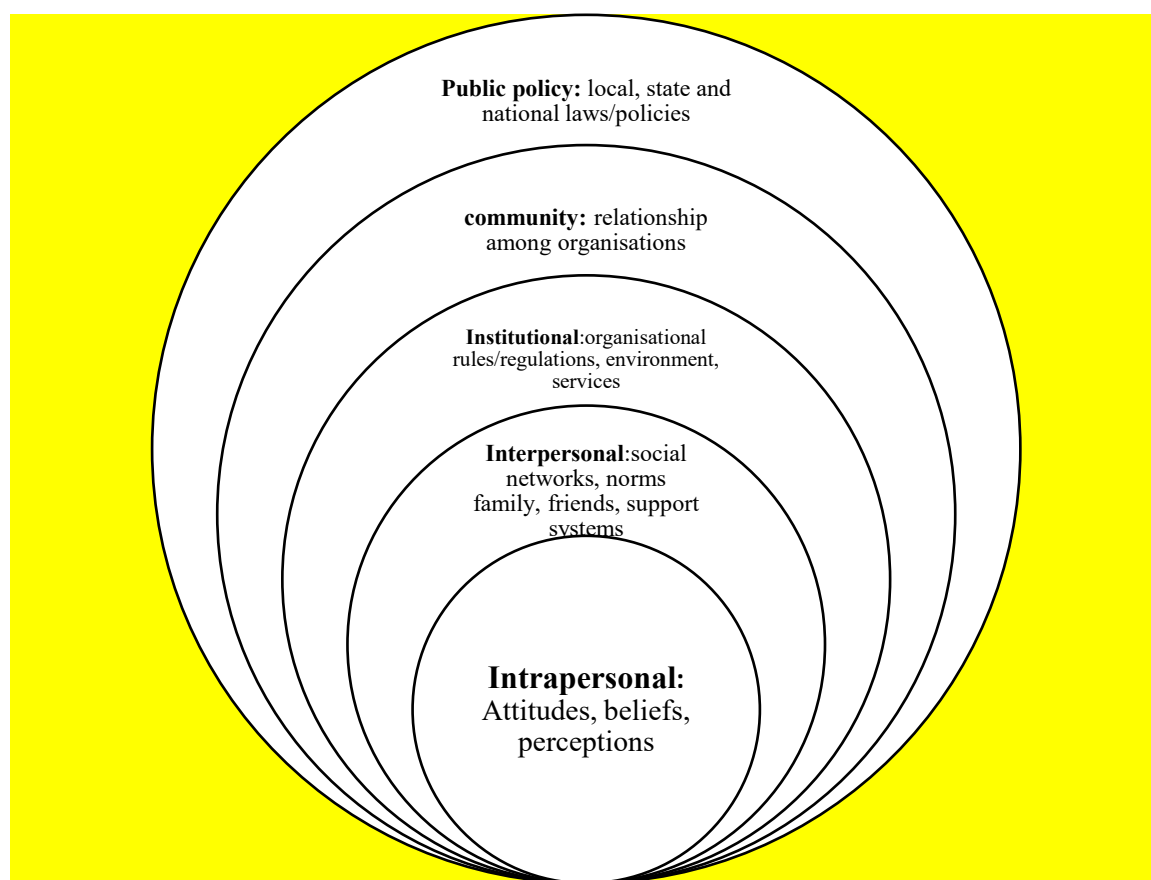


Figure 3.1: Social Ecological Model Showing the Multi Levels of Influences

3.1.5 Different Adaptations of the Social Ecological Model

Author	Theory, Framew ork or Model	Sample size	Sampling method	Data collection method	Method of Data Analysis	Design

Kumar et al., (2012)	SEM	2,079 adults	Random selection	Web survey	STATA, multiple binary logistic regression method	
Dunn et al., (2014)	SEM	43 participants, 6 focus groups.	Purposive, snowball/referral	Semi-structured interview	Thematic content analysis	Qualitative assessment
Nyambe et al., (2016)	Theory of Triadic Influence (TTI), Social Ecological Model (SEM)	40 SEM studies 46 TTI studies	Systematic literature review	Closed ended data extraction form	Aggregate descriptive statistics	Literature Review
Fleury & Lee, (2006)	SEM			Journal scans		Literature review

Nuss et al., (2016)	SEM	82 school nurses from 32 school districts		Surveillance data		
Soderlund, (2017)	SEM	10	Data base search based on inclusion criteria			Literature review
Langille & Rodgers (2017)	Emmons' SEM	14	Convenience, snowball	Interviews	Audit trail, audio record transcription	Cross case/mixed strategy
Golden et al., (2015)	SEM					
Ohri-Vachaspathy	SEM	560 children	Random selection	Survey	Multiple logistic regression ,	Cross-sectional survey

ati et al.,					descriptiv	
(2015)					e and	
					bivariate	
					statistics	

Table 3.1: Different Adaptations of the Social Ecological Model

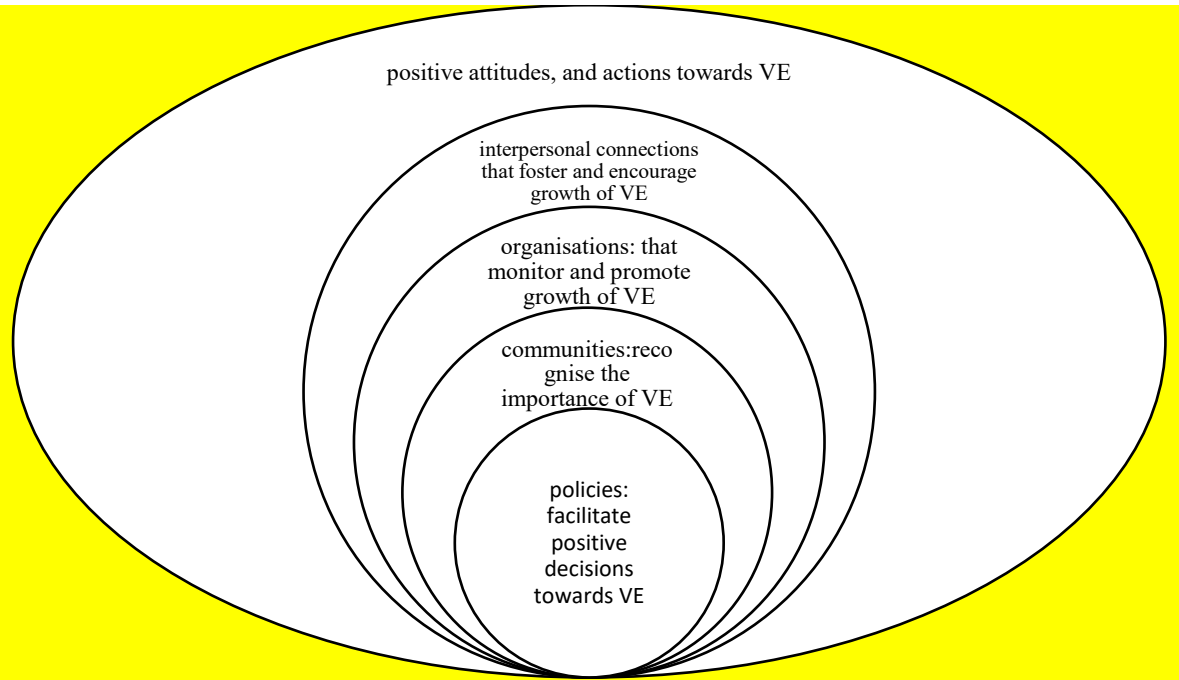


Figure 3.2: Connecting SEM to Research Topic

3.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The preceding section has analysed and discussed theories, concepts and models which touches on the subject matter of this research topic. A critical study of The Social Ecological Model has revealed how dynamic and encompassing a model it is. The research topic seeks to explore socio-cultural and socio-economic factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education. The interesting thing about the SEM model is that it reflects socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political factors. The SEM outlines factors to be analysed from a multi-level point of view. It gives room for a solution-based approach on a multi-level also (kumar et al., 2012; Nyambe et al., 2014; Languille and Rodgers, 2010). It also allows for multiple level analysis separate from factors, such as analysing barriers and positive contributors of influencing factors (Dunn et al., 2014).

SEM gives room for the researcher to apply some of the levels and not all depending on which factors are being explored (Fleury & Lee, 2016). The SEM can also be used for a solution-based only approach for research where the influencing factors have already been identified (Kumar et al., 2012; Dunn et al., 2014) Nuss et al., 2016; Nyambe et al., 2016; Soderlund et al., 2017; Golden et al., 2015). When solutions have been recommended and implemented, the SEM can also be used to trace the success and failures of previous projects, or to strategies on expansion of such projects to fit another setting Ohri-Vachaspati et al., 2015)

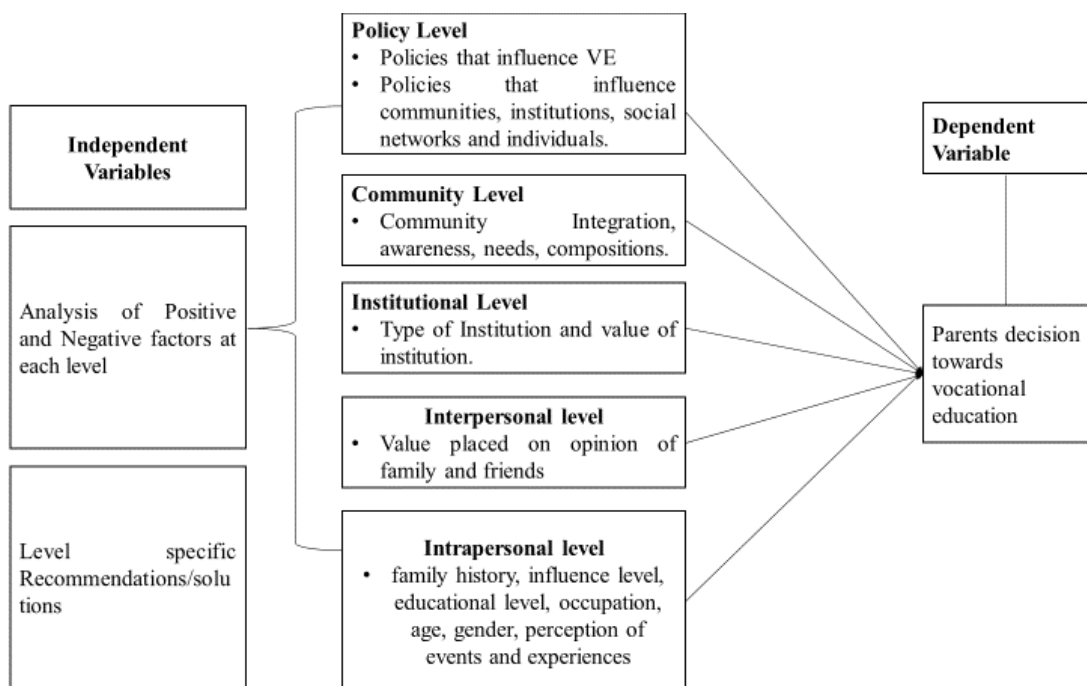


Figure 3.3: Conceptual Framework of Factors Influencing Parent's Decisions Towards Vocational Education

Source: Author's conception

The framework opines that the decisions parents make towards vocational education depends on factors which can be analysed at five different levels of Intrapersonal/individual level, interpersonal level, institutional/organisational level, community level and policy level (Mc Leroy; Bibeau; Steckler and Glanz 1988). The framework further opines that for each level, each factor that influences the decisions of parents towards vocational education can be either positive or negative (Dunn et al., 2014). The framework also shows that solutions and recommendations can be targeted at each level, giving room for relevant authorities to use target specific solutions and recommendations at each level, taking note of unique factors and differences at each level (Nuss et al., 2016; Kumar et al., 2012; Dunn et al., 2014; Nyambe et al., 2016; Soderlund et al., 2017; Golden et al., 2015).

The designed framework guided this research in answering the research question aimed at: a) Identifying and discussing the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government. b) investigating whether some influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government more than others. c) Understanding Parent's preferences for either vocational or general education and the reasons for their preferences. d) determining circumstances under which parents in Jos-North local government will change their decisions towards vocational education. e) contributing to theoretical and empirical research and recommending solutions to the problem of lack of engagement with vocational education in Jos-North local government.

Previous studies have focused on finding out the opinion of high school students and their parents on choices made in secondary, with emphasis on contextual factors that may help or hinder vocational (Rodríguez Menéndez et al., 2016). Others have focused on the influence of the school on student's decisions for further education (Foskett et al. 2008). Other studies explored the social and cultural effects of lack of vocational skills in a community (Lowe et al., 2020). Other studies explored the factors which influenced adult immigrants in Akeshu county of Norway to peruse vocational programme of study (Alhassan, 2018). None of these researches focused on the factors which influence the perceptions of parents towards vocational education, neither did they undertake any study in Jos-North Local government of Nigeria.

Furthermore, previous studies concentrated on how decisions are made and not how decisions are made especially as it concerns spirituality and religion (Superdock et al., 2018). Others explored which factors influence parents to accept or refuse immunisation

more than others (Chung et al., 2017). (Chiang et al. 2015) Chung et al., 2017; Chiang et al., 2015). Another research explored who was more likely to miss or reduce work between husband and wife and between married couples or singles (DeRigne & Porterfield, 2017). None of the studies mentioned examined whether there were factors which influenced decisions more than other. While some touched on factors which influenced the decision of parents, none of them focused on such level of influences regarding decisions towards vocational education. In addition, none of these studies were set in Jos-north local government, Plateau state, Nigeria.

In addition, more research explored circumstances under which students leave school earlier than expected (Kende & Szalai, 2018). Another research focused on circumstances under which parents would move cities in search of specialist healthcare (J., 2010). Again, these studies explored circumstances responsible for certain decisions, but none of them explored specific reasons why a parent will choose one option over another and most importantly, none of those research were carried out in Jos-North local government of Plateau state, Nigeria.

Again, other research noted that court decisions can cause a parent to change their decisions (Ginn et al., 2015). Changing school trends can also influence parents to change decisions from private to government or otherwise (James & Woodhead, 2014). Others explored circumstances under which parents will change childcare arrangements (Huskinson et al., 2013). These studies mentioned different circumstances why parents would change decisions previously made. None of them were specific to vocational education and none of them were specific to Jos-North local government of Plateau state, Nigeria.

Finally, the conceptual framework outlines the factors that influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education, divides them into positive and negative factors and recommends solutions to problems using The Social Ecological model which to the best of the knowledge of this research has not been used by any other researcher in this subject matter.

Based on this framework on the factors influencing the decisions of parents towards vocational education, three conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors influence the way parents decide whether they want to allow their child/ward to attend vocational education. Secondly, it can be deduced from the framework that although socio-economic factors are easy to spot because of their assumed importance, socio-cultural factors tend to play stronger roles in shaping the way individuals make decisions and respond to their immediate environment. Thirdly, an important finding from the framework and theories discussed in the preceding sections shows that more effort should be put into understanding how socio-cultural factors affect major decisions such as the choice of vocational education for a child.

Lastly and most importantly, factors operate on a multi-level relationship and are interdependent, therefore, an accurate model of analysis is needed. Policy makers need to therefore enact policies which will improve the socio-economic situation of parents and preserve the cultural practices of the people to the best extent possible.

Based on extensive review of literature, frameworks, concepts and theories related to the factors influencing parents in their decision making concerning vocational education, this research realised that many researches have paid attention to understanding reasons for the lack of engagement experienced in vocational education

(Enyekit et al, 2011; Ainsworth and Roscigno, 2005; Wallenborn, 2010). Nevertheless, the literature also revealed that the vocational education sector is riddled with false perceptions about the importance of vocational education (Reisinger and Turner, 2003; Velde and Cooper, 2000; Huyton and Ingold, 1999). However, previous studies tend to point out the problem and make general recommendations with the assumption that is enough to end the slow rate of growth experienced in the vocational education sector. Practically, vocational education has many factors which influence its growth, and an identification of more important factors is a good place to start.

Therefore, the proposed conceptual framework developed based on literature review and fieldwork proposes that if vocational education is to grow, policy makers must recognise the importance of parents as important stakeholders in the growth of vocational education. they must consider the factors which influence parents and may lead them to decide against vocational education for their child/ward. Such decisions will mean that no matter the amount of refurbishment and development put into vocational education by government, if parents do not enrol their child/ward, it becomes a waste of resources.

3.3 Summary and Conclusion

Chapter three of this research reviewed several theories which explained the factors that influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education. Chapter three reviewed the sociological theories of gender, The Cultural Capital Theory, The Social Cognitive Career Theory, The Career Related Parent Support Theory, The Rational Choice Theory, Stakeholder's Theory, The Iceberg Theory and The Cultural Ethical Model in section 3.0.

After reviewing the above theories, all of the theories and models were found with gaps which did not address the subject matter of this research sufficiently, hence, the Social Ecological Model (SEM) was adopted as an appropriate model to guide the research in section 3.1 because of its all encompassing nature to address all the factors in each level. Section 3.1.0 – section 3.1.4 introduced the different levels of the SEM, ending with a table in section 3.1.5 showing the different adaptations of the SEM in previous studies.

Chapter three concluded in section 3.2 where a thorough discussion of the SEM was discussed as adapted to fit the subject of parent's decisions towards vocational education in Jos-North local government of Plateau state. A conceptual framework was sketched to capture the author's adaptation of the SEM to fit the current topic of study.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

4.0 Introduction

Despite efforts at national, and state level to improve the state of vocational education in Nigeria, vocational education has recorded less growth and lack of robust engagement by the population. The underlying factors responsible for the lack of growth and engagement recorded in the vocational education sector is what this seeks to investigate. This study has identified that parents play important roles as decision makers when it comes to school choice for their child/ward, hence, the research goes further to explore these factors through the perceptions and experiences of parents. To effectively carry out this investigation, it is important that an appropriate is chosen and designed to go in line with the overall aim and objective of the study. Chapter four begins with an introduction, continues in six sections and ends with a conclusion. Section one explores literature on philosophies and their underlying assumptions.

Section two explores different approaches to research, the conditions under which each approach can be used, and the conceptualisation of parental decision making. In the third section, an exploratory multi-case design is discussed along with other types of designs. Section four explores various research strategies, which in this case are parents in the Jos-North local government area. Influenced by the adopted research strategy, the method of data collection consisting of open-ended questionnaires, field observations and document reviews is discussed in section five. Section five also discusses sample size, reliability, variables and ethical considerations. To bring the chapter to an end data analysis technique are discussed in section six. Inferential and

non-inferential method is used to present findings using graphs, table and written discussions.

To achieve the objectives of this research which is: 1) To identify and discuss the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government. 2) To investigate whether some factors influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education more than others in Jos-North local government. 3) To understand parental preferences for vocational or general education and reasons for their preferences. 4) To determine circumstances under which parents will change their decisions towards vocational education in Jos-north local government. 5) To recommend probable solutions and contribute to theoretical research. An appropriate methodology is needed to achieve the stated objectives. The sections below discuss the philosophy, approach, and design of this study.

4.1 Research Paradigms

Research paradigms offer researchers a gateway to shape their research (Easterby-Smith and Thorpe, 2010). Paradigms can be epistemological or ontological. Epistemological paradigms are concerned with the appropriateness used in the process of research to uncover knowledge (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2012; Creswell, 2013). Ontology on the other hand, deals with assumptions about what constitutes a subjective or objective reality to **the researcher** (Farquhar, 2012; Bryant and Lasky, 2007). Ontology asks the question, what are we studying, while epistemology asks what are the basis of known knowledge in this chosen study? (Bryman and Bell, 2013; Saunders et al., 2012). What this means is that despite the different opinions concerning knowledge, the nature of truth, the nature of human behaviour, and the presentation of facts based on

the researcher's investigations, one cannot avoid epistemological and ontological arguments.

Epistemology is concerned with what is defined as acceptable knowledge whereas, ontology is concerned with reality and its nature (Bryman and Bell, 2013). Ontology tackles questions such as do social actors exist in reality? Are they externally dependant or independent of each other? Is reality built up from the realities and perceptions of social actors? These questions presented by ontological paradigms can either be subjective or objective (Easterby-Smith and Thorpe, 2010; Collis and Hussey, 2010).

4.2 Research Philosophy

The characteristics and types of research philosophies are identified and highlighted based on the influence of the paradigms which have been discussed in the preceding section. This research presents four philosophies which are associated with the epistemological paradigm. The four philosophies as presented by Creswell (2013) include, interpretivism, positivism, pragmatism and realism. The strengths and weaknesses of the main philosophies have been highlighted grounded by the view of Farquhar (2012) who emphasised on the importance of consistencies rigorously employed throughout the research. This minimizes bias and increases the validity and generalizability of the research findings.

4.2.1 Positivism

Positivism came about due to the search for causal relationship, observable reality and regularities (Saunders et al., 2012). The positivist seeks to understand the causal relationships in data so that law-like generalisations can be drawn from data through

hypothesis testing (Gill and Johnson, 2010; Johnson et al., 2007). This means that positivism digs into insights in phenomena to observe and measure embedded variables (Collis and Hussey, 2010). The positivist philosophy has certain characteristics which are presented in table 4.1.

Aspects	Assumptions
generation of hypotheses	Hypotheses are generated to test theory and explain findings.
Causality	Regularities in human behaviour are explained using science aimed at explaining causal relationships and fundamental laws
Reductionism	Problems are best understood and tackled if they are reduced to its simplest form
Operationalization	Operationalisation of concepts is important for easy and accurate measurement
Independence	The researcher adopts an objective view, removing himself from the phenomenon being observed.
Objectivity	Reality is independently derived from human beings meaning that science is value-free

Observation	Only that knowledge which has been confirmed by the senses is qualified as knowledge because it can be verified.
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Table 4.1: Aspects of Positivist philosophies, (Mah, 2016)

Table 4.1 reveals that the positivist views science as a demonstration of causal relationships which has been observed deductively. This reveals that the positivist tends to prefer observable facts which exists in the field of science. Positivists seeks information on social reality and the external world in a predictive manner solely for science (O'Donnell et al., 2013). According to the positivist, the construction of theories is based on general prepositions which represents regular causal relationships (Bryant and Lasky, 2017). The theories of general propositions can only be obtained through systematic observations and experiments. Positivism advocates the application of natural scientific methods in the study of social reality. Positivism also believes that the purpose of theory is to generate hypotheses which can be tested (Bryman, 2004).

Based on the information above, the positivist reasoning is not suited for this research. This is because, the logic of observation, structured questionnaire and experiments as the key sources of obtaining empirical knowledge does not align with the purpose of this research which seeks to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education.

4.2.2 Interpretivism

The philosophy of interpretivism is concerned with understanding the truths from groups or individuals without necessarily being objective by removing themselves from

the phenomenon (Farquhar, 2012; Bryant and Lasky, 2007). The interpretivist philosophy assumes that social reality holds meanings for human beings, therefore, human actions are embedded in social reality which holds meaning for them and in turn, they act and react based on the meaning they attribute to their actions and the actions of others (Bryman and Bell, 2013). This means that **the researcher** can have access to the common-sense thinking of people, which helps **the researcher** to interpret their actions and social world through their own point of view. This does not in any way according to Acquaye (2013), mean that the positivist and interpretivist philosophy are in opposition with each other, it simply means that each philosophy requires a different analytical lens based suited for a research.

The interpretivists philosophy gives room for in-depth study and understanding of the phenomenon. Interpretivism is often adopted as an alternative to positivism. It is predicated on the view that a strategy ought to respect the differences between people, and therefore requires **the researcher** to grasp the subjective meaning of social action. The interpretivist philosophy has also been called phenomenology (Bryman, 2012), or social constructivism (Easterby-Smith and Thorpe, 2010). The common features of the interpretivist philosophy are presented in table 4.2.

Characteristics	Assumptions
Holistic	Parts of the phenomenon must be studied in terms of its whole and the whole in terms of its parts

Researcher's relationship/Subjective	The researcher's own view and construction is recognised. The recognized culture and symbols recognised by a people is constructed as knowledge. It is interactive, participative and cooperative.
Understanding the nature of reality	Reality is fluid, it is socially constructed and changes. It adopts multiple realities. Reality exists within the mind
Rich insight/research goals	Exploring in-depth gives the researcher room for full understanding of the phenomenon. Predictions may be weak.
Setting	Carrying out in-depth investigation entails that the subject of the research is not removed from its natural environment.
Information desired	What do some people think and do? What type of problems are they confronted with? how do they deal with these problems?

Table 4.2: Assumptions of Interpretivist philosophy, Mah (2016).

Based on the strengths and weaknesses of the interpretivist philosophy which has been discussed above, it is obvious that the interpretivist philosophy is best suited for this research, therefore, this research will adopt the interpretivist philosophy for robust understanding of the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education.

4.2.3 Pragmatism

The pragmatist philosophy acknowledges that there are different approaches to undertaking research and interpreting the world (Saunders et al., 2012). This means that there may be multiple realities about the world, and no single point of view can paint a single picture of the world. Unlike the positivist philosopher who believes in antecedent conditions, the pragmatist believes in actions, situations and aftermaths (Bryman and Bell, 2013). Supporters of the pragmatic philosophy argue that the research questions are the most important determinant of a research strategy, and not necessarily the epistemological or ontological assumptions (Bryman, 2012; Saunders et al., 2012; Simons, 2009). The idea behind pragmatism is not the use of multiple methods; rather, it is the use of a single method or methods which enables the answering of the research questions, using a well-founded, credible reliable and relevant data collection method (Maxwell, 2010; Kelemen and Rumens, 2008).

While the pragmatist philosophy appears to be fit for this research, because of its emphasis on the research questions and not necessarily the methodological assumptions underpinning the research, the interpretivist research still suits this research more because it concentrates on the social actors which the research questions addresses. Exploring a wide range of methods may give more freedom, but it may also lead to

confusion, difficulty in aligning the results of each data, and presentation of too much data.

4.2.4 Realism

The realist philosophy supports the positivist position in that it relates to scientific enquiry (Kuhn, 1971; Wooldridge, 2003). The realist philosophy supports the view that objects exist independent of human control. Realism also supports the interpretivist view which says that knowledge is socially constructed (Yin, 2009). This means that realism takes a middle ground between positivism and interpretivism, because it acknowledges a high degree of contextual analysis as well as causality (Easterby-Smith et al., 2010). Harrison (2013), points out that just like positivism, realism assumes a scientific approach in the search for and development of knowledge. The realist stance is not however restricted to a single paradigm of thinking, rather, it gives the freedom to draw inspiration from both school of thought (Robson, 2002; Yin, 2009).

4.2.5 Chosen Philosophy (Interpretivism)

Interpretivists believe that the world is not objective, and the world is constructed by people (Chu, 2007). Interpretivism believe that the projection of the world is through the eyes and thoughts of people. They interpretivist philosophy believe that the concept of reality is psychologically perceived (Takei, 1997). Truth arises from the interaction between man and society or man and man, therefore, situations experienced by man in the society is what creates their truth. This means that as situations changes, those truths can change, meaning that there is no fixed rule to the subject of truth, therefore, what obtains in one place may be different in another place (Yanyu 2019). This idea informs

one of the objectives of the research which is to find out if the decisions of parents will change if situations change.

Interpretivism uses qualitative research method and believe that research seeks to understand a phenomenon in a time or space. Interpretivism posits that multiple realities exist for different researchers (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Knowledge is socially constructed according to the interpretivist; therefore, a personal and flexible structure can be adopted (Carson et al., 2001). In the interpretivist research, the researcher holds some form of prior notion of the phenomena being studied, but deems it insufficient for developing a rigorous research given the complex and multiple nature of what is being observed as reality (Spencer, 2016). This is in line with the rationale and purpose of this research which started with the researcher's personal experiences as a child and personal observations of the reactions of other parents towards vocational education as a teacher.

While it is understood that the factors that influence the decisions made by the researcher's parents towards vocational education, which in this case was mostly negative, the experience alone is not enough to carry out a rigorous research on the topic so, the interpretivist philosophy is adopted to achieve the aim of investigating the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education. The fundamental tenet of the interpretivist school of thought is that reality is influenced by both the social and societal factors embedded within the mind. The researcher's reality while growing up with her parents was influenced by factors which include gender and the fact that the parent was concerned about what people would think. This explains

why knowledge is subjective and established on shared signs and symbols valued by individuals of a culture.

The interpretivist takes into consideration multiple realities. The multiple realities experienced by the researcher as well as that revealed by the literature review all inform the choice of the interpretivist philosophy. Because knowledge is composed of shared signs and symbols valued by individuals of a culture with multiple and different realities, which includes; family history, level of education, level of income, type of occupation, age, gender and other variables unique to different individuals in that culture, based on these factors, the experiences and interpretation of these realities and knowledge will differ among individuals (Spencer, 2016). Interpretivism also seeks to investigate varying contexts and interpretations of events by individuals in said culture and the impacts of societal views on the understandings that they construct.

Interpretivism has been used in research on diversity in organisational settings (Greeff, 2015). In fact, interpretivism has been argued to be the best philosophy in the study of sport (Torres, 2017). In a different point of view the interpretivist philosophy has been said to have been neglected (Packard, 2017). The weaknesses inherent in the interpretivist philosophy is not overlooked, however, these weaknesses can be overcome if interpretivist make it clear what the philosophy is about and what it is not about (Hall, 2014). Interpretivism has been successfully used in the study of politics and traditions (Marsh et al., 2014). It has also been used to explore and understand teacher practice (Rapley, 2018).

One of the advantages of adopting the interpretative philosophy is that it lays a precedence for future researchers who may be encouraged and enabled to adopt the

philosophy (Weller, 2014). One of the appealing things about the interpretivist philosophy is the fact that participants are treated as subjects. It is the fact that participants are treated as humans whose views though varied, are important. This approach according to Easterby-Smith et al., (2010) yields deeper comprehension and answers. The interpretivist stance is always appreciated for being interesting (Goldkuhl, 2012). The interpretivist philosophy is profoundly capable of penetrating the complexities of the social world and behaviour and generating accurate results (Irshaidat, 2019).

One of the criticisms of the interpretivist philosophy is that findings cannot be generalised. Williams (2000) states that generalisation in interpretivism is inevitable. This research tackled the problem of generalisation by taking into consideration, the heterogenous nature of Jos-North local government where every geo-political zone was represented in the data. This means that the opinions sampled were not only the opinions of indigenes of Plateau state, but also that of Nigeria as whole. Dudovskiy (2019), reiterates that interpretive researchers assume that reality can only be accessed through social constructions such as language, shared meanings, consciousness and instruments. This research acknowledges that individuals with shared meaning such as same educational history may have different family history, making their experiences and accounts of events different.

Having understood the basic characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of each philosophy; considering the questions, aims and objectives designed to guide this study, the interpretivist line of thinking has been deemed most suitable for this research. The rationale behind choosing the interpretivist philosophy is because this research seeks to

gain an in-depth understanding of the factors responsible for decisions parents in Jos-North local government take towards vocational education. The interpretivist philosophy allows for interaction between the researcher and the objects/subjects of study which according to Easterby-Smith et al. (2010) and Jogulu and Pansiri (2011), yields deeper comprehension and answers. Interpretivist philosophy gives room for empirical and field research. Research questions are derived from field survey to collect data.

Data is collected using analytical techniques and procedures to understand patterns. A conceptual framework is developed, and its implications discussed. Findings can also be replicated. The interpretivist philosophy allows the participants and the researcher to collectively construct findings based on their interaction, dialogue and interpretations. Supporters of the interpretivist philosophy argue that humans give different interpretations to the world they live in. This is what leads to the formulation of research questions based on a comprehensive review of literature related to decisions, vocational education, parental influences, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors. This led to the development of a conceptual framework, paving way for the adoption of a suitable research approach.

Interpretivism studies impact. Stavropoulos (2016), used the interpretivist approach to study the impact of institutional practice, legally significant actions and practices of political institutions on legal rights and obligation. This is the same way this research aims to understand the factors which influence (impact) the decisions of parents towards vocational education. Despite the criticisms of the interpretivist philosophy, there is no denying that it has immensely influenced the development of the social science and has

helped our understanding of the contemporary social world (Chowdhury, 2014). Interpretivism deals with interpretation of events (Matta, 2015). It can be the interpretation participants give to events around them and the interpretation the researcher gives to participant responses to questions.

Interpretivism has been criticized because of its subjective nature which gives room for bias, and that primary data cannot be generalised (Klein & Myers, 1999). The reliability and representativeness of the data is greatly undermined. On the positive side, a high level of validity is associated with primary data generated via interpretivism (Collins, 2010) because such studies tend to be honest and trustworthy. Interpretivism studies usually gives room for the adoption of multiple methods in order to reflect and interpret different aspects of the issue (Dudovskiy, 2019). This characteristic is what has informed the mixed method approach adopted by this research. The flexibility of being able to adopt multiple strategies of data collection has made it possible for robust analysis of the data.

Secondary data is very important for the interpretivist philosophers. In this type of research, meanings tend to appear towards the end of the research (Dudovskiy, 2019). This research has reviewed secondary data extensively in chapter two which is the literature review chapter of this study. The interpretivist philosophy is best suited to answer the question: What are the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North Local government of Plateau state, Nigeria? It will allow for multiple analysis and looking into the individual perspectives of participants with the aim of identifying themes and developing theories of factors which influence the perceptions of parents in Jos-North local government towards vocational

education. The multiple approach used in interpretivist research allows for a suitable approach to data collection which will be discussed in section 4.3.

4.3 Research Approach

To understand the relationship between theory and research, it is important to explore the pivotal roles played by the philosophical foundations of the deductive and inductive research approaches (Ketokivi and Mantere, 2010). Saunders et al. (2012) has identified common approaches in scientific research, namely, deductive, inductive and abductive approaches.

4.3.1 Deductive Approach

Deductive approach involves the development of a theory which is subjected to empirical testing through observations of facts and data collection (Saunders et al., 2012). The deductive approach is mostly used in the natural sciences, where explanations of a phenomenon is based solely on laws. A deductive approach relies on the operationalization of concepts, such that it enables the measurements of facts in a quantitative manner (Creswell, 2013). The deductive school of thought argues that problems are best solved when they are reduced to their simplest form, also known as reductionism or operationalization. The deductive does not appear to be best fitted for this research because of its use of hypotheses formulation and testing of theory.

4.3.2 Abductive Approach

Unlike the deductive approach which moves from hypotheses formulation to theory testing, and data collection or the inductive approach which starts from data collection and proceeds to theory building. Abductive approach begins with the observation of a

phenomena before working out a possible theory to explain how the phenomena must have taken place (Farquhar, 2012; Stevenson, 2005). The abductive approach is developed from theoretical and explanatory ideas resulting in close examination of cases (Bryman, 2012; Yin, 2009). The abductive approach is not concerned with logic, rather, seeks to generate a new theory or modify an old theory through rigorous and additional data collection. Based on the arguments presented above, the abductive research approach is not suitable for this research.

4.3.3 Inductive Approach

The inductive approach derives theory from data by looking at patterns in collected data, unlike the positivist approach which is based on hypothesis formulation and theory testing (Farquhar, 2012). According to Johnson et al. (2007), an inductively developed theory is more like to fit with collected data. The questions accompanying this research are rooted in theories related to decision-making to guide the researcher's understanding of the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in the study area. Following this line reasoning puts this research into the trajectory of the inductive research approach. Some of the research questions guiding this study may not be grounded in theory, still, an inductive approach seems the most suitable approach to follow in finding answers to them. This research does not seek theory or hypotheses testing, rather, seeks to contribute to the existing theories on decision making and vocational education.

Focusing on the decisions of parents towards vocational education in the context of Nigeria and Jos-North in particular, where there is very little existing literature, inductively reasoning will be most suitable because data can be generated, and

theoretical themes suggested by the data can be reflected upon. Because this study is not only concerned with the contexts at which the phenomenon is occurring, it is more likely to use qualitative methods of data collection to establish different views of the phenomenon (Bryman and Bell, 2012). To understand the socio-cultural and socio-economic factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education, an inductive approach gives leeway and insights into the phenomena. In line with the argument put forward by Saunders et al. (2012), a research which seeks to understand why something is happening, rather than describing what is happening, needs an inductive approach rather than a deductive approach.

The outcome of any research is not only influenced by the approach of philosophy adopted, it is also influenced by other methodological choices such as research design, and the techniques for data collection (Creswell, 2013; Robson, 2011; Saunders et al., 2013). The researcher must be conscious of the fact that the reliability, replicability, and validity of a research depends on the type of design employed. Methodological choices are guides on how a researcher wants to find or provide answers to his or her research questions (Creswell, 2013; Modell, 2010). Methodological choices must contain clear objectives derived from the research questions, clearly specifying sources of data collection, method of analysis, ethical issues and constraints or limitations experienced by the researcher. Saunders et al. (2012); Easterby-Smith, (2010); and Yin (2009) give example of limitations to include access to data, access to time and access to funds.

4.3.4 Chosen Research Approach (Mixed method)

Mixed method approach affords a researcher the opportunity to use multiple sources of information from multiple approaches to gain new insights into a social phenomenon

(Axinn et al, 1991; Edin, 1999; Pearce, 2002). Mixed method approaches expand the scope and improves the analytic power of studies. Mixed method approaches cover a limitless array of combinations; from sampling, data collection, and data analysis techniques (Sandelowski, 2000). Mixed method approach can be combined at the paradigm level, at the method level, at the technique level, at the sampling level, varied types of instruments can be combined, data analysis can be mixed, and data collection can also be mixed.

The mixed method of data collection is a subset of the multimethod research where what is learned from one method is integrated in the application of another method (Axinn & Pearce, 2006). The goals of mixed method is to show that combining multiple methods is possible to gain insights into a phenomena, to provide operational examples of mixed methods so that interested researchers can use same methods as starting points and to highlight development in research strategies to stimulate continued methodological innovation (Axinn and Perce, 2006). There are varied reasons why using a mixed method of data collection is considered important in research. Axinn et al (1991) explained three reasons why a mixed method of data collection is important.

Mixing the data collection approach provides information from one approach which was not identified in a different approach used. Non sampling error is reduced because information is provided from multiple sources and to ensure that potential bias coming from one approach is not replicated in an alternative approach. Rosenbaun (2001) noted that although it is impossible to eliminate bias in research, replicating empirical evidence across approaches characterised by various forms of bias substantially increases confidence in the empirical results. Axinn and Pearce (2006) further added

that mixing multiple methods affords opportunities to use the strength of one method to balance out the weakness of another. Mixing methods also produces a comprehensive empirical record about a topic (Axinn & Pearce, 2006). The aim is to counterbalance strengths and weaknesses experienced in measurement, and hypotheses testing.

Many social researchers use the words Qualitative and quantitative to divide the world of approaches to research, but Bazeley (2003) argue that this dichotomous distinction is not useful, this is because it refers only to whether data were coded into text or numbers. While the distinction between statistical analysis and interpretative analysis is somewhat useful, the result depends on the researcher. In fact, Lieberman (1992) argue that as investigators choose among approaches to research problems, they make distinctions among types of research designs, data collection techniques, data coding strategies and different analytic approaches. According to Axinn and Pearce (2006), using the words 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' to summarize between distinctions in research approaches such as: survey interviews versus unstructured interviews, large versus small samples, hypotheses testing versus hypotheses generation or description are far too simplistic. They argue that each research project varies along different dimensions.

Data collection methods can be presented as surveys, semi-structured/unstructured interviews, observations, focus groups, and archival/historical research. The distinctions among this methods depends on (1) whether the data comes from primary or secondary sources (2) whether interviews are structured or unstructured (3) whether people are observed or interviewed (4) whether the researcher interacts with the study population (Axinn & Pearce, 2006). Surveys have a high level of structure; the

interviewer is usually involved, and the researcher has low involvement with the study population. Braun & Clarke (2014) explain that surveys can be qualitative. Participants type or handwrite their responses to each question. This will basically be an interview. Qualitative surveys can be distributed as hard copies, Email surveys or online surveys. Less structured interviews have a low level of structure, the interviewer is always involved at a high level with study population. Focus groups have low level of structure. The researcher is always involved with medium involvement with the study population (Axinn & Pearce, 2006). Observations have low level of structure where the researcher is usually involved at a high level with the study population. In the historical/archival methods, structure and involvement is out of the researcher's control with a low involvement with study population. Axinn and Pearce, (2006) explain that it is possible to collect data on large numbers of people using any type of these data collection methods and they could all be coded as numbers or analysed as texts.

The mixed method approach is often considered as the 'third approach' in social research. The mixed method has been considered as a viable alternative to the quantitative and qualitative paradigms because it has produced a platform of ideas that are credible and distinctive (Denscombe, 2008). A mixed method approach involves the use of quantitative and qualitative methods in the same research. It also clearly specifies the sequencing and priority given to quantitative and qualitative elements of data collection and analysis. In a mixed method research, the way the quantitative and qualitative data are used is explicitly described with heightened emphasis on how the triangulation is used and pragmatism is adopted as the philosophical underpinning of the research (Johnson et al., 2007; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).

The mixed method approach also involves collecting and analysing both quantitative (closed ended) and qualitative (open ended) data (Creswell and Plano, 2011). Collecting and analysing data must use the appropriate procedures and tradition for each method such as ensuring that the right sample size for quantitative and qualitative analysis is used (Johnson et al., 2007). Data collection, analysis or discussion should be integrated (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). Procedures which implement quantitative and qualitative components concurrently or sequentially with the same or different sample must be used and the procedures must be framed within philosophical/theoretical models of research (Greene, 2008). The mixed method approach can also be used in different ways.

A convergent mixed method involves collecting both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time and separately analysing both types of data, comparing results side-by-side, transforming qualitative data set into quantitative scores or jointly displaying both forms of data (Creswell, 2015). The explanatory sequential method can also be used by initially collecting quantitative data followed by qualitative data where the qualitative phase builds directly on the results of the quantitative phase. In the exploratory sequential method, the quantitative result is explained in more detail through the qualitative data (Creswell, 2003). The exploratory sequential approach can be used to develop survey instruments where exploratory data is first collected and analysed and the results used to develop a survey instrument which is then administered to the sample population (Saunders et al., 2007).

In what he called “simple-minded triangulation, Silverman (1993) advised against these types of triangulation where one kind of data is simply used to corroborate or refute the results of another without attention to the embedded situated nature of accounts.

Qualitative data can also be used to augment a quantitative outcome. This is called the embedded design where qualitative and quantitative data is collected, but qualitative data is used to augment the outcome of the study (Palinkas et al., 2011). The mixed method can also adopt a multi-phase approach where community-based stakeholders participate as co-researchers where they provide input about their needs, ways to address them and how to implement change (Mertens, 2009). The use of a mixed method approach involves carefully selecting what addresses the research aim. This is because there are advantages and disadvantages to the use of the mixed method approach.

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Adopting a mixed method approach presents various advantages. Creswell (2015) discussed that a mixed method can be used to understand contradiction between qualitative and quantitative data, reflects the participant's point of view, adds breadth to multidisciplinary research, adaptable to many study designs and aids in collecting rich and comprehensive data. Creswell (2015) adds that at the same time a mixed method approach can also present certain challenges which may increase the complexity of evaluations, lead to reliance on researchers outside main area of study and it can also require increased resources.

Different research has successfully adopted the different methods of the mixed method approach. The mixed method systematic review was used to study workplace-related generational characteristics of nurses (Stevanin et al., 2018). A mixed method triangulation design (QUAN + QUAL) was used to study the psychological distress in quarantined patients with COVID-19 and its association with peripheral inflammation (Guo et al., 2020). Same design used to study the quality of life of patients with head and neck cancer (Nayak et al., 2019). Another research by Subedi (2016), explained the holistic idea of a mixed method design as the third research community of knowledge claim. A fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis was used to investigate big data analytics and firm performance (Mikalef et al., 2019).

A mixed method was also used to study residential satisfaction in affordable housing (Riazi & Emami, 2018). A sequential explanatory mixed method design was used by Inuwa et al., (2018), to study the effects of the demonstration method on student's achievement in financial accounting. Same design was used by Hadian et al. (2019), to study the impact of adolescent pregnant women's health practices on maternal, fetal and

neo-natal outcomes. In a cross-sectional study, a mixed method approach was used to analyse postal survey data to study the experiences of mothers (problems) in early breastfeeding. Sloodman (2018) has clearly explained that simply because the qualitative and quantitative research are generally connected with two different perspectives does not mean that they cannot be combined.

Mixed method allows the use of inductive and deductive methods (Alavi & Håbek, 2018) because qualitative research follows inductive logic while quantitative research follows deductive logic. In a mixed method study, results from a qualitative component can be used to inform a quantitative component. Some have been described as qualitatively driven inductive mixed-method and multiple methods research design (Cheek et al., 2015). They posit that not having a mapped out, neatly named and classified method from the onset does not make it a sloppy research, rather, rigid and inflexible approaches to research design work against optimal research outcomes. A suitable often applied method in research is Qualitative Content analysis (QCA), a method which can be used for both inductive and deductive analysis (Gläser-Zikuda et al., 2020).

In the use of QCA, findings can be quantified if it is what the research question requires. The QCA is also suitable for the different designs within the mixed method approach as described by Creswell, (2015). QCA can be used to handle large volume of data. Hagenauer & Hascher (2010) used the QCA to analyse (n=134) students. Inductively developed categories as used by Hagenauer & Hascher (2010) facilitates a broader understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

4.3.4.1 How the Mixed method was Adopted for this Research

According to Sandelowski (2000) mixed method approaches cover a limitless array of combinations from sampling, data collection and data analysis. Due to the heterogeneous nature of Jos-North local government, in Plateau state Nigeria, it was important to use a data collection method that was time sensitive and less expensive. It was also important to adopt a data collection method that guaranteed the safety of the researcher and assistants. Although assistants were carefully selected based on ease of gathering data from their immediate community, other methods had to be adopted to eliminate bias. Thus, this research adopted the mixed method approach, specifically, the mixed method of data collection and the mixed method of sampling strategy. The textual/qualitative survey containing the same questions were distributed both online and face-to-face. There were video conference calls and telephone interviews with about five people where the same questions were asked to each of them. Responses were written down by the researcher. Interview format was also used on respondents who could not understand English. The questions were read aloud to them, and their answers were recorded in the questionnaire forms.

The mixed method approach has been adopted to guide this study because it uses observations and theory to familiarise itself with the issues raised in the research. Themes are also identified to enable ease of investigation. The mixed method approach formulates research questions to explore the phenomena and find answers to the research questions. Data is also collected to identify patterns and relationships between the identified phenomena. It gives room for the building of theory in the form of a conceptual framework. This research took advantage of the flexibility of the

mixed/multiple method approach to achieve the goals set out for this research. It gives the researcher the freedom to mix the interpretivist method with a case study and exploratory design. It also affords the researcher the freedom to explore both the inductive and deductive method for sample size determination. It explores the freedom to collect both qualitative and quantitative data using the survey instrument.

This research used the mixed method of data collection (Sandelowski, 2000). Using the questionnaire as an instrument but combining both structured and semi-structured questions. The deductive and inductive method was used for data sampling technique. Where a deductive method (calculation of sample size) was used which is mainly used in quantitative research, then it employed the saturation method which is mainly used in qualitative methods.

4.4 Research Design

Research design is a detailed plan for how research data will be collected. Borg, Meredith and Gall, (2003), believe that research design is the bedrock of a research study. A research design has to do with how a researcher intends to provide answers to the questions raised in the research (Easterby-Smith and Thorpe, 2010). The design of a research provides a link between the chosen philosophies and the methods used to collect and analyse data. Bryman and Bell (2013); Farquhar (2012), present common types of research design capable of affecting the credibility of a research to include, experimental design, case study design, action research and survey design.

4.4.1 Experimental Design

With the experimental design, a high level of confidence is placed on statistical inferences, thereby, ensuring that established significant relationships reaches reliability (Maxwell, 2010). Experimental designs also need to achieve an internal validity which demonstrates cause and effects between two variables. The experimental type of research is often preferred in the natural sciences rather than business and social sciences because the independent variables are usually manipulated to analyse their impact on the dependant variables (Creswell, 2013). While the experimental design is associated with the laboratory, it is also grounded in hypotheses (Saunders et al., 2012). Because this research has no dealings with the laboratory, the experimental design does not appear to be best suited for this research.

4.4.2 Case study Design

The case study research design arises out of a need to study a phenomenon in its natural environment (Saunders et al., 2012). Studying a phenomenon in its natural environment gives room for the generation of relevant and meaningful theory gained through practice (Farquhar, 2012). A case study design can present an objective, yet detailed and intensive analysis of the phenomenon. According to Creswell (2013); Easterby-Smith et al. (2010), a case study design can use the structured or semi-structured interview qualitative method, to enable the researcher collect large amount of data to further the researcher's in-depth analysis of the problem. A core feature of the case study design is its ability to combine both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, which extends the robustness of the research and add to the value of its results (Yin, 2012).

Why, what and how questions are better answered with a case study design. The use of qualitative and quantitative methods implies that it accommodates both the inductive and deductive approaches to theory (Yin, 2012; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). The concept of external validity has always been the challenge experienced by researchers in case study design. The argument is whether the results from a single case can be attributed to similar cases (Gill and Johnson, 2010). From the title of this research, it be categorized as a case study research since the research is concerned with the nature and complexities of a single case, which could be a location or community, in this case, Jos-North local government. The case study design is often ladled with the issue of external validity or generalizability. The question which arises in this case, is how a single case can be represented to yield findings which can be applied more generally to other cases. This problem was solved with the adopting of the cross-sectional design.

4.4.3 Cross-sectional or Survey Design.

The cross-sectional design is also called the survey design. The cross-sectional design was adopted also, because it allowed for the multiple methods of data collection, which apart from questionnaires and structured interviewing, also allowed the adoption of other methods such as structured observations, content analysis, official statistics, and diaries. A cross-sectional design entails the collection of data from more than one case at a single point in time, collected data can be a body of quantitative or quantifiable data about two or more variable which are then examined and analysed (content analysis) to detect patterns of association (Bryman, 2004). A survey study is usually used to answer questions like how much, what, how many and where. Yin (2009), stated that it mostly used for descriptive and exploratory research.

Surveys designs allow for the economical collection of a large amount of data from a sizable population. Surveys are often obtained through questionnaires which are administered to a sample population. The survey method is easy to understand and explain. Inferential and descriptive statistics can both be used in the collection and analysis of quantitative data. (Saunders et al., 2012). Relationships and model of relationships can be explained from data collected through the survey method. In the opinion of Shaughnessy et al. (2011), a survey is made up of predetermined set of questions which is distributed to a sample, which is a representative of the entire population of interest. The attitudes and attributes of that population can be described from the information revealed in the sample analysis

Further, the attitude of different populations can be compared. Attitudes and changes over time can also be observed and recorded. The key to a great research is a good sample selection. it allows for the generalisation of findings from the sample in the population, which is the whole purpose of a survey research. The survey research is often used to explore feelings, thoughts and opinions (Shaughnessy et al., 2011). Jillian (2012), explained that more control is gained with a survey design, and if sampling is used, cost can be reduced because it allows for the generation and generalization of findings to represent the whole population. The evidence presented explained that a case study research was best fitted for the research because it deals with a location or community. Based on the topic of the research, it was identified that Jos-North is a small community which serves as the location of the research. But the case study research posed a problem of validity and generalizability.

4.4.4 Chosen Research Design

The exploratory case study design is used when there is no predetermined outcome for the research. According to Yin (2014) case studies are appropriate when answering why, what, who and how questions. The exploratory case study design aims to answer “how” and “what” questions. Some of the questions in this research contain the what questions for example? What are the factors which influence the perceptions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government? And what are the circumstances that will make parents change their decisions towards vocational education in Jos-North local government? Because this research seeks to gain in-depth and extensive knowledge of a social phenomenon, which is the lack of engagement of parents with vocational education in Jos-North local government, the exploratory case study is best suited for this research.

The exploratory case study is used to explore presumed causal links which are too complex for a survey or an experiment (Yin,2014). Case studies build or affirm theories (Eisenhardt, 2007), in exploratory case study, a theory is built from the research which is one of objectives this research aims to achieve too. Case studies provide conceptual framework rather than theoretical framework. According to Jabareen (2009), a conceptual framework is a network of interlinked concepts which when put together, provides a better understanding of a phenomenon. The aim of the conceptual framework is to provide understanding rather than a theoretical explanation. The conceptual framework is derived from many discipline-oriented theories. The idea is to analyze these theories in order to generate new interpretations and understanding.

The phenomenon under research is the lack of growth in the vocational education sector despite the many benefits accrued to it. One of the factors responsible for this lack of growth is the lack of engagement by people with vocational education. Having found out that parents are stakeholders in the education sector because they have to send their children to school, in this case vocational education, it is important to explore the opinions and perceptions of parents in Jos-North towards vocational education in order to recommend plausible solutions to the lack of engagement with vocational education.

The research adopted the cross-sectional (survey) design as best suited to achieve the aim and objectives set for this research, answer the research questions, and to make up for the apparent weakness of the case-study design. This is because of the allowance it gave to generalize findings and the ability to gather data economically from a sizable population, the ability to form models based on patterns discovered during content analysis. It gave room for comparison of the attitude of different population and it made room for the use of pre-determined questions which can be distributed with the questionnaire as an instrument.

4.5 Data Collection Method, Sources and Instruments.

Methods for data collection can either be quantitative, qualitative or both (Saunders et al., 2012; Yin, 2012). Qualitative data collection method adopts tools which aids **the researcher** gain deep rooted understanding of a phenomenon, such as semi-structured questionnaire, and interviews (Yin,2014). These methods qualify data and gain insights into people's perspectives through non-statistical inferences. Quantitative data collection method on the other hand uses tools such as the structured questionnaire or closed ended questions Creswell, 2013; Bryman and Bell, 2009). Qualitative data was

used to explore attitudes, behaviours, and experiences through open-ended questions. The qualitative method is an attempt to get in-depth opinion from participants. Taking cognisance of the importance of attitudes, behaviours and experiences in research, the qualitative method was adopted to make answering the research question easier.

4.5.1 Secondary Data

The use of secondary sources for data collection gives the researcher the advantage of a wide range of sources. The input of an extensive breadth and input from experts and professionals is of utmost importance (David, 2013). A major weakness is associated with secondary method of data collection, which is that the researcher is not involved in the data collection process. An advantage of the secondary sources of data collection, as identified by Saunders et al. (2012), is that sources of literature aimed at a wider audience are easier to locate than primary literature.

The secondary sources which have been used in this research are journals (Online) from Cardiff Metropolitan University Electronic library and hard copies from Cardiff Metropolitan print and post service. Other sources of data collection are books, journals and online thesis from the British Library, books from the London School of Commerce library as well as articles and reviews. Others include newspapers and magazines. This study, however, assumes that secondary data may have a low response rate to questionnaire and may lead to questionable validity and reliability of the data. It is against this background that primary data is also adapted to raise the validity and reliability of collected data as well as to make analysis easier.

4.5.2 Primary Data Source

The primary data is crucial in this study, in that, data was generated from responses collected directly from the targeted respondents in North Central zone of Nigeria, specifically Jos-North, in Plateau state. Sourcing data primarily does not only capture the opinion, feelings and thinking of these beneficiaries but also present the true and current scenario in terms of attitude and behaviour of these parents. primary data were collected in six weeks of field work. the main instrument used for data collection were semi-structures, open-ended questionnaires. The data included the views of parents about vocational education, their personal experiences and their demographic information. Questions included issues such as parent's educational backgrounds, occupational backgrounds, level of income, gender, age, religious background and cultural orientations.

Respondents also provided information on their knowledge and perceptions towards vocational education. Opinions were drawn on the traditional on the political, cultural, traditional and religious inclinations which forms the decisions of parents towards vocational education. The open question or open-ended questionnaires were used to gather information of the perceptions of parents, and the factors which influences them to take certain decisions regarding vocational education. Other data gathered to complement the secondary data included information on how, and the extent to which the socio-economic and socio-cultural factors of education, income, occupation, gender, age, religion and governance influence the decisions parents make towards vocational education.

4.5.3 Validity and Reliability of Primary Data Collection Instrument

To ascertain the content of and appropriateness of the survey questionnaire for this study, it was subjected to a crucial process of validity before being taken to the field. My director of studies and supervisor scrutinised the survey questionnaire, offered suggestions and corrections before confirming that the survey questionnaires were appropriate, valid and reliable enough to achieve its intended objective. The primary data collection process started with a pilot study in 2015, after the initial conceptualisation and elaborate phase of the research project in 2014. The process of data treatment and analysis began with the assembling of the interview/questionnaire data gathered from the field, coding and thematically categorizing themes from the analyses.

A total of 500 copies of the survey questionnaire was generated and administered to parents in the Jos-North local government area of Plateau state, Nigeria. To ensure that the survey questionnaire was reliable, that it was able to receive the expected information from respondents, it was subjected to the test-retest reliability test (Bobko, 2001; Ogolo, 1996, Leedy, 1989). This was done for maximum satisfaction that the questionnaire would achieve its purpose. This test was carried out in Terminus market and business district; the largest and busiest market in Jos-North local government, where people from different works of life are found.

It involved distributing questionnaires to staff of Zenith bank, to the cosmetics shops on the third floor and the traders in makeshift stalls by the roadside. These questionnaires were administered to them twice. The first and second phases of the test administration was carried out in one week. A total of 70 questionnaires were

distributed to respondents. Analyses of results showed that responses to the questions were not the same. The questionnaire was redesigned, and redistributed, which more precise and fewer questions.

4.5.4 Population of the Study

Being an exploratory case study/survey design, primary data was generated for the analyses. Therefore, in view of the content, extent and time of the study, it was necessary to determine an appropriate and manageable, but relevant population. Thus, the population for this study were parents who have a child or more, and are residing in Jos-North metropolis, in North-Central Nigeria.

4.5.5 Determination of Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Generalization are usually not based on data collected from the entire population defined by the research problem, but rather, on a finite part of the population called sample. Sample therefore being a subset of the population would be used here in drawing inference about the population parameters. Using the entire population of parents in Nigeria would rather be impossible, impracticable and above all very expensive, hence, the population would be carefully defined to include all necessary variables needed for the study. To draw a precise inference about the population (parents) in the zone, a sample size (n) was determined statistically with the aim of getting a true representation of the population.

4.5.6 Sample Size Determination

One of the concepts which drives the question of how much data is needed for a study, is saturation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Saturation is a concept developed from grounded theory (Bowen, 2008). Saturation is the point when new data fails to generate new

information (Sandelowski, 1995; Morse, 1995; Creswell, 2015). In explaining how much data is required to reach saturation, Morse (2000); Braun & Clarke (2006) identified that a broader scope of study requires more participants while an awkward or sensitive topic will require less participants. What the researcher needs is to make sure that there is enough data to tell a rich story (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). The aim of this research which is to identify and discuss factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government is extremely important but cannot be considered sensitive. This informs the choice to collect more data than the interpretive philosophy recommends. The research aims to gather enough data to tell a rich and robust story.

Sample size, especially in qualitative research has been a topic of debate for many years. Creswell (2015) stated that the traditional stance on size is not to specify a stance but to consider size as a function of when saturation occurs in a study. Creswell (2015) recommended that the design of the study should determine size. For a narrative study, one or two individuals. 3-10 individuals for phenomenology, 20-30 for grounded theory research, a single culture sharing group for ethnography, and four or five cases for case study research. This is opposed to the quantitative research where it is advised to collect as large a sample as possible because with a large sample size, the sample reflects the characteristics of the population and there is less room for error. Fowler (2008), stated that the appropriate calculation for sample size determination should be on the consideration that the sample will be evenly divided on a question, sampling error and a confidence interval. This is where the advantages of the mixed method approach are explored because the deductive and inductive method is used to determine sample size.

In a similar research which used the Social Ecological Model (SEM), Dunn et al., (2014) used a sample size of 43 participants divided into 6 focus groups on a qualitative assessment. Suderlund (2017), reviewed 10 articles in a literature review. Kumar et al., (2012) adopted a sample of 2,079 participants using random selection. Langille & Rodgers, (2017) conducted interviews with 14 participants with a convenience and snowball technique on a cross case/mixed strategy. Ohri-Vachaspati et al., (2015), surveyed 560 children, using random selection on a cross-sectional design. Qualitative research which is oriented towards positivism will require large samples than in-depth qualitative research does so that a representative picture of the whole population under review can be gained (Boddy, 2016).

Although qualitative research typically involves the use of small samples, the choice of a sample size is still an important consideration because it determines the extent to which the researcher can make analytical generalizations, case to case transfer, external statistical and internal statistical generalizations (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Sample size should not be too large that it is difficult to extract thick rich data, it should also not be too small that it is difficult to achieve data saturation. The four distinct approaches to determining sample size which include: rule of thumb, conceptual models, numerical guidelines derived from empirical studies and statistical formulae (Sim et al., 2018). They conclude that determining sample size a priori is an inherently problematic approach, especially in more interpretive models of qualitative research.

According to Malterud et al., (2016), a study needs the least number of participants when the study is narrow and if the combination of participants is highly specific for the study aim. According to Morse (2000), the broader the scope of the research, the

longer it will take to reach saturation. Basically, choosing a sample size should depend on the scope of the research, the effect of the scope of the research, and the nature of the research (Malterud et al., 2016; Morse, 2000). Since the effect of the scope of a study, how or to what extent it occurs cannot be considered separately from that of the topic, it may not be realistic to rely on generic determinants of sample size except as provisional guidelines or springboards (Bryman, 2012). A more particularistic focus on the unique characteristics of the study at hand and the way it inter-relate should be considered (Sim et al., 2018; Sim et al. 2018b).

Existing research project sample size estimation during the design phase of a study prior to data collection, but does not provide simple and reliable ways to determine the adequacy of sample sizes during and/or after data collection (Guest et al., 2020). The shortcomings and challenges associated with existing methods of achieving saturation in data led guest et al. (2020) to propose alternative methods which are: base size, run length and new information threshold. To achieve a manageable sample size (n), the validity of the conclusion of any research is governed among other considerations, by the quality of data used (Gupta 1978). Primary data is necessary in this study; therefore, effort was made to ensure that the data collected were accurate, reliable and thorough. To achieve this, a manageable sample size (n) was obtained using Scott (2013) formula for sample size determination for unknown target population.

The calculation below was used as a benchmark to ascertain the number of questionnaires to be distributed. A total number of 400 questionnaires were sent out of which 393 were returned before the time set down for data collection elapsed. The data was coded, and information extracted. Saturation was achieved at 41. This means that

the final number of participants used for the research was 41 which was the point where no new information was found. The exploratory case study design adopted for this research allows for the use of 3-5 participants (Creswell, 2002; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). However, the instrument for data collection, which is the qualitative survey, allows for large samples.

Sample Size = (Z-score) * StdDev * (1-StdDev) / (margin of error....

Where:

Z score = the (signed) number of standard deviations an observation or datum is above the mean

StdDev = Standard deviation

Margin of error = Level of error allowed

Confidence level corresponds to a Z-score

The sample for the study, therefore:

Sample Size = $\frac{(Z\text{-score}) * StdDev * (1 - StdDev)}{\text{Margin of error}}$

Margin of error

Where:

Z score = 1.96 (i.e. 95% confidence level)

Std.Dev = 0.5

Margin of error = 5%

$n = \frac{(1.96) * .5(.5)}{.05}$

(.05)

$$n = (3.8416 \times 0.25)$$

(0.0025)

$$n = (0.9604)$$

(0.0025)

$$n = 384.16$$

Sample size = 385

The topic of this research which explores the factors that influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government, shows that it is a broad study which explores multiple variable at the same time as it affects parents living in Jos-North local government. Morse (2000) stated that a broad topic requires more participants, while an awkward or sensitive topic requires less participants. The research is broad but not sensitive which means that a sub-section of a large population can be used to extract relevant information. What matters is that the researcher has enough data to tell a rich story (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). The focus is to determine when saturation occurs (Creswell, 2015). The choice of a sample size is in line with what Fowler (2008) said that researchers should collect as large a sample as possible to reflect the characteristics of the population and leave little or no room for error.

The initial size based on Scott (2013) calculation for an unknown population was needed to reflect the diversity and characteristics of the, but to extract information based on the research question, a smaller size is needed. Using this method will determine if

generalizations can be achieved. Section 4.5.8 shows the breakdown of how questionnaires were distributed. After distributing 400 questionnaires of which 393 were returned, the responses were analyzed. Because of the nature of the questions, responses were categorized to fit into the multi-level categories of the Social Ecological Model. Chapter five of this research will discuss more on the analysis of results.

4.5.6.1 Justification for chosen sampling strategy

In explaining how much data is required to reach saturation, Morse (2000); Braun & Clarke (2006) identified that a broader scope of study requires more participants while an awkward or sensitive topic will require less participants. This research is broad but cannot be classified as a sensitive topic. What the researcher needs is to make sure that there is enough data to tell a rich story (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). The need to collect data to tell a rich story is the reason why 400 questionnaires had to be sent out based on Scott (2011) formula for the determination of an unknown target population. Creswell (2015) stated that the traditional stance on size is not to specify a stance but to consider size as a function of when saturation occurs in a study. This means that it is not the amount of data collected that matters, it is the quality of information extracted from the data that matters.

Sample size should not be too large that it is difficult to extract thick rich data, it should also not be too small that it is difficult to achieve data saturation (Sim et al., 2018). 400 hundred questionnaires are too much to extract interpretative data. 41 is a reasonable number especially after saturation was achieved. Sim et al., (2018) concludes that determining sample size a priori is an inherently problematic approach, especially in more interpretive models of qualitative research. This problem was encountered in this

research which is why a mix of sampling strategies was chosen as a unique way to achieve the aim and objectives of this research. According to Morse (2000), the broader the scope of the research, the longer it will take to reach saturation. Basically, choosing a sample size should depend on the scope of the research, the effect of the scope of the research, and the nature of the research.

The scope of the research is in Jos-North metropolis which is the most populated local government in Plateau state. The scope of the research is also quite broad because it explores multiple factors including socio-cultural factors, socio-economic factors, socio-political factors. This informed the decision to determine sample size using deductive method but only for questionnaire distribution or primary data collection but using saturation method during the data analysis stage.

4.5.7 Sampling Technique

Sampling is an important step in the research process because it informs the quality of inferences made by a researcher from the underlying findings. The decision on the number of participants to select and how to select these numbers is difficult for both qualitative and quantitative research. Sampling decisions where elements of both the qualitative and quantitative data are combined at some stage of the research are typically more complicated (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Discussions on sample size determination tend to be dichotomized, a practice which Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2005) described as representing a false dichotomy. Both random and non-random sampling can be used in quantitative and qualitative research, the same way small samples can be used for quantitative research and big samples used for qualitative research.

Sampling can be classified according to a) the time orientation of the study components e.g. does the qualitative and quantitative components occur simultaneously or sequentially) b) the relationship between the quantitative and qualitative sampling, e.g. identical or nested. From the works of Patton (1990); Miles & Huberman (1994); Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2007), twenty-four sampling schemes have been identified for use in both qualitative and quantitative research. These schemes can either fall into the class of random sampling (probabilistic) or non-random sampling (non-probabilistic). The choice of a sampling method depends on the goal of the research. According to Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2007), if the goal is to obtain insights into a phenomenon, events or individuals, as is the case with qualitative components of mixed method research, then a purposeful selection of individuals and settings which represents and informs the phenomenon is selected.

Table 4.3 presents a summary of random probability sampling schemes as presented by Onwuegbuzie & Collins (2007).

Sampling Strategy	Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stratified 	<p>The population is divided into subsections comprising relatively homogenous groups with respect to one or two characteristics then a random sample from each stratum is selected.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-stage Random • Critical Case • Theory-Based • Snowball/chain • Random Purposeful 	<p>A sample is chosen from the random sample schemes in multiple stages.</p> <p>Settings, groups, or individuals are chosen because their inclusion provides the researcher with compelling insights about a phenomenon of interest.</p> <p>Settings, groups or individuals are chosen because their inclusion will help the researcher to develop a theory.</p> <p>Participants are asked to recruit individuals to join the study.</p> <p>Random cases from the sampling frame are chosen then a desired number of individuals to participate in the study is selected.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stratified Purposeful • Criterion • Convenience • Quota 	<p>The sampling frame is divided into strata to obtain relatively homogenous subgroups and a purposeful sample is selected from each stratum.</p> <p>Groups or individuals are chosen because they represent one or more criteria.</p> <p>Settings, groups or individuals are chosen because they are conveniently available and willing to participate in the study.</p> <p>The researcher identifies some of the desired characteristics and quotas of sample members to be included in the study.</p>
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Table 4.3: Random probability sampling schemes.

As an exploratory study, Morse & Niehaus (2009), emphasised that a research must be theory driven. If the research is focused on exploration and description, then the theoretical drive must be inductive. The component which corresponds with the

theoretical drive is the core component while the other is the supplemental component. The core is written in capital while the supplement is written in small letters. A mixed method considers primary and secondary designs. Some of the primary include purposeful mixing, theoretical drive, timing, point of integration, typological use and degree of complexity (Johnson & Christensen, 2007). Some secondary dimensions to be considered include: the phenomenon, the social scientific theory, ideological drive, combination of sampling methods, degree to which the participants will be different or similar (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).

The stratified purposive sampling is a basic tool used in mixed method approaches. Kemper et al. (2003) described it as identifying subgroups in a population and then selecting participants from each sub-group in a purposeful manner. Researchers can then identify characteristics for the sub-groups and compare across groups. There are no rules for sample size in qualitative enquiry (Patton, 2002). A sample size of between 15-30 tend to be common in qualitative research which aims to identify patterns across data (Gouch & Conner, 2006), while more than fifty participants will constitute a large sample in qualitative research (Sandelowski, 1995). The inductive nature of this research means that it tilts towards qualitative methods. According to Patton (2002), the typical approach to sampling in qualitative research is purposive, with the aim of generating in-depth understanding of a topic.

Sampling requires thinking about inclusion and exclusion of who you want to hear from and who you do not want to hear from. Qualitative research sometimes aims to sample for diversity in perspectives (Fassinger, 2005). Participants are not sampled so that findings can be projected to others but because they consider them to be good sources

of information to advance the analytic goal. The sampling strategy in qualitative research involves the pragmatic and theoretical influences applied flexibly in a way which is justifiable in the context of the overall research design. Braun and Clarke (2014) highlights some common sampling strategies in qualitative research:

Convenience sampling: which has been described as the least rigorous and justifiable sampling method by Sandelowski (1995) is a sample selected because it is accessible to the researcher. Participants are almost always self-selected and bear no necessary relationship to the wider population.

Snowballing or friendship pyramiding: sample is built through networks of the researcher or other participants. The researcher asks participants if they know anyone who would like to take part in the survey. The invitation to take part might then come from the researcher or the existing participant.

Stratification: the aim of stratification is to ensure that diversity is incorporated into the sample. It could relate to any factor such as age or culture. It could also depend on the research topic and questions. Stratification can be demographic, location based, theoretical or phenomenal.

Theoretical Sampling: The burgeoning data analysis and theory development shapes the selection of subsequent participants to elaborate the developing theory. This is common in Grounded Theory where sampling becomes an iterative process.

Criterion Sampling: The dataset has a very specific criterion, meaning that the researcher samples for a specific event or issue. In this case, the researcher will sample all or some of the data which met the criterion.

The non-probability sampling techniques (purposive and convenience) are sampling techniques used by researchers to choose a sample of subjects/units from the population. Etikan (2016) admits that the subjective nature of choosing a sample makes it a limitation but states that it is useful when the population is very large and when the researcher has limited resources, time and workforce. It can also be used when the research has no aim of generalising results to reflect the entire population (Ashley Crossman, 2019). The choice of a technique depends on the nature and type of research. The convenience sampling is mostly used in quantitative studies where subjects more readily accessible to the researcher are more likely to be included. Opportunity to participate is not equal for all qualified individuals in the target population and results are not necessarily generalizable to the population (Wu Suen et al. 2014).

Purposive sampling is typically used in qualitative studies. Researchers carefully select subjects based on study purpose with the expectation that each participant will provide unique and rich information to add to the value of the research. Members of the assessible population are not interchangeable and sample size is determined by data saturation not by statistical power analysis (Crossman, 2017). Too much data can undermine the ability to perform thorough analysis, hence, purposive sampling of the primary population is one way of achieving a manageable amount of data (Ames et al., 2019). The purposive sampling technique is most effective in the study of certain cultural domains with knowledgeable experts within. Purposive sampling can be used with both qualitative and quantitative research techniques and the inherent bias of the method contributes to its efficiency. The purposive sampling method remains robust even when tested against random probability sampling (Tongco, 2007).

Purposive sampling has a long developmental history with many views as to whether it is simple and straight forward or complex (Guarte & Barrios, 2006). Purposive sampling is better at matching the sample to the aims and objectives of the research; therefore, the rigour of the study and the trustworthiness of the data and results is improved. This makes the research credible, transferable, dependable and confirmed (Campbell et al., 2020). Researchers who use purposive sampling face the challenge of being unable to gain access to potential interviewees, prompting Bakkalbasioglu, (2020) to suggest an alternative strategy where interviewees are used as fixers. A strategy which shortens access time and decreases no commitment of the potential elite interviewees, while earning the researcher partial insider status.

The purposive sampling method is best suited for this research because of its usefulness in selecting a manageable sample from a large population (Etikan, 2016). The population in Jos-North is large, and the population of parents is unspecified. The opportunity to carefully select participants who add value to the research (Crossman, 2017) is instrumental to this research. The sample size is also determined by saturation (Crossman, 2019) as stated in section 4.5.6 of this research and helps to avoid the use of too much data (Ames et al., 2019). The flexibility of being used in both qualitative and quantitative study (Tondco, 2007) means that it fits into the mixed method approach adopted for this research, as well as the inductive approach. It also matches the aims and objectives of this research which is to explore the factors that influence the decisions of parents in Jos-North local government towards vocational education.

This research also adopted the stratification sampling strategy to ensure diversity is incorporated (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Parents were carefully selected to relate to level

of education, level of income, type of occupation, gender, religion and age. The snowball sampling strategy was useful because parents were able to identify other parents who may be interested in participating in the research. Due to the stratification method used, some areas like markets were very diversified, therefore, the convenience method was used for parents who identified as parents and were readily available and willing to participate in the research.

4.5.8 Conceptualization of the Project

This research was conceived in 2012, aimed at understanding the reason for the lack growth recorded in the educational system in Jos-North local government in Nigeria, specifically in the vocational educational sector. Jos-North served as a good case considering the reoccurrences of crisis in the community since 2001, which has claimed lives and properties, and further left the town impoverished and under-developed (Ojukwu and Onifade, 2010). Jos-North local government is also a place where the researcher grew up, meaning that she experienced the town become a shadow of itself, with an increase in school dropouts and touts along major streets and business areas. The high rate of suspicion has thrown a dark shadow in the town, thereby creating divided settlement along religious lines. Access to key resources and stakeholders makes it easier to collect primary data.

During the pilot study, socio-economic issues such as the closing down of vocational institutions or major vocational institutions being converted to academic institutions, continues decline in enrolment into vocational education, and the continues negative perceptions towards vocational education were identified. This phase of the research was meant to serve the purpose of providing partial information which will set the

empirical pace of the study and set the stage for the main data collection. The major areas considered as key hubs were visited and assessed in terms of accessibility, time and proximity. The presence of a high number of parents situated in areas close to each other was considered.

Before the pilot study took place, three research students who were studying in University of Jos, at the time were recruited and groomed on the specifics of the research, the data gathering instrument, as well as the purpose of the research. These three researchers were Muslims. This was done to reduce suspicion and build the confidence of respondents. This was because at the time of this research tensions and suspicions were still high, with Christians and Muslims avoiding areas dominated by people from each religious group. These researchers helped in stratifying those areas into accessible areas like Islamic schools, and households in those areas. They had easy access to the imams and heads of communities in those areas like Anguwan Rimi, Anguwan Rogo and Anguwan Rukuba. This gesture created awareness about the research project and made it easier for the collection of data in those areas.

During the pilot phase, the researcher decided to organize meetings with these three researchers and other university graduates as a strategy to create awareness for the study. This was meant to get people to view the research as a needed project. The strategy paid off because the message was spread, people were happy to receive incentives such as free pens and writing pads to encourage participation in completing the questionnaire. People were informed about the purpose of the study and how it may be instrumental to creating awareness towards solving a major problem in the

communities. The pilot study enabled the researcher to identify key hubs, and stakeholders in the Jos-North local government area.

4.5.9 Field Observation/ Survey Questionnaire

The nature of this research proved that a wide range of opinions were needed to gather adequate data towards achieving the aims and objectives set out for this research. While the survey method was found most appropriate for data collection, distribution of questionnaires to reach more people within a short period of time proved difficult. It was considering this that made the researcher to adopt a multiple of methods for distribution of questionnaires.

First, Jos-North Metropolis was stratified into different strata. This was done because of the focus of this research which is to investigate the impact of the educational level, occupational type, gender, income level, age and religion on parents' decisions towards vocational education. The stratification of Jos-North was divided into markets, banks, hospitals, academic institutions, vocational institutions, hospitals, and religious houses. The convenient sampling method was also adopted in places like markets where data was gathered from parents who were most conveniently available and willing at that point in time. In other places like schools and banks, the snowballing method was used. This non-probability sampling technique was important for such formal settings. The researcher worked with people already known in those places, who became instrumental in recruiting their colleagues to complete the questionnaires. Most of the people in the formal sectors asked that they take the questionnaires with them, complete at their own convenience, then gave a time and date to come back for collection.

The instrument for data collection, which was the questionnaire, had to be carefully designed. The words had to be short, direct and precise, the spacing had to be enough to allow the respondent room for writing, and the number of questions not too much but enough to answer the questions raised in the research. A qualitative survey questionnaire was selected as most appropriate to answer the research questions. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section contained questions aimed at answering the research questions raised in this research, while the second section contained information on the demographic breakdown of respondents.

Although the sampling technique as adopted from Scott (2013) specified that a sample size of 385 was appropriate since the target population of parents was unknown. Data gathered from the national population census and data gathered from the national bureau of statistics recorded the number of people in each local government and plateau state in general, it did not, show data on the number of people who were parents, or those who had school aged children at the time of the last census recorded in Nigeria in 2016. To gather as much data as possible, four hundred (400) questionnaires were printed and distributed. This was done with the knowledge that the questionnaire distribution methods adopted for this research did not guarantee that all the questionnaires will be received within the specified time. It was better to have more data than less.

Location	Name of location	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaires returned
Markets	Terminus Market	50	12

	Kwararafa Market	50	10
	Katako Market	50	21
Sub-total	3	150	44
Banks	Skye bank	50	20
	GT Bank	50	13
	Union Bank	50	18
	First Bank	50	19
Sub-total	4	150	70
Vocational Institutions	Industrial Training Fund	50	18
	Zibeh Institute of technology	50	17
	ECWA information and computer science college	50	20
Sub-total	3	150	55

Academic institutions	Effective International College	50	17
	Albayan Islamic sec. sch.	50	17
	Federal Government College	50	13
	Nurudeen Islamic College	50	16
	Calvary Science College	50	12
	Arewa Model Private Sch.	50	17
Sub-total	6	300	92
Hospitals	Our lady of Fatima hospital	50	12
	Jos University Teaching Hospital	50	11
	Bingham Hospital	50	10

Sub-total	3	150	33
Religious Houses	Emmanuel Anglican Church	50	11
	Akbarudeen Mosque	50	12
	Cocin Church	50	27
	Masalacin Juma'a	50	19
	Living Faith Church	50	15
	Central Mosque	50	15
Sub-total	6	300	99
Total	25	1200	393

Table 4.4: locations where questionnaires were distributed.

After a quick verification of the questionnaires which were collected on the spot or collected later, it was discovered that only 393 were considered admissible. This did not prove to be much a problem because 393 was still acceptable sample size recommended by Scott (2013) for an unknown population, in this case parents in Jos-North local government. Table 4.4 breaks down the locations, clearly showing how the locations were stratified to enable the questionnaire to reach a cross-section of people from different socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

4.6 Method of Data Analysis and Presentation

The retrieved questionnaires were coded and presented in tables for further analysis. Apart from the use of tables to organize and present data, charts were also used to provide quick view of the data for easy comparison with other data and aid in drawing a quick and relevant decision. For data treatment and analysis, a thematic inductive approach was used, which began with the assembling of collected data and categorizing them into themes from the research questions. A thematic inductive analysis was adopted because according to Yin (2012), it is theoretically flexible. This means that thematic analysis can be used within different frameworks to answer different types of questions (Bryman and Bell, 2012; Farquhar, 2012). The thematic analysis was also selected because it addressed the research questions which relates to parent's views and perceptions towards vocational education (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2012). To identify patterns and themes across the collected data, a rigorous process of familiarization, coding, search for patterns, reviewing, name definition and naming and finally writing up findings in an organised manner was carried out. Figure 4.1 shows the step by step

approach to inductive thematic analysis.

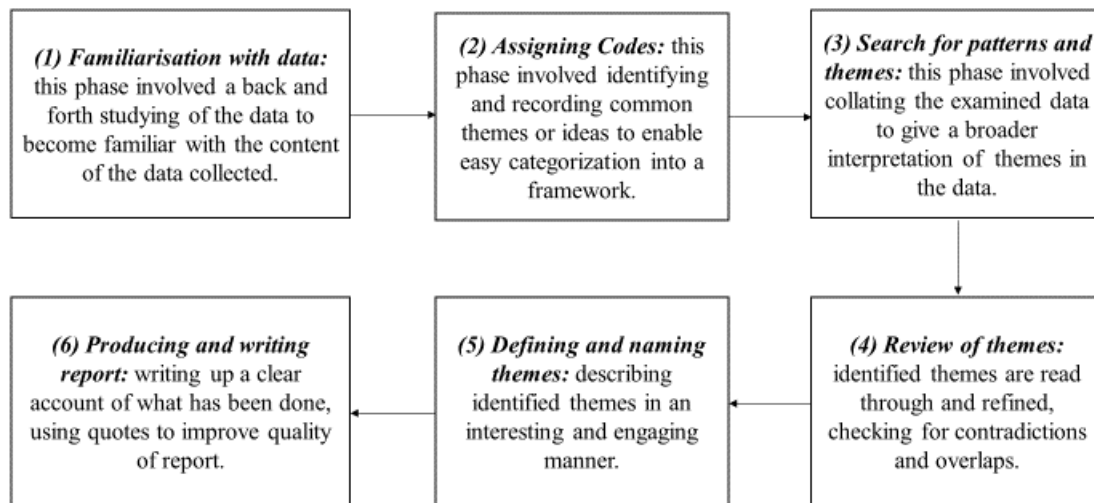


Figure 4.1: Approaches to thematic data analysis

Figure 4.1: Approaches to Thematic Data Analysis

Although the process of thematic analysis is done in a sequential manner, with each phase building up to the next, it also involves a lot of back and forth. Analysed data were treated and analysed into main themes and emerging themes.

In addition to the main themes gathered through the questionnaire based on the research questions, several additional themes emerged. These themes were not completely independent of the original theme, but they were very useful as it went in line with the aims and objectives of this research. These themes emerged because of the careful design of the research questions, which gave room and freedom for participants to express themselves. These emerging themes are displayed in Table 4.5 below.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Bryman and Bell (2007), stated that in every research, the issues of ethics and objectivity are critical and crucial elements that must be considered. The principles and rules guiding research methodology must be adhered to, such as the safety of the participants in the study and following generally laid down ethical standards. In accordance with this, the study was conducted in line with Cardiff Metropolitan University ethical guidelines; more so, confidentiality of the participants was protected.

Participants in this research were made aware of their right not to participate, to withdraw or skip questions they were uncomfortable with. There was no form of coercion used neither was the research conducted using covert methods. In this research, participants were informed of the title and purpose of the research as a strictly academic exercise. They were meant to preview the questionnaire to see that there was no space for personal information such as names and address, or personal contact information such as e-mail or telephone number. The researcher, however, made sure that her contact and the contact details of Cardiff Metropolitan University were boldly displayed on the letter as well as on the participants' signature sheet.

4.8 Limitations of the Study

During carrying out this research which sought to investigate the factors that influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education, several challenges were encountered.

Firstly, there was lack of accurate secondary data in the archives of the national population census and national bureau of statistics showing the number of people who

were parents in Jos-North local government. This affected the sampling technique chosen. The sampling method as presented by Scott (2013) made it easy to calculate a sample which represents an unknown population.

Secondly, language proved to be a barrier. Because the questionnaire was written in English language, some respondents could not read the questions, while others needed a bit more explanations on what some of the questions meant. The researcher had to be present to explain and sometimes complete the form as the participant answers the questions orally. Because this happened quite a lot especially amongst the market women and men, it slowed the pace of data distribution and collection. It helped that the researcher and some of her assistants could speak Hausa and major indigenous language like Berom and Irigwe languages. This made translation of English words easy.

Thirdly, time was a major constraint in the data collection stage. There was so little time to collect so much data. This is one of the reasons why recruiting extra trained and reliable hands was needed, to cover more areas within the time available. This is also the reason why the stratified random sampling method was chosen to make it easier for the researcher and her assistants to cover areas based on how the areas were divided. A lot of effort was put into making sure that the sample size covered a cross-section of the population, cutting across different classes, educational level, occupation, and income level.

Fourthly, the nature of the environment after the constant crisis gave birth to suspicions, especially along religious lines. Some households may have produced some interesting results because of stay at home parents. For safety and security reasons, households

were not visited, rather more areas considered as hubs for a cross-section of people were chosen to cover up for that limitation.

This research only made use of the survey method through the instrument of a semi-structured qualitative questionnaire. It is perhaps one of the weakness of the cross-sectional design that the researcher has no way verifying the sincerity of answers provided by participants. The qualitative use of open-ended questions, in the questionnaire though was very efficient in answering the questions raised in the research, the research could not present or quote extracts of all responses to such open-ended questions, therefore, the researcher coded the responses into similarities in responses and the most similar was extracted and quoted in the research. There is a chance that some important extracts which may be important might not be included.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has explored different methodological choices, with emphasis on research philosophy, research design, research approach, data collection and analysis methods used for this research. The aim of the adopted research methods is to contribute to theory and practice. The chosen methods used to identify and analyse factors which influence the perceptions of parents towards vocational education were critically done while taking into consideration, the validity, reliability and generalizability and replication of results. Knowing that the credibility of the research depends on using the most appropriate methods, the choice of adopting the methods used in this research was clearly justified. For instance, the suitability of using multiple methods for questionnaire distribution, and the descriptive analysis tool used to understand the

factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government area of Plateau state was clearly justified.

The adoption of Nvivo and SPSS and Excel as tools for analysing data was considered as the most appropriate technique capable of meeting the objectives of this study. The supervisory expertise, technology and techniques adopted in the methodology gives the research an added quality. The research objectives of the research were best achieved by putting the study in the line of social science reasoning by adopting interpretivism.

Chapter five focuses on data analysis, interpretation and the presentation of findings using graphs, charts and tables.

Research Method	Mixed Method approach
Participants	cross-section of males and females
Location of research	Jos-North local government
Number of participants	393
Types of information to be collected	Responses from participants via questionnaire containing demographic information, open and close ended questions on general perceptions towards vocational education

Types of data collected	Questionnaire containing open and closed ended questions
Procedure for organising data	Input qualitative data into SPSS, and Nvivo, software package, content and thematic analysis of qualitative responses
Data analysis procedures	Coding qualitative data, contingency tables and frequencies, descriptive analysis, comparing groups, relating variables qualitatively developing themes
Other software programs used	Microsoft excel data analysis tool pak
Type of design	Exploratory Case study/cross-sectional or survey design
Permissions for gaining access to participants	Copy of participants sign page indicating willingness to participate of their own free will.
Sampling approach	Convenience, stratified, snowballing, purposive sampling.
Instruments used to collect data	Questionnaire, containing open-ended and closed ended questions

Data analysis procedure	Descriptive statistics, coding, thematic analysis
Approaches to establish validity and reliability	Internal validity by supervisory team, pilot study
Research philosophy	interpretivism (practical, realistic and sensible)

Table 4.5: summary of research methodology

Source: Author

Chapter Five: Analysis and Presentation of Findings

5.0 Introduction

Data analysis for this research which investigated the factors that influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government of Plateau state, Nigeria. The research set out to answer the following questions: 1) what are the factors that influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government, Nigeria. 2) Do some factors influence the decisions of parents in Jos-North local government towards vocational educational more than others? 3) Do parents prefer vocational education or general (formal) education? and what are the reasons for their preferences? 4) what are the circumstances which would prompt parents to change their preferences? The analysis will be presented based on the responses to the qualitative survey questionnaires and broken down into sub-sections.

This chapter presents the data as it was analysed. The scope of this research is limited only to parents who live in Jos-North local government of plateau state Nigeria. Analyses in this research are strictly based on participant's (parents) responses to the research. This chapter of the analysis will only present the findings without drawing any real commentary from the literature. The interpretation of the analysis will be fully explored in chapter six of this research. For objective one, the coding and thematic analysis will be presented with respondent's comments highlighted for effect. Other objectives such as objective two will use the hierarchy chart to present the different levels of influences for each factor. Question three and four will continue with the thematic analysis and presentation of respondent's comments.

The research instruments used for this chapter will be presented in the appendix section of this research

5.1: Factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government.

Survey Question: What factors would influence your decision to enrol your child in vocational education?

Since independence, efforts have been made by different governments to promote vocational education in Nigeria, beginning with the publication of the Ashby Commission report in 1960 (Nduka 1982). Despite the obvious importance of vocational education, it does not receive adequate attention and recognition in Nigeria. (Maduekwe, 1993). The reasons have mostly been attributed to inadequate infrastructures, inadequate time for lecturers to carry out research, learn new skills and abilities and generally upgrade themselves; lack of sponsorship from tertiary institutions for lecturers to attend seminars and conferences; and lack of reward for excellence. One of the aims of this research was to explore the factors which influenced the decisions of parents towards vocational education, having identified gaps in the literature which failed to address the point of view of parents in the growth of vocational education.

In response to research question one which is 1) what are the factors that influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government, Nigeria? to answer that question, parents were asked what factors would influence their decision to enrol their child ward in vocational education. Using Nvivo as the instrument for data analysis, parents' responses were coded into themes (Thematic

analysis) a multiple coding method was used. First, themes were thematically coded into socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political factors. Then it was further separated into the five levels of The Social Ecological Models of intrapersonal, interpersonal, community, institutional and policy levels.

5.1.1 Socio-Economic Factors

5.1.1.1 Money

Under socio-ecological factors, the major factor which influenced the decisions of parents towards vocational education was money. According to respondent 1 and 5, the only reason why vocational education would be an option is due to *“lack of funds for formal education or if it is the only one they can afford.”* as for respondent 17 and 36, the only reason why vocational education will be considered is for it to be a channel for *“alternative source of income to promote empowerment and self-reliance.”* Respondent 17 appears to understand the importance of vocational education but will still not engage with it except as an alternative. For other participants like participants 20, 21 and 27, they were more interested in price, cost and availability of funding. For respondent 20 who will be influenced by *“availability of funding”* suggests a call for the intervention of policy makers to introduce the funding system.

Respondent 21 and 27 who indicated that that they would be influenced by *“cost”* and *“price”* seems to suggest that if the price of vocational education is too high, they will go for formal education and if the price or cost of formal education is too high, they will enrol the child in vocational education. Other respondent like respondents 4, 29 and 39 were not specific about what factor would influence them. For them, the *“economic situation”* in the country would be the influential factor which will determine if they

will enrol their child in vocational education. Again, this crosses over to the policy makers and the need for a multiple model like the Social ecological Model. The economic situation may influence the parent's occupation through promotion or even loss of job. This will be further discussed in chapter 6 of this research.

5.1.1.2 Occupation

For some parents, the factor which will influence their decision to enrol a child in vocational education was more personal to the type of occupation which the parent engaged in. According to respondent 10, need to carry on the family business was most important for them as seen in the response "*to take over the family business from me.*" respondent 10 seems to believe that by doing so the child can "*create a better future for themselves.*" The participant in this case is a blue-collar worker who may have enjoyed the dividends of working in the blue-collar sector and attended a polytechnic. The confidence displayed by the parents is so much that it is his wish to see his child take over the family business.

5.1.2 Socio-Cultural Factors

5.1.2.1 Religion

For some parents, the factor which will influence their decisions towards vocational education was more about the ethics of vocational education. According to respondent 21, "*morals and discipline*" was an important factor in deciding whether the child will be enrolled in vocational education. This seems to indicate a religious parent who believes that when a child is engaged in practical learning, they are completely occupied both in spirit and body.

5.1.2.2 Age

For some respondents, age was a factor which will determine their decision towards vocational education. although no explanation was given as to why age mattered to them. For respondent 11 who mentioned age as a factor without offering any explanation as to why age was so important, further analyses also revealed that respondent 11 also mentioned “*time*” as an important factor. Age seems to be tied to the passing of time or the availability of time. As a female under 30 who has gone through vocational education after her first degree, respondent 11 may also be saying that through her own personal experience, engaging in vocational is the best use of time available.

Tied with age as a socio-cultural factor which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education is the theme of time. According to respondents 11, 16, 27, 33, time as a factor which will influence their decision towards vocational education was for “*utilizing limited time*” and for “*convenience*”. This seems to imply that vocational education according to these parents offers convenient learning and that one can achieve a lot within a short time of learning.

5.1.2.3 Personal factors

Respondent 7 and 10 had personal factors which will influence their decisions towards vocational education. for respondent 10, vocational education will be attractive because it will be an avenue to equip the child with skills to take over the family business and create a better future for themselves. For respondent 7, it was more of a cultural view where it is the role of the parent to make decisions for the child. This is opposed to the

parents who stated that what the child wants will be the most influencing factor for them. In this case whatever the parent decides is deemed best for the child.

Personal factors are not only reflected from the parent angle but also from the child's angle. This means that the major factors which will influence the decisions of parents towards vocational educational education revolves around the child. This factor was most popular for majority of the parents in the study. The child factor was mostly inter-related with the parent factor, such that the parent's choice depended on the child's choice, most especially regarding performance in formal education and signs of talent towards vocational education. This factor was revealed by respondent 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 29, 33, 38, 39, 40, 41, and 5. This point of view was revealed through sentences like:

"Their genuine interest in learning said vocation. My decision would be based on the request of the child. It's up to them to decide whether to get a proper education or go the vocation route." (Participant 19).

For other parents, the factor which would influence them towards vocational education would be if the child shows signs, talents and promise towards vocational education. this factor was revealed in responses such as:

"child's disposition and show of passion for vocational activities at an early age" (respondent 2)

"If I see potential towards a skillset in my child, I'd enrol them to help them hone those skills" (respondent 23)

“The child's likes, leanings, tendencies. For instance, if a little child likes sewing, fashion, then I would enrol that child in a tailoring class.” (Respondent 38)

An interesting factor raised alongside the child's display of potential and talent towards vocational education was the notion that vocational education caters to the needs of disabled individuals. This point was revealed by respondent 6 with the response:

“If I notice my child is creative with his hands or physically challenged in any way” (respondent 6)

Another point raised in the personal factor is the child's ability. About two parents stated that they would lean towards vocational education if the child was not doing well in formal education. this was revealed through statements like:

“If they have a flair for other things and not doing well in regular school” (respondent 22)

“The child's academic record in conventional schools.” (respondent 18)

The socio-cultural factors have shown that parents are influenced by various factors to determine if they will enrol their child towards vocational education. As revealed above, some factors are made independently by parents based on their own personal factors like taking over the family business, while others are influenced by the child's personal choice to be enrolled in vocational education, the child's flair and display of talents or flair towards vocational education as well as the inability of the child to cope with formal education.

5.1.3 Environmental Factors

For some parents, environment was an important factor in their decisions towards vocational education. For respondent 20, “*accessibility*” was important. This may suggest that if the vocational education is accessible to the parent, they will consider enrolling the child into that vocational education. For other participants like respondent 21, “*location*” location was an important factor in determining if they will enrol their child into vocational education. The location may mean that it is located close to the place of residence, or whether it is in an affluent or strategic area. For participant 28, the response “*the country I live in*” seems to suggest that being in Nigeria is a factor which will influence the decision to enrol the child in vocational education or not.

5.1.4 Socio-Political Factors

Many themes were tied to socio-political factors because most of the factors were dependant on policy makers. For some respondents, the economic situation in Nigeria meant that parents had to seek alternative forms of education which will make them less reliant on the labour market. This was illustrated in the response from respondent 13 who said that “*the unemployment in my country has made vocational training essential.*” Other respondents like respondent 18 stated that the influencing factor will depend on the “*future prospects of the vocation.*” Respondent had similar opinion with the use of the word “*relevance.*” This may suggest that not all vocational education or training are relevant. Other participants like respondent 27 and 35 were more interested in the curriculum factor. According to them, “*the scope of the curriculum*” was an important factor capable of deciding if they will enrol their child in vocational education.

The scope of the curriculum was further highlighted by participant by participant 5 who stated that the status of the vocational study was an important factor capable of influencing their decision towards vocational education. this was illustrated in the statement “if the status of vocational education is on the same level as general (formal) education.” For other parents, the only way they will consider enrolling their child in vocational education is if they are left with no other choice. This was illustrated with statements such as “if it is only educational choice available”. This response suggests that this parent is not one who is interested in vocational education and would only engage in vocational education if there is no other choice. As discussed in the literature review of this theses, it is difficult to separate one factor from another because most of the factors are interwoven and interrelated this will be further discussed in chapter six of this research.

Some parents such as respondent 27 said that the safety standards present in vocational institutions will decide whether they will enrol their child in vocational education. this may be accrued to the fact that vocational education encourages the use of different type of machines, some of which requires thorough training on how to safely use them. Other reasons may be that they have witnessed accidents happen in vocational training centre due to lack of training standards

5.1.5 The influence of perception

Perceptions are shaped by several factors which may be external or internal, such as geographical, economic, social, geographical, cultural, demographic, psychographic and behaviouristic (Reisinger and Turner, 2003). The influence of perception covered

many themes ranging from perceived advantages of vocational education and the perceived status of graduates of vocational education.

Positive perceptions of vocational education: In response to the question what factors would influence your decision to enrol your child in vocational education? respondent 1 stated that vocational education is a better choice for long planned breaks or unplanned breaks such as that caused by an unexpected pandemic. Towing a similar line, respondent 31 used the words “*Knowing that school is not meant for everyone. I’ll make sure the child at least has a vocation to fall back on.*” To imply that vocational education is a good back up plan in case formal education fails you. Based on the perception that vocational education provides opportunities for entrepreneurship and development in the labour market (Colley et al., 2003) respondent 32 stated that the factor which will influence their decision to enrol their child in vocational education is “*To enable them have skills that they can either use to become entrepreneurs or be capable to move up the corporate ladder should they choose to go that route.*” Respondent 36 simply stated that vocational education encourage independence, therefore, it will influence the decision to enrol the child in vocational education.

Respondent 13 stated that the practical aspect and ease of learning presented by vocational education would be a factor which will influence their decision to enrol the child in vocational education, a point which was backed by respondent 16 with the words “*hands on training*”. Respondent 13 used the words “*Knowing that vocational education is more practical than general education and it is easier for children to understand.*” Respondent 14 was more concerned with the financial advantages when she stated that “*financial independence and personal growth*” would be the influencing

factor. Respondent 26 stated that the potential for vocational education to build capacity is an influencing factor for him.

Wholistic education: these were the words used by respondent 36 to suggest that he will consider vocational education if proves capable of providing wholistic education. a similar view was presented by respondent 9 who suggests that he will be influenced into enrolling the child in vocational education if it presents a blend of both vocational and formal education. This was represented in the words “*access to formal education.*”

Quality of vocational education: for respondent 3 and 36, the quality of vocational education was the most important factor. For respondent 36, the standard/pedigree of alumni from such vocation will be most important to him. This was represented in the words “*Quality of former students who have passed through the same institution.*” The

Safety standards: For respondent 27, the quality and enforcement of safety standards in such vocational institution is paramount for him.

Type of vocational education: for respondent 9 and respondent 40, they were more interested in the type of vocational education. according to respondent 9 the “*specialty of such vocation*” was most important to him. This may entail that such a parent will choose a vocational institution specialised in auto-mechanics than that specialised in sewing. Parents may choose vocational institutions specialised in bricklaying and plumbing than those specialised in cooking and baking.

The interdependent nature of these factors shows that it is difficult to isolate a single factor which stands independently on its own to influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government. the best approach would

be to investigate if some factors have more influence on the decisions of parents towards vocational education than others. it is important to show how these factors are related using the Social Ecological Model. Using the Social Ecological Model will make it easier to separate each factor, not as an independent factor, but to fall into the categories of either intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional/organisational, community and policy level. This model can also be used to find out which factor (s) or category is most influential. This is tackled in section 5.2 of this chapter.

5.2 Most Influential to least influential factors that influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education.

Survey question: Considering the factors you mentioned in question 1 above arrange the factors below from 'Most influential to Least influential'

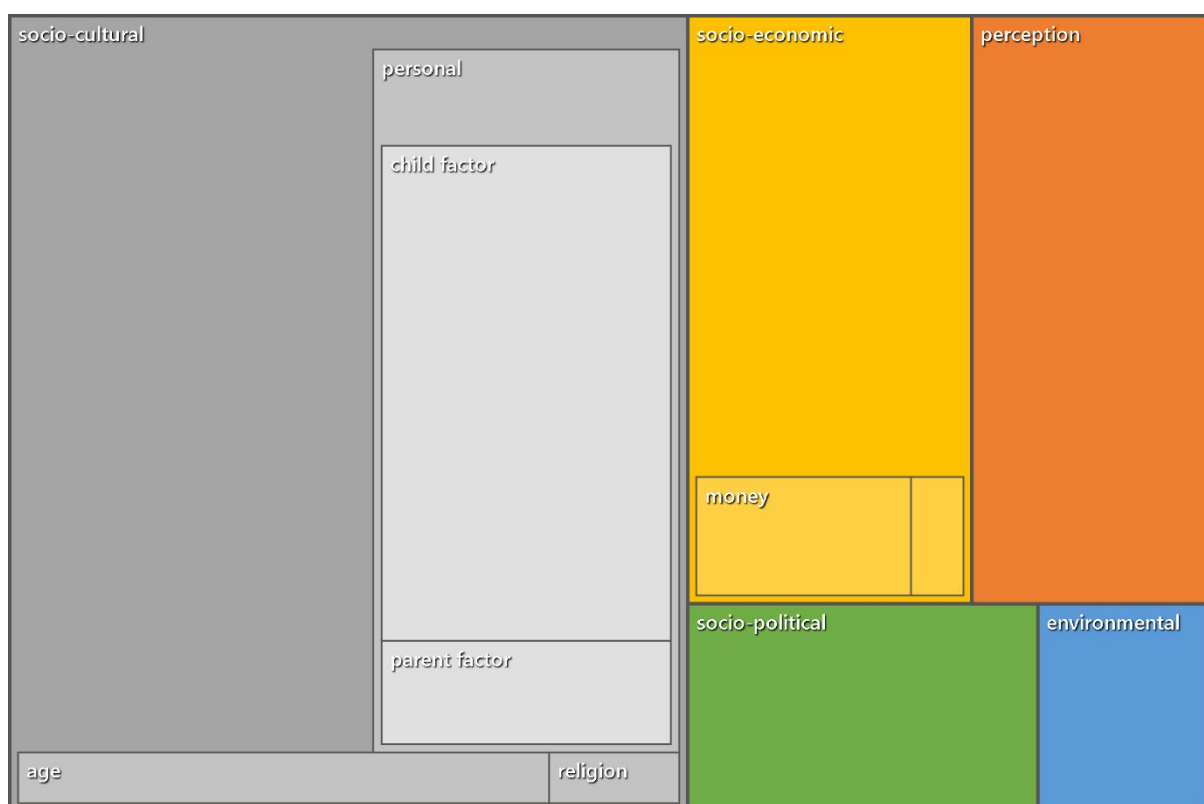


Figure 5.1: Hierarchy of Most Influential to Least Influential Factors

From the hierarchy chart presented in figure 5.1, socio-cultural factors are the most factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education. Under socio-cultural factors, factors which revolved around the child were most popular. The child factors included: what the child wants, the child's performance in formal/general/conventional education and what is best for the child. socio-cultural factors also covered age, and religion. Socio-cultural factors were followed by factors revolving around the perception on vocational education. These covered points including the quality and image of vocational education, the quality of graduates from vocational education, wholistic nature of vocational education, and type of vocational education. this was followed closely by socio-economic factors.

Socio-economic factors covered money and occupation. It was the third most influential in the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government. this was followed by socio-political factors and environmental factors being the least influential. Table 5.1 shows the numerical breakdown of the hierarchy according to files and references.

Name	Files	References
Environmental	5	5
Perception	16	19
socio-cultural	27	37
socio-economic	16	18
socio-political	8	10

Table 5.1: breakdown of most influential to least influential factors towards vocational education.

The breakdown from the hierarchy chart and the table shows that the decisions for parents to enrol a child in vocational education are more influenced by socio-cultural factors and least influenced by environmental factors.

5.3 parents' preferences for vocational education or general education

Survey question: If you had to choose between vocational education and general education for your child, which would you choose? please give reasons for your answer.

In response to the research question: Do parents prefer vocational education to general education? and what is the reason for their preference? 24 parents indicated that they prefer general education to vocational education as against the 11 parents who said they preferred vocational education.

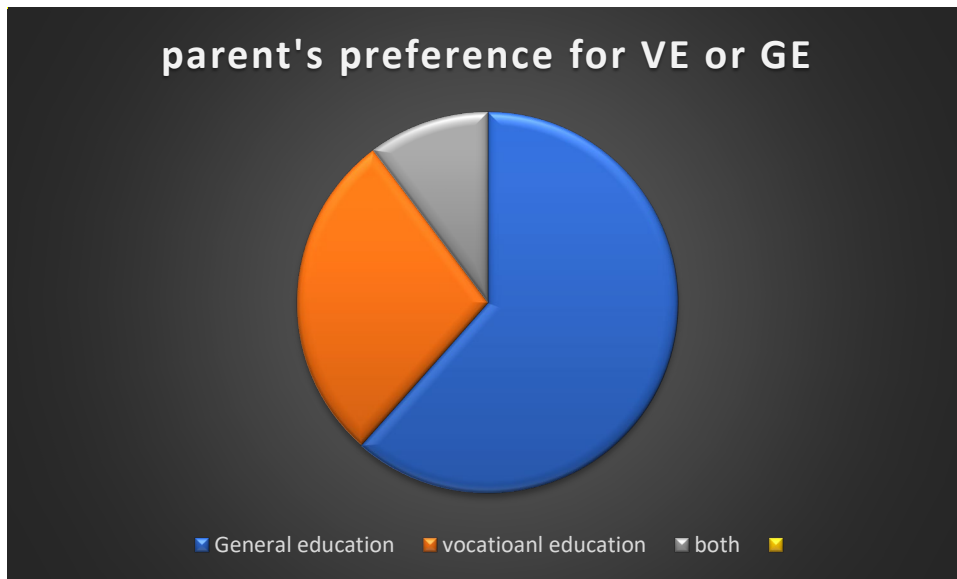


Figure 5.2: Showing Parents Preference for General Education over Vocational Education.

5.3.1 Reasons why parents prefer general educations

Parents who indicated that they preferred general education to vocational education gave different reasons for their choice, choices ranging from outlining the limitations of vocational education as against the strengths of general education, to the personal experience and observations of parents. Others stated that vocational education can be done later while general education is a better foundation. Others simply outlined the advantages of general education as the reasons for their choice. Others said that general education is their choice because it is what is valued by the society. Others stated that general education gives the children more choices.

Advantages of general education: Respondent 1,20 and 22 were some of the parents who stated the advantages of general education as against the limitations of vocational education. This was revealed through sentences such as:

“Because VE might narrow interests and opportunities, while general education will broaden their choices and help them find the perfect fit for their skill set.” (Respondent 1).

“I believe is more encompassing while vocational education is more specific. A child should know a lot of stuff before they chose one to become an expert in” (respondent 22).

“Because I believe it is broader so would give the child greater opportunities in life. Vocational training may be more restrictive.” (Respondent 38).

Parent’s personal experiences: For some parents, their preference for general education was because they have experience with general education and have never engaged with vocational education. another parent stated that she prefers general education because she has observed that that is what will suit them. This was revealed in statements such as:

“It's the option I have experience with. I know nothing about vocational education.” (Respondent 18).

“I've met them, and I know this would work better for where their interests lie.” (Respondent 39).

Vocational education as an addition to general education: For other parents, vocational education was a better option only as an addition which can be done after general education has been acquired. This was revealed in the following sentences:

“Vocational education can be built later when the foundation of GE is achieved.”
(respondent 2).

“Because they could always choose/decide to take a vocational training later in life by themselves. But general education equips them for that and more.” (respondent 20).

“So that from there, he would in turn go for the one that properly suits him which becomes an area of specialization/vocation.” (respondent 34).

Room to acquire specific skills: Some parents like respondent 32 believed that general education gives room for students to acquire areas of specialization and that general education is a steppingstone to excelling in vocational education. This was revealed in the following sentences:

“The reason is subjective to course of study. Take engineering for example. During study, there are practical (vocation like) classes that are done. The child having done all those classes can find that one they are interested in and go deeper in that.”
(respondent 32).

Strengths of general education: Other parents like respondent 21, 9, 37 and 8 simply outlined the strengths of general education using words such as *“more choices”*, *“all-encompassing.”*, *“ease of specialization”* and *“this is quite varied and leaves room for different options”* to explain why they would prefer general education to vocational education.

Societal values and perceptions: For parents like respondent 40, the societal perception of vocational education determined why they would choose general education over vocational education. In his response, he stated that he would choose

general education over vocational education *“Because that’s what is valued in our society”*

5.3.2 reasons why parents prefer vocational education

Advantages of vocational education: For most of the parents who stated that they would choose vocational education for their child/ward over general education, the strengths of vocational education were at the core of their choice. For parents like respondent 13, 16, 23, 24, and 28, there are many advantages why vocational education a better choice is. This was revealed in responses such as:

“This is because it places the child in the part of life, he/she chooses. He/she after long years of training would have become so conversant with the rudiments of the vocation.” (respondent 13).

“Because what the child shows interest in will be adequately attended to with hands on practical during training.” (respondent 16).

“It’s more focused” (respondent 23).

“More tailored based on displayed interest and natural skill of child” (respondent 24).

“It broadens their scope” (Respondent 28).

Societal demands: Other parents like respondent 26 stated that present demands from the society requires individuals with skills acquired through vocational education. This was revealed in the following sentence:

“Because the world we live today requires people with talents and skills, great ideas and technical expertise to survive in any form of economy globally” (Respondent 26).

Parent's personal experiences: Some parents also indicated that their personal life experiences propelled them towards vocational education. According to respondent 27 *"With life lessons learnt, I wish I did vocational education when I was a kid. I don't want my children to make the same error. It's an immediate source of revenue and can make one self-employed"*. This response is laced with regret and it appears that the parents want to make sure that the child is offered a better opportunity than they had. This may be caused by reasons such as unemployment. A point which was revealed by respondent 10 who said that he will choose vocational education *"Because there are not enough jobs to go around in the formal sector."* This factor is usually controlled by the economic situation which is also determined by government policies.

Both are important: For parents like respondent 12, 17, 19, 35, there was no need to choose one because both general education and vocational education are useful to the child at different stages in life for different purposes. According to respondent 17 *"I wouldn't want to be left with that choice as both can go side by side."*, while respondent 19 simply said *"I'm in between. I'd prefer they have both."* While it may appear that parents preferred general education to vocational education, some of the parents who preferred general education were not completely opposed to vocational education. Most of them saw vocational education as a worthy alternative or addition. This group are noted as the group most likely to change their minds if circumstances which led them to choose vocational education changes.

5.4 Factors/circumstances which will make parents change their decisions towards Vocational education

Survey question: If you had to change your choice in Question 3 above, what are the reasons/factors that would make you change your choice?

The aim of this question was to follow up on parents who made certain preferences in question three above. If parents prefer vocational education, what will make them consider general education? and for parents who prefer general education, what will make them choose vocational education? As seen in question 3, parents who preferred general education were in the majority. The presentation will begin with parents who preferred general education and factors which will make them consider vocational education.

5.4.1 Factors which will make parents change their choice of general education to vocational education.

Better quality of vocational education: For parents who preferred general education, various reasons were given for why they may choose vocational education instead of their preferred choice. These reasons ranged from the better quality of vocational education to inability to afford their preferred choice. Other reasons include what the child wants, unavailability of general education, if perceptions change, if standards fall, lack of employment opportunities and what the child needs. For respondents 1, 32 and 39, they would change the circumstances which would make them change their mind would be if vocational education presents a better quality of education. This was revealed in the following comments:

“if the vocational education is a nice field and there are not many people in it”
(respondent 1).

*“reason for change of choice would be having vocational classes that also go deep into
the theories of why things are done the way they are”* (respondent 32).

*“if more attention is paid to standardizing vocational education in the country so it has
some tools of formal education”* (respondent 39).

The child’s interest, needs and wants: Other parents stated that despite their preference for general education, if the child shows interest in vocational education, is not coping with formal education, or displays talents or a flair for vocationally inclined activities, then they will change their minds regarding their choice of general education. some of this was revealed in the following statements:

“The child wanting to go there” (respondent 18).

“Already expressed that is if the child is struggling with general education” (respondent 22)

*“Other than removing their brain and replacing it with Einstein’s, I don’t see what else
can be done of the child is not educationally inclined and is good with their hands.”*
(respondent 31).

*“My choices would change considerably because of my son’s passion/submission to the
aforementioned”* (respondent 34).

“If the children interests change” (respondent 39).

“If the child performs poorly or shows no interest to formal education” (respondent 41).

“If my child's interest is on vocational training” (respondent 6).

“If I believed my child's learning needs would best be met in vocational education.”
(respondent 8).

Affordability: For some parents, they would change their mind if they could no longer afford their first choice of general education. for them it was all about affordability. Respondent 11 simply stated *“affordability”* in response to the question, while respondent 5 stated that he will change his mind if he *“can no longer afford the first choice.”* Respondent 9 stated that he can only change his mind if he *“became impoverished and could not afford fees for a general education.”* For respondent 21, it was not only about affordability, but how the education is paid for. He stated that vocational education may become attractive because graduates of vocational education are not saddled with student debts. This was revealed in the statement *“Most vocational study folks have no student debt.”*

Lack of alternative choice: Respondent 20 stated that the only reason they will change their mind is if they have no other choice, or if the standard of general education falls such that they are left with no other choice than to choose vocational education. This was revealed in the following statements: *“The unavailability of general education.”* For respondent 5 “if the standard of general education falls” she will consider changing to vocational education.

Change in perceptions towards vocational education: For respondent 31 and 40, changing their mind about choosing vocational education depended on a change in perception towards vocational education.

“Again, I think it is a culture thing. In the United States, many people using their hands for their trade bank more money and make their own hours.” (Respondent 31)

“How our country perceives vocational education” (Respondent 40)

No prospects: For respondent 36, lack of employment experienced by graduates of general education will be a reason why he will change his choice of general education *“Nigerian society and unemployment.”* this parent appears to be aware of the large scale of unemployment and sees vocational education as an escape.

5.4.2: factors which will make parents change their choice of vocational education to general education.

Parents who indicated that they prefer vocational education gave different reasons why they may change their mind from their original preference or choice to general education. some of the reasons given by parents include:

The choice of a much better educational option: For respondent 10 and 28, the only reason why they will change their mind is if there is a much better option for education. these educational choices must be top class or world class. In the words of respondent 10, *“If my child is going to school abroad.”* For this parent, the only education that tops vocational education is one outside the shores of Nigeria. Only then will general education be attractive for this parent. A similar line of thought was displayed by respondent 28 who used similar line saying, *“Top class education at an ivy league*

school.” Like respondent 10, this parent believes that only an ivy league education is worth giving up vocational education for and since all the ivy league colleges are outside Nigeria, then sending the child abroad is the only way they can choose vocational education.

Vocational education not working: For respondent 4 and 14, the reason they will choose general education instead of vocational education is if vocational education falls short of expectation. For respondent 4 “government unable to provide employment opportunities” will be the deciding factor for her to choose general education. for respondent 14, if vocational education is not serving the purpose it was meant to fulfil, then there is no need to continue with it. This was revealed in the following extract *“If the vocational training isn't making my child better.”* For respondent 10, vocational education is seen as a behavioural or academic correctional facility. If this does not work, then it better to continue with vocational education.

Better opportunities with general education: for respondents like 26, he indicated that general education may offer better opportunities than vocational education. This was revealed in the following extract:

“May be because general knowledge is a good background to checkmate what my ward is capable of doing and achieving at ease.” (respondent 26)

For this respondent, he appears to be open minded about the fact that vocational education may not have all the answers. General education appears to be a better foundation to capture the child’s abilities. Respondent 28 stated that he can only choose general education if he is already *“guaranteed financial security.”* But financial

security does not mean he will automatically choose general education in the country, rather he will seek better quality of general education outside the country.

If general education becomes compulsory: for respondent 16, the only reason he will change his mind is if greater importance is given to the acquisition of a BSc. This was revealed in the following extract:

“The factor that will make me change my mind will be because of the point of qualification for BSc.”

This carries similar weight with those who said they will choose general education if it were the only option available.

Negative perception: respondent 14 stated that she may change her choice of vocational education if she finds that she is being looked down upon because her child attends a vocational school. This was revealed in her response stated below:

“People might think my child isn't educated cos they didn't go to a general school”

This is an effect of the negative perceptions' individuals have about vocational education, which will be discussed in detail in chapter six of this research.

For respondent 12 and 35, they were neutral on the matter and didn't see a reason why they had to choose either one or the other. For respondent 12, she stated that the only reason why she would change her mind is if the child is unable to cope with both general and vocational education. this was revealed in the following extract: “I would only change my choice when I see that my child can't manage both and might just need to

focus on one.” As for respondent 35, the quality and type of institution determined their choice. “*It would boil down to the institution*” was how she described her choice.

5.5 Conclusion

Based on data analysis and presentation of findings using qualitative evidence from views and responses of parents in Jos-North local government, it can be said that the decisions of parents in Jos-north local government towards vocational education are influenced by socio-economic factors, socio-cultural factors, socio-political factors and existing perceptions. It can also be said that parents in Jos-North local government are more influenced by socio-cultural factors especially factors revolving around what the child want and what the child needs. It can also be said that most parents prefer general education to vocational education because of the many limitations of vocational education as opposed to the advantages of general education. Other reasons are the possibility of adding vocational education as an addition to general education as well as parents’ personal experiences. Societal perceptions also play a role in why more parents prefer general education.

The data analysis also revealed that parents in Jos-north local government will change their mind from their preferred choice if the alternative choice proves to be better, if there is no other choice, if they can no longer afford their original choice and if the society has a negative perception or have no incentives for graduates from their preferred choice.

The findings and analysis will be discussed in detail in chapter six with emphasis on the association between the research findings and existing literature

Chapter Six: Discussion of Results and Recommendation

6.0 Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss the data which was analysed and presented in the previous chapter against the existing literature on factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education. The discussion of the findings presented in this chapter focuses on exploring, discussing and understanding why vocational education has received such little engagement despite its many benefits. This study has been articulated around the underlying factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government, Plateau state, Nigeria. These factors cut across socio-cultural, socio-economic, environmental, socio-political and perceptual factors. Based on The Social Ecological Model used as a guide to understand the multi-level/inter-dependent nature of these factors, the factors will be broken down into intrapersonal, interpersonal, organisational/institutional, community and policy level.

The Social Ecological Model will also be used to break down some of the other objectives set for this study which is to determine if some factors influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education more than others, to ascertain whether parents prefer general education or general education and why, and to determine the circumstances under which parents will change their decisions or preferences towards vocational education. The extent of the discussion on this chapter is centred on the researcher's interpretation and understanding of how participants responded to the survey questions. The data was extracted from the 293 semi-structured questionnaire

which was received from the 400 sent out using both stratified and snowballing method. 41 respondents were selected after reaching saturation point. The analysis of the data paved way for the discussion of the findings against the objectives and drawing up of meaningful conclusions. The discussion of findings is presented in the order in which it was analysed and presented in chapter five of this research.

6.1 Discussion of findings and analyses related to research objective one

Research Objective 1: To explore the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government.

Socio-economic factors: The most visible factor mentioned by parents was money. This included affordability, cost, price and alternative source of income. Dormeier and Giang (2012), tried to explain this by saying that a lack of material and immaterial capital hinders the ability for parents to make the right choices. They also stipulated that such choices are made by parents with limited educational qualifications. This may be true for respondent 1 who is in the low earning group of 30,000-70,000 and has just a university degree. An interesting feature of socio-economic factors is that they are mostly connected. The income of parents tends to influence the decisions they make (Katz, Gonzalez 2016) this may explain why parents were more concerned about money.

Parents in the study did not specifically mention their level of income as a factor which influence their decision towards vocational education. Elran, Yaari et al. (2018); Bocquier, Fressard et al. (2018), explained that while it has been found that level of income affects decision making, it does not feature in most decisions. The views of

parents are well founded because just like Mupinga and Livesay (2004) explained, it is because of the high cost of vocational education, the low rate of return to vocational education and the weak relationship between graduates of vocational education and the labour market. Hamidi (2005), added that governments of developing countries like Nigeria were advised by development agencies to reduce public expenditure on vocational education and training, and leave it to the private sector and enterprises. the high cost of capital investment needed to sustain quality vocational education cannot be left to the market forces alone (McMahon 1988).

Based on the point raised by McMahon (1988), parents who earn below 100,000 will likely not be able to afford such quality vocational education. Even parents like respondent 17 and 36 who said the need for an alternative source of income, or a backup type of education will lead them towards vocational education may not be able to reap those benefits if they are on low income. As explained by Kau (1998), explained that the benefits of vocational education cannot be assessed except the cost is first accounted for. In other words, the economic costs of vocational education will only be understood through the economic benefits of vocational education. Parents in the study tend to fall into the category described by Billet (2015), who explained that to analyse the cost of vocational education, the benefits needs to be analysed at three levels. Firstly, is the benefit to labour productivity and profit, secondly, is benefits to the employee in the shape of higher wages and salaries and lastly is the benefits to the state in the shape of revenue and taxes, duties and low spending on welfare and social security payments.

Occupation: according to respondent 10, training his child to take over from him in his occupation was a factor which would influence his decision towards vocational

education. This may be important for the parent because as Baruch et al (2016) explained, the occupation of an individual plays a significant role in shaping their confidence, personality, and finance. This parent must have achieved these qualities to be confident in his wish for his child to take over the business from him. This view is contrary to the point raised by Heigl et al. (2011), who noted that blue collar workers worked mainly for their families but did not want their children to end up in the same occupations as them or Kalff et al. (2001), who also did not only agree that parental occupation affects decisions in education.

Dabney et al. (2013) confirmed that Parental occupations tend to facilitate similar interest in future careers by their children, and that such interest will be facilitated through motivation, modelling and encouragement. Although no parent mentioned that their income influenced their decision towards vocational education, Lemos, Almeida et al. (2011) explained that a parent's level of income is connected to their level of education because it gives them access to jobs which brings better income. While parents did not specifically mention income as an influencing factor, it plays a huge role especially for parents who were more concerned about cost, price, and affordability.

Socio-cultural Factors: The theme of religion was very subtle especially as mentioned by respondent 21 who said that morals and discipline in education will influence his decisions towards vocational education. Although this point appears vague, Superdock, Barfield et al. (2018), explained this by saying that Parents themselves consider religion and spirituality to be fundamental in decision making, but they apply the concepts of religion and spirituality in vague ways. This means that religion and spirituality impacts on how decisions are made rather than what decisions are made. Respondent 21 may

understand that the child will be faced by different difficult situations in future and would need the backing of education to make it work as explained by Chan, Ananthram (2017).

The religion of respondent 21 could also play a strong influence in why morals and discipline are important to him. As a Muslim, Islam supports entrepreneurship, therefore, this father is assured of not going against religious dictates by being in favour of entrepreneurship/self-employment. Because religion is something which is unique to the individual, (Richardson, 2013), the reasons why morals and discipline will be so important to this parent may not be after all a religious based decision. Respondent 21 also mentioned price as a factor which will influence his decision towards vocational education. It is assumed, therefore, that price will be more influential than religion, thereby, backing up the position of Richardson (2013).

Age was also associated with time and convenience which was mentioned by respondent 11,16,27 and 33. Parents could be aware that they have limited time, and that with age comes loss of memories. They hope to remember the reason why they made such decisions. Parents could be aware that Older adults are more vulnerable to false memory, this means that the older an adult is, the less likely they are to remember the reason for the decision they take about their child's education (Kumar, Gupta 2017). Parents who mentioned time were in their midlife between ages 38-42. This group according to Tymula, Belmaker et al. (2013), are more risk averse than elders and adolescents. Because these group of 38-42 are in the middle age group, they are extra careful about the decisions they make, therefore, they are bound by time in their decision making.

Parents make decisions towards vocational education because they are aware that the older, they get, they less likely they are to take risky decisions. Parents in this category are also aware of the benefits of such decision and not the cost (Gardner & Steinberg 2005). The age of the child may also be the reason why parents are conscious of time. It is easier for a child above eighteen to start a beginner's course in vocational than in general education. an eighteen years old child who is just starting secondary school will be considered too old. Other parents who talked about time and convenience may be interested in the reward which comes with time. Age may be based on expected time of rewards, industry and competitiveness as noted by (Richardson, 2013).

Because education is seen as an investment, age of the child and age of the parents may be a factor which may help in actualizing that investment. Korniotis & Kumar, (2011) explained this when he said Decisions regarding education are investments. Investments skills seems to deteriorate with age due to the adverse effect of cognitive aging. Again, it is difficult to separate age from other factors because as mentioned earlier they are interdependent of each other. The concern about age and time may be triggered by the fact that the parent is growing old, sees no progress in his/her career, therefore, age may not a stand-alone point but a point which is mixed with other factors. This was supported by Korniotis & Kumar (2011) who explained that older investors also exhibit bad investment skills especially if they are less educated, earn lower income and belong to minority ethnic or racial groups.

Another factor which parents stated influenced their decision towards vocational education were personal factors. These personal factors are composed of factors around the child, and factors around the parent. The factors around the parents is mainly what

the parent wants, and thinks is best for the child. It includes the parent who wants the child to take over the business and the parent who believes it is simply the role of the role of the parent to make decisions for and on behalf of the child. Some parents stated that it is their duty to make decisions for the child, therefore, the child had no say in what decisions were taken on their behalf. This is true as was stated by Alam (2008) who stated that parents force their children into schools even when they are academically unable, while those who can afford it, send their children abroad.

This was also experienced in the researcher's experience as a teacher. Parents who believe that vocational education is a subordinate education or a place for bad boys or dropouts from general education will not allow their child attend vocational education even if the child wanted it. This is what is similarly experienced in Malaysia where at one time, people considered the image of vocational secondary school as a place for bad boys, blue collar and second-class people (Eyre, 2011). The situation is no different amongst Greek parents. Saiti and Mitrosoli (2005) stated that Greek parents believe that a university degree is a golden key to greater opportunities in life.

The most popular socio-cultural factor was what the child wants either as a personal choice, or if they believe it is what the child needs. For those who believe they will be influenced by what the child wants, the reason for this as explained by Mushabab (2012), is because parents and school counsellors have understood the influence of decisions, they take on a students' career. This also questions the autocratic image which most Nigerians parents have. They may be democratic after all or they may be changing in their approach just like parents in Malaysia. Some parents would go with

that the child wants because they have also seen that the child has special skills and that there are benefits to engaging with vocational.

This was supported by Alavi et al. (2013); Mushabab (2013), who observed that the number of vocational graduates finding jobs upon completion of training is on the increase, and their salaries is comparable to graduates pursuing academic training. They also observed that there has been an increase in career opportunities for graduates of vocational education, more than there are, for those pursuing academic education.

Environmental Factors: for parents who said location would be an influencing factor for them, they could be talking about how far whatever option is from them. They could also be talking about the status of the school. If vocational education is situated in the type of environment meant for wealthy people, then parents will consider vocational education; same as general education. The cultural capital theory explains this point where it states that through cultural capital, cultural wealth is created, thus, making recipients make decisions which furthers the cultural wealth of individuals and families. Such parents believe that being around wealth and interacting with the wealthy will help in wealth creation. Again, location may imply that parents do not want to spend too much money on transportation. This brings us back to socio-economic factor of affordability and the inter-dependence of factors and the difficulty of separating one factor from another.

Socio-political factors: for every time parents mentioned that their decision depended on the economy or standard of education, they were referring to the role of political factors. This is because Governance encompasses the mechanisms of economic, social and political relationships (Smith 2017). The activities of government has a strong effect

in decision making as agreed by (Cohen, Holder-Webb et al. 2017). With words like prospects, unemployment, scope of curriculum and relevance, these are areas controlled by government. The influence of government is far reaching to homes, employment, economy and even social interaction. The mention of curriculum is also valid because Mohammad & Ismail, (2019), stated that the Nigerian vocational education curriculum has not been integrated with employability skills which is the reason why parents will rather engage with general education than vocational education in Nigeria.

Perceptions: in the analysis, parents indicated that the way they perceived vocational education would influence their decisions towards vocational education. Perceptions positively or negatively influence parent's decisions. With parents using words like something to fall back on, skills, entrepreneurship, move up corporate ladder, hands on training, practical and easy to understand, financial independence, quality of former graduates and speciality, it is obvious that parents believe that vocational education can provide positive outcomes for their children. These influences are backed by the very concept and definition of vocational education described by Davies and Ryan (2011), who stated that vocational education is a type of education designed to prepare students for specific subjects and disciplines.

A similar view was held by Oni (2007) as regards the practical nature of vocational education. The Nigerian National Policy on Education (2008), described the wholesome nature of vocational education as an educational process which is in addition to general education. The speciality of vocational education was also confirmed by Okocha, (2009) and Sakellariou, (2006). Concerning the influence based on the quality of

graduates from vocational education, it may prove daunting as vocational education is said to be a place for bad boys as stated by Eyre (2011).

As mentioned in previous discussions, it is impossible to discuss a factor as an independent factor. It is the same case with perceptions. As Reisinger and Turner, (2003) put it, Perceptions are shaped by several factors which may be external or internal, such as geographical, economic, social, geographical, cultural, demographic, psychographic and behaviouristic factors. These factors are all linked. Therefore, The Social Ecological Model adopted to guide this research is the best approach. The SEM considers the complex interplay between factors. It allows the researcher and the reader to understand the range of factors that influence the decisions, actions and perceptions of individuals. The overlapping rings displayed in figure 3:1 of this research illustrated how factors at one level affects factors at another level.

6.1.1 Using the SEM to explain factors that influence the perceptions of parents towards vocational education

As explained in chapter three, the first level which is the intrapersonal level identifies personal factors like personal history and biological factors. Some of these factors include age, income and education. the interpersonal level deals with social influence from friends, family and norms within social networks. It examines close relationships which have the power to influence decisions of parents. Organisational/institutional level examines rules and regulations for operation. It examines environmental ethos in places like schools and workplaces. The Community level deals with the environment and services including relationship among organisations. The Public Policy Level are

Local, state, and national laws and policies. They are broad societal factors which include policies around education, economic, and social issues.

Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Organisational	Community	Public Policy
affordability		academic record	location	unemployment
age		religion	accessibility	curriculum scope
cost				prospects
alternative income				safety standards
talent				economic situation
occupation				
interest				
skills				
morals				
discipline				

Table 6.1: Using SEM to explain Factors that Influence Decisions of Parents towards Vocational Education.

Table 6.1 shows the breakdown of factors which influence the perceptions of parents in Jos-North using The Social Ecological Model. From the table, one can see that the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government are more intrapersonal followed by public policy. This gives an insight into what is most important to parents and how issues of lack of engagement with vocational can be solved. This will be discussed in the coming sections.

6.2 Discussion of findings and analyses related to research objective two

Research Objective Two: To investigate whether some factors influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education more than others.

The analysis and finding from chapter five which used the hierarchy chart on NVivo, revealed that socio-cultural factors were more influential in the decisions of parents in Jos-North local government followed by socio-economic, and perceptual factors. It has also been established in this research that most of these factors operate on a multi-level

basis where factors are dependent on each other. The review of literature revealed that influencing factors are determined by the nature of the circumstances. In some circumstance, environmental and cultural factors will be at the forefront (Thorn et al., 2012) while in other circumstances, factors like socio-economic will be the driving force for other factors like perception (Shooshtarian, 2015). Other times, the inter-relationship between these factors cannot be separated. In some cases, the hierarchy of influence will also differ based on circumstances (Bhui et al., 2012), where socio-economic will be at the forefront in some cases and at the bottom in other cases.

In other cases, the factors that influence more differ among groups. it may be between the rich and the poor, the religious and the non-religious, the educated and the illiterate (Wyatt et al., 1983). It is not surprising that socio-cultural factors were found to be more influential for parents in Jos-North in their decisions towards vocational education. Farzad Behtash et al., (2013) explained that the most proper dimension is socio-cultural because it considers beliefs, family structure, ideology, religion, ethnicity, attachment sense, cultural capital and social capital. As an individual who grew up in Jos-North and its environs, the researcher understands and has experienced the strong effect of socio-cultural factors and how it influences perceptions which has a very strong influence on the decisions of parents towards vocational education.

The influence of factors can also be determined by differences in destination (environment), community and household level (Mannan, 2017). These differences may be true for parents in Jos-North local government, but the same factors influence them in different ways. Parents in the study come from different economic, cultural, educational, religious, religious and family background, yet they are all influenced by

the same socio-cultural and socio-economic factors, especially the socio-political factors.

Using the breakdown of factors illustrated in table 6.1 of section 6.1.1, it can be seen that with the Social Ecological Model, it does not matter if the factors are socio-economic, socio-cultural or perceptual, they all affect parents at the intra-personal/individual level more than others. This is a pointer to the policy level on where reforms should be targeted at.

6.3 Discussion of findings and analyses related to objective three

Research Objective three: To understand parental preferences for vocational or general education and reasons for their preferences.

Analyses of research question three showed that majority of the parents preferred general education to vocational education. A few of the parents preferred to have both. The preference had to do with the strengths and benefits of general education as against the limitations and weaknesses of vocational education. For parents who preferred general education, the benefits of general education, their personal experiences and the perceptions towards vocational were some of the reasons given for their preference of vocational education. the review of literature revealed that parents will surely prefer vocational education because the growth of vocational education is hampered by the perception that it does not represent careers of choice, that it caters for only the academically handicapped and that it is saddled by a hugely fragmented delivery system (Leong 2011).

The review of literature has also backed the reasons why parents prefer general education to vocational education, saying that vocational education is perceived as a second-class education where cost of equipment is high and the provision of, and maintenance of training materials are consumable (Usman and Pascal, 2011). For parents who stated that there is more benefit in general education, Bennell (1996), asserted that there is no convincing evidence to show that the social rates of return (ROR) to vocational education is generally lower than that of general secondary education. It must be noted that some of the problems faced by vocational students has nothing to do with the student's ability but rather, has more to do with family circumstances and government policies, a view which was supported by Conlon (2005). For parents who gave reasons that their personal experiences influence their choice of education for their child/ward, Busemeyer et al. (2011), identified that individuals tend to support the concentration of resources on those areas closer to their own personal experiences. For parents who said that they will prefer to have vocational education as an addition after general education, Malamud and Pop-Eleches (2010), were not in support because they discovered that it was easier for the marginal student to shift from vocational to general education than the other way round, adding that marginal students are more likely to be affected by policy changes encouraging general over vocational education.

For parents who stated that they would prefer to have both instead of having to choose either one or the other, it may be a good compromise only if the government plan it properly. Due to the high-risk of return experienced in both vocational and academic education, Tuor and Backes Tellner (2010), noted that the mixed method of education

seems more viable and beneficial to employees and entrepreneurs. For the parents who said they preferred vocational education for its ability to harness talents, Okocha (2009) agreed that Vocational education was introduced as a way of reducing the waste of talent often associated with conventional schools, but despite the growing awareness of this fact, there seems to be a lack of information linking education and working life.

6.3.1 Using SEM to explain reasons for parents' preferences for general education or vocational education.

Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Organisational	Community	Public policy
Parent's personal experiences			What is valued by society	Unemployment
Beliefs about the advantages of preferred choice			Popularity of general education	
Negative preception of rejected choice			Negative portrayal of vocational education	
Limited knowledge of rejected choice			High regard for general education	
Expectations of ROI from preferred choice			Societal expectations	

Table 6.2: Using SEM to Explain Reasons for Parent's Preferences for General Education or Vocational Education.

In table 6.1, once again, the intrapersonal level appears to be popular, but this time accompanied in popularity by the community/organisational level. Unemployment is again represented at the public policy level. The Social Ecological Model does not only help in understanding factors that affect behaviours; it also serves as a guide to developing successful intervention programs in the social environment. With its emphasis on multi-level of influence and the idea that decisions (behaviours) shape, and are shaped by the environment, it is then capable of creating a conducive environment for vocational education to thrive. Having explored parent's preferences and the reasons for such preferences, it is important to understand reasons why parents would change their mind from their desired preference.

6.4 Discussion of findings and analyses related to research objective four

Research Objective Four: To determine circumstances under which parents will change their decisions towards vocational education in Jos-north local government.

To achieve the aim of objective four, the responses of parents who said they preferred vocational education were compared to the responses of those who said they preferred general education. Then their responses were compared to their responses in survey question four.

Parents who said they preferred general education to vocational education gave various reasons why they would change their mind about their choice of vocational education.

Some of the parents said they would consider vocational education if it proves to be a better quality of education than general education. What this means is that vocational education is not a problem, rather it is the image of vocational education that has become a problem such that parents do not want to associate with it. It is not surprising that parents will change their mind if vocational education proves to be a better form of education. The truth is that vocational education has all it takes to achieve the status. The many benefits and roles of vocational education as presented by Shavit and Muller (2000); Polat et al (2010), says that vocational education enhances a student's chance to find gainful employment.

Apart from enhancing the chances for gainful employment, it equips individuals with knowledge, technical and behavioural competence to remain employed (Colley et al., 2003). It is understandable that vocational education has acquired the image over the years as a place for dropouts, bad boys and students unable to cope with general

education (Hartung et al., 2005; Eyre, 2011; Saiti and Mitrosoli, 2005). This is left for the government to tackle, making sure that vocational education becomes attractive to everyone and that people make choices based on need, i.e., what they want to achieve out of education not standards.

Parents who said they will change their minds if the child wants vocational education, or if the child needs vocational education. This goes in line with the thoughts of Haghani & Sarvi, (2019), who stated that decisions are also made under circumstances which consider who is affected by such decisions. The level of such decisions may be micro or macro in nature. This reason which was in the majority goes contrary to the image projected about Nigerian parents being authoritarian (Alam, 2008). This is indication that parents are willing to listen to the child's needs. On the other hand, the parent may want to change their choice not because it is what the child wants but rather what the child needs. This means that parents will change their mind due to factors such as affordability and time. Parents may not want to continue wasting time for a child who is not doing well in general education. as the child grows older, they may want to change their choice and explore other options (Tymula, Belmaker et al., 2013; Hess, Queen et al. 2013; Alavi et al., 2013; Odu, 2011)). Another reason why parents will change their mind is affordability.

Parents indicated that affordability will be a reason why they would change their mind about their choice. This means that if they were formerly able to afford it, but suddenly were unable to, then they will change their choice. This may be because of loss of job, price increase, increase in family size, high cost of living and change of location. Considering that the cost of quality vocational education is much higher than the cost

of quality general education, affordability is an important reason as stated by parents (Aypay, 2003; Mupinga and Livesay, 2004). The direct and indirect resources devoted to vocational education such as instructional materials, instructor's time, physical facilities and equipment; all constitute to the cost of vocational education. It can be difficult to effectively cost vocational education; but an alternative proffered by Shephard (1970) involves relating the output of training to the minimum cost of training while taking account of the training technology and price of the inputs.

Other reasons given by parents for why they would change their mind is if perceptions change or there is no other choice. The lack of choice or alternative may happen if government decide to sync or mix both vocational and general education as recommended by various researchers (Tuor and Backes Tellner, 2010; by Wang and Seggie (2013). As for perceptions, Anon (2019), stated that when there is a shift in core beliefs, people change along with it. To expand this line of thought, it is believed that for individuals to change their minds, policy issues need to be reframed rather than appealing to facts (Meyer, 1995). Other reasons why people change their decisions is if they are equipped with new information which reveals the risks and dangers of certain behaviours and decisions (Marteau, 2018). It is obvious that people can change their minds if certain conditions change.

Parents are right to be concerned about the image and perception of vocational education as observed by Leong (2011), who noted that the growth of vocational education is hampered by the perception that it does not represent careers of choice, that it caters for only the academically handicapped and that it is saddled by a hugely fragmented delivery system. For some parents the better alternative cannot be found

anywhere in Plateau state or Nigeria as a whole, instead they rather send the child abroad to get the type of quality education they need. This view was supported by Alam (2008), who stated that parents force their children into schools even when they are academically unable, while those who can afford it, send their children abroad. The reason why parents will change their minds about vocational education is mirrored in the reason why parents will change their minds about general education.

6.4.1 Using SEM to explain circumstances under which parents will change their decisions towards vocational education.

Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	organisational	community	public policy
VE not overcrowded			low financial incentives	well structured education
child's wants			negative perceptions of 'Standardized VE	
Child can't cope with GE				no student Loans
child's talent				Unemployment
change in child's wants & needs				
affordability				
no student debt				
Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Organisational	Community	Public Policy
Schooling abroad		type of institution	negative perceptions	status of qualification
Ivy league education				
VE not working for child				
GE as a good background				
financial security				
What People will say				

Table 6.3: Using SEM to Explain Circumstances Under Which Parents will Change Their Choice of Vocational or General Education.

Table 6.3 shows the different opinions of parents on circumstances which will make them change their decisions towards vocational education. At the top of the table are the reasons responses of parents who said they would prefer general education to vocational education while at the bottom are the responses of parents who said they

would prefer vocational education over general education. in both categories the personal factors are popular among the parents. The intrapersonal/individual reasons are those reasons personal to parents. They are circumstances which are unique to an individual. It may involve personal opinions, perceptions, ideas, plans, cultural conditioning and financial status.

Community and public policy level are circumstance which to a large extent is controlled by the community. This includes the general perception held by the community which in turn forms the foundation of perceptions and beliefs at the intrapersonal level. At the public policy level are those circumstances which only the government's intervention will make it possible. For parents to change their mind, there must be a change in circumstances especially around their choice of education.

6.5 Recommendations and contribution to theory

This research has thus far discovered that vocational education still has a negative impression amongst parents in Jos-North local government, Nigeria. Parents are unwilling to engage in vocational education despite being aware of its many benefits and contributions to human capital development. Some parents will consider vocational education as an alternative or an additional education but not as a first choice. The contributions of this research to practice, is aimed at recommending practical ideas to tackle the problem of un-attractiveness to vocational education and subsequent lack of engagement by parents with vocational education. The recommendation speaks to government and policy makers, private businesses and investors, individuals, and most importantly parents.

6.5.1 Recommendations at Intrapersonal/Individual Level

Intrapersonal levels deal with perceptions, history, attitudes and beliefs. A point noted by Reisinger and Turner (2003) that Perceptions are shaped by several factors which may be external or internal, such as geographical, economic, social, geographical, cultural, demographic, psychographic and behaviouristic factors. The intrapersonal level measures attitudes, beliefs, perceptions (Kumar et al., 2012). The intrapersonal level which is also called the individual level investigates factors which affects individuals (Dunn et al., 2014).

Intrapersonal or individual factor focuses on factors for individual characteristics such as developmental history, knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, self-concept and skills (Nyambe et al., 2016). Intrapersonal level also has to do with access to resources which includes perceived functional ability, socio-economic status, educational level, employment status, and motivational variables (Fleury & Lee, 2006). Intrapersonal level of the SEM also places emphasis on education, training, skills enhancement and cultural tailoring (Soderlund, 2017).

Most of the findings from objective 1-4 showed that intrapersonal level is more popular than other levels. From objective one which sought to identify and discuss the factors which influence the perceptions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North, parents gave reasons such as lack of funds for formal education, need to promote self-reliance, cost, hope for the child to take over family business, morals and discipline, time, child's needs, interest and wants, accessibility, location, the perception that school is not meant for everyone, skill acquisition, ease of learning, financial independence, quality of former students and specialization are all interpersonal factors. Objective

three also revealed the perceptions, opinions and beliefs of parents concerning vocational education and general education. It also included their plans.

Most of the reason parents gave for either choosing vocational education or general education were based on their own perceptions, opinions, and views of such type of education. Some of the reasons include: the strengths of vocational education as against the weaknesses of general education and vice versa, the notion that vocational education can be an additional learning, and what the child wants. These perceptions were built either through personal experiences or observations. Some may have had a history to come to such conclusion.

Parents are known as micro-economic agents who are responsible for the well-being of the child. They pass on values to their children which stretches across generations. Parents have very important roles to play in changing the negative perceptions towards vocational education. Parents should be ready to support a child in whatever type of education or career they choose. Parents are advised not to force children to remain in academic schools when they are not performing well. Parents should be aware that their grades matter instead of certificates and name. Parents are also advised not to discourage children who speak up or show interest in vocational education, it does not mean that they are failures, it simply means that they know what they want themselves and hope to build a career or business when they pursue vocational education. Parents should rather, be proud that their child is intelligent.

Parents are advised to stop the spread of negative comments about vocational education. Family members are also advised to desist from discouraging parents who have decided to send the child to a vocational institution. Because of the type of society Nigeria is,

the words of the extended members of the family is considered very important. If extended family members would stop discouraging other families who have made such decisions, the image of vocational education will be changed. Parents, friends and family members should also stop looking down at those who have children in vocational institutions. They should stop regarding them as dropouts or stop their children from playing with children attending vocational institutions with the impression that they are un-intelligent and may display challenging behaviour.

Parents should also be aware that not all children are cut out for vocational education, and not all children are cut out for academic education. A parent should study the child and learn what the child shows interest in, what they have a flair and talent for. When parents observe the innate traits of their kids, they would be able to support a child financially, and emotionally to go through vocational education. Parents would be able to advertise the importance of vocational education to friends, neighbours, family and friends. When parents display confidence and support for a child in the pursuit of vocational education, the child also becomes confident and can defend himself/herself from bullies who may want to mock them because of the type of education they are enrolled in. Confidence from a parent is often reflected in the child.

Parents should also be aware that they should not use their child to correct their own mistakes. They should not use the child to achieve what they could not achieve during their time. Parents are advised that there is no guarantee that family and friends will behave themselves. There is no guarantee that family and friends will not want to put the parent down, by flashing their income, education, and occupation in their face. A parent must develop self-confidence, contentment within themselves to know what they

want their child, or to follow what the child wants. Parents' self-confidence should be paramount; this is because it directly affects the child too.

Finally, the contribution to practice is to individuals as applied to everyday living. Individuals need to understand that no matter what happens in life, there will always be barriers from external and internal sources in the form of economic, societal, cultural, social, environmental, demographic, religious, and psychological factors. Individual especially parents, are expected to understand these facts, and learn to make decisions based on personal convictions of what is best for the child. This level is even more so important when the child displays exceptional gifts and talents which can only be nurtured to growth in a vocational educational environment. When all stakeholders play their role, the place of vocational education as a reputable form of education will be improved.

6.5.2 Recommendations at Interpersonal Level

In the SEM the interpersonal level deals with social influence from friends and family and norms within social networks. They are primary groups which consist of social networks and support systems which are culturally relevant change (Kumar et al., 2012; Dunn et al., 2014; Nyambe et al; 2016). The interpersonal level involves modifications to the home and family environment and consists of social institutions. Interpersonal processes provide identity and support. The interpersonal level determines household roles and structures, kinship system, public and private domains and peer education especially in low income countries (Ohri-Vachaspati et al., 2015; Golden et al., 2015; Krueger, 2012). The interpersonal level deals with modifications to the home and family environment, social support systems and social networks within the community.

In the findings and analysis carried out in chapter five of this research, Parent's did not mention family members as factors or reasons for their decision. The closest it came to mentioning family was the parent who said he wanted his child to take over the family business. A point which was revealed in the literature that the old apprenticeship system was run in such a way that children learn, grow into and subsequently take over and practice the family occupation directly from their parents, relations or master craftsmen (Olumade, 2013; Owolabi, 2006). Because the background of this research started from the researcher's personal experiences and observations, it is pertinent to add that the views of the researcher also counts. The researcher, therefore, submits that family members and friends who form part of the society are part of the factors why parents do not engage with vocational education.

The interpretation of some of the submissions of parents who said they would change their decisions when the societal negative views changes does not specify what part of society they mean. Since family and friends are part of the society, this research submits that the interpersonal level is also active in this research, therefore, this research also contributes to the regular practice by family and friends who tend to discourage parents and children alike who intend to enrol into a vocational school. It is advised that family members should consider the many benefits of vocational education as revealed in this work and works of other authors and weigh the loss which may occur due to a family member taking a wrong decision because of negative comments and lack of support from members of one's family.

6.5.3 Recommendations at Organisational/Institutional level

Organisations are social institutions with rules and regulations for operations (Hesch et al., 2000). Organisation operating at that level determine how well services are provided to an individual or group (Heyler et al., 1998). The organisational or institutional level include educational institutions, family institutions, religious institutions, business organisations, and government institutions (Heyler et al., 1998). This level deals with modifications to institutional environment or services or social networks. The organisation/institutional level include private businesses and groups of investors. It can also be groups of vocational institutions. This level deals with rules and regulations for operations of these institutions that exist within a community.

In the data analysis and findings recorded in chapter five of this research, some parents indicated that they will choose vocational education because inculcates morals and discipline in students. For that parent, the service rendered by that institution is a religious service. If the institution fails to provide the expected service, then the parents sees no need to engage with the institution. Another parent indicated that the institution determines if he will change his mind about his original choice. The institution in this case refers to the quality and status of the institution of interest. It can also include the quality of its former graduates. Although not much references were made by parents concerning the roles of organisation and institution, this research acknowledges the important role played by private businesses and investors as stakeholders.

Private business owners and investors should be aware that there is more to business than monetary profit. The profit received from offering quality and honest services is also very rewarding. Private businesses should ensure that they provide the equipment

to back up any advertisement. What is advertised should be what is offered. Private businesses should ensure that they offer what they charge parents for. Private businesses should also ensure that they settle every legal aspect of the business before they begin operation. Private businesses should also ensure that they keep up with every registration which they ought to do and not cut corners. Keeping everything legal, ensures that the students do not have their education cut short or graduate with a certificate with which they cannot use to find gainful employment. When things are done appropriately, the image of vocational education will gradually improve. Parents will be assured that vocational education is not for dropouts, but a gate way to the future.

The results of this research speak to private businesses and investors to take note of the opinion of parents who consider the services of private businesses to be expensive, therefore, they shy away from them. When the vocational institutions provided by government is considered sub-standard and that provided by private enterprises is too expensive, it is an opportunity for a private enterprise to look for a means to strike a balance between affordability and quality. Sponsorship could be sort from well-meaning charities and individuals to help augment the cost of providing quality vocational education; a cost which lies heavily on the provider due to the high cost of facilities and equipment needed to achieve this goal.

6.5.4 Recommendations at community level

The community level can be a culmination of various organisations in an area. Communities often come together to carry out a project and achieve common goals (McElroy, 2002). The community level explores settings such as schools, workplaces and neighbourhood in which social relationships occur and seeks to identify the

characteristics of these settings that are associated with making the decision to engage with vocational education. Community levels addresses the contexts in which social relationship occur (Stokols, 1996). In the analysis and findings in chapter five, one of the indications of Community Level was “location” and “accessibility.” Parents are concerned about the community in which a school is located and how assessible the community is. Accessibility to a community may involve how good the roads are, or how close to town the community is. It also includes the history of collaborations and successful projects carried out in such communities.

At the community level, there needs to be collaborations between key stakeholders in the communities. These collaborations will do even better if it extends to key stakeholders at the institutional/organisational levels. There is no successful community without organisations. Organisations cannot succeed without rules and regulations guiding them; the same goes for communities. If communities invest time, money and energy and sensitizing the people, there will be greater awareness about the benefits of vocational education. The role of the community will go a long way in changing the negative perceptions towards vocational education.

6.5.5 Recommendations at public policy level

The public policy level is the enabling environment provided by local, state and national government (Vincent, 2009). The public policy level looks at the broad societal factors such as education, unemployment, economic and social policies that help create a climate in which vocational education is encouraged and the economic and social

inequalities between graduates of vocational education and graduates of general education will be non-existent.

Government has been recognized as a major player in facilitating a conducive environment within which vocational education will thrive. The government hold the power to change the negative perceptions plaguing vocational education. The task to improve the image of vocational lies with all arms of government; federal, state and local government. There are over twenty vocational institutions listed in Plateau state but only four of them make it to the official list of recognized institutions of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). (NBTE, 2016). This is a huge problem, because it contributes to the low image accrued to vocational education. The institutions who are not officially recognized are still operating, recruiting students, receiving fees, yet, whatever certificate this young people graduate with, will not serve them in their desired goals. When only four out of over twenty is officially recognised, it is not surprising the number of graduates of vocational education who are unable to find gainful employment.

Government are also advised to establish more vocational institutions, as well as raise the status of vocational certificates to it academic equivalent. Laws should also be put in place to ensure that graduates of vocational education can seek redress in a court of law or in an employment tribunal, in cases where they are qualified for a job, but feel that they were denied the job because a graduate of academic institution was preferred, despite being better qualified and experienced. With the situation of things in Nigeria, this appears almost laughable and impossible due to the state of impunity experienced in the judiciary and major institutions, but a gradual process of change by a capable and

accountable leader can achieve this desired objective. Government is advised that establishing more vocational institutions without proper and up-to-date facilities and management is a waste of time and resources.

Government is also advised that in any chance where the running and proper management of vocational institutions proves cumbersome, government is advised to create a conducive environment for private businesses and investors to take over. Conducive environment should reflect in tariffs, registration fees and accreditation. While offering a conducive environment, government is advised to put in place, strict checks to ensure that private providers of vocational education provide quality services to its students. Government should be aware that establishing more institutions and creating a conducive environment for vocational education to thrive through fair laws and practice to accommodate private businesses and investors, is not enough; government should also be aware that massive sensitisation programs is organised, making use of all communication channels. The awareness and sensitisation will inform people about the new face of vocational education and its many benefits.

One problem faced by vocational institutions and many institutions in Nigeria is like of maintenance of infrastructures. This is perhaps an important reason why vocational education is very important. Technical graduates could be trained and employed as service personnel, to maintain equipment and make sure they are in working order, safe to use, and up to date. Equipment should not only be used for advertisement; it should also be seen in these institutions. Corruption has become so common place that equipment meant for government owned vocational institutions, are declared not working, then sold off to private institutions. If the government of the day make it a

point of duty to prosecute anybody caught in such acts of corruption, it will send a message to others who might be involved in such corrupt practice to desist from it.

The outcome of this research has shown that socio-economic factors play a very important role in forming the opinion of parents towards vocational education. Government can improve this by ensuring that more jobs are created, and that workers' salaries/wages are reviewed and paid adequately. Government should ensure that they prioritize what is important before any other matters. When people have good jobs, they tend to become less rigid about certain matters, but when people are unable to achieve basic education, earn reasonable income, and engage in satisfying occupation, other socio-cultural factors like religion and culture come to the surface. Having the basic things in life helps reduce the dependence of people on inter-cultural factors. It is the role of the government to provide these jobs. Encourages home grown businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, encourage private job creation, privatize some institutions to ensure that the economy is running smoothly.

Government should understand that education is a very complex but interesting venture; It is expected that vocational education should not be used as a replacement for academic education, but rather an alternative. Sensitization programmes should include a clear message on the different learning styles of human being. The program should be able to explain that a child who is not doing well in academic education, excels in vocational education simply has a different way of learning, it does not mean that one is better than other. Both types of education simply attend to different learning needs. Government could begin by introducing vocational education into main-stream education; this will help identify students who excel in vocational subjects. Parents

could then be encouraged to pursue full-time vocational education with evidence from the child's performance.

Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Organisation	Community	Public Policy
Put child's needs first. Work hard. Speak up. Honesty.	Support intrapersonal level. Reduce negativity. Honesty	Collaborations. Cooperation. Investing in meaningful projects. Honesty.	Collaborations. Support other levels. Honesty. Integrity. Cooperation Safe laws Accountability	Economic Reforms. Curriculum restructuring. Strict health and Safety Laws. Conducive environment for private investors. Cultural integration. Funding for education. Sensitization programmes. Invest in skill acquisition.

				<p>Employment opportunities.</p> <p>Standardized qualification.</p> <p>Honesty</p> <p>Accountability.</p> <p>Invest in modern technology.</p>
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Table 6.4: Recommendations at Public Policy Level.

6.6 The Social Ecological Model: Fostering better engagement with vocational education

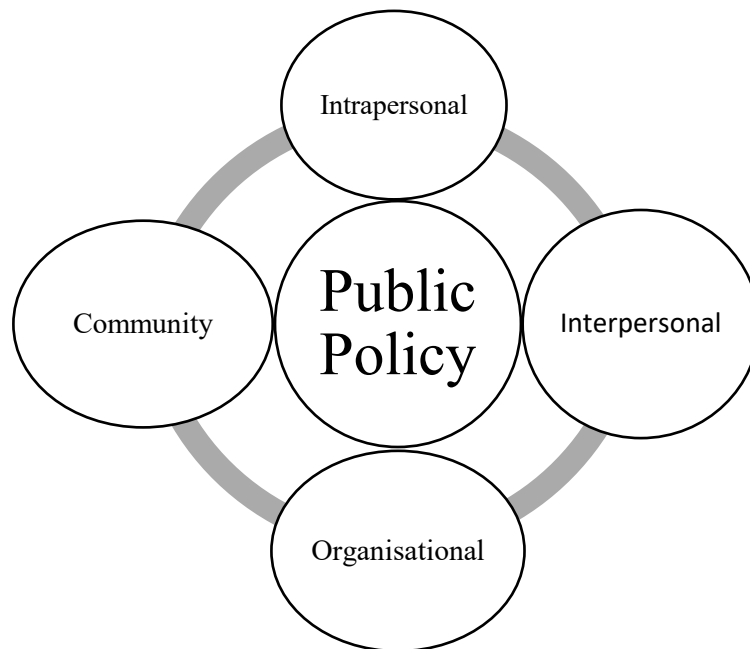


Figure 6.1: Social Ecological Model for Proper Management of Vocational Education.

Figure 6.1 shows the relationship between the different levels. The radial cycle adopted for this model places the public level policy at the centre. The activities of the outer ring of the cycles contributes to the central cycle. This cycle shows there is a correspondence between the central circle and the outer cycles. The ring shows that all levels are interconnected and that the activities of one affects the activity of the other. Parents in the study revealed that most of the factors which influenced the decisions to choose or not to choose vocational education, that made some factors more influential than others, made one type of education more attractive than others and influence them to change their initial decisions had more to do with government policies which affects the economy, and the environment.

As discussed in the recommendations, everybody has a role to play but the government has a greater role of creating an enabling environment for other levels to play their part successfully. The interconnectivity of the ring means there is no room for a break in communication or transfer of resources from one level to the cycle. Representing the different levels in a cycle also projects the idea that it is not a hierarchy which may mean that one level is more important than the other. While the public policy level may appear to be more important than the others, it cannot survive on its own without the others. The survival of the public policy level is based on the other level remaining together. Once the cycle is broken, the public policy loses its strength. For vocational education to thrive, all levels must work together.

6.7 Implications to Human Capital Development

The role and importance of human capital development cannot be over emphasized. Human capital development is important to organisations (Ndinguri et al., 2012), to development (Buys and Bosman, 2010), increasing the competitive advantage of nations (Bourrih, 2013), poverty reduction (Rao and Jani, 2009), improvement of labour productivity and facilitation of technological development (Konstantinuk, 2014), as well as personal skill acquisition and growth (Aluko and Aluko, 2012; Correa et al., 2014). The many benefits of human capital development are too important to be ignored. Various questions have been raised, concerning the importance of vocational education in increasing human capital development; many researches have also criticised the role of vocational education in human capital development as more detrimental than beneficial (Loyalka et al. 2015).

When the importance of vocational education is compared to the importance of human capital development to a nation, it can be deduced that vocational education and human capital development go hand in hand. Vocational education has been said to improve the progress of a sustainable environment (Franck, 2012). It has also been described as responsible for preparing students for both social life and various occupations (Hyslop, 2001). Vocational education has also been described as an important tool for fighting poverty and increasing international competitiveness (Ojeaga, 2012). It is also recognised as a means of empowering young people to engage in productive activities and earn livelihoods (UNESCO, 2005). Vocational education cannot be separated from human capital development, and human capital development cannot be separated from vocational education. This is because of its importance at both micro and the macro-level of development.

The implication of vocational education is such that, when vocational education is absent, the human capital development of the country becomes redundant. Vocational education produces a wide range of monetary and non-monetary benefits which includes higher economic growth, higher productivity, better satisfaction with health and life, and employee satisfaction. Vocational education and human capital development interact, and mutually reinforce each other. It can raise workers' skill level and contribute directly to higher productivity; yet it can also improve productivity indirectly by increasing a worker's job satisfaction and well-being.

In most cases where vocational education has negatively impacted vocational education, by increasing drop-out rates, reducing general skills and specific skills; it is because vocational education was introduced as a substitute for academic education, or

because vocational education was introduced haphazardly and inadvertently. When vocational education is introduced in such a manner, it is bound to negatively impact human capital development. This is because, the program does not consider the differences that exists in human beings. It should be known that vocational education appears expensive due to the high cost of buying equipment needed. However, a clear-cut budget, and a well mapped out plan on how to generate income needed to sustain the vocational arm of education will lead to national development and individual development. Strategic planning with the right minds is needed to ensure that while effort is being made to change the face of vocational education, general academic education should not be neglected either.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on discussing the findings and analyses recorded in chapter five of this research. Chapter six was divided into section 6.1 – 6.7 with subsections in-between. The objectives which were introduced in chapter one was revisited along with the accompanying survey question aimed to achieve the research objectives. Four research objectives were discussed in line with the findings and analyses, backed up by literature. The Social Ecological Model was used to further break down the findings into manageable and understandable components. Objective five focused on recommendations at each level of the Social Ecological model. The implication to human capital development was discussed following up on subsection 2.3 in chapter two of this research.

The research continues in chapter seven with summary of findings and future research, contributions to knowledge, implications to practice and management, suggestions for further research and personal reflections.

Chapter Seven: summary of findings and future research

7.0 Introduction

At the beginning of this study, one aim and five objectives were set to 1) identify and discuss the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government. 2) To investigate whether some factors influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education more than others in Jos-North local government. 3) To understand parental preferences for vocational or general education and reasons for their preferences. 4) To determine circumstances under which parents will change their decisions towards vocational education in Jos-north local government. 5) To recommend probable solutions and contribute to theoretical research.

Chapter one discussed the research problems, scope, rationale and objectives. Chapter two explored and review relevant literatures; continuing in chapter three with discussions on the theoretical and conceptual framework with focus on The Social Ecological Model. Chapter four discussed the methodology used in the research, discussing mixed method and interpretivism. Chapter five analysed and presented the findings from the research while chapter six discussed the findings and gave recommendations on how to foster better engagement with vocational education towards the growth of vocational education.

Chapter seven will summarise the findings from previous chapters and will present suggestions for future research. Chapter seven will further discuss the contributions of

this research to knowledge, going further to discuss the implications of the research to practice and management. Chapter seven will conclude with the researcher's personal reflection.

7.1 Contribution to Knowledge

One of the fundamental contributions of this study to the body of research and the management of vocational education is related to the interdependent relationship and roles between parents and policy makers/government towards the growth of vocational education. Ample empirical data were gathered from parents to support the fact that parents quite often perceive the government to be responsible for the growth of vocational education. However, attempting to improve the face of vocational education in a community like Jos-North local government in Nigeria is an objective orientation and not subjective. The various attempts by government have proved to be subjective, exocentric and unsustainable.

A major contribution of this research is the adaptation of the Social Ecological Model to fit the narrative of factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government. The SEM was used to explain why parents prefer a type of education to another. It was also used to explain circumstances under which parents would change their decisions towards vocational education. The SEM was also used in the recommendations towards better engagement and relationship with vocational education. The SEM has mainly been used in the health sector both in the medical field and in schools with studies from Kumar et al., (2012); Dunn et al., (2014); Nyambe et al., (2016); Fleury & Lee, (2006); Nuss et al., (2016); Soderlund, (2017); Langille & Rodgers (2017); Golden et al., (2015); and Ohri-Vachaspati et al., (2015).

By adapting the SEM with slight modifications, this research has been able to contribute to theory and knowledge in the field of vocational education and human capital development. The Social Ecological Model for better engagement with vocational education is presented in figure 7.1 below.

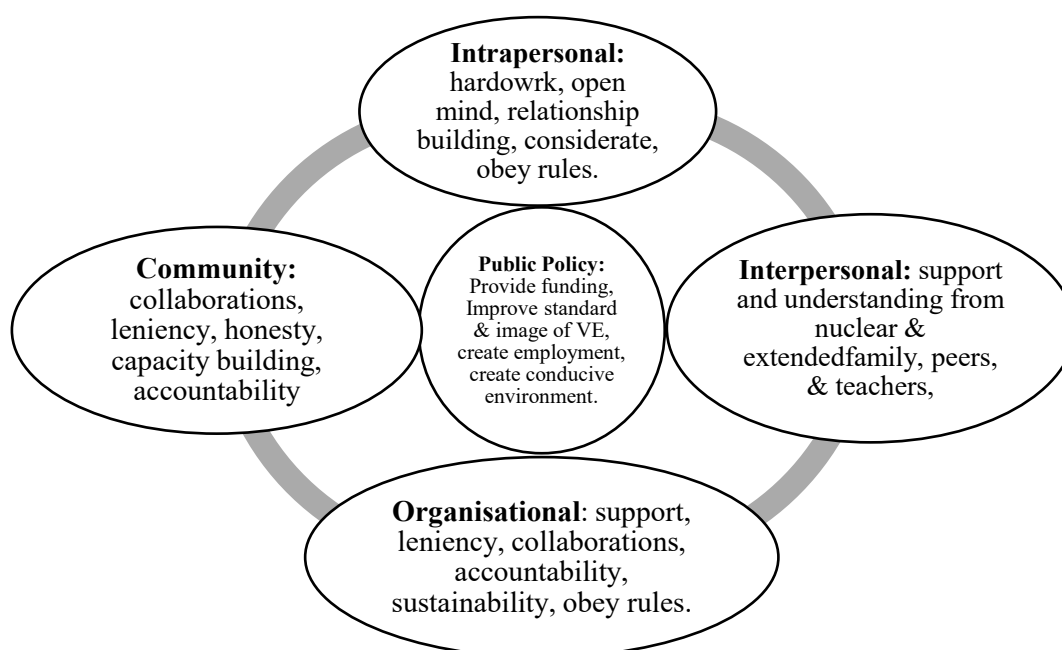


Figure 7.1: Social Ecological Model for Tackling Factors which Influence the Decisions of Parents Towards Vocational Education.

On this note, this study advocates for a Social Ecological Model of decision making with Public Policy surrounded by the other level in close contact, much like a chain which considers and incorporates the socio-cultural and socio-economic circumstances of parents who are decision makers in school choice for their children. The idea is to consider parents as primary decision makers and important stakeholders in decision making. It is neither a top-down or bottom up strategy, but an inter-dependent consultative type of approach, where the opinion of parents is sought before a policy about vocational education is implemented. Consultation should include financial

responsibilities, ongoing projects, intended projects and the future of vocational education.

The extended family and peers, the organisations or institutions, the communities and the government are all stakeholders responsible for the growth of vocational education. The level closest to the parent must be used to make decision making towards vocational education easier for the parent. The dissemination of information, resources and support should go through the level which is easier for the parent to access. The framework presented argues that previous strategies adopted by policy makers to enhance the growth of vocational education has been ineffective, evidenced by the recurring problems and challenges faced by vocational education since post independent Nigeria. The problems show that the wrong strategies were used in the attempt to improve the face of and attractiveness of vocational education.

It shows that they did not carry out proper research, neither did they consider the socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions of stakeholders. The failure of previous implementations shows that the place of parents as stakeholders with important roles to determine the growth of vocational education was disregarded by policy makers causing the lack of improvement in the vocational education sector. It also shows that the right channels of information and communication were not harnesses to the best of their advantage. The framework further argues that despite the many attempts to revamp the sector of vocational education, through the setting up of different committees to investigate the problems facing vocational education, it has so far not worked. The changes which were implemented in the past were not sustained because one of the major factors causing the breakdown of vocational education has not been addressed.

A committee of select number of people, no matter their level of experience cannot solve the problem of vocational education by sitting in a boardroom to discuss without proper investigation. This is the reason why the many recommendations set up by the many committees have failed consistently to address the lapses experienced in the vocational education sector. Therefore, the solution approach recommended by this study is important, because it is a step-by-step process which involves all players in The Social Ecological Model.

An interesting contribution of this study to theory is the identification of the underlying challenges limiting the growth of vocational education in Jos-Plateau state, from an angle which has never been studied before. These types of challenges may be difficult to identify or quantify when analysing developmental and growth practices. When they are identified, they are loosely or vaguely addressed as issues in development. They are discussed as unemployment, GDP, and economic growth. As per the growth of vocational education, the empirical outcome of this research is the identification of the inextricable link which exists between parents' socio-cultural and socio-economic background and the way they make decisions concerning the education of their children. policy makers have always adopted an exocentric approach to solving problems, which appears headless and external to the subjects of such change. Disassociating change initiatives from the subject of such change is tantamount to heading to failure, as has been the case.

Another practical contribution of this research is the type of methodology used. The methodology for this research incorporated a somewhat unfamiliar approach. Case study research is mostly used in purely qualitative studies. This study, however, did not

only use the qualitative variables and data, it integrated the quantitative variables made possible by the survey method adopted in the collection of data. The uniqueness of the community was important. The study considered the inherent differences in the community. It also considered, the differences in the socio-economic and socio-cultural background of participants. The different approaches adopted in different sections of this research all contributed to the wholistic nature of this research. The method adopted for data distribution was unique; owing to the divided nature of the Jos-community, a different approach was used for different communities. Instead of using a single method to collect data, the research chose to use a single instrument (questionnaire) to collect different data types of qualitative and quantitative. This added to the robustness of the findings of this research, giving the research a wider view of the phenomenon of study. Adopting a single method for analysis and presentation was for simplicity and clarity in understanding the data.

The entire contributions to this research are an overly simplistic approach to understanding the factors which influence the decisions of parents towards vocational education in Jos-North local government, Plateau state, Nigeria. The policy-related, solution-based contribution of this research is the reason why The Social Ecological Model for fostering better engagement with vocational education is recommended to improve the quality of vocational education enough to attract people from different works of life, educational background, occupation, gender, religion, level of income, or age. This in time, will improve the quality of human capital in the Jos North local government, Plateau state and Nigeria.

7.2 Implications to Practice and Management

Government has been recognized as a major player in facilitating a conducive environment within which vocational education will thrive. The government hold the power to change the negative perceptions plaguing vocational education. The task to improve the image of vocational lies with all arms of government; federal, state and local government. This does not mean that the bulk of the responsibility lies with only the government (Public Policy) it also involves every level Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, organisational, and communities playing their part especially in collaborations and support.

There are over twenty vocational institutions listed in Plateau state but only four of them make it to the official list of recognized institutions of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). (NBTE, 2016). This is a huge problem, because it contributes to the low image accrued to vocational education. The institutions that are not officially recognized are still operating, recruiting students, receiving fees, yet, whatever certificate these young people graduate with, will not serve them in their desired goals. When only four out of over twenty is officially recognised, it is not surprising the number of graduates of vocational education who are unable to find gainful employment.

Government are also advised to establish more vocational institutions, as well as raise the status of vocational certificates to its academic equivalent. Laws should also be put in place to ensure that graduates of vocational education can seek redress in a court of law or in an employment tribunal, in cases where they are qualified for a job, but feel that they were denied the job because a graduate of academic institution was preferred,

despite being better qualified and experienced. With the situation of things in Nigeria, this appears almost laughable and impossible due to the state of impunity experienced in the judiciary and major institutions, but a gradual process of change by a capable and accountable leader can achieve this desired objective. Government is advised that establishing more vocational institutions without proper and up-to-date facilities and management is a waste of time and resources.

Government is also advised that in any chance where the running and proper management of vocational institutions proves cumbersome, government is advised to create a conducive environment for private businesses and investors to take over. Conducive environment should reflect in tariffs, registration fees and accreditation. While offering a conducive environment, government is advised to put in place, strict checks to ensure that private providers of vocational education provide quality services to its students. Government should be aware that establishing more institutions and creating a conducive environment for vocational education to thrive through fair laws and practice to accommodate private businesses and investors, is not enough; government should also be aware that massive sensitisation programs needs to be organised, making use of all communication channels. The awareness and sensitisation will inform people about the new face of vocational education and its many benefits.

One problem faced by vocational institutions and many institutions in Nigeria is lack of maintenance of infrastructures. This is perhaps an important reason why vocational education is very important. Technical graduates could be trained and employed as service personnel, to maintain equipment and make sure they are in working order, safe to use, and up to date. Equipment should not only be used for advertisement; it should

also be seen in these institutions. Corruption has become so common place that equipment meant for government owned vocational institutions, are declared not working, then sold off to private institutions. If the government of the day make it a point of duty to prosecute anybody caught in such acts of corruption, it will send a message to others who might be involved in such corrupt practice to desist from it.

The outcome of this research has shown that socio-economic factors play a very important role in forming the opinion and eventual decisions of parents towards vocational education. Government can improve this by ensuring that more jobs are created, and that workers' salaries/wages are reviewed and paid adequately. Government should ensure that they prioritize what is important before any other matters. When people have good jobs, they tend to become less rigid about certain matters, but when people are unable to achieve basic education, earn reasonable income, and engage in satisfying occupation, other socio-cultural factors like religion and culture come to the surface. Having the basic things in life helps reduce the dependence of people on socio-cultural factors. It is the role of the government to provide these jobs. Encourages home grown businesses, encourage entrepreneurship, encourage private job creation, privatize some institutions to ensure that the economy is running smoothly.

Government should understand that education is a very complex but interesting venture; It is expected that vocational education should not be used as a replacement for academic education, but rather an alternative. Sensitization programmes should include a clear message on the different learning styles of human beings. The program should be able to explain that a child who is not doing well in academic education but excels in vocational education simply has a different way of learning, it does not mean that

one is better than other. Both types of education simply attend to different learning needs. Government could begin by introducing vocational education into main-stream education; this will help identify students who excel in vocational subjects. Parents could then be encouraged to pursue full-time vocational education with evidence from the child's performance.

7.3 Suggestions for Further Research

To further understand the influence of factors on parental attractions and decisions towards vocational education, one can also carry out similar research in other parts of the countries to check for generalizability. Research can also be carried out on other factors which were mentioned in passing in the review of literature and the responses from participants. The research can investigate the influence of factors such as location, environment; gender of the child, culture and religion. This research only explored perceptions and attractiveness and decisions towards vocational education from the view of only parents. Further research can be carried out to test the perceptions of the children towards vocational education and perhaps compare the responses to that of their parents. It will also be relevant to find out which parent wields the most influence in decision making from the perspective of the child.

Based on the unexpected outcome from the qualitative section, which revealed that parents were concerned about the gender of the child in terms of suitability to types of vocational education, further research could be undertaken to find out if parents would be more likely to invest in vocational education for boys or for girls. This research did not cover any kind of demographic analyses; it will also be relevant for further analyses to be carried out, aimed at finding out if demography/geographical location plays any

role in perceptions and decisions towards vocational education. Further analyses on this subject could aim to find out if mothers have less influence in rural areas than those in urban areas. This could help answer questions on gender, demography, and its influence on perceptions towards vocational education.

The test on gender difference and perception revealed that women showed differences to their male counterparts when compared in terms of level of education and type of occupation. They did not show any difference within themselves when compared in terms of level of education and type of occupation. Further research could be carried out to find out why this differences and similarities occur. Are women controlled by achievement, emotions, or culture? It would also be relevant to find out if culture, emotion, psychology or education influence the mother on her children, in her relationship with women and in her relationship with her male counterparts. This research did not explore the relationship between age and perceptions towards vocational education. Further research will be relevant to find out if certain age group agree or disagree to certain statements made. Are older parents more likely to be attracted to vocational education or would younger or middle-aged parents be more attracted to vocational education.

Further research could also be carried out, exploring into the similarities and differences which may exist between women in blue collar and women and white-collar jobs. Although this research did not find any significant differences between and within the women, it is worth finding out if there are differences such as differences in wages (who earns more), who experiences more gender stereotype? (Women in blue collar or women in white collar jobs). The differences between blue collar profession and white-

collar profession, as it affects both males and females are worth exploring. A more robust research could be carried out on this topic to further explore the question of who fares better. This could help in further explaining the need for vocational education or the lack of it thereof.

The literature revealed that the educational level of parents influences the future educational and career choices of the children (Garcia et al., 2014). This study could discover that the educational level of a parent influences their perceptions and attractiveness towards vocational education. It would be relevant to undertake further research to find out if the educational level of a parent affects the male child more than the female child. It will also help to find out if the educational level of the male parents influences the child more than the educational level of the female parent. Undertaking these opportunities for further research will contribute further to the knowledge and findings in this research. Questions which are raised from the outcome of this research will possibly be answered by carrying out further research as recommended in this study.

This research concentrated on socio-economic factors which influence the perceptions and attractiveness of parents to vocational education. The socio-cultural and socio-political factors were outcomes which were revealed in the analysis of the qualitative section of the questionnaire. Responses of parents revealed that socio-cultural factors were very much at play in forming the perceptions they had towards vocational education. The choice to explore mainly socio-economic factors was born out of the awareness that people speak out on matters which they think will change their circumstances. Socio-cultural factors are recognised as hidden factors which may not

even be immediately recognised by individuals who display attitudes caused by the influence of socio-cultural factors. It would be relevant to design a questionnaire or interview with very strategic question which will most likely reveal these socio-cultural factors like religion and culture. It will be relevant to compare the level of influence wielded by socio-cultural and socio-economic factors on perceptions towards vocational education.

7.4 Personal Reflections

This research explored the factors which influenced the general lack of engagement by parents in Jos-North local government, Nigeria, towards vocational education. The research explored the role of decisions as a factor influencing the lack of engagement of parents towards vocational education. The factors of gender, cost, academic level, and occupational type were selected as important factors based on the outcome and findings from the pilot study. The research adapted the tactics of within group and between group analyses, this means that respondents were separated into groups of males and females, higher level educational qualification and lower level educational qualifications, high income earners and low-income earners, blue collar workers and white-collar workers. This made it easier to compare responses, find significant or insignificant differences among groups, and the correlation amongst groups.

Undertaking this study opened a doorway to a larger world. In this study, the presence of a larger theme could not be ignored. It was obvious that the learning objective had to be backed up by a high level of competency. Through this research study, the researcher learnt the importance of proper organisation especially when it comes to referencing. The frustration of forgetting to reference a point, and having to spend precious time

searching for it, and in some cases, deleting such statements and starting all over, made the use of soft wares like Mendeley and RefWorks, life savers. The researcher was also able to understand the importance of structure, and the need to make your work your own. The larger picture surfaced when the researcher realised that she had not only completed a research by exploring answers to laid down research questions, she had also completed a project. She had accomplished a first step into the world of professionalism.

The learning journey during this research was not only exhilarating, but also surprising. Being a lover of informal writing, it was a great learning outcome to discover that she had gained the ability to interpret and communicate new knowledge in formal academic writing. The researcher had also gained oral presentation skills and scientific writing skills. She learnt to defend and have pride in the outcomes of her work as an original research worthy of extending to the forefront of her chosen discipline. It gave the researcher greater freedom to act autonomously in the planning and implementation of her research. She acquired extensive knowledge of the subject area and developed the ability to critically evaluate research techniques and methodologies. The researcher was also able to develop professional relationship where needed and where appropriate. The researcher developed skills in making and testing hypotheses and developing new theories.

In terms of challenges, this research encountered its fair share of challenges. But it also revealed the problem-solving skills which the researcher never knew she possessed. There was the struggle to fit her research to a single philosophy, paradigm and design. This challenge was solved by further study into the nature of research and embracing a

more flexible approach which was result oriented. There was also the challenge of finance especially in transportation and travels. This challenge was tackled by adopting the best method and tactics to save cost, hence the use of the survey, and snowballing method. Another challenge was the struggle to balance the challenge of being a new mother with education. This challenge was managed through time management. The most critical challenge which was faced during the period of primary data collection was the fear and tension which one had to deal with, due to the constant crisis in Jos. The solution to this was to engage the services of research assistants who had access to those areas, and to distribute questionnaires in the central parts like business and market areas.

The researcher intends to explore further, the issues raised in this research and those recommended for future research. Since the researcher is now aware that parents are more interested in cost of education, amongst other factors, she has become aware of the role she plays as a parent in the future career of her child. It has also prepared the researcher for the role she intends to play in the life of students who will be tutored under me in future. The research has also brought in its wake, business ideas which will be put to good use in the nearest future. Furthermore, undertaking this research study revealed the strength which lies deep within her. I moved from a clueless researcher in the first year who could not make up her mind on one topic because she had too many ideas and kept changing her topics as she explored literature further, to a researcher who could say what she wanted to achieve and calmly make changes where needed.

The financial, emotional, psychological and sometimes traumatic difficulties encountered in the process, was enough to hang in the towel, yet she was able to

continue. This journey brought out the warrior within. The journey was mostly a lonely one for the researcher due to family and work commitments, therefore, she continues to sing the praises of technology in the form of virtual online libraries which afforded her the opportunity to study from anywhere, and make better use of the nights which in most cases, was the only time available for her to achieve her personal goals. Whatever criticism of vocational education raised by individuals, one thing that cannot be denied is the general agreement to the immense benefit of vocational education to the development of human capital in a country like Nigeria. The undertaking of this research has made the researcher realise that vocational education is not the problem, rather it is the implementation and practice of vocational education that is the problem.

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Appendix 1: Interview Extracts

Respondent 1

Question 1: Lack of funds for formal Education,

Question 2: Lack of funds for formal education

Question 3: I will choose GE because VE might narrow interests and opportunities, while general education will broaden their choices and help them find the perfect fit for their skill set.

Question 4: if the vocational education is a nice field and there are not many people in it

Question 5: Did not attend any form of vocational education

Gender: Male

Age: 43-57

occupation: white collar

income: 30,000-70,000

Highest level of education: University degree

Religion: Christian

Number of children: 2

State of origin: Lagos

Respondent 2

Question 1: child's disposition and show of passion for vocational activities at an early age

Question 2: It depends on type of vocational passion

question 3: GE.VE can be built later when the foundation of GE is achieved

Question 4: I wouldn't want to

Question 5: Did not attend any form of VE

Gender: Male

age: 28-32

occupation: white collar

Income: 280- above

Education: Master's degree

Number of children: 1

state: rivers

Respondent 3

Question 1: Quality of former students who have passed through the same institution

Question 2: quality of education

question 3: General education

question 4: the child's interest

question 5: No VE

Gender: female

age: 58-62

occupation: white collar

income: 280-above

education: masters

religion: Christianity

children: 2

state: oyo

Respondent 4

question 1: environmental and economic factors

question 2: economic
environmental

question 3: I will choose VE

4: government unable to provide employment opportunities
white collar jobs do not have job securities anymore

5: No VE

Gender: Female

age: 28-32

occupation: white collar

income: 30,000-70,000

education: masters

religion: Christianity

number of children: 1

state: delta state

Respondent 5

question 1: If VE is the only one I can afford
if status of VE is on same level as GE
if it is the only educational choice available
if it is what the child wants

question 2: if status is on same level and GE
if it is what the child wants
if it is the only one, I can afford
if it is the only educational choice available

question 3: General education. because it is a better foundation to fit into the system. If the child really wants VE, they can enrol again.

question 4: if the standard of general education falls
if I can no longer afford the first choice

question 5: no VE

gender: female

age: 38-42

occupation: blue collar

income: 80,000-120,000

education: masters

Religion: Christianity

children: 1

state: Abia

Respondent 6

question 1: If I notice my child is creative with his hands or physically challenged in any way.

Question 2: Physically Challenged 2.
Creative with his hands

question 3: General education because my child will be better exposed to all rudiments of learning and social interaction will not be limited in any way.

question 4: If my child's interest is on vocational training.

question 5: no VE

gender: male

age: 43-57

occupation: white collar

income: 30,000-70,000

education: masters

Religion: Christianity

children: 3

state: Delta

Respondent 7

question 1: The Child's ability 2. What we, as parents, view as being in the child's best interest.

question 2: Factor 2 Factor 1

question 3: I would choose general education. Reasons:1. it is all encompassing. 2. It makes vocational educational easier.

question 4: No response

question 5: yes VE

question 6: I attended vocational training after my college degree. Yes, my occupation is in line with the vocational training.

Gender: male

age: 38-42

occupation: white collar

income: 180,000-220,000

education: postgraduate

religion: Christianity

children: 1

state: Ogun

Respondent 8

question 1: If I believed my child's learning needs would best be met in vocational education.

question 2: If I believed my child's learning needs would best be met in vocational education.

question 3: General education is all-encompassing.

question 4: If I believed my child's learning needs would best be met in vocational education.

question 5: No VE

Question 6: N/A

gender: female

age: 33-37

occupation: white collar

income per month: 280-above

education: first degree

religion: Christianity

children: 1

state: Akwaibom

Respondent 9

question 1: Speciality of such vocation, access to formal education

question 2: Access to formal education

Speciality of such vocation

question 3: General Education because it gives the child more choices

question 4: If I became impoverished and could not afford fees for a general education

question 5: yes VE

question 6: in secondary school

gender: male

age:33-37

occupation: white collar

Income: 30,000-70,000

education: first degree

religion: Christianity

children: 3

state: Ogun

Respondent 10

question 1: To take over the business from me to create a better future for themselves

question 2: To take over the business from me to create a better future for themselves

question 3: Vocational education because there are not enough jobs to go around in the formal sector.

question 4: If my child is going to school abroad

question 5: yes VE

6: during polytechnic

gender: male

age:28-32

occupation: blue collar

income: 30-70,000

education: polytechnic

religion: Islam

children: 3

state: kwara

Respondent 11

question 1: Money, Time, Age

question 2: Money Time Age

question 3: General education, because I feel it still gives room for vocational education and it helps enhance a child more.

question 4: Affordability

question 5: yes VE

Question 6: Yes, I did, after my general education, and yes, it is in line with my occupation

gender: female

age: 23-27

occupation: blue collar

income: 30,000-70,000

education: First degree

religion: Christianity

children: 1

state: Anambra:

Respondent 12

question 1: Long holidays, such as the one brought upon by COVID-19. Their desire to learn a vocation.

question 2: Long holidays. Child's personal desire

question 3: I would prefer my child to have both general education and vocational education because it will help them fit into the society. They would have options to choose from or to fall back on.

question 4: I would only change my choice when I see that my child can't manage both and might just need to focus on one.

question 5: Yes VE

question 6: I took classes in tailoring and baking while I was studying Mass Communication in the University. There is no way related but I was able to manage and today I work as a broadcaster and still make out time to make clothes.

gender: female

age: 33-37

occupation: white collar

income: 80,000-120,000

education: postgraduate

religion: Christianity

children: 1

state: Cross River

Respondent 13

question 1: Knowing that vocational education is more practical than general education and it is easier for children to understand. Also, the level of unemployment in my country has made vocational training essential.

question 2: Unemployed rate Level of adaptability

question 3: Vocational training. This is because it places the child in the part of life, he/she chooses. He/she after long years of training would have become so conversant with the rudiments of the vocation.

question 4: no answer

question 5: yes VE

question 6: I attended training after graduating from University. I am still learning and yes, I'll carve an occupation with my vocational training

gender: female

Age: 28-32

occupation:

Income:

education: first degree

Religion: Christians

children: 1

state: Edo

Respondent 14

question1: Financial independence and personal growth.

question 2: Financial independence Personal growth

question 3: Vocational education

question 4: People might think my child isn't educated cos they didn't go to a general school

question 5: No VE

question 6: N/A

gender: female

age: 28-32

occupation: white collar

income: 30,000-70,000

education: first degree

number of children: 1

state: Akwaibom

Respondent 15

question 1: The child's interest in vocational education

question 2: no response

question 3: General education because every chance to get educated is not usually a waste

question 4: no response

question 5: No VE

question 6: N/A

gender: female

age: 28-32

occupation: white collar

income: 80,000-120,000

education: first degree

religion: Christianity

state: Anambra

Respondent 16

question 1: Child's Interest, Utilizing limited time, Hands on training

question 2: 1, Child's Interest 2, Utilizing limited time 3, Hands on training

question 3: I'll choose Vocational Education because what the child shows interest in will be adequately attended to with hands on practical during training.

question 4: The factor that will make me change my mind will be because of the point of qualification for BSc
question 5: No VE

QUESTION 6: n/a

GENDER: MALE

age: 38-42

occupation: blue collar

income: 30,000-70,000

religion: Islam

children: 2

state: Edo state

Respondent 17

question 1: Empowerment Self Reliance Alternative Income Source
question 2: Empowerment Self Reliance Alternative Income Source
question 3: I wouldn't want to be left with that choice as both can go side by side.
question 4: I wouldn't want to.
question 5: No VE

question 6: N/A

gender: male

age: 43-57

occupation: blue collar

income: unspecified

education: first degree

religion: Islam

children: 3

state: Abia

Respondent 18

question 1: Prospects of the vocation the child's choice the child's academic record in conventional schools.

question 2: The child's academic record in conventional schools. The child's choice. Prospects of the vocation.

question 3: General education. It's the option I have experience with. I know nothing about vocational education.

question 4: The child wanting to go there

question 5: No VE

question 6: N/A

gender: male

Age: 28-32

occupation: white collar

income: 30,000-70,000

education: postgraduate

religion: Islam

children: 4

state: Oyo

Respondent 19

question 1: Their genuine interest in learning said vocation. My decision would be based on the request of the child. It's up to them to decide whether to get a proper education or go the vocation route.

question 2: no response

question 3: I'm in between. I'd prefer they have both, that way They have an option of choosing which direction to go later in life rather than being stuck in one area plus they'd have basic/required knowledge to scale through life.

question 4: No response

question 5: yes VE

question 6: Different periods but mostly as an adult (22) Occupation and vocation differ greatly.

gender: male

age: 28-32

occupation: white collar

income: 30,000-70,000

education: postgraduate

religion: none

state: Oyo

Respondent 20

question 1: Availability Funding Accessibility Schedule Relevance Interest

question 2: Availability Relevance Interest Funding Accessibility Schedule

question 3: If I have to make a choice, I would choose general education over vocational education for my children, because they could always choose/decide to take a vocational training later in life by themselves. But general education equips them for that and more.

question 4: The unavailability of general education.

question 5: Yes VE

question 6: After several years of corporate work experience. No, my work wasn't in line with it.

gender: male

Age: 38-42

occupation: white collar

income: 230,000-270,000

education: first degree

religion: Islam

children: 2

state: unspecified.

Respondent 21

question 1: Quality location Price. Morals and Discipline

question 2: Quality. Morals and Discipline Location. Price.

question 3: General. Ease of specializations

question 4: Most vocational study folks have no student debt

question 5: no VE

question 6: N/A

gender: male

Age: 33-37

occupation: white collar

income: 280,000-above

education: postgraduate

religion: Islam

children: 2

state: Imo

Respondent 22

question 1: If they have a flair for other things and not doing well in regular school

question 2: Not doing well in regular school is most influential followed by having a flair for something else

question 3: General education I believe is more encompassing while vocational education is more specific. A child should know a lot of stuff before they chose one to become an expert in

question 4: Already expressed that is if the child is struggling with general education

Question 5: yes VE

Question 6: During school holidays in my secondary school days and no my occupation is not in line with the vocational training received

gender: male

age: 43-57

occupation: white collar

income: 280,000- above

education: postgraduate

religion: Islam

children: 1

state: Anambra

Respondent 23

question 1: If I see potential towards a particular skillset in my child, I'd enrol them to help them hone those skills

question 2: If I see potential towards a particular skillset in my child, I'd enrol them to help them hone those skills

question 3: Vocational education. It's more focused

question 4: If the vocational training isn't making my child better

question 5: No VE

question 6: N/A

gender: male

age: 33-37

occupation: white collar

income: 80,000-120,000

education: first degree

religion: Islam

children: 1

state: Lagos

Respondent 24

question 1: Personal choices of the child and aptitude lean child has shown already

question 2: Childs choices. Childs skill aptitude lean

question 3: Vocational is more tailored based on displayed interest and natural skill of child

question 4: no change of mind

question 5: No VE

question 6: N/A

gender: male

age: 43-57

occupation: white collar

income: 280,000- above

education: postgraduate

religion: Islam

children: 5

state: Imo

Respondent 25

question 1: The interest of the child and how it would be beneficial to the child in the nearest future

question 2: Child's interest 2. Benefits
question 3: VOCATIONAL.....because of my life experiences
question 4: I would not
question 5: Yes VE

question 6: After my tertiary institution
gender: male

Age: 23-27

occupation: blue collar

income: 30,000-70,000

education: first degree

religion: Islam

children: 4

state: Bayelsa

Respondent 26

question 1: Capacity building and talent discovery
question 2: Talent discovery Capacity building
question 3: Vocational because the world we live today requires people with talents and skills, great ideas and technical expertise to survive in any form of economy globally
question 4: May be because general knowledge is a good background to checkmate what my ward is capable of doing and achieving at ease
question 5: Yes VE

question 6: After acquiring general knowledge to university level, and life became tough I had to view other options and grab other opportunities, which I am glad I did
gender: male

age: 33-37

occupation: blue collar

income: 80-120

education: postgraduate

religion: Christianity

children: 3

state: Kebbi

Respondent 27

question 1: Cost Curriculum Environment Willingness of the kid to learn Time convenience
Safety Standards etc

question 2: Cost Curriculum Environment Willingness of the kid to learn Time convenience
Safety Standards etc

question 3: Vocational education with life lessons learnt, I wish I did vocational education
when I was a kid. I don't want my children to make the same error. It's an immediate source
of revenue and can make oneself employed

question 4: Not Changing

question 5: No VE

question 6: N/A

gender: male

age: 38-42

occupation: blue collar

income: 30,000-70,000

education: first degree

religion: Islam

children: 1

state: Enugu

Respondent 28

question 1: The country I live in presently.

question 2: Terrible country Wanting a better life the children having more options to choose
from

question 3: Vocational education. It broadens their scope.

question 4: Top class education at an ivy league school. Guaranteed financial security.

question 5: yes VE

question 6: After University. No, it's not.

gender: male

age: 33-37

occupation: white collar

income: 80,000-120,000

education: first degree

religion: Christianity

children: 1

state: Delta

Respondent 29

question 1: The economy situation and their interest

question 2: 1 Interest 2 Economy situation

question 3: General education (reason unspecified)

question 4: If the child is not doing well academically

question 5: No VE

question 6: N/A

gender: female

age: 33-37

occupation: white collar

income: 80,000-120,000

education: postgraduate

religion: Islam

children: 2

state: Lagos

Respondent 30

question 1: No response

question 2: no response

question 3: no response

question 4: no response

question 5: no response

question 6: no response

gender: male

age: 33-37

occupation: white collar

income: 80,000-120,000

education: first degree

religion: Christianity

children: 2

state: Akwaibom

Respondent 31

question 1: Knowing that school is not meant for everyone. I'll make sure the child at least has a vocation to fall back on.

question 2: Not everyone is school material

question 3: I would choose general education, but Nigerians have the propensity to limit their children. If the kid does not have the knack for schooling, let them learn a trade.

question 4: Other than removing their brain and replacing it with Einstein's, I don't see what else can be done of the child is not educationally inclined and is good with their hands.

Again, I think it is a culture thing. In the United States, many people using their hands for their trade bank more money and make their own hours.

question 5: No VE

question 6: N/A

gender: female

age: 43-57

occupation: white collar

income: 280,000-above

education: postgraduate

religion: Islam

children: 3

state: Ogun

Respondent 32

question 1: To enable them have skills that they can either use to become entrepreneurs or be capable to move up the corporate ladder should they choose to go that route

question 2: entrepreneurship, moving up the corporate ladder

3: General education. The reason is subjective to course of study. Take engineering for example. During the course of study, there are practical (vocation like) classes that are done. The child having done all those classes can find that one they are interested in and go deeper in that.

4: reason for change of choice would be having vocational classes that also go deep into the theories of why things are done the way they are.

5: yes VE

6: polytechnic

gender: male

age: 33-37

occupation: white collar

income: 280,000-above

education: postgraduate

religion: Islam

children: 2

state: Edo

Respondent 33

1. Time and my child's interest

2. Child's Interest/Passion, Time

3. not answered

4. not answered

5. no VE

6. N/A

gender: female

age: 38-42

occupation: white collar

income: 280,000- above

education: first degree

religion: Christianity

children: 2

state: not specified

Respondent 34

1. The major factor is to get them to find out where their actual passion/vocation lies on
2. Edu Books/ information/ supportive material like internet based on the child's age
3. General education, so that from there, he would in turn go for the one that properly suits him which becomes an area of specialization/vocation
4. My choices would change considerably because of my son's passion/submission to the aforementioned
5. yes
6. No, it was a personal decision/experience

gender: male

Age: 38-42

Occupation: blue collar

Income: 30,000-70,000

Education: first degree

Religion: Islam

Children: 2

State: Edo

Respondent 35

1. The scope of the curriculum
2. Curriculum as Most, location as least
3. Either or would be fine
4. It would boil down to the institution
5. no VE
6. N/A

female

43-57

white collar

280,000-above

first degree

Christianity

4

Ondo

Respondent 36

1. Wholistic education, alternate source of income, independence
2. Independence, alternate source of income, wholistic education
3. General (no explanation)

4. Nigerian society and unemployment
5. no VE

6: N/A

Gender: male

Age: 43-57

Occupation: white collar

Income: 280,000-above

Education: first degree

Religion: Islam

Children: 3

Respondent 37

1. Child's inability to understand schoolwork
2. no response
3. general education- this is quite varied and leaves room for different options
4. Nothing will make me change except it's to acquire a skill set
5. no VE

6: N/A

Gender: female

Age: 43-57

Occupation: blue collar

Income: 280,000-above

Education: postgraduate

Religion: Islam

Children: 4

State: Rivers

Respondent 38

1. The child's likes, leanings, tendencies. For instance, if a little child likes sewing, fashion, then I would enrol that child in a tailoring class.
2. The factor that would be most influential would be the child's leanings. The least would be what I want. Or rather me wanting to live vicariously through the child.
3. General. Because I believe it is broader so would give the child greater opportunities in life. Vocational training may be more restrictive.
4. I would not change my choice.
5. no VE

6. N/A

Gender: male

Age: 43-57

Occupation: white collar

Income: 280,000-above

Education: first degree

Religion: Christianity

Children: 1

State: Kogi

Respondent 39

1. The economy trend. Their interests.
2. no answer
3. Tough. I'd go with general education for my kids. I've met them and I know this would work better for where their interests lie.
4. If the children interests change and/or if more attention is paid to standardizing vocational education in the country so it has some tools of formal education
5. No VE

6. N/A

Gender: female

Age: 33-37

Occupation: white collar

Income: 230,000-270,000

Education: first degree

Religion: not specified

Children: 2

State: unspecified

Respondent 40

1. Type of vocational education Child's decision

2. no answer

3. General education Because that's what is valued in our society

4. How our country perceives vocational education

5. yes VE

6. Finished the training It is not in line with my education

Gender: male

Age: 28-32

Occupation: white collar

Income: 30,000-70,000

Education: first degree

Religion: Christianity

Children: 2

State: Benue

Respondent 41

1. Child's interest and talents

2. Talents Interest

3. General education. The later can be acquired by the child at the point of discovery
4. If the child performs poorly or shows no interest to formal education
5. yes VE

6. As a graduate/ No it is not

Gender: female

Age: 33-37

Occupation: white collar

Income: 80,000-120,000

Education: first degree

Religion: Christianity

Children: 3

State: Oyo

Appendix 2



PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Reference Number:

Participant name or Study ID Number: 20042952

Title of Project: Factors Influencing the Perceptions of Parents in Jos-North towards Vocational Education.

Name of Researcher: Ijuolachi Obiora

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

☐

1. I agree to take part in the above study.

☐

The following statements could also be included on the consent form if appropriate:

☐

2. I agree to the interview / focus group / consultation being audio recorded

3. I agree to the interview / focus group / consultation being video recorded

☐

4. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications

☐

Signature of Participant

Date

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature of person taking consent

Appendix 3: Questionnaire

1. What factors would influence your decision to enrol your child in vocational education?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Considering the factors you mentioned in question 1 above arrange the factors below from 'Most influential to Least influential'

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.....
.....
.....
.....

3. If you had to choose between vocational education and general education for your child, which would you choose? please give reasons for your answer

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

4. If you had to change your choice in Question 3 above, what are the reasons/factors that would make you change your choice?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

5. Did you attend any form of vocational education or training? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes to Question 5 above, at what stage did you attend the training? is your occupation in line with the vocational training/education?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

what is your gender? Male ☐ Female ☐

Age: 18-22 ☐ 23-27 ☐ 28-32 ☐ 33-37 ☐ 38-42 ☐ 43-57 ☐ 58-62 ☐

Occupation: Blue Collar: Any occupation which requires manual labour, whether self-employed or employed by an organisation ☐

White Collar: Occupations which are performed in an administrative setting, an office or a cubicle. May be self-employed or employed by an organisation ☐

Income per Month: 30,000 - 70,000 ☐ 80,000 - 120,000 ☐ 130,000 - 170,000 ☐ 180 - 220,000 ☐ 230,000 - 270,000 ☐ 280,000 – above ☐

Highest level of Education

.....
.....

Religion: Christianity ☐ Islam ☐ other ☐

Number of Children:

.....

State of Origin:

.....
.....

Thank you!!!