

An Analytical Study on the Perception of the Entrepreneurs' towards Critical Success Factors of Pre-schools in Udaipur

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Abstract:

The charm of organized education for children below primary school age did not, until very recently received the attention it deserved. In earlier times, pre-school education was accused of lack of relevance to higher education and of too narrow a discipline base. The jewel of infant schools was introduced in India by the British missionaries in the latter part of the 18th century when such schools were set up in the western and southern regions of India. However in recent times, pre-schooling concept have picked up pace with its increasing importance. Research ¹ shows that by the age of 3, a baby's brain reaches almost 90 percent of its adult size. The awareness of this fact amongst young parents has also lead to the popularity of this concept. Henceforth, it has also attracted many young entrepreneurs who find this as a highly lucrative business model. Udaipur city, with a density of approximately 6, 00,000; have a pre-school in almost every nook and corner of the city. On one hand, the branded pre-schools in Udaipur like Kidzee, Bachpan, Tree-House, Little Einstien etc. take a huge share in the market whereas on the other hand indigenous players like Kids Kingdom, Curious Kids, Tiny Tots, Mikado Kids etc. are excelling this industry with their performance. These schools can be distinguished from each other on the basis of success factors like curriculum, distance, teaching pedagogy, conveyance facility, Student-Teacher Ratio, fee structure, medium of language, extracurricular activities, brand name, infrastructure, experienced teachers and affiliation. The article examines the perception of entrepreneurs towards these critical success factors of pre-schools in Udaipur.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurs, Pre-school, factors, Education*

Introduction:

Since its emergence, preschool industry has been regarded very much as a niche field derived from high school education industry. However, with increasing relevance in current scenario; it has become the first step of many kids in education line. Futhermore, this industry has turned out to be one of the most desirable business ventures for young entrepreneurs. Low capital requirement, short gestation period and high return on investment are some of the reasons which make this industry a lucrative one. The abrupt demand of pre-school education has led to spreading of these institutes in every alternate streets of any town. This has drawn a negative

¹ Child Welfare Information Gateway- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

impact on the quality delivered by these institutes. To stand against this criticism; pre-school institutes should do a quality check considering the various critical success factors (CSF). Henceforth, this research article aims at knowing the perception of entrepreneurs towards the CSF of this industry in particular.

Review of Literature:

- i. **Sammon (2005)** explored the effects of pre-school education on children's attainment and social/behavioral development at entry to school, and of any continuing effects on such outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1 (age 7). The sample included over 3,000 children and 141 pre-school centres drawn from six different types of providers. In addition, a home sample of children who had not attended a pre-school centre was included. In order to identify the processes that might influence centre effectiveness, observational data were collected and centre managers interviewed. In-depth case studies of 12 more effective centers were used to explore and illuminate the processes, particularly in relation to pedagogy, associated with better child outcomes. A mixed method approach was adopted to simultaneously answer both confirmatory and exploratory questions, to support user engagement and provide triangulation. The paper concluded that pre-school goers were much sharper than others. They show good sign of social/behavioral development.
- ii. **Greene (2007)** examined the relationship between mode of travel to school and the full range of factors that might affect mode choice. With data from Gainesville, Florida, a multinomial logit model was estimated to explain school mode choice for a sample of K-12 students. Students with shorter walk or bike times to school proved significantly more likely to walk or bike. If confirmed through subsequent research, this finding argued for neighborhood schools serving nearby residential areas. Students traveling through areas with sidewalks on main roads were also more likely to walk. If confirmed, this finding argued for "safe routes to school" sidewalk improvements. As noteworthy as the significant factors were those that did not prove significant. School enrollments were not significant after controlling for travel time between home and school. Larger schools may draw students from larger areas and thereby indirectly affect mode choices. But school size does not appear to have a direct effect on mode choices. Land use variables such as density and mix also were not significant. The travel behavior literature emphasized the importance of such variables in travel decision making. Apparently, school trips are different. They tend to be unlinked to other activities, and thus reduced the need for proximity to other land uses. They are mandatory; thus the walking environment may be less important than it is with discretionary travel. And school trips involve children, who may be less sensitive to walking conditions than are their adult counterparts.
- iii. **Cardon (2009)** investigated the effects of providing play equipment and markings at the pre-school playground on physical activity engagement levels. They performed a cluster randomised control trial. In November and December 2007, a convenience sample of 40 public pre-schools in Flanders, Belgium, was randomly assigned to one of the following conditions: 1) in 10 pre-schools play equipment was provided, 2) in 10 pre-schools markings were painted on the playground, 3) in 10 schools play equipment was provided

and markings were painted, 4) 10 schools served as a control condition. Accelerometer-based physical activity levels during recess were evaluated at baseline and 4 to 6 weeks after the implementation of the intervention in 583 children (52% boys; mean age 5.3 years, SD 0.4). At baseline pre-schoolers spent only 11.2% (average: 4.7 min) of recess time in moderate to vigorous activity, while 61.3% (average: 25.7 min) was spent in sedentary activity. The interventions were not effective in increasing the average activity levels or the percentages of engagement in moderate or vigorous activity, or in decreasing sedentary time. The study concluded that providing playground markings or play equipment is not sufficient to increase activity levels and decrease levels of sedentary activity during pre-school recess. More activating supervision and the inclusion of more structured physical activity seem needed.

- iv. **Sylva (2010)** focused on the pre-school stage of children's development. It highlighted various activities pre-school conducts to enhance children's personality. It talked about the different factors of a pre-school which affects the growth of a kid like: infrastructural facilities, curriculum, toys, activities etc. In a very welcome move, it brought together into one volume the evidence from 37 technical papers and research reports published between 1999 and 2008.
- v. **Sammons (2010)** explored the impact of pre-school experience on young children's cognitive attainments at entry to primary school and analysed data collected as part of a wider longitudinal study, the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project, which followed a large sample of young children attending 141 pre-school centres drawn from six types of provider in five English regions. The article compared the characteristics and attainments of the pre-school sample with those of an additional 'home' sample (children who had not attended pre-school) recruited at entry to reception. Multilevel analyses of relationships between child, parent and home environment characteristics and children's attainments in pre-reading, early number concepts and language skills were presented. Duration of time in pre-school was found to have a significant and positive impact on attainment over and above important influences such as family socio-economic status, income, mother's qualification level, ethnic and language background. The research also pointed to the separate and significant influence of the home learning environment. It was concluded that pre-school can play an important part in combating social exclusion by offering disadvantaged children, in particular, a better start to primary school.

Objectives of the Study:

From the above review of literature, the following objectives were found for the study –

- To Study the perception of the Entrepreneurs' towards critical success factors of pre-schools of Udaipur. .
- To Study the Entrepreneurs' perception towards the additional success factors required to make their pre-schools a more successful business venture.

Research Methodology

- The study is based on primary data collection from 30 leading entrepreneurs of pre-school Industry.
- Research Design was descriptive in nature.
- Random sampling technique was used.
- A well-structured questionnaire using Likert’s five points scale was used to collect primary data for analysis. A survey was carried out on randomly selected entrepreneurs in the areas so identified.
- Data has been presented in the forms of tables in order to make the analysis easy. Analytical tools Mean & Standard Deviation were used.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Q What are the critical success factors of pre-school?

Entrepreneurs Ranked Factors: EX=5 Points, AE= 4 Points, BE=3 Points; ME= 2 Point, IN = 1 Point.

(Table 1) Frequency of Respondents

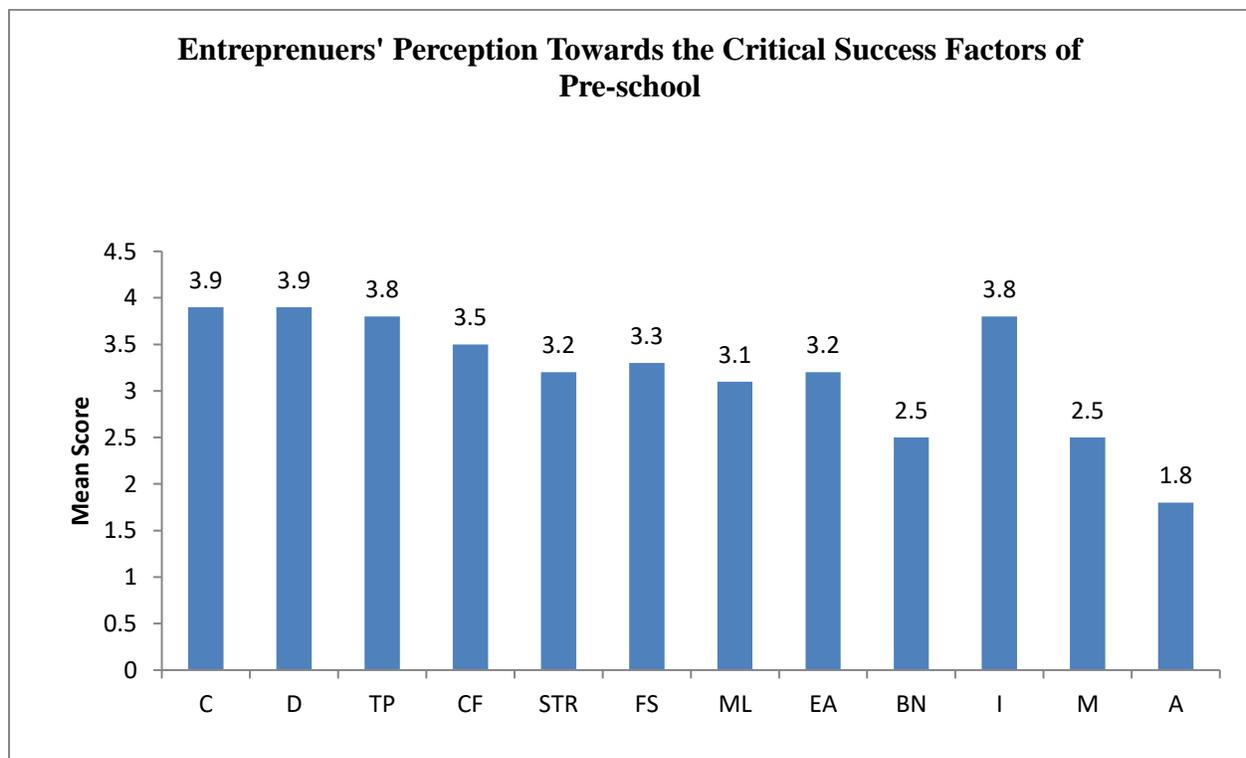
Rank→	EI	VI	I	LI	UI
Curriculum (C)	11	8	9	2	0
Distance to the school (D)	14	6	5	3	2
Teaching Pedagogy (TP)	12	9	5	1	3
Conveyance Facility (CF)	9	7	8	4	2
Student-Teacher Ratio (STR)	6	8	7	6	3
Fee Structure (FS)	9	6	6	5	4
Medium of Language (ML)	7	5	8	6	4
Extracurricular Activities (EA)	9	6	5	4	6
Brand Name (BN)	2	4	8	9	7
Infrastructure (I)	9	8	4	6	3
Management (M)	3	4	7	7	9
Affiliation (A)	1	1	4	11	13

Extremely Important: EI; Very Important: VI; Important: I; Less Important: LI; Unimportant: UI

Score (Point x Frequency)

Points→	5	4	3	2	1	Total	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
C	11*5	8*4	9*3	2*2	0*1	118	118/30=3.9	4.7
D	14*5	6*4	5*3	3*2	2*1	73	117/30=3.9	4.7
TP	12*5	9*4	5*3	1*2	3*1	86	116/30=3.8	4.5

CF	9*5	7*4	8*3	4*2	2*1	55	107/30=3.5	2.9
STR	6*5	8*4	7*3	6*2	3*1	56	98/30=3.2	1.9
FS	9*5	6*4	6*3	5*2	4*1	80	101/30=3.3	1.9
ML	7*5	5*4	8*3	6*2	4*1	57	95/30=3.1	1.6
EA	9*5	6*4	5*3	4*2	6*1	78	98/30=3.2	1.9
BN	2*5	4*4	8*3	9*2	7*1	75	75/30=2.5	2.9
I	9*5	8*4	4*3	6*2	3*1	79	116/30=3.8	2.5
M	3*5	4*4	7*3	7*2	9*1	75	75/30=2.5	2.4
A	1*5	1*4	4*3	11*2	13*1	56	56/30=1.8	5.7



Interpretation

In this section, entrepreneurs' perception towards critical success factors of pre-schools is analyzed and the opinion of these respondents is presented in Table 1.

The study reported that entrepreneur find curriculum and distances as the two most important factors which affect the success of any pre-school. Young parents these days are excessively particular about the kind of pre-schooling their kids go through. The major criterion for selection of any preschool is the curriculum they follow. However, distance travelled by the kid to reach the pre-school is also considered by parents a lot as the target mass of pre-school is kids in the age –group of 1.5 years to 6 years only. An entrepreneur should not only start his pre-school with good quality curriculum but at the same time should also take into consideration the location of the pre-school. A venture in high residential density area may get better response when compared to the one with less density.

On the other hand entrepreneurs also find that affiliation of the pre-schools to any recognized body is not of much importance. Parents do not consider this factor to a large extent because this category deals with kid's basic development rather than merit building.

Entrepreneurs are also of the opinion that a pre-school venture to be successful should use spacious, well ventilated and lighted infrastructure. It should have less of staircases as these become risky for the kids. Furthermore, well equipped infrastructure coupled with innovative teaching pedagogy attracts parents. A major issue found in this industry is imitation of study material. However, parents distinguish these pre-schools through their innovative and modern teaching pedagogy.

Majority of the entrepreneurs find that fee structure plays a vital role in decision making of parents while selecting the pre-school. High mean score of 3.3 clearly states that fee structure of the pre-school should be so that target mass accepts it easily or else it may negatively impact the decision of the parents.

With the rising trend of nuclear family concept; parents prefer pre-school where more of personal attention can be given to the kids. Pre-schools have come up with unique selling point of low student-teacher ratio so that each child is taken care properly. Furthermore, few branded school maintain a student teacher ratio as less as 5:1. However, this affects their viability in terms of rising fee-structure.

Entrepreneurs even state that extracurricular activities and medium of language are taken into consideration by parents as reflected by the mean scores of 3.2 and 3.1 respectively. However, 6 entrepreneurs find that extracurricular activities are unimportant in the parents' decision making for selection of pre-schools. In Udaipur, English language is considered critically important in terms of career building. Parents prefer this medium of language from kid's early schooling days. Hence, an entrepreneur with a venture which takes care of this factor may be preferred over others.

It was also found that parents do not find management of the school as an important factor which is represented by a low mean of 2.5. However, brand name though with low mean score of 2.5 have comparatively high standard deviation score of 2.9. Moreover, 14 out of 30 respondents keep brand name in the important category.

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that:

- Parents find curriculum and location of the pre-school as most important factors for deciding their kid's pre-school.
- Entrepreneurs also find that teaching pedagogy and infrastructure should be taken into consideration while starting a pre-school venture as these play an important role in decision-making of the parents.
- Most of the entrepreneurs feel that conyance facility if provided; can attract distant parents also.
- Entrepreneurs opine that fee structure, medium of language, extracurricular activities and student teacher ratio can be distinguishing factors for the parents in decision making.
- Lastly, entrepreneurs find that factors like affiliation of the school, brand name and management should be given less importance as compared to other critical success factors while starting a pre-school venture.

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