

Entrepreneurial Characteristics and Montessori Education



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Literature Review

Currently there are about 7.6 million businesses in the United States and this number is projected to grow to 7.9 million by 2020 (IBISWorld, 2015). Entrepreneurship is one of the most important factors in the economic growth in a country (Bansal, 2012). It has been noted that small businesses are the source of economic growth not only in the United States, but other countries in the world (Paleno, 2000).

How did these individuals decide on becoming entrepreneurs? In a study by Segal, Borgia, and Schoenfeld (2005), entrepreneurial intentions were stronger in people who believed they would be successful and expected their new ventures to have positive outcomes. The study also showed that a combination of tolerance toward ambiguity in uncertain situations, self-efficacy, and desire to be self-employed lead these individuals to think about becoming an entrepreneur. It is important to recognize the influence education has on young students and their future intentions of starting their own businesses. (Soomro & Shah, 2015). There are many differing opinions about how entrepreneurship should be taught. However, research indicates that entrepreneurship education should be taught in a realistic environment, promoting active learning, and encouraging reflective processes in their daily learning objectives (Kassean, Vanevenhoven, Liguori, & Winkel, 2015).

How does one instill these entrepreneurial values in today's young students? Van der Kuip and Verheul (2004) suggested that evaluating the Montessori method of education and other alternative educational systems could lead to identifying key factors that can be implemented in entrepreneurial education. With that having been said, some of today's most creative innovators and entrepreneurs began their education in a Montessori school system (Lamas, 2015). For example, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, the founders of Google, Inc., attended Montessori schools as young students

According to Lamas (2015), teaching students to think and/or behave differently is valued by entrepreneurial education experts. Therefore, the focus of this study is to determine if the behaviors and skills associated with entrepreneurs exist within the Montessori method of learning.

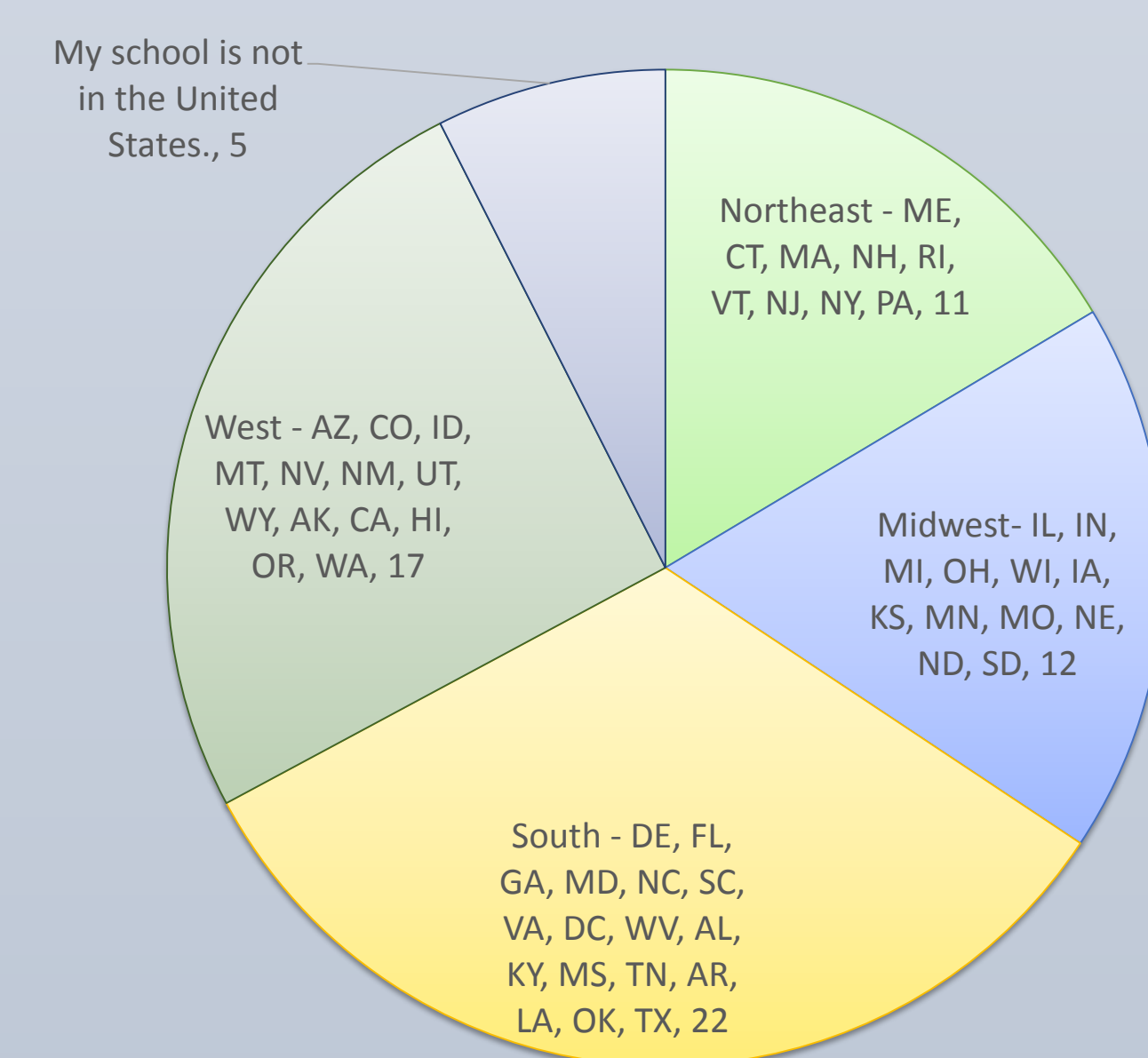
Research Questions

- What entrepreneurial behaviors are supported by the Montessori method of learning?
- What entrepreneurial skills are developed in students within a Montessori classroom?

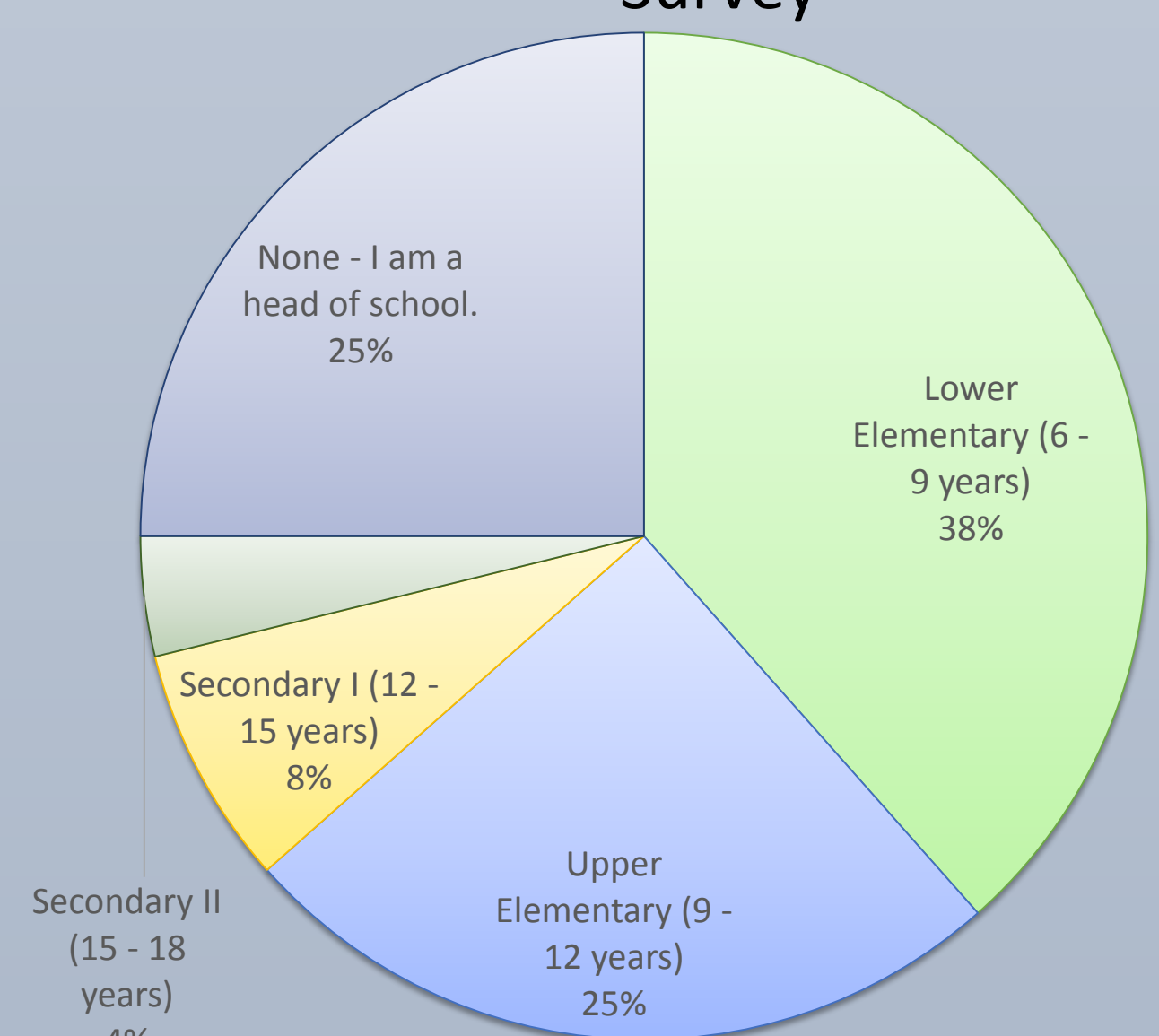
Methodology

- A survey with closed questions was distributed through Qualtrics to 214 Montessori classroom teachers and heads of school through the AMS Teacher Research Panel. Results were analyzed using SPSS.
- The survey was developed using behaviors in entrepreneurial literature, such as tolerance for ambiguity and internal locus of control.
- Of the 72 surveys returned, 89% were complete. The response rate was 33.6%.

Regions Represented in Survey



Levels of Classrooms Represented in Survey



Survey Results

The current research investigated the intersection of a Montessori education and entrepreneurial behaviors. The majority of respondents were from the southern region of the United States and taught upper or lower elementary ($n=33$). The majority of respondents were also certified Montessori teachers ($n=40$) teaching in an AMS accredited school ($n=23$).

Prior research has indicated entrepreneurial behaviors should be taught in a realistic environment that encourages reflection and goal planning (Kassean, Vanevenhoven, Liguori, & Winkel, 2015). Teachers, Heads of School, and other Montessori personnel rated Montessori students highest on the following entrepreneurial behavior categories: collaboration, creativity, internal locus of control, and self-esteem. Students were rated lowest on competitiveness, analyzing information, goal-setting, and tolerance for ambiguity. Behavioral stems were considered to have a high rating when the average score was a 4 or higher out of a possible rating of 5. Conversely, behavioral stems were considered to be rated lower if the average score was below 4. This was selected because all behavioral stems, except, "My students prefer to work alone," were rated in the range of 3.29 to 4.63. Since the rating of 3 indicated a neutral response and the rating of 4 indicated agreement, the researchers selected to use above 4 for high ratings and below 4 for lower ratings. No items had an average rating below 2.37.

Selected References

- Kassean, H., Vanevenhoven, J., Liguori, E., & Winkel, D. E. (2015). Entrepreneurship education: A need for reflection, real-world experience and action. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 21(5), 690-708.
- Segal, G., Borgia, D., & Schoenfeld, J. (2005). The motivation to become an entrepreneur. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, 11, 42-57.

Survey Results

Entrepreneurial Behaviors and Skills:

