

DETERMINANTS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN DELTA STATE NIGERIA**Charity Uche Eziechine¹ & Jane Nwakego Egbri²**

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Abstract

The study examined the determinants influencing the career choice of business education students in tertiary institutions in Delta State. Three research questions guided the study, and one null hypothesis was formulated and tested at a 0.05 alpha significance level. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in public tertiary institutions that run business education programmes. The study population comprised 196 200-level business education students for the 2019/2020 academic session. The entire population was used as a sample due to its manageable size. No sampling technique was employed. A structured questionnaire of 15 items was used for data collection. The instrument was structured in line with the research questions, with four rating scales very high extent (4 points), high extent (3 points), low extent (2 points) and very low extent (1 point). The instrument was face validated by three research experts. A reliability test was conducted using a sample of 20 business education students at Anambra State University. They were not part of the study since the entire population was used as a sample size. The first and second administrations were done within an interval of two weeks. To measure the degree of consistency between the first and second administrations, data obtained were analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha Statistics method and a reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained.

Hence the instrument was considered reliable. The researcher administered copies of the questionnaire to respondents with the help of four research assistants, one from the schools under review. Completed copies were retrieved, and data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. While mean (x) and standard deviation (SD) were used to analyze data from the research questions, t-test statistics were used to test the null hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that personal interest, home/parental background and peer group influence the career choice of business education students. Also, male and female business education students do not significantly differ in their career choice in tertiary institutions in Delta State. The study recommends that career choice be initiated in schools as early as the nursery/primary school years. Career seminars and talks are organized regularly to expose students to areas of interest as they choose their career paths. Also, school administrators and other stakeholders organize special sensitization crusades to educate parents on the need not to force their children/wards into their own career choice but, with guidance and support, allow them to make their own right career choice. The study also recommends that career counsellors educate students on the need to choose a career based on interest and knowledge in a particular course or subject area, not necessarily choosing a career because their friends choose it.

Keywords: *Determinants. Business Education, Career, Career choice,***Introduction**

Education is an important instrument for national development interaction of persons and ideas. It fosters the development of individuals, training minds in understanding the globe and acquiring the appropriate skills and competencies needed for an individual to live and contribute positively to society. Developing appropriate skills and competencies is one of the aims and objectives of the business education programme.

Business education is a vocational course that prepares individuals for a business career and enables individuals to be intelligent economic consumers of goods and services. The philosophy in the study of business education aims to prepare individuals to acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will enable them to fit into work or become self-reliant. According to Okoro (2016), business education studies new technologies in business and the acquisition of skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge leading to occupation in various sections of peoples' economic and social lives. The programme, as an integral part of vocational education, prepares students for entry into advancement in jobs within business, handle their business affairs and function intelligently as consumers of goods and services in a business economy. To function intelligently in an economic and social society requires making a good choice of career that will expose the individual to new technologies and processes of adding value to oneself and the society at large. This process of making occupational/career choices, as put by Braza and Guillo (2015), is complex and unique to individuals depending on the cognitive factor and social structure of the individual's milieu

The choice is the selecting or separating from two or more preferred alternatives. Choice involves judging the merits of multiple options and selecting one or more of them. It is a strong force that determines the next line of action that an individual intends to take. The choice is one of the major tenets of students, including business education students who are indecisive about the course to read. Making a good career choice may foster the achievement of the aims and objectives of business education. The aim of education, as a stipulation in the national policy of education as revised (2014), is to help the individual develop occupational and vocational competencies that will enable them to be gainfully employed or become self-employed.

Career choice has lately become a very complicated issue because choosing a career may be influenced by numerous factors, yet choosing the right career is important to ensure that individuals live a satisfying life. Career choice is a difficult task that students sometimes face at the point of entry into a higher institution of learning. Merriam Webster's Dictionary (1998) states that career choice involves choosing one occupation over another. Choosing a career remains a critical aspect of the individual student's life which role - pattern the needs to be played by the individual in the society. Issa and Nwalo (2014) assert that choosing careers, subjects, courses of study, and subsequent career paths remains a nightmare for prospective undergraduate students. Making a good career choice may require the availability of alternatives and personal preference between the alternatives. According to Kerka (2018), making a career choice could be influenced by multiple factors that include; personal interests, home/parental background, social support/ peer, and available resources (Information and Financial), among others.

Interest is a very significant determinant of the career choice of students. Bija (2015) posits that students' interests may be the most influencing factor in selecting a career choice among students worldwide. Career interest reflects stable preferences for certain work activities and environments. Interest exists within the individual rather than on external pressures on decision making. Students' career choice follows their passion and thus drives them to choose a career that most times matches their interest, knowledge and abilities required in a particular

study. Personal interest may be the most influencing factor in selecting a study. However, some students make their career choice due to intrinsic interests. Intrinsic interest is the driving force that energizes an individual to decide if the individual is going to excel and have satisfaction in the career. In the words of Nyamwange (2016), he establishes that career choice is influenced by life context, personal attitude and educational attainment. He also stated that those who do not have the freedom to make their career choice seem more frustrated when trying to pursue the career chosen by their parents or other family relatives.

Home is the first agent of change for a child. Students grow up from home as children, and their contact with their parents is a significant factor in their way of life. Parents are one of the primary and important sources of information for their children concerning higher education studies, especially as it concerns the children's choice of course. As an encouraging force, parents normally provide their children with the first experience and model with which the child can identify. Ceja (2013) affirms that many students are provided opportunities and information from the home environment. Parents consciously set themselves up as counsellors and advisers as the children often confide in them on various issues, including vocational matters. Parents are significant interpreters to children for information about themselves and their world. Among family members, parents are the most influencing in the career choice decision of their children. Simpson (2018) opined that college students are likely to choose a career along with their parents' occupation. The author further states that children from low socioeconomic status aspire to a career at a higher level than their parents, while children from homes of high socioeconomic status tend to lean more on influences outside the home. However, some previous studies reveal that most children sometimes choose a career in-line with their parents' desires. Further observations also seem to indicate that some ethical family issues may likely influence students' career decisions since cultural values and expectations have a pervasive influence in shaping students' attitudes to education and course of study over a long period.

Social support/Peer groups play a significant role in the choice of career of students. Some students choose a particular career because their peers, friends or classmates in secondary school have chosen the same course. Peers of the same age bracket often exchange ideas on what they want to study after secondary school, which greatly influences their career choice. Natalie (2016) states that through interaction with family, relatives, friends, school and community, young adults explore and learn about a career which ultimately leads to their career choice. However, friends may help in providing useful and meaningful information about a specific career option, which could also influence their career choice. Consequently, it could be said that these outlined factors, among others, likely influence students' career choices, especially business education students in tertiary institutions.

Statement of the Problem

The overall philosophy and objective of education in Nigeria, stipulated in the National Policy of Education (2014), aims to integrate the individual into a sound and effective citizen with equal educational opportunity for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Achieving these objectives frequently depends on determinant elements that

influence students' career choices. Choice of career, especially for students transiting from secondary school to tertiary institutions, seems to have remained a cause of concern to many stakeholders, especially parents. Consequently, these concerns appear to result from some determinant factors that influence students' career choices, especially business education students. These determinant factors, as observation, seem to reveal include; students' interest in the course, home/parental background, social support/peer group, and available resources, among others. Though those mentioned above, which seem not to have an empirical basis, pose a worry to this study. As a result, it becomes imperative that further study be carried out to examine the actual cause of this backdrop and probably profile empirical solutions to these uncertainties that act as determinants influencing students' career choices in tertiary institutions. Therefore, this study examined the determinants influencing the career choice of business education students in tertiary institutions in Delta State.

Purpose of the Study

The study aimed to examine the determinants influencing the career choice of business education students in tertiary institutions in Delta State. Specifically, the study determined:

- The extent of the influence of interest on business education students' career choice in tertiary institutions in Delta.
- Extent of home/parental background influence on career choice of business education students in tertiary institutions in Delta State.
- Extent of peer group influence on career choice of business education students in tertiary institutions in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in line with the specific purpose of the study:

- To what extent does interest influence the career choice of business education students in tertiary institutions in Delta State?
- To what extent does home/parental background influence the career choice of business education students in tertiary institutions in Delta State?
- To what extent do peer groups influence the career choice of business education students in tertiary institutions in Delta State?

Test of Hypothesis

Ho:

There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female business education students' responses on determinants influencing career choice in tertiary institutions in Delta State.

Methods

A descriptive-based survey design was adopted for the study. The descriptive survey involves collecting data to describe and interpret existing conditions, prevailing practices, beliefs, attitudes and ongoing processes (Creswell 2014). This design was considered suitable for the study since it allows the collection of relevant information from respondents through a questionnaire without any form of manipulation. The study population comprised 196 200-level

business education students from the tertiary institutions in Delta State that run the programme for the 2019/2020 academic session. The population comprised 84 business education students from Delta State University Abraka, 54 business education students from Ogwashi-Uku Polytechnic, 18 business education students from College of Education Warri and 40 business education students from Federal College of Education Technical Asaba. The entire population was used as a sample due to its manageable size. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire with two sections, A and B. Section A contained demographic variables of each respondent, such as sex. In contrast, section B consists of 15 items drawn from the three research questions. Research question one contains items 1-5; research question two includes items 6-10, and research question three includes items 11-15. The responses were structured on a 4-point rating scale of very high extent (VHE) 4 points, high extent (HE) 3 points, low extent (LE) 2 points, and very low extent (VLE) 1 point. The instrument was face validated by three research experts from Delta State University Abraka, and all observations and corrections were effected in the final draft. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test-retest method. The instrument was administered to a sample of 20 business education students at Anambra State University. They were not part of the study since the entire population was used as a sample size. Cronbach Alpha Statistical Method was used to measure the degree of consistency between the first and second administration. A reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained, which shows that the instrument was reliable. The researcher administered copies of the questionnaire with the help of four research assistants, one each from the schools of study and completed copies were retrieved at the interval of two weeks. The research questions were analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD). Values of 2.50 were regarded as high extent, and values below 2.50 were considered as the low extent and meant scores reported at two (2) decimal places. The null hypothesis was tested using t-test statistics at a 0.05 alpha significance level. Where the calculated r-value exceeds the critical p-value, the null hypothesis was rejected and, if otherwise, accepted.

Results

Research Question 1

To what extent does interest influence the career choice of business education students?

Table 1: Mean (\bar{X}) of respondents' scores on the extent to which interest influence career choice of business education students.

S/N	Influence of Interest on career choice	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	Subject interest influence career choice	3.28	1.57	High Extent
2.	Motivation to develop relevant skills influence career choice		2.64	1.55 High Extent
3.	Stable preference for certain work activities influence career choice		2.94	1.62 High Extent
4.	Exploration and advancement influence career choice		2.78	1.61 High Extent
5.	Passion for following a particular career influences career choice	3.55	0.61	High Extent
6.	Having the basic knowledge required for a particular career influence career choice		2.65	0.42 High Extent
Grand Total		2.97	1.23	High Extent

The analysis of research question 1, as shown in table 1, indicates that the mean response of respondents ranged from 2.64 – 3.28. The result shows that personal interest influences the career choice of business education students in Delta State. With an aggregate mean of 2.97 above the criterion mean of 2.50, it signifies a great extent of influence of interest on the career choice of business education students in Delta State.

Research Question 2:

To what extent does home/parental background influence the career choice of business education students?

Table 2: Mean (\bar{X}) standard deviation of respondents; score on the extent to which parental background influences career choice of business education students.

S/N	Influence of home/parental background on career choice	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
7.	First experience gotten by children influence career choice	3.23	1.54	High Extent
8.	Information interpretation by parents influence career choice.	3.02	1.53	High Extent
9.	Parents level of education influence career choice	3.46	1.51	High Extent
10.	Cultural value expectations influence career choice	3.35	0.66	High Extent
11.	Parents; economic status influence career choice	3.60	1.54	High Extent
12.	Ethical background of families influence career choice	3.25	0.24	High Extent
Grand Total		3.32	1.17	High Extent

The analysis of research question two in table 2 revealed that the mean response of respondents ranged from 2.02-3.60, which signify that home/parental background influence business education students' career choice in Delta State. With an aggregate mean score of 3.32 above the criterion mean of 2.50, it indicates a high extent of influence of parental background on the career choice of business education students in Delta State.

Research Question 3

To what extent do social/ peers influence the career choice of business education students?

Table 3: Mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation of respondents' score on the extent of social support/ peer group influence on career choice of business education students.

S/N Social support/ peer group influence on career choice Decision		\bar{X}	SD
13. Friends' course of study influences career choice Extent	3.18	0.61	High
14. Exchange of ideas by some age brackets influence career choice Extent	3.26	1.57	High
15. Interaction of young adults with family relatives influence career choice	3.32	1.58	High Extent
16. The prestige associated with a particular career influences career choice Extent	2.54	1.64	High
17. Career flexibility influences career choice Extent	2.85	1.60	High
18. Supportiveness and quality of relationship influence career choice Extent	2.76	1.89	High
Grand Total	2.99	1.48	High Extent

Source: Fieldwork 2022

The analysis of research question three, as shown in Table 3, indicates that the mean response of the respondents ranged from 2.54-3.32. The result showed that social/peers influence the career choice of business education students in Delta State. With an aggregate mean of 2.99 above the criterion mean of 2.50, it signifies a high extent of influence of peers on the career choice of business education students.

Hypothesis**Ho:**

There is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female business education students' responses on determinants influencing their career choice in tertiary institutions in Delta State.

Table 4: Independent sample t-test analysis on the significant difference between the mean rating of male and female business education students' responses on the determinants influencing career choice in tertiary institutions in Delta State.

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal.	p-value	Decision
Male	161	3.54	0.58				
Female	88	3.22	0.49	2.46	-30.80	0.08	NS

The calculated t-test of -30.80 is less than the p-value of 0.08 at a 0.05 alpha significance level. It signifies that the p-value is higher than the t- calculated value. This implies that there is no significant difference between the mean rating of male and female business education students' responses on determinants influencing their career choice in tertiary institutions in Delta State. The null hypothesis is, therefore, retained.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from research question one, as shown in Table 1, revealed the influence of interest on the career choice of business education students in tertiary institutions in Delta State. The responses agreed with Bija (2012), who posited that students' interests might be the most influencing factor in selecting a career choice among students. In affirmation, Nyamwange (2016) establishes that those who do not have the freedom to make their choice seem more frustrated when trying to pursue the career chosen for them.

The findings in research question two, as presented in Table 2, indicate that home/parental background greatly influences business education students' career choices in tertiary institutions in Delta State. This finding agrees with Ceja (2013), who reveals that a good number of students are provided opportunities and information from the home environment and that parents are one of the primary and important sources of information for higher education to students. The findings from research question three, as shown in Table 3, revealed that social/peer groups influence the career choice of business education students in tertiary institutions in Delta State. This finding agrees with Natalie (2006), who revealed that young adults, through interaction with family, relatives, friends, school and community, explore and learn about a career which ultimately leads to their career choice.

The null hypothesis results indicate that male and female business education students do not differ significantly in their responses to the determinants influencing career choice in tertiary institutions in Delta State.

Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, the following conclusion was reached; that personal interest, home/parental background and peer group strongly influence business education students' career choices in tertiary institutions in Delta State. Students could benefit from real-life scenarios and problem-solving situations, both for practice and experience, thus preparing their minds for future career choices.

Recommendations

Consequent to the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made thus:

1. That career choice should be initiated in schools as early as the nursery school years, with career seminars and talks organized regularly to expose students to areas of interest as they choose their career path in life choice.
2. School administrators and other stakeholders should organize a special sensitization crusade to educate parents on the need not to force their children/wards into careers of

- their choice but, with guidance and support, allow children to make their own right career choice.
3. That career counsellors should educate students on the need to choose a career based on interest and knowledge in a particular course or subject area, not necessarily choosing a career because their friends choose the career.

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