

A Study on Students' Choice of Programme in the University

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Abstract

The study examined the choice of programme that students' offered in the University, especially in the built environment. Questionnaire was administered on 100 Level students in the Departments of Architecture, Building Technology and Estate Management of Covenant University, Ota. A total of 136 copies of questionnaire was retrieved and used for analysis as contained in the study. The study revealed that 79.4% were in the University based on their parents' choice while 90% are responsible for the choice of course (programme) they are pursuing in the University based on personal interest. About 69.9% of the students dislike the University which may be a factor to be considered in their academic performances. It is therefore very important that, even though the students are very tender in ages, respect should be given to their opinion in taking decision(s) on issues that border on their lives. Parents should always take time to talk things over with their wards rather than imposing their opinion on the children.

Keywords: Architecture, Building, Education, Estate Management, Students' Choice, University.

1. Introduction

Education can vastly be viewed as formal, semi-formal and informal. Informal education system saw to it that guardians or parents inculcated into their wards or children values and norms, and also taught them handcraft occupations which in turn became their career. The formal education as the name implies is class-room based and provided by trained teachers. The semi-formal education, on the other hand, is a hybrid of the above discussed. The focus of this research is however on the formal system of education. In whatever form education may come, it invariably cultivates the mind or the intellect. It brings about self-realisation, ensures social reformation, love in the society and a good life (Appiah, 1994). Accordingly, education is that which empowers man to perform in a justly, skillfully and satisfactory manner to whatever capacity he finds himself. Amoor and Aliyu (2014) further assert that it is a process of leading and initiating people to acquire necessary skills, facts, knowledge, habits and attitudes that will make them co-exist with others as useful and productive members of the society.

According to a study carried out in Ghana by Akyina, Oduro-Okyireh and Osei-Owusu (2014) governments over the years have laid emphasis through educational reforms on the need to have programmes in schools that will train the youth to occupy positions in the society. Thus, the government is affirmative that this can be achieved through serious emphasis on guidance and counseling so that students can make right choices of programme of study; make good plans and decisions which will ultimately promote disciplines in schools. This implies that there is unarguably an influential nexus between the choice of programme of study in a University and the area of discipline or subject choices in Senior High Schools so as to enable students channel their interests, aptitudes and abilities. However in the Nigerian context, this may not always be the case as students find themselves deviating from their academic needs, aspirations and aim in life.

The proper educational counseling that may guide toward making intelligent and informed decisions are somewhat not sought after and this may lead to problems of coping with a course of study, lack of interest, lack of motivation (Akyina et al, 2014) and subsequently withdrawal (Redmond, Quin, Devitt and Archbold, 2011). This therefore is the essence of this research as it seeks to investigate the factors that influence students' choice of programme of study with particular focus on students in Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

Various works had been carried out, in other fields, on the factors considered in choosing a programme of study and vocation. For instance, the work of Clutter (2010) explored parents' critical role in their children's career choices and aspirations. The work had, subsumed in it, a brief history of past career counseling techniques, which begins in the formative years through assessing the student's personality to determine proper occupational fit. The researcher also stated that there has been a progression to the post-modernist view that bases vocational interest and aspirations on constantly changing life roles. Also included were previous empirical researches that have examined parental influence on adolescent's career choices, as well as researches that border on the effects of socioeconomic status, gender, and race. The paper however concluded that career counselors and parents may use the strength of parental influence upon young adults to provide more effective career development techniques and create stronger partnerships with the young adult's primary stakeholders. This paper, although extant in its review of literature failed to empirically undertake the study.

Alika (2010) investigated into parents and peer group influence as correlates of career choice in humanities among secondary school students in Nigeria. Survey method was adopted with a random sample study population that comprised one hundred Senior Secondary School two (SSS2) students in Oredo and Egor local government areas of Edo State. Three research instruments, namely: the students occupational clusters preference scale (OCPS), peer pressure assessment scale (PPAS) and the parental influence assessment inventory (PIAI) were employed. The items on the instruments were a modified 4-point Likert scale. Using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC), a relationship was established between the independent variables (parental and peer group influence) and the dependent variable (career choice). Result showed that there was no significant relationship between parental and peer group influence on career choice in humanities among secondary school students. As regards career development, it recommended that counselors should work directly with parents and peers, especially with a view to enhancing the positive aspects which may eventually improve the career development prospects of our future workers. The recommendation is seemingly in harmony with the study of Akyina, et al (2014) which stated that school counselors should reinforce students' rational programme choice behaviour by intensifying counseling in schools so that students will continue to make rational choices of programmes in school.

The study of Igbiniedion (2011) examined the perceived factors that influence students' vocational choice of secretarial studies in tertiary institutions in Edo State, Nigeria. Two research questions were raised and answered; while two hypotheses were formulated and tested. Factors that were investigated included parental, peer group, gender and interest. The study was informed by the low level of students' enrolment into secretarial education programmes across the universities and college of education and the poor attitude of students with regard to their self-worth in spite of the many job opportunities and career satisfaction offered by this all-pervasive skill-oriented vocational academic programme. The study was descriptive in design with a stratified sample size of 191 students randomly selected from a population study of 447 students enrolled in secretarial studies programmes in public tertiary institutions in Edo State during the 2006/2007 academic session. Survey instrument was questionnaire and used to gather data from the field for analysis. The results showed that there were variations in the perceived factors that influence students' vocational choice of secretarial studies between male and female students; and also students from the universities and college of education differed significantly with regard to some of the factors that influence their choice. Based on this, it was recommended amongst others that candidates irrespective of the gender should be encouraged to enroll into secretarial studies programmes.

In Spain, Sanchez (2012) analysed the factors that influence secondary school students' choice of higher education options. The study explored the implications and benefits of establishing provider-client relationships between universities and students; hypotheses were also formulated to guide the study. The research employed a quantitative approach with the use of questionnaires as survey instrument to achieve the stated aim and formulated objectives of the study. A closed ended questionnaires comprising of twenty-four questions to assist with the hypotheses testing and achieve the objectives was drawn. The target population was the first-year undergraduates who enrolled in communication sciences programmes at both the public and private universities totaling 344 student-participants with 52.6 per cent and 47.4 per cent in public and private universities respectively. Results revealed that the leading criteria for Spanish students interested in pursuing studies in communication sciences were ranking, reputations, excellence and quality of the University's educational programmes. The results were in consonance with the studies by Maringe, (2006) and Holsworth and Nind, (2005). On sources of information related to and their degree programmes, respondents placed the highest value on direct and experiential sources with preference to public Universities over the privately owned universities.

Sabir, Ahmad, Ashraf and Ahmad (2013) did a comparative research of undergraduate Engineering and Business

students on factors affecting University and course choice. The authors stated that in higher education environment in Pakistan, students have become consumerists due to increasing tuition fees resulting from the competitive and aggressive nature of higher institutions struggling to recruit highly intellectual students. The study's primary focus was to uncover the factors that students deem vital related to their choice of university and desired courses. Adopting the stratified random sampling technique, a total of 226 students comprising of undergraduate Engineering and Business students from five universities in three cities of central Punjab participated in the study. Data analysis using simple descriptive statistics the study revealed that higher education commission ranking, institutional reputation, employment, and career prospects were the most important variables with respect to students' desired university and course of study. The resultant effect of this approach meant that the students consider prominence, price and programme factors most important among the Universities' key elements of marketing mix. The implications of the study were that promotional tools should be designed based on students' preferences and not according to the policies the Universities deem important for the students and the need also for the Institutions to reposition themselves in intense educational markets.

In Nigeria, Eremie (2014) examined the factors influencing career choices among Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers State. Hypotheses for the study were all stated in the null. The sampling technique for the study was the simple random sampling that selected four hundred Senior Secondary School Students of one thousand two hundred sample frame from five Secondary Schools in Rivers State. The "Comprehensive Career Choice Survey" (CCCS) was administered to the respondents to collect necessary data. Testing for the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance was the t-test statistics. The findings revealed that there were significant differences among male and female secondary school students in their career choices in terms of: prestige of a profession, gender parity, and parental influence. Part of the findings on prestige of a profession is in line with the work of Ogunlade and Akeredolu (2012). The study recommended that professional career counselors should be consulted to assist students in planning and choosing their careers and professional career counselors should include the students in the selection process, considering interest, ability, skills and personality of the students.

A study by Brownsom (2014) on parental influence on career choice of secondary school children in Ondo West Local Government of Ondo State investigated parents' influence on the career choice of their children in some selected schools in the study area. The population comprised all the Senior Secondary School II students within the study area. Random sampling was used to administer the survey instrument to 256 SSS II students drawn from the population. The data analysis employed mean scores and t-test. Findings revealed that the influence of parents on their children's career choice was minimal as parents did not aid their children to study another course from that which they had chosen. They only advise their children on subjects to offer. Based on the findings, it was recommended that parents need to educate their children and always meet the basic needs of the children, school counsellors and teachers are also encouraged to give equal attention to all children regardless of gender on knowledge acquisition about career choice. The above findings contrast the study of Navin (2009) who found that parental attachment is positively correlated with career exploration and Jungen (2008) who found that parents greatly impact the career selection process of their children even though they seemingly are unaware of all the ways they do this.

A study carried out by Olaosebikan and Olusakin (2014) examined the effects of parental influence on adolescents' career choice on secondary schools students in Badagry Local Government Area of Lagos State. The study tested five hypotheses all stated in the null in order to achieve the aim of the work which was to provide clues to the extent of parental influence on career choice of adolescents affected them positively or negatively. The sample was made up of three hundred respondents who were randomly selected from ten purposefully selected secondary schools (3 Model Colleges, 4 Non-Model Colleges, and 3 Private Colleges). The survey instrument was a questionnaire which was administered to the respondents personally by the researchers. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance with Chi-square by using analysis of contingency table on such variables as sex, class of school, and type of school as to the effects of parental influence on adolescents' career choice on secondary schools students in the study area. Findings from the study showed that about 50 per cent of the respondents agreed to parents influencing their career choice. On the average, 21.5 per cent of the respondents agreed that their parents' line of business had influenced their career choice, while 75 per cent disagreed. About 30 per cent of the respondents agreed that they chose the family career because of the need to sustain the family business. Three of the five formulated hypotheses tested were accepted because there were no significant differences in the variables compared while the other two were rejected as there were significant differences in the variables compared. The results therefore indicated that adolescents in secondary schools in Badagry Local Government Area of Lagos State have some form of independence in making career choices. Even though the choices should be guided, it is however pertinent that students tow the career line in which they possess great passion and potentials. This work is in line with the works of Keller (2004) wherein it was stated that support, love,

communication and honesty between young adolescents and their parents are important for career development; Hairston (2000) and Otto (1989) also established the fact that of all the factors that influence career choice, parents are the most influential determinants of career plans.

Adeokun and Opoko (2015) explored the link between students' commitment to architectural education and their subsequent willingness to remain within the profession. The survey instrument was the use of questionnaires and focused on Architectural students' on a two-tier degree which were experience of architectural education with respect to coursework (industrial training and the intention to practice after graduation), experiences in professional offices and intention to practice after graduation. Of 350 undergraduate and post-graduate architecture students in the department who constituted the sample frame, 141 questionnaires were returned. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data were content analysed. Findings of the study indicated a correlation between reasons for choosing architecture and decisions to practice architecture. It was found that there is a gradual drop in the desire to practice architecture at higher levels of study compared to the lower levels. The authors recommended that to improve retention rate in professional practice, admission process should include a request for a detailed personal statement from applicants, to establish strong congruence between course/major choice and career aspirations.

Within the local context, there are no similarities as to how choice of programme was selected by the students and the factors that may have influenced the decision making of the students with regards to the built environment profession. The various studies conducted focused on secondary school students hence there is paucity of research in Nigeria on tertiary institutions. This paper intends to empirically contribute to filling this obvious knowledge gap.

3. Materials and Methods

This is an empirical work therefore quantitative approach was employed in the study. Questionnaire was administered on 100 Level students in the Departments of Architecture, Building Technology and Estate Management of Covenant University, Ota. A total of 136 copies of questionnaire was retrieved and used for analysis as contained in the study. Descriptive analysis was used to order the data collected so as to show the general trend of the choice in each of the three programmes (courses) in the Built Environment in Covenant University (this is contained in tables 1 – 4). Crosstabulation was employed to examine the relationship between gender and the person that made the choice of the university, programme of study and the person that made the choice of the programme and finally programme of study and students' interest in such programme (all these are contained in tables 5 – 7).

4. Results and Discussions

The various data collected would make no meaning if they are not properly ordered and discussed. Therefore, the data collected were collated and analysed using both descriptive and crosstabulation as shown in tables 1 – 7. Data contained in each of the tables were explained and appropriate deductions made.

Table 1: Personal Data

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	85	62.5
	Female	51	37.5
	Total	136	100.0
Age Bracket	10 – 15 Years	5	3.7
	16 – 20 Years	129	94.8
	21 – 25 Years	2	1.5
	Total	136	100.0
Programme of Study	Architecture	47	34.5
	Building Technology	45	33.1
	Estate Management	44	32.4
	Total	136	100.0

Table 1 contains the general data of the respondent students in terms of their gender, age bracket and programme of study. While majority (62.5%) of the students are male, 94.8% of them are between 16 and 20 years of age. 34.5% of the students are in Architecture Department, 33.1% in Building Technology and the remaining 32.4% in Estate Management Department. It could therefore be concluded that there are more male than female students in the three Departments constituting the Built Environment in Covenant University and students' population in the departments are evenly distributed.

Table 2: Who Chose the University?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Myself	28	20.6
Parents	108	79.4
Total	136	100.0

The choice of university was analysed in Table 2. The table revealed that while 79.4% had the choice made by the parents only a paltry 20.6% were the students' choice. Parents' choosing to bring their wards into the University might not be unconnected with the good name that the University already have – being the best private university in Nigeria and also making waves both in West Africa and Africa continent in general and aspiring to be one of the best ten (10) universities in the world on or before year 2022.

Table 3: Do you like the University?

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	41	30.1
No	95	69.9
Total	136	100.0

The test of going with parents' choice of university was conducted and the result is shown in Table 3. Only 30.1% of the students liked the choice of university not minding whether the choice made by them or their parents while 69.9% did not like their parents' choice. With almost 70% rejecting their parents' choice it could be deduced that even though the students are still tender in ages, they desire that their interest be considered in taking decision on issues affecting on their lives.

Table 4: Who Chose the Programme of Study?

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Myself	79	58.1
Parents	11	8.1
University	46	33.8
Total	136	100.0

With the choice of university settled, the study went further to establish the person behind the choice of programme of study in the University. Personal interest of the students played out with 58.1% responsible for their programme of study. While only 8.1% were parents' choice, 33.8% were the choice made by the University. Choosing programmes for the students, by the University, may not be unconnected with the fact that the students were still awaiting their SSCE/NECO examination results when they were given admission into the University however, their results could not meet the requirements for their preferred course. However, it is evident that a chunk of the students were allowed to determine their preferred programme. Comparing tables 3 and 4, it could be deduced that despite the fact that most of the students were not allowed to choose their desired University, they were at least permitted to choose their programme of study.

Table 5: Gender * Who Chose the University? Crosstabulation

Gender	Who Chose the University?		Total
	Myself	Parents	
Male	17	70	87
Female	11	38	49
Total	28	108	136

Effort was made to match students' gender with the choice of university. The result of the crosstabulation is as contained in Table 5. The analysis shows that only 17 male students personally chose the university while 70 parents made the choice for the male students. On the other hand, 11 female students chose the university as against 38 parents who made the choice for their female children. This implies that majority (80.5%) of the male students were influenced by their parents in choosing their university of study as against the female students (77.6%).

Table 6: Programme of Study * Who Chose the Programme of Study? Crosstabulation

Programme of Study		Who Chose the Programme of Study?			Total
		Myself	Parents	University	
Programme of Study	Architecture	43	4	0	47
	Building Technology	15	0	30	45
	Estate Management	21	7	16	44
Total		79	7	46	136

To establish on Departmental basis the person that made the choice of programme of study, crosstabulation was carried out as shown in Table 6. In Architecture, there were 47 students out of which 43 were responsible for the choice of the programme while the programme was chosen for 4 students by their parents. The situation in Building Technology is totally the reverse as 30 students reported that the choice of programme was made for them by the University. Also in Estate Management Department, 16 of the students stated that it was the University that chose the programme for them. The large number of students who had their choices made for them by the University could not be unconnected to their inability to meet the requirements for their preferred choices. Rather than the University rejecting them, they were given opportunity to still remain in the University, running the programmes where their O' Level results meet the admission requirements.

Table 7: Programme of Study * Do you like your Programme of Study? Crosstabulation

Programme of Study		Do you like your Course of Study?		Total
		Yes	No	
Programme of Study	Architecture	43	4	47
	Building Technology	31	14	45
	Estate Management	34	10	44
Total		108	28	136

A crosstabulation was conducted to examine the relationship between students' interest and their course of study. The results as contained in Table 7 showed that 43 students in Architecture were satisfied with their course of study. On the other hand, 31 students of Building Technology Department liked their course while in Estate Management Department 34 of the students liked their programme. The conclusion from the table is that, not minding who made the choice of the course the students still like their various course of study. This finding further establishes the finding in Table 4 that showed that majority of the students chose their programme. Hence, they are satisfied with what they chose.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study examined the choice of programme that students' offered in the university in the built environment programmes using 136 copies of questionnaire administered on 100 Level students in the Departments of Architecture, Building Technology and Estate Management of Covenant University, Ota. The study revealed that 79.4% were in the University based on their parents' choice while 90% are responsible for the choice of course (programme) they are pursuing in the University based on personal interest. About 69.9% of the students do not like the University and this may be a factor to be considered in their academic performances. Based on these findings, it is therefore very important that, even though the students are of tender ages, they should be given the opportunity to make their contributions in taking decision(s) on issues that impact on their lives. Moreover, parents should always take time to talk things over with their wards rather than imposing their opinions on the children. The University has taken a good step in offering them options in other courses instead of throwing them back into the pool of students still roaming the streets looking for admissions which may not come their ways.

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