BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS' RATING OF FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICE IN UNIVERSITIES IN EDO AND DELTA STATES

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Abstract
This study investigated business education students rating of factor influencing career choice in universities in Edo and Delta States. The theory of this study was hinged on Krumboltz' theory of social learning and career decision making. The descriptive survey research design was employed and the population for the study consist of 802 Business education undergraduate students from University of Benin and Delta State University. The sample size comprised 100 Business education undergraduate students selected through a proportionate sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was 0.71. The data collected were analyzed using mean ($\bar{x}$), standard deviation and two sample independent t-test. The findings revealed that gender and students interest play a significant influence on students' choice of business education programme. Furthermore, there is no significant difference between male and female students on their choice of option in business education in universities. It was recommended, among others, that both male and female business education students should be encouraged to enrol into business education programmes through the activities of their professional bodies and beneficiaries of the programmes.
Keywords. Business education, career choice, students' interest, university

Introduction

The general goal of education is to provide young people with the appropriate knowledge and skills to realistically plan for their future career. Business education being an aspect of the general education programme provide students with knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes needed to do well either as self-employed or in paid-employment industries. It isa norm that business education prepares the individual for the acquisition of practical skills and applied skills as well as different occupations (Ezeani & Ogundola, 2016). This was supported by the National Policy on Education which lay emphasis on the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).Therefore, schools are being challenged to produce students who are knowledge producers, problem-solvers and creative thinkers who can apply their skills to enrich their lives and communities. Consequently, it has become imperative for the nation to rethink her educational delivery practices in order to enhance the competitive ability of her teeming graduates. As a step in this direction, Nigeria government sees Business education as anessential programme to help foster the creative

thinking skills in students. According to Ezeani and Ogundola (2016) business education as a programme is offered at different levels of educational system (such as the primary, junior and senior secondary schools, three-years colleges of education, two-years ordinary diploma (OND) and higher diploma (HND) in colleges of technology or polytechnics, and in the four-year undergraduate programmes of Universities), is spiced with a lot of lofty objectives.

Njoku (2006) gave the objectives of Business Education at the universities level as follows; to empower individuals with desirable skills, knowledge and value to perform specific functions so as to become self-reliant, to help individuals appreciate the world around them and contribute maximally to the social and economic development of the nation, to empower individuals in such a way that they will develop their intellectual capability that would help them to make informed decisions in all sphere of life, to help individuals become judicious spender and develop proper values for the achievement of healthy living and growth of the nation and to understand the political framework of a nation so that they can contribute to national economic development of their country. Towards the attainment of these goals, secondary school graduates must have the right incentives towards choosing business education programme as a career course as a result of the fundamental and ubiquitous benefits that are inherent in the programme.

Choice involves making a psychological decision, judging the outright advantage of multiple options and selecting the best or more of them. Career choice is one of the major dilemma and challenge facing Nigerian students. It involves the chemistry of many factors which are intricately intertwined. It is not a direct task and involves a difficult process of decision making (Meddour, Abdo, Majid, Auf & Aman, 2016). Sometimes, the selection made, may be disproportionate with the personal traits. The selection made may be over ambitious or too low compared to the innate ability, skills, understanding and strength, or turnover that exists in individuals themselves. This may lead to resultant failure and disappointment (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). It is difficult for everyone to make a decision regarding their career. This individual action is manifested on a larger scale in the economic prosperity of a nation. Individuals who are misfits in their workplace tend to be less productive and efficient, and therefore are unable to achieve their goals.

In most cases, the choice of careers, subjects, and courses of study and the subsequent career paths to follow are a nightmare for prospective undergraduate students (Issa & Nwalo, 2008). Most often, choosing the right subject combination leading to the right profession can make the difference between enjoying and disliking the career in future. In other words, choice is considered to be something that is worthwhile in itself and is a fundamental indicator of the freedom of a student in choosing his/her course of study. Every student at a certain juncture in their life has to make a choice regarding their career. It is important that students make the correct choice (Nyarko-Sampson, 2013). This will make them more poised, stable, and endowed with a pleasant countenance which will lead to knitting a better fabric for the society. Unfortunately, career choices are made with little awareness of the real world (Bright, Pryor, & Harpham, 2005). Students make crucial decisions at a stage when they may not be fully informed of their choices, or else unavoidable circumstances prevent them from pursuing their goals.

The eminence of career choice may be determined using different yardsticks, to which many persons attach different weights. For instance, the employment opportunities the course can offer, talents, skills, societal perception and academic achievement exert an influence on

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career choice of students (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001). Ngunjiri, (2013)found that poor financial background of students from disadvantaged communities deter choices of appropriate educational programmes and careers. Studies have also shown factors that influence career choice by high school students (Hashim &Embong, 2015; Mudhovozi & Chireshe 2012). For instance, Mudhovozi and Chireshe (2012) found that the participants who attended rural-situated public schools made delayed career decisions. The same study also found that participants were mainly influenced by parents, teachers and friends to choose psychology as a career. Therefore, making a good choice of career such as business education should be a major concern of students, parents and governments since the aim of education is to help the individual develop occupational and vocational competences that will help them to be gainfully employed and self-employed (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).In choosing a career, it is vital to know how students develop their choices for one occupation or the other, and how these choices are applied. Thus, parents, teachers, and counsellors ought to be conversant with major factors which influence occupational and vocational development of individuals. This is essential because career theorists believe that individuals have certain abilities, interests, personality traits and other characteristics that inform one's career choice.

The theoretical framework of this study was hinged on Holland (1992) theory of vocational personalities and work environments. Holland's theory has been the foundation of several assessment devices designed to help individuals make career and education choices that are compatible with their interests, skills, and abilities. Holland's major viewpoint is that a person's choice of a vocation is an expression of his personality and that interest inventories are expression of personality and their preferred work environments. According to the theory, people search for environment that will allow them to exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values and to take on agreeable problems and avoid those found to be disagreeable. Again, it states that a person's behaviour is determined by an interaction between his personality and the characteristics of his environment. Holland (1992) examined factors which influence career choices. Influences found to be important include: family; peers, teachers and other adult role models; school, work, and leisure experiences; and socio-economic status and ethnic background.

This theory is suitable for this study in that, through one's personality and characteristics of his environment, career choice can be made. In other words, for students to choose business education as a career course, they take into consideration their interests, skills, societal acceptance and abilities to succeed. But the extent to which these students are able to match their interest, abilities and skill with their career path appear to be worrisome.

Ekpenyong (2005) asserted that those concerned with vocational education and, in particular, career teachers, are aware that it is only a small fraction of youths that can on their own solve their career and identity problems. These identity and career problems seem to be more peculiar to many business education students since business education appear not to be their first choice of study. Nyamwange (2016)found that many youths made wrong career choices due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, the types of books the students read, the school they attend, the students subject teachers, passion, interest, ethnic factor, gender, student's performance in a subject area, parents role, or as a result of prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate vocational guidance and career counseling.

Student's interest may be the most influencing factor in selecting a career choice among the generation of students all over the world (Biju, 2012). Interest exists within the individual rather than rely on external pressures or a desire towards decision making. Some studies affirm

the fact that personal interest is one of the leading elements in the selection of course by students in the tertiary institution (Ahmed, Sharif & Ahmad, 2017; Bubic, 2014). Owie (2003) argued that the principal reason why an individual chooses a specific career is that the person has inherent interest in the field. Students therefore, choose their course upon a 'match with their interests and abilities, which implies that students have a solid knowledge of the interests or abilities required to be successful in a particular course of study and the subsequent job (Humayon, Khan&Ansari, 2018).While this may be extremely predisposed by previous academic achievement, it must, however be noted that, intrinsic interest of an individual remain a fundamental force that energizes and spur individual decision, if the person is expected to be effective, fulfilled and excel in the career. A situation, where intrinsic interest is missing, no amount of training, motivation or satisfaction would positively increase the person's academic performance and professional effectiveness (Ahmed, 2014).

The influence of gender in student's career choice cannot be underplayed. When considering gender, irrespective of the socio-cultural background, male students are more likely to be motivated by money and status in their choice of career than female students. Therefore, students who think they should be financially endowed will select a business major. This is because making money is extremely paramount for business major students. Similarly, Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) that reported financial prospects influence the career choice of men as they have to meet household expenses, whereas women show more concern for social values and utility. Some studies have shown significant relationship between gender and occupational aspirations, preference and choice (Igbinedion, 2011). In our modern-day society, boys and girls typically, go through different socialization processes and they have a propensity to learn different gender roles and behaviour patterns and this therefore expose them to different interests. However, these roles and interests later become the principal factors in their career choice, specifically in a course like business education. In Nigeria for instance, there is this perception that, career aspirations that lead to teaching job, ordinarily should be meant for the female student while that of male should be engineering, accounting and so on. The findings of Igbinedion (2011) however revealed that there is a significant difference between male and female business education students with regard to their perception of parents as a factor that influenced their choice of secretarial studies programmes.

In addition, the types of books the students read, the school they attend, culture, the student's subject teachers, ethnic factor, media influences, prospective levels of income, employment opportunities, the social acceptability of profession, recognition, work satisfaction and student's performance in a subject area among others also play a significant role in choosing a career (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). Therefore, it has been observed that for students to choose business education as a career course, it can be influenced by a number of factors.

The major turning point in the life of an adolescent involves the career choice that they make while in school. Student's interest in business subjects plays a crucial role in affecting the choice of business education as a career course. Students who performed well in business related subjects in their junior and senior secondary school certificate examination who are supposed to apply for business education as a career course in tertiary institution are often seem to be advised otherwise. This is because choosing the right subject combination leading to the right profession can make the difference between enjoying and detesting the career in future. However, the role of gender and the interest of the students in choosing business education programme as a career

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course appear to be worrisome, this is because students interest appear to be tinted towards course like medicine, accounting, engineering and other professional courses. This is because they see business education as a non-professional course and that it may offer their wards less job opportunities after graduation, therefore, they tend to advice themselves against choosing business education as a career course. According to Igbinedion (2011) there is a low enrolment into business education programmes across the universities and college of education. The reasons for these difficulties are not yet clear to the researcher. Could it be as a result of parental influence? Is it as a result of peer group influence? Is it as a result of student's interest? Could it be as a result of gender of the students? Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to determine the factors influencing Edo and Delta State student's choice of business education.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent does students' interest in business subjects influences their career choice in business education in universities in Edo and Delta States?
2. To what extent does gender influence students career choice in business education in universities in Edo and Delta States?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between gender and students choice of business education in Edo and Delta State tertiary institutions.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. According to Aggarwal (2008), descriptive survey research is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation. The population of the study was 802 students offering business education in University of Benin, Benin City and Delta State University, Abraka. University of Benin had 376 and Delta State University had 426 totally 802 students. The sample was 100 business education undergraduate students selected through a proportionate sampling technique. The instrument that was used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Business Education Students Rating of Factor Influencing Career Choice (BESRFICC). The questionnaire was divided into two sections: A and B. Section A captured the demographic characteristics of the respondents which comprised the name of the institution, gender and area of specialization while section B consisted of 12 items drawn from the research questions. The respondents were requested to select the most appropriate options. The items of the questionnaire were measured on a four-point rating scale ranging from 4-1; Very High Extent (VHE) =4; High Extent (HE) = 3; Low Extent (LE) =2 and Very Low Extent (VLE) =1.The instrument for data collection was face validated by the researcher's supervisor and one expert from the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, from the University of Benin, Benin City. To establish the reliability of the instrument for the study, the internal consistency of the items were measured. This was determined by using the Cronbach's alpha statistic which gave an alpha value of 0.71. The data collected were analyzed using mean ($\bar{x}$), standard deviation (SD) and two sample independent t-test. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while and two sample independent t-test was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Decision rule for research question was based on mean value of 2.50, such that any calculated mean ($\bar{x}$) equal or greater than 2.50 was regarded as

high extent (HE)while any mean ($\bar{x}$) less than 2.50 was regarded as low extent (LE). For the hypothesis, the probability value (p) was used. Where the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05, the null hypothesis was not retained, but where the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was retained.

Results

The results are presented in the order of the research questions and hypothesis.

Research Question 1: To what extent does students' interest in business subjects influences Edo and Delta student's choice of business education?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Influence of Subject Interest

S/N	Item Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	I chose this field because I am fully confident thatI will give my best here.	3.89	.34	HE
2	I chose this field because I was inherently inspired to do so.	2.94	.94	HE
3	I chose this field because my teachers made me feel that I could succeed in this occupation.	3.26	.70	HE
4	I chose this field because its working conditions suit me well.	2.63	.99	HE
5	I choose this programme because it best fit my personality	3.04	.93	HE
	Cluster	3.15		HE

HE: High Extent

Data presented in Table 1 reveal that the mean responses range from 2.63 to 3.89, while the standard deviation range from 0.34 to 0.99. With these mean responses, it is revealed that the extents students' interest influence their choice of business education in universities is high. The cluster mean' therefore, shows that students' interests influence their choice of business education in universities to a high extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does gender influence students choice of business education in Edo and Delta State tertiary institutions?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Influence of Students Gender

S/N	Item Statement	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	Male students like business education as a career course because it involves calculation.	3.29	.82	HE
2	Female students do NOT like business education as a career course because it involves calculation.	2.89	.81	HE

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3	Female students like business education as a career course because it involves teaching.	2.88	.92	HE
4	Male students do NOT like business education as a career course because they see it as feminine course.	2.91	1.04	HE
5	Female students like business education because it prepares them as future secretaries.	2.93	.94	HE
6	Male students choose business education as a career course because it involve skills acquisition programme.	3.06	.76	HE

S/N	**Item Statement**	$\bar{x}$	**SD**	**Remarks**
7	Female students like business education as a career course because it prepares them for easy access to employment either as a teacher or business woman.	3.25	.99	HE
	Cluster	3.03		HE

HE: High Extent

Table 2 indicate that the mean response ranges from 2.88 to 3.29, while the standard deviation range from 0.76 to 1.04. With these results, the above mean responses revealed that the extent gender influence choice of business education in universities is high. The cluster mean' therefore, shows that gender influence on students' choice of business education in universities is of high extent.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between gender and students choice of business education in Edo and Delta State tertiary institutions.

Table 3: The t-test Analysis of Students' Choice of Business Education Based on Gender

Variable	**Gender**	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**df**	**t-val.**	**Sig. (p)**	**Decision**
Students, choice of Business Education	Male	57	3.17	.237	99	.758	.450	NS
	Female	44	3.13	.358				

The result presented in Table 3 show that the aggregate mean responses for male and female respondents are 3.17 and 3.13 respectively, while the corresponding standard deviations are .237 and .358. The t-value is .758 at df = 99, while the p-value is .450. Testing at a significant level of .05, it was found that the p-value is greater than the alpha value. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between gender and students choice of business education in Edo and Delta State tertiary institutions is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from research question one revealed that students' interest influence their choice of business education in universities to a high extent. This was supported by the findings of Owie (2003) who asserted that the most important reason why a person chooses a particular career is that the person has intrinsic interest in the field. This simply means thatwhen students choose careers, they should consider their personal interests because: 1) they believed they will do better in the field that interests them; 2) People who choose careers which match their personal interests are usually successful; and 3) People could get greater satisfaction and happiness when working in the field of interest. To this end, many students believed that interest is extremely paramount when choosing a career course.

Research question two findings showed that the extent gender influence choice of business education in universities is high. This finding is however in line with that of Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) who reported that financial prospects influence the career choice of men as they have to meet household expenses, whereas women show more concern for social values and utility. The result suggests that male naturally like to choose a course that could potentially fetch them more money when they eventually graduate while the female also prefer courses that will give them time to take care of their family. For instance teaching job, which business education readily provide for is recipients. The ubiquitous benefits of business education programme also provide ample opportunities for both male and female to choose business education as a career course. This is because, students eventually graduates as an accountant or teacher.

The findings of the study with regards to hypothesis three indicated that, there is no significant difference between male and female students on their choice of business education in tertiary institutions. The findings of this study was however supported by that of Igbinedion (2011) who revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female students in their perception of peer group as a factor that influenced their choice of business education.

Conclusion

This study has shown that different factors contribute to student's choice of business education in universities in Edo and Delta States. However, based on the above findings, it can be concluded that variables such as student's gender and interest contribute to the determinants influencing career choice of business education students. To this end, student's low preference for business education at the tertiary level is as a result of their inadequate awareness of the relevance and prospects of the skills acquired in business education. Consequently, this has resulted in the attrition rate of business educationist in primary, post primary and tertiary institutions of learning and business professionals in office occupation respectively.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are considered imperative:

1. Students orientation programmes such as seminars, workshops, conferences should be organize by the management of business education programme so as to equip them with the opportunities that are inherent in the programme.

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2. Guidance and counselling unit should also be provided by the department of business education, because this unit which will be charged with the responsibility to counsel the students on appropriate career choice in business education.
3. Management of the department of business education should contact non-governmental organizations to sponsor media-charts and professionals be invited to create awareness to the students on the relevance, prospects and lucrativeness of business education in secondary schools in preparation for entry into universities and its corresponding usefulness and importance in the world of works.
4. Both male and female business education students should be encouraged to enrol into business education programmes through the activities of their professional bodies and beneficiaries of the programmes. This is because the result of this study showed that there was no gender inequality in students' choice of business education.

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