

CAREER CHOICE AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS

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Abstract

The paper examines the worrisome issue of career choice among Students in recent times. The study focused specifically on the roles of certain factors such as Family, Self-efficacy and Market Demand in fostering career choices among business education students. The paper went further to identify some of the ways that these determinant factors impacts the career choice of business education students and offers practical implications for career counseling, educational policies, and interventions aimed at empowering students to make informed and autonomous career decisions. It calls for a holistic approach that addresses family, personal, and labour market considerations to ensure that Students in Public Universities choose careers that align with their interests, abilities, and societal needs. The authors recommended, among others, that comprehensive career counseling programmes should be implemented in schools as this will help students assess their career interests, skills, and values.

Keywords: Business Education Programme, Business Education Students, Career Choice.

Introduction

The global economic meltdown in early 2008 that made the world economy to take a downward turn could be said to be a child's play. The impacts of global and local lockdowns induced by Covid-19, accompanying value chain disruptions, and widespread economic downturn are increasingly being felt, as they contribute to unemployment and decline in labour incomes, which Nigeria, as a country, is not left out from the effect (Ediomo-Ubong & Dele-Adedeji, 2024). However, global labour mobility, outsourcing, technological advances, and automation fueled fear of job insecurity and wages growth, with unskilled and less educated workers feeling most at risk of job displacement, disengagement and unemployment. Lack of information, understanding orientation, awareness, training and opportunities about the activities in different careers or vocations have helped to worsen the situation. No wonder the endless discussions on career selection to help young youths, make the right career choice that will prepare them for the labour market where they will always remain relevant in world economy. Nyamwange (2016) posited that every individual must, at one time or another, be confronted by the problem of career choice and many of them encounter this problem when as a students and are required to choose study programmes leading to their future careers.

Career choice has become a complex issue because of the emergence of information technology, post industrial revolution and job competition, thus making education a universally recognized solution to socio-economic problems of the world. Ohadoma (2014) opined that nations and individuals rely on education as an instrument for eradication of poverty, ignorance, jobless, hunger, bad governance, poor communication system and inadequate shelter among other things. Effiom and Petters (2019) believes the

problem of career choice has generated a lot of questions and answers among scholars. The problem has been a delicate issue and amounted to serious controversies which still remains unresolved and needs to be treated with most caution. There is no clear process that students have used to make career choices. Most students rely heavily on their parents or guardians, peers, mentors or idols to make career choices. Most students are easily cajoled by their parents in the choice of a career which at the long run may not agree with their expectations. Choosing a career is a complex process that coincides with high school and university ages, creating psycho-social stress. In this period, when individuals experience difficulties in both their psychological and social lives, asking them to make decisions that will affect their entire lives will increase individuals' stress and prevent them from making sound decisions (Koçak, Ak, Erdem, Sinan, Younis, & Erdoğan 2021). According to Jayson and Lilibeth (2017), young students have diverse dreams and interests in life. There is an old adage which inspires people to succeed: "if there is a will, there is a way." In choosing a career, suitability to the interest of the students is given importance. Students must know on what degree to pursue in college, one that interest them and must also fit their abilities so that it will not be hard for them to choose the right career path.

Some students who are in Public Universities do not have adequate information about occupational opportunities to help them make appropriate career choice. This has led to so many swing of career path after graduation from the university. Hence, this has highlighted career selection as one of many important choices students make in determining future plans; these decisions will impart them throughout their lives. Hence it is important to find out the factors or determinants of career choice among universities student; so as to see if it can help to guide them to make the right and rational career choice. Similarly, Effiom, and Petters, (2019) observed that the influence parents, guardians and the home front has on the child's learning is strictly fundamental to the concept of life. This thus suggest that most of the habits are basically developed at home and thus could be adjusted during the early childhood pre-school years. This also highlights the fact that the home front and parents occupy the most important position in the child's education. Proper career choice has become very important as a number of students graduate on a yearly basis without employment. The purpose of a university education, from the point of view of both the university and the individual student, is in the main to train and prepare young people for their future vocational activity, which may bring them into close contact with commercial or social enterprise. In other words, at the family and individual levels, a university education is to enable the beneficiary to have a good and sustainable employment. This is why a number of students seem to prefer business education.

Business Education is a crucial component or aspect of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) in Nigeria. It equips students with the skills and knowledge necessary for various business-related careers. It focuses on developing practical skills in areas such as accounting, finance, marketing, office technology and management education (OTM). These skills are essential for students to succeed in the business world (Lindsay, Hughes, Dougherty, Reese, & Joshi, 2024). It does this by providing hands-on training and real-world experience, which prepares students for immediate entry into the workforce. This is particularly important in today's fast-paced and ever-changing job market. Business education often includes training in entrepreneurship, encouraging students to start their own businesses. This can lead to job creation and economic growth. With the rise of digital technologies and global markets, business education programs are continually evolving to include new trends and technologies, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the future (Jacob, 2017). This is why skill acquisition takes the center stage in the 21st century in Nigeria.

Business Education

Business Education, an integral part of Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) in Nigeria; is the type of education that equips the individual with knowledge, occupational skills and competencies needed to enter into business world or teaching profession in order to earn a living. Business education as a discipline is expected to expose its recipients to diversity curricula, hence, it is that type of education

that inculcate in its recipients the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and values that is required for sustainable livelihood and social-economic development. Amuchie and Matsayi (2018) defined business education as an aspect of education that provide the knowledge, skills, understanding and other attitude needed to perform well in the world of business as producers or consumers of goods and services that business offers. The development of business education skills, as an education for business and education about business, is vital to a nation economic emancipation.

Relevance of Business Education

Skill Development: Business education focuses on developing practical skills in different areas such as accounting, finance, marketing, and management. These skills are essential for students to succeed in the business world (Lindsay, Hughes, Dougherty, Reese & Joshi, 2024).

Career Readiness: By providing hands-on training and real-world learning experience, business education prepares students for immediate entry into the workforce. This is particularly important in today's fast-paced and ever-changing job market.

Entrepreneurship: Business education often includes training in entrepreneurship, encouraging students to start their own businesses (Edokpolor & Egbri, 2017). This can lead to job creation and economic growth.

Adaptability: With the rise of digital technologies and global markets, business education programs are continually evolving to include new trends and technologies, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the future (Jacob, 2017).

Career Choice

Career choice refers to the process of selecting an occupation or profession that aligns with one's interests, skills, values, and goals. It involves evaluating various factors such as personal strengths and weaknesses, educational, job satisfaction, market trends, salary potential, work-life balance, passion and purpose, flexibility and adaptability, and long-term career prospects. Career choice is a significant decision that could greatly influence an individual's professional satisfaction, financial stability, and overall well-being. It often involves self-reflection, research, and sometimes guidance from career counselors or mentors to make informed decisions (Gupta, 2024).

Factors to Look at when Choosing a Career

Gupta (2024) suggested ten keys in look at when choosing career. They are discussed as follows:

Self-Assessment:

Self-assessment is a crucial step in navigating the complex landscape of career choices. It requires introspection into interests, values, skills, and personality traits to gain a deeper understanding of oneself. By reflecting on activities that bring joy and subjects that catch passion, one can uncover innate preferences and aptitudes. Identifying strengths allows the students to leverage them in their career while acknowledging weaknesses help to make informed decisions about areas where one may need to improve or seek support. This process not only empowers them to align career path with authentic self but also enhances the likelihood of finding fulfillment and success in their chosen endeavors. Through self-awareness and honest evaluation, the students can embark on a career journey that resonates with your true identity and aspirations.

Research:

To make a smart career choice, it's important to learn about different jobs. This can be done by checking out career websites, talking to people who work in different fields, and even spending time with them on the job. This lets them see what they do every day and what it takes to succeed. By getting firsthand information about the requirements, tasks, chances to grow, and how much money can make in

different careers, they will be better prepared to decide what's right for you. It is like doing some detective work to figure out which career path fits them best.

Education and Training:

Before delving into one's dream job, think about what education or training they might need. Some jobs need a specific degree or certification, while others might require vocational training. It is important to figure out what qualifications the students need and how much time and money it will take to get them. This way, one can plan and make sure they are ready for the journey. Also, take a moment to consider if they have the skills and dedication needed to succeed in their chosen field of study. It is like making sure they have all the tools needed before starting a big project.

Market Demand:

Before committing to a career path, it's wise to check if there are enough job opportunities in the field one is interested in. This can be done by looking at current trends, how many jobs are available, and what experts predict for the future. Some industries like healthcare, technology, and renewable energy are growing fast, which means there might be lots of job openings. By doing this homework on the demand for professionals in one's chosen industry, one can get a better idea of whether it's a good fit. It's like checking the weather before planning a picnic – one needs to make sure the conditions are right for a successful outing.

Work-Life Balance:

Consider your desired work-life balance when evaluating career options. Some professions demand long hours, frequent travel, or irregular schedules, which may impact one's personal life and well-being. Determine whether the lifestyle associated with one's chosen career aligns with one's priorities and commitments outside of work.

Financial Considerations:

Evaluate the financial aspects of business students' career choice, including salary potential, benefits, and job stability. Research average salaries in the field and consider factors such as location, experience, and industry demand. Additionally, assess the potential for advancement and salary growth over time. Striking a balance between financial stability and personal fulfillment is crucial when choosing a career.

Passion and Purpose:

Seek a career that aligns with business education students' passions and values. Consider what motivates them and brings a sense of fulfillment. A career driven by purpose and passion is more likely to sustain the interest and enthusiasm over the long term. However, be realistic about the challenges and sacrifices involved in pursuing the dreams.

Skills Development:

Evaluate opportunities for skill development and professional growth within one's chosen career path. Consider whether the field offers opportunities for continuous learning, skill enhancement, and career advancement. Assess the availability of mentorship programs, networking opportunities, and professional development resources to support one's growth and success.

Job Satisfaction:

Prioritize job satisfaction and fulfillment when choosing a career. Consider factors such as the alignment of one's values with the company culture, the opportunity to make a meaningful impact, and the level of autonomy and creativity afforded in the role. A fulfilling career enhances the overall well-

being and contributes to a sense of purpose and happiness.

Flexibility and Adaptability:

Lastly, consider the flexibility and adaptability of business education students chosen career path. In today is rapidly changing job market, it's essential to be adaptable and open to new opportunities and challenges. Choose a career that allows you to leverage your skills and experiences across different industries and roles, ensuring long-term career resilience and success.

Family and Career Choice

Family and career choice refers to the impact that a student's family background, including their parents, siblings, and other family members, may have on their career choices. Family influence can manifest in various ways, such as parental expectations, socioeconomic status, cultural values, and exposure to different professions within the family. Eremie and Okwulehie (2019) posited that as the child grows up, the immediate environment comprises of the nuclear family and the extended family comprising of uncles, aunts, cousins, and grand parents. Accordingly, these people will be expected to have a significant effect on the students' choice of career. The family and parents shape the future personality of the students as they grow up. Parents shape the personality of their children by influencing the level of education or training that their children achieve; the knowledge they have about work and different occupations; the beliefs and attitudes they have in working; and the motivation they have to succeed. Most of this is learned unconsciously as children and teenagers absorb their parents' attitudes and expectations of them as they grow up.

Williams (2016) noted that if their parents' jobs give them great satisfaction or provide a comfortable lifestyle, children see the perks early on, and may favour these careers over others. In contrast, if parents complain about their jobs or struggle to support the family on the income their jobs provide, children are more likely to seek more fulfilling or higher-paid roles. According to Williams, the parental variables which influence a students' career choice include the parents' occupation, the activities they allow their children to participate in (for example like music or dance lessons or to pursue certain sports activities sometimes influence them to commit to those activities full-time), parental encouragement and expectations of their children, and the Parent-Child relationship.

Mohd and Abdul, (2015) revealed that parents, mothers, in particular were more influential in career choice of school students compared to their peers. Choosing a career is like choosing a life partner in view of its implications for one's happiness or otherwise in future. It determines, to a large degree, how time will be spent; who will be chosen as friends; what attitudes and values will be adopted; where one will reside and what pattern of family living will be adopted (Koçak, Ak, Erdem, Sinan, Younis, & Erdoğan1, 2021). This is why students in business education students are always anxious about what they will do with their lives and the manner of adults they will turn out to be. They are mostly concerned about early entry into the occupational world, finding good working environment, especially, in this fast changing and self-motivated society where employment opportunities are not readily available for young people in the labour market.

Various Ways Family Impacts Career Choice of Children

There are several ways in which family can impact an individual's career choices:

Parental Influence:

Parents often have strong opinions and preferences about the type of career their children should pursue. This could be due to their own experiences, aspirations, or beliefs about what constitutes a "good" or "respectable" career. Children may feel pressured to follow in their parents' footsteps or choose a career path that their parents approve of (Shazia, & Muhammad, 2019).

Socioeconomic Background:

The financial resources and educational opportunities available within a family may significantly influence career choices. Individuals from affluent families may have more access to higher education, internships, and professional networks, which may open up a wider range of career options (Vadivel, Alam, Nikpoo, & Ajani, 2023). Conversely, those from lower-income families may need to prioritize financial stability and security, leading them to choose more practical or lucrative career paths (Tompsett & Knoester, 2023).

Role Models and Mentors:

The career paths and experiences of family members, such as parents, siblings, or extended family, may serve as role models for an individual. Observing the successes, challenges, and job satisfaction of family members may shape an individual's perceptions of different career options and their own aspirations (Koçak, Ak, Erdem, Sinan, Younis, & Erdoğan, 2021).

Family Responsibilities and Obligations:

Family responsibilities, like caring for aging relatives or supporting younger siblings, can significantly impact a person's career decisions. Many individuals may select jobs that offer greater flexibility or are more accommodating to family needs. Additionally, they might prioritize financial security over personal satisfaction in their professional lives (Schulz R, & Eden J, (2016).

Geographic Location:

The availability of certain job opportunities and industries within a family's geographic region may limit or expand the range of career options accessible to an individual. Families may encourage their children to pursue careers that are prevalent in the local job market (Rickmeier, 2023).

Family Traditions and Culture:

In some cultures, or family traditions, certain career paths are highly valued or even expected, such as becoming a doctor, lawyer, or engineer. Individuals may feel a strong sense of duty or pressure to maintain these family traditions, even if the chosen career may not align with their personal interests or talents (Akosah-Twumasi, Emeto, Lindsay, Tsey, & Malau-Aduli, 2018).

Child Upbringing:

If their parents were uneducated or always struggling to get by financially, business education students may decide you're never going to be in the same position. This may prompt them to pursue a vastly different career path, looking for stable, high-earning jobs. Likewise, if parents who were workaholics and were never around when one was a child, one may decide to pursue a line of work with flexibility that gives parents more time with their children (CHRON Contributor, 2021).

It is important to note that the influence of family on career choices can be both positive and negative. While family can provide valuable guidance and support, it is crucial for individuals to balance their own aspirations and interests with the expectations and preferences of their family members. This has raised the issue of self-efficacy.

Self-Efficacy and Career Choice

Self-efficacy is a psychological concept that pertains to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish tasks. In the context of career choice, self-efficacy may refer to a student's confidence in their skills, interests, and capabilities related to different career paths. Higher level of self-efficacy is often associated with greater motivation and persistence in pursuing career goals (Edokpolor, 2018c; Bandura, 1977). In respect to gender differences in academic self-efficacy, Bolat and Odacı (2016) revealed that subjects with masculine and feminine gender roles had greater career decision

making self-efficacy than those with indeterminate roles, and those with androgynous roles had greater career making self-efficacy than those with masculine, feminine or indeterminate gender roles.

Some students have a kind of belief in their ability to be successful in a particular career even when it is evident that they lack the required mental capability. Some might achieve success if they are backed with academic accomplishment while others may fail because they have created unrealistic goals for themselves. Although experience has shown that the belief one has about him/herself has a long way in determining success in life. In other words, what an individual call himself to be, that is the exact kind of personality they would build for themselves. Self-efficacy does not believe in failure in any tasks given provided there is a presumed solution.

Sources of Self-Efficacy

Bandura's (1977) postulated that self-efficacy beliefs are developed and increased primarily through four major sources. These sources of self-efficacy are discussed as follows:

Past Performance Accomplishments

Although self-efficacy is flexible, it usually comes from sources that are based primarily on past performance experiences (Lane, Jones & Stevens, 2002). Past performance accomplishments tend to be the most powerful and dependable predictors of self-efficacy beliefs (Dawes, Horan & Hackett, 2000; Lane, Jones & Stevens, 2002). Research evidence showed that high self-efficacy beliefs from past experiences of success and mastery, and low self-efficacy based on poor experiences also generalize across different contexts and situations (Lane, Jones & Stevens, 2002). Based on this research it would be predicted that past performance accomplishment shows the strongest influence on self-efficacy beliefs.

Verbal Persuasion

A person's self-efficacy may increase when encouraged by persons who are capable of completing a task with success, especially with regard to mastery in difficult situations (Bandura, 1977). Guidance and positive suggestions from others may assist in correcting performance in areas needing improvement that was previously producing unsuccessful results. This encouragement, however, could be less influential than an individual's own accomplishment experiences, since it is not based on authentic personal experiences. In response, it is important that people utilize verbal support and encouragement from others, to be motivated to create new opportunities to observe their own success.

Emotional Arousal

Emotional arousal is another source of information that can impact self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). People often rely, to some extent, on their emotional reactions to situations or tasks to help determine if they can cope and be successful at it. High negative emotional arousal often debilitates performance, whereas positive emotional arousal may raise performance. Negative emotional arousals are stressful reactions that often lead to fear, and cause people to doubt their competency. Positive emotional arousals and anxiety towards a task may lead people to be more motivated to perform successfully and increase feelings of satisfaction from the task. It is essential, therefore, that techniques to reduce negative and increase positive emotions may be used to raise self-efficacy.

Vicarious Learning

Many self-efficacy beliefs are also developed by learning from other people's experiences (Bandura, 1977). Observing others perform successfully could improve people's beliefs in their own capabilities to perform in similar ways, and helps encourage persistence in their own efforts. People often compare themselves to others and become convinced that if someone else similar to them can do it, so can they. The clearer the outcomes and the more determination expended in the face of obstacles by the model, the more likely the observer will be to model that behaviour in the future. Since observing others is not a

direct reflection on how someone will do personally though, its effect can be weaker than the other sources. As a result, it is beneficial for people to observe the successes of others to help enhance their confidence in their own abilities to succeed.

Market Demand and Career Choice

Market Demand refers to the current and projected needs of the job market or economy in terms of specific skills, industries, or professions. Career choices influenced by market demand may involve considerations such as job availability, salary potential, growth prospects, and alignment with industry trends or emerging sectors (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). When choosing a career path, many individuals take market demand into account. Careers with high market demand often have better job prospects, higher salaries, and more opportunities for advancement (Carnevale, Cheah, & Hanson, 2015). Evaluating market demand could help individuals make informed decisions about their education, training, and career goals.

According to Fogg, and Harrington (2019), some key factors that influence market demand include: Economic conditions and industry growth; demographic changes and shifts in the labor force, advancements in technology and the need for specialized skills, Government policies and regulations that impact certain sectors; global competitive forces and outsourcing trends. By understanding current and projected market demands, individuals could position themselves for success in the job market. This may involve pursuing degrees or certifications in high-demand fields, developing in-demand skills, or targeting industries with strong growth potential (Frey, & Osborne, 2017).

Market demand plays a significant role in determining career choices. It reflects the needs and preferences of consumers, which in turn influence the demand for goods and services, thereby shaping the job market. Understanding market demand may help individuals make informed decisions about their careers by identifying industries and professions that are in high demand and likely to offer opportunities for growth and advancement. Lynham (2018) observed that markets for labour have demand and supply curves, just like markets for goods. The law of demand applies in labor markets this way: A higher salary or wage—that is, a higher price in the labor market—leads to a decrease in the quantity of labor demanded by employers, while a lower salary or wage leads to an increase in the quantity of labor demanded. The law of supply functions in labor markets, too: A higher price for labor leads to a higher quantity of labor supplied; a lower price leads to a lower quantity supplied.

Various Ways Market Demand Impact Career Choices

Industry Growth:

Individuals often consider industries experiencing growth when making career decisions. Industries with high market demand typically offer more job opportunities and better prospects for career advancement (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023).

Skills and Qualifications:

Market demand could dictate the skills and qualifications required for various roles. Job seekers may choose career paths that align with their skills and interests while also considering the demand for those skills in the market (World Economic Forum, 2020).

Salary and Compensation:

High demand for certain skills or professions often translates into higher salaries and better compensation packages. Job seekers may prioritize careers in fields where salaries are competitive and there is potential for financial stability (PayScale, 2023).

Job Security:

Career choices are influenced by the level of job security offered by different industries and professions. Individuals may opt for careers in sectors with stable demand to minimize the risk of unemployment or job instability (Forbes, 2023).

Technological Advances:

Technological advancements could create new career opportunities while making others obsolete. Individuals may choose careers that align with emerging technologies and market trends to stay relevant in their fields (PwC, 2022).

Globalization:

Global market trends and international trade may impact career choices by creating opportunities in new markets and industries. Professionals with skills and experience relevant to global markets may have a competitive advantage in their career pursuits (World Bank, 2023).

Conclusion

Knowing the fact that skills and knowledge acquired from business education offer numerous benefits, and aligned career choices add various benefits not just to the students, but also to the employer and the society. Improved understanding of family, self-efficacy and market demand amongst other factors must be given serious attention since they are cable of influencing career choice that will help to reduce problem of inappropriate career choice by young persons.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. *Reinforce Career Counseling Programmes:* Comprehensive Career Counseling programmes should be implemented in schools that will help students assess their interests, skills, and values. To help them also explore a diverse range of career options that is aligned with their potential and understanding the educational and training requirements for different careers.
2. *Empower Student Self-Awareness:* Incorporate self-assessment activities that enable students to identify their unique strengths; weaknesses; and personal preferences. Understand how their interests, skills, and values align with different career paths. Develop a strong sense of self-efficacy and confidence in their ability to make informed career decisions.
3. *Involve Families in the Process:* Parents and guardians should be educated on the importance of supporting their children's career exploration. Provide guidance on how to have constructive conversations about career choices. Encourage families to consider their child's interests, abilities, and personal aspirations when providing input on career decisions.
4. *Integrate Labour Market Information:* To ensure that career education curriculum include: Up-to-date data on current and projected job market trends, growth industries, and in-demand skills. Share information on the earning potential, job outlook, and career advancement opportunities for various occupations. Discussions on how market demands may influence career choices and the need for flexibility and adaptability.
5. *Foster Collaborative Partnerships:* Develop strong partnerships between schools, local businesses, and community organizations to provide students with real-world work experiences, job shadowing, and mentorship opportunities. Invite industry professionals to share their career journeys and insights with students. Gather feedback from employers on the skills and competencies they seek in prospective employees.
6. *Emphasize Transferable Skills:* Highlight the importance of developing transferable skills,

such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and adaptability, which are valuable across a wide range of careers.

7. *Inspire Lifelong Learning*: Promote the concept of ongoing learning and skill development to help students understand that career paths are not undeviating and that they may need to continuously update their knowledge and abilities to remain competitive in the job market.

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