

Perceived Determinants of Career Choice among Female Graduate Employees in Selected Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study examined the perceived determinants of career choices among graduates in selected tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The population of the study was 116 female graduate employees in all the Departments in the two selected institutions, namely: Rivers State University and Ken Sarowiwa Polytechnics, Bori. The entire population was used as the sample size and the census sampling procedure was adopted. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The test-retest method was adopted for the reliability of the instrument and the test-retest scores of the sample were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) which yielded reliability coefficients of 0.94 which was considered very high and adequate for the instrument to be used for the study. The Instrument was validated by three Experts from Faculty of Education in Rivers State University. A total of 116 copies of the questionnaire containing two Sections were distributed and successfully retrieved from the respondents. The Instrument was structured with options of Agree and Disagree and simple percentage was used as a statistical tool to answer the research questions raised for the study and analyze the data. Hence, the study revealed that intrinsic factors exerted less influence, extrinsic factors exerted great influence and interpersonal factors exerted less influence on career choice of female graduates in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The following recommendations were made: Universal Basic Education Boards should establish Career and Guidance Centres for School Management Authorities. This will enable them to understudy children to enable them make the right career choice decisions based on intrinsic factors when they proceed to the university and become responsible graduates; At early age, Parents and guardians should encourage the girl child to choose her career according to her capabilities and interest, so that when she eventually becomes a graduate, she will not regret the career she chose.

Key words: Determinants, Career, Career Choice, Female Graduate Employees, Tertiary Institutions.

Introduction

Career refers to the occupational activity of an individual over a long time period. It is a lifelong activity that reflects that person's progression in his/her chosen profession or work life. It is the sum total of the individual's occupation for an entire work life, rather than a brief work experience. In other words, it is the history of the individual's work life. Career does not approximate to paid services alone but include periods of unemployment, underemployment as well as free services rendered during the individual's work life. Career for some people involves a combination of these, whereas for others who are engaged in paid employment, the spectrum may be a short term contract, casual work, portfolio career, job sharing or long term contracts (Preston & Whitehouse 2004). Career choice refers to students' or recent graduates' decision of selecting the occupation and professional field which fit best to their individual needs.

Career choice is dependent on three categories of factors: extrinsic, intrinsic and interpersonal. Extrinsic factors are not inherent in the nature of the tasks or of the occupational role (Willis, Shann & Hassel, 2009) and may include labour market conditions (Edvardsson, 2005), employer brand, salaries

and income, job security job availability, good remuneration and/or prestige of the occupation/job. Intrinsic factors focus on the job content and the opportunities it provides for further training, career and professional development. The intrinsic factors include specific job related factors, such as authority and power related to the job (Marinas, Iqret, Marinas & Prioteasa, 2016) working conditions and professional and career advancement opportunities or goals, creativity and professional challenges incurred, interest for a specific job, aptitude, skills and abilities, learning experiences, compatibility with sex roles, content of the work and satisfaction, training and professional development opportunities. Interpersonal factors may include parental, family, relatives and/or friends and/or teachers' influence (Gokuladas, 2010), early exposure to profession (Willis, 2009).

Females are thus motivated to make their career choices based on intrinsic, extrinsic or interpersonal factors. In support of this assertion, Hewitt (2010) noted that the factors influencing career choice can either be intrinsic or extrinsic or both. Most people are influenced by careers that their parents favour, others follow the careers that their educational choices have opened for them, some choose to follow their passion regardless of how much or little it will make them while others choose the careers that give high income among other factors.

According to Barrow (2009), intrinsic influences are personal, biological forces such as needs, intelligence, aptitudes, interests, values, occupational knowledge, self-knowledge, and personality and combine with extrinsic forces; together, these influences help develop the self. The self or person is the result of shaping interactions between biological and geographical determinants and forms a keystone bridging these determinants, which consequently shapes an individual's self-concept. Many intrinsic and extrinsic influences provoke changes in personal career or occupational choice. Individuals interested in labor-intensive jobs may develop interests in less labor intensive jobs as they mature and their physical abilities become a performance-limiting aspect. These influences are conceptual components of life's developmental system.

The level of involvement of women in career roles in the formal sector of Nigerian economy is still low, although significant improvement has been noted in bridging the gap in educational enrolment and attainment. The low level of female empowerment has been attributed to their lower level of educational attainment especially in such fields like engineering, architecture, medicine, law, and politics among others. The social attitude and poor acceptance of females in male dominated careers (even from women themselves) also play a key role in their career such that career women often have to work harder at their jobs to keep even with their male counterparts. The corollary of this poor acceptance and social attitude is an imposed career influence on their female children. This trend has virtually affected the career choice of females (Osiremu, 2007).

Career choice is one of the biggest dilemma and challenge in any individual's life. It involves interplay of intrinsic, extrinsic and interpersonal factors which are intricately intertwined. It is not a straightforward task and involves a difficult process of decision making. Hence, the influence of career choice has a lasting impact on an individual. It serves to be a predictor and determinant of their prospective level of income, nature of work and consequently leaves a mark on the personality, demeanour and outlook of an individual (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). This study seeks to examine the intrinsic, extrinsic and interpersonal factors that influenced the choice of career among female graduates in selected Tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Female Graduate Employees working in tertiary institutions among others should be able to enjoy their chosen careers. This is true if they were intrinsically motivated to choose their careers without extrinsic or interpersonal influences. It is observed that most of these graduates who are employed today in tertiary institutions were not intrinsically motivated to choose their careers. Consequently, a good number of them made wrong choices of career and in recent times, have regretted their choices. Undoubtedly, wrong career selection opens the door for lifelong consequences for most individuals (Mashige & Oduntan, 2011). According to Issa and Nwalo (2011), such individuals will underperform

in their work places and become a source of inefficiency not only for themselves, their organization but also for the economy as a whole. This corroborates with the assertion of Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) who noted that though it is difficult for everyone to make a decision regarding his/her career, one wrong decision can change the fate of an individual. 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. However, it is not clear whether it is intrinsic, extrinsic or interpersonal factors that influenced the career choice of female graduates in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This gap is what this study aims to fill.

Purpose of the study

This study examined the perceived determinants of career choices among female graduates in selected tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine how intrinsic factors influenced career choice among female graduates in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.
2. Determine how extrinsic factors that influenced career choice among female graduates in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.
3. Determine how interpersonal factors that influenced career choice among female graduates in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. How did intrinsic factors influence career choice among female graduate employees in tertiary Institutions in Rivers State?
2. How did extrinsic factors influence career choice among female graduate employee in tertiary Institutions in Rivers State?
3. How did interpersonal factors influence career choice among female graduate employees in tertiary Institutions in Rivers State?

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 116 female graduate Employees in all the Departments in the two selected institutions; 60 from Rivers State University and 46 from Ken Sarowiwa Polytechnics, Bori. The entire population was used as the sample size because of the manageable size of the population. The census sampling procedure was adopted. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire. The Instrument was validated by three Experts from Faculty of Education in Rivers State University. The Instrument was contained 16 items structured with options of Agree and Disagree. The test-retest method was adopted for the reliability of the instrument and the test-retest scores of the sample were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) which yielded reliability coefficients of 0.94 which was considered very high and adequate for the instrument to be used for the study. A total of 116 copies of the questionnaire containing three sections were distributed and successfully retrieved from the respondents. Simple percentage was used as a statistical tool and the frequency count was used to answer the three research questions raised for the study. The Decision rule was 50% ($\frac{1}{2}$ of 100%). Scores below 50% were low, while 50% and above were high. The items were scored based on the grand frequency and percentage.

Results

Research Questions 1: How did intrinsic factors influence career choice among female graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 1: Percentage Responses on the Influence of Intrinsic Factors on career choice among Female Graduates in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State *N=116*

S/N	Items	Agree		Disagree	
		Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
1	I had self-interest for specific job	74	63.8	42	36.2
2	I held on to my learning experiences	20	17.2	96	82.8
3	I had skills in my area of interest	16	13.8	100	86.2
4	I had occupational knowledge of my area of interest	6	5.2	110	94.8
5	I had creative ability in my area of interest	5	4.3	111	95.7
6	I desired a career compatible with my sex role	4	3.4	112	96.6
Grand Freq/Percent		21	18.0	95	82.0

Table 1 shows the percentage responses of the influence of intrinsic factors on the career choice of Female graduates in selected tertiary institutions of learning in Rivers State. On average, 18 percent of the respondents (representing 21 out of 116 respondents) agreed that their career choice was influenced by intrinsic factors such as I had self-interest for specific job, I held on to my learning experiences, I had skills in my area of interest, I had occupational knowledge of my area of interest, I had creative ability in my area of interest and I desired a career compatible with my sex role; while 82 percent of the respondents (representing 95 out of 116 respondents) disagreed that these factors influenced their choice of career. Hence, it was revealed that intrinsic factors exerted less influence on career choice of female graduates in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: How did extrinsic factors influence career choice among female graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 2: Percentage Responses on the Influence of Extrinsic Factors on Career Choice among Female Graduates in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State *N=116*

S/N	Items	Agree		Disagree	
		Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
1	I had high salary expectations	84	72.4	32	27.6
2	Prestige of profession influenced my choice of career	96	82.8	20	17.2
3	The available job opportunities influenced my choice of career	101	87.1	15	12.9
4	My feeling about job security influenced my choice of career	102	87.9	14	12.1
5	My concern for the labour market conditions influenced my choice of career	110	94.8	6	5.2
Grand Freq/Percent		99	85.0	17	15.0

Table 2 shows the percentage responses of the influence of extrinsic factors on the career choice of Female graduates in selected tertiary institutions of learning in Rivers State. On average, 85 percent of the respondents (representing 99 out of 116 respondents) agreed that their career choice was influenced by extrinsic factors such as I had high salary expectations, Prestige of profession influenced my choice of career, the available job opportunities influenced my choice of career, my feeling about job security influenced my choice of career and my concern for the labour market conditions influenced my choice

of career; while 15 percent of the respondents (representing 17 out of 116 respondents) disagreed that these factors influenced their choice of career. Hence, it was revealed that extrinsic factors exerted great influence on career choice of female graduates in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: How did interpersonal factors influence career choice among female graduate employees in tertiary institutions in Rivers State?

Table 3: Percentage Responses on the Influence of Interpersonal Factors on career choice among Female Graduates in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State *N=116*

S/N	Items	Agree	Percent	Disagree	
		Freq		Freq	Percent
1	My parents influenced my career choice	3	2.6	113	97.4
2	My siblings influenced my career choice	1	0.9	115	99.1
3	My teachers influenced my career choice	6	5.2	110	94.8
4	My guardian influenced my career choice	7	6.0	109	94.0
5	My friends influenced my career choice	5	4.3	111	95.7
Grand Freq/Percent		4	3.8	112	96.1

Table 3 shows the percentage responses of the influence of interpersonal factors on the career choice of Female graduates in selected tertiary institutions of learning in Rivers State. On average, 3.4 percent of the respondents (representing 4 out of 116 respondents) agreed that their career choice was influenced by interpersonal factors such as my parents influenced my career choice, my sibling influenced my career choice, my siblings influenced my career choice, my teachers influenced my career choice, my guardian influenced my career choice and my friends influenced my career choice; while 96.1 percent of the respondents (representing 112 out of 116 respondents) disagreed that these factors influenced their choice of career. Hence, it was revealed that interpersonal factors exerted less influence on career choice of female graduates in tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Discussion of Finding

One of the findings of the study revealed that intrinsic factors such as I had self-interest for specific job, I held on to my learning experiences, I had skills in my area of interest, I had occupational knowledge of my area of interest, I had creative ability in my area of interest and I desired a career compatible with my sex role influenced their career choice. They also disagreed that interpersonal factors such as my parents influenced my career choice, my siblings influenced my career choice, my siblings influenced my career choice, my teachers influenced my career choice, my guardian influenced my career choice and my friends influenced my career choice exerts a little influence on the choice of career of female graduate Employees in tertiary institutions. Though, Hsiao and Nova (2016) noted that Intrinsic factors such as creativity, autonomy, and challenging and dynamic environment are believed to exert less influence on choice of career and interpersonal factors such as friends and teachers are non-influential on career choice of individuals, while Extrinsic factors, such as job security, money-making, and job availability, exert more influence on career choice of individuals. However, Kingsley (2018) noted that intrinsic factors such as skills, interest and abilities should influence career choice of individuals rather than extrinsic and inter personal factors.

Another finding of this study revealed that extrinsic factors such as salary expectations, prestige of profession, available job opportunities, job security and labour market conditions has a great influence on the career choice of Female Graduates of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. This corroborates with the assertion of Hewitt (2010) noted that the factors influencing career choice can either be intrinsic or extrinsic. These extrinsic factors include social contacts, role models, availability of resources such as

information and finances, globalization, ethnic background, level of educational attainment, and differences in job characteristics. Willis, Shannn and Hassel (2009) noted that extrinsic factors that influence choice of career may include labour market conditions, salaries and income, job security, job availability, good remuneration and/or prestige of the occupation/job. However, Bani-Khaled (2014) opined that individuals should weigh their options according to their interest and their educational performance before choosing their career and disregard extrinsic and interpersonal factors.

Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) in their findings on interpersonal factors opined that Mothers have stronger influence on their children as compared to their fathers. Another fact proven by research is that children prefer to discuss their plans and choices with their mother more as compared to the fathers. But when their efforts are combined together, it is the parent's upbringing that is the basis of the outcome of the personality of the child. The values of the parents are transferred into the child. Besides the home, another major determinant of career choice is media. It provides exposure at the earliest stage. Media highlights social travails, global issues, trends and fashions, portrays the glamour of a culture, and the glitter of the consumer world. However, according to Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (2001), an individual's talents, skills and abilities should exert an influence on his/her career choice, so that the individual does not make a wrong choice of career that may lead to failure and disappointment in the future.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that extrinsic factors such as salary expectations, prestige of profession, available job opportunities, job security and labour market conditions has a greater influence on the career choice of Female Graduates of tertiary institutions in Rivers State far more than intrinsic factors such as self-interest, learning experiences, skills, occupational knowledge, creative abilities and career compatibility with sex roles and interpersonal factors such as parents, siblings, teachers, guardians and friends. Hence, extrinsic factors have a positive influence on the choice of career of female graduates, while intrinsic and interpersonal factors have a negative influence on them.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Universal Basic Education Board should establish Career and Guidance Centres for School Management Authorities. This will enable them to understudy children to enable them make the right career choice decisions based on intrinsic factors when they proceed to the university and become responsible graduates.
2. At early age, Parents and guardians should encourage the girl child to choose her career according to her capabilities and interest, so that when she eventually becomes a graduate, she will not regret the career she chose.
3. At the Primary school level, teachers should encourage children to choose their careers according to their interest; abilities and skills (intrinsic factors), to enable them enjoy and not regret the career they choose in the future.

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