

Influence of Socio-Economic Factors on the Selection of Office Technology by Business Education Students in Colleges of Education in North-eastern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of socio-economic variables on business education students' choice of the office technology option in colleges of education in northeastern Nigeria. Two research questions and two corresponding null hypotheses were formulated for the study. The total population consisted of 932 students, from which a sample of 365 was drawn. A descriptive research design was employed, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire directly administered to the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was ensured using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.80. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, while regression analysis was applied to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that both gender and job prospects significantly influenced business education students' choice of the office technology option in these institutions. The study concluded that the low preference for the office technology option is due to students' inadequate awareness of the relevance and career prospects of the skills acquired through this program. It was recommended, among other things, that Departments of Business Education should organize programs to raise students' awareness of the importance and opportunities associated with the office technology option in tertiary institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Making career decisions is a lifelong process. Career decision-making begins with an awareness of the world and the ability to understand what is important to an individual. According to Izzawati and Lisnawati (2015), Students all over the world usually faced with the task of career decision making, the choice of careers, subjects, and courses of study in schools and of subsequent paths to follow, are always difficult problems facing students on the choice of right subject combination, leading to the right profession can make the difference between enjoying and detesting the career in future, therefore, dedicating oneself to academic and career choices that are unattainable leads to frustration. In support of these observations,

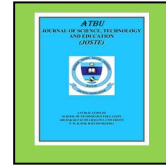
Amoor (2015) opines that educational and vocational decision-making is not an easy task, yet at one time or the other students are faced with the task of making choice in academic and careers. On the other hand, Purnama and Ernawati, (2021) are of the belief that when you're in your teens, especially as a student in high school, a career is very important. High school students should start thinking about careers because they will be transitioning from high school to college. In the transition process, students will experience a career decision-making process such as considering the college major, they will choose. The goal is to achieve the desired career in the future therefore; high school students are expected to be mature in making career decisions. It then follows that student never perceives their

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environment, personality, and opportunity the same and this explains the different career choices students make.

There are several factors that influence career choice of students. According to Kerka (2010) each individual undertaking career choice decision, the process is influenced by various factors including; the context in which they live in, their personal aptitudes, social contacts and educational attainment, personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, role model, social support and finances. Oksuz & Karalar (2016) Argue that, individuals experience difficulties in self-discovery, researching professions, determining suitable professions for themselves and deciding on a profession during the career development process, while students are still deciding on their professional orientation and trying to dream and create ideals about the profession; Family expectations, frequently changing education system, curriculum changes, changes in the university entrance exam, academic success, interest, ability and desire to make a decision appropriate to personal characteristics and employment opportunities can lead to negative emotions in the decision-making processes. Hence most people are influenced by careers favored by their parents whereas others follow the careers that their educational choices have set for them. People often select a job on the basis of experiences or exposures to the world of work. However, Savickas and Lent (2014) stated that gender plays an important role in career choices. Male and female career choices are normally different because of the difference in their self-concepts; many students may restrict their career choices to careers that are gender stereotyped,

Office technology is one of the major occupational areas of business education that prepares student teachers for a job within a wide range of business career such as secretaries, general office work, and business teachers who undertake the teaching of secretarial studies. Etonyeaku (2014) defines office technology as an aspect of vocational business education programme that gives training and imparts necessary skills that will provide the recipients with

the intellectual and professional background, adequate for their assignment and makes the recipients adaptable to changing situations in the economy. The career opportunities under office technology that the student can undertake after graduation include office occupation, office educators and secretarial administrators. The office occupation provide job opportunities in areas of administrative assistance, secretary ship, clerk, typist, executive secretary, file clerk, general clerk, legal secretary, receptionist, personnel manager, administrative manager and confidential secretary (Amoor, 2014).

Despite opportunities available in the option, the researcher still observed that the enrolment of business education students in to office technology of business education in Nigerian colleges of education is low. Finding a balance between the demand and the supply of competent office technology educators and administrators has become a problem not only for the professional secretaries in Nigeria, but also for institutions that produce these graduates (Patrick, 2016). This is also in line with the observation of Amoor, (2009) he notes that, the choice of office technology option of business education students in Nigerian colleges of education was sharply declining. He stressed that this has also given birth to acute shortage of competent office educators and administrators who are knowledgeable and versatile in office technology, information and communication skills to teach in tertiary institutions of learning or work in office occupation.

Many factors have been identified as the causes for the decline of business education students' enrolment into office technology in Nigerian tertiary institutions, scholars such as Ferry (2006) asserts that adolescent occupational choice is influenced by many factors, including life context, personal aptitudes, educational attainment, negative perception of business education students, low esteem for office technology, and lack of students' interest in the vocation. Amoor (2015) also examined students' interest, prestige, student to students' interaction and teachers' influence as factors influencing career choice in tertiary institutions of learning.

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The researcher observed that inadequate enrolment of students into office option of business education in Nigerian colleges of education and tertiary institutions as well, may be responsible for inadequate trained office technology educators to teach in secondary and post-secondary schools, and inadequate trained secretaries for office occupation. It is based on these problems that this study will be conducted to examine how socio-economic factors influences

the choice of office technology option among business education students in Colleges of Education in North eastern, Nigeria.

Literatures have shown that the choice of office technology option among business education students in colleges of education of north-eastern Nigeria is very low as compared to accounting option. A survey in the colleges of education in the research area, records from exam office reveal the following:

Table 1: Enrollment of Students in to Office Technology

Year	Institution	Total students	Office option	Percentage
2017/2018	FCE Yola Adamawa	172	70	41
2017/2018	COE Hong Adamawa	113	38	34
2017/2018	COE Azare Bauchi	176	71	40
2017/2018	COE Maiduguri	80	28	35
2017/2018	FCE Gombe	518	169	33
2017/2018	COE Zing Taraba	159	65	41
2017/2018	FCE Potiskum Yobe	342	72	21
2017/2018	COE Gashua Yobe	206	94	46
Grant total		1766	607	34

Source: Office of HODs of the various schools

This is also similar with the statement of Patrick (2016) which revealed that the number of students enrolled into accounting option doubles that of the office technology in recent years in colleges of education in north east Nigeria. In the same vein, Amoor (2014) observed the declining of student enrolment into office technology option in Nigerian tertiary institutions has given birth to shortage of competent secretarial educators and administrators that are knowledgeable and versatile in office technology. This invariably poses a lot of dangers for future office profession in Nigeria.

The problem of low enrolment is a great challenge to many programmes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Studies conducted by Bude (2007) and Devid (2008) revealed that gender, peer group, job prospects and occupational remuneration are among factors that affects student's enrolment in mathematics and science subjects. Although much has been written on factors influencing choice of office technology option among business education students, but no

empirical evidence on socio-economic factors where the study intends to fill the gap.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of socio economic factors on choice of office technology among business education students in colleges of education in north eastern, Nigeria. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Determine the influence of gender on choice of office technology among business education students in Colleges of Education in North Eastern, Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the influence of job prospects on choice of office technology among business education students in Colleges of Education in North Eastern, Nigeria.

Research Questions:

Two research questions were formulated in line with the specific objectives in order to guide the study.

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- 1 To what extent does gender influence the choice of office technology among business education students in Colleges of Education in North Eastern, Nigeria?
- 2 To what extent does job prospect influence the choice of office technology among business education students in Colleges of Education in North Eastern, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

- HO₁** Gender has no significant influence on choice of office technology among business education students in Colleges of Education in North Eastern, Nigeria
- HO₃** Job prospect has no significant influence on choice of office technology among business education students in Colleges of Education in North Eastern, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The design adopted for this study was survey, the area of the study covered all the eight colleges of education offering business education in north-east region of Nigeria with the total population of 932 students where by 365 students were randomly selected from the study total population, a structured questionnaire titled Socio Economic Variables and Career Choice of Office

Technology (SEVCC) adapted from Odia and Ogiedu, (2013) was used for data collection which was subjected to faces and content validity by experts in the department of vocational and technology education program, of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, and College of education Azare. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was found to be 0.87 hence, the instrument was considered reliable. The data was collected from the respondents by the researchers and two trained research assistants who assisted in the distribution and collection of the questionnaires from the respondents. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for research questions and regression analysis for hypotheses at 0.05 levels of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One: To what extent does gender influence the choice of office technology option among business education students in colleges of education in north eastern, Nigeria?

From the table below the result shows that the mean score of all the items ranging from 2.99 to 3.71 with grand mean of 3.49 were above index score for agree, this was also applicable to grand mean whereby (3.49 > 2.50). Based on the analysis, the respondents therefore agreed that gender has influence on students' choice of office technology option.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation responses of Students on the extent to which Gender influence the Choice of Office Technology.

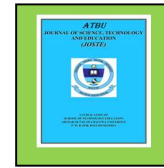
S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Female students prefer office technology option than the male students	3.71	1.31	Agree
2.	Compared to female students, male consider office technology option as worthwhile.	3.56	1.19	Agree
3.	Compare to male, most female students are run away from office technology option because of its practical in nature.	3.67	1.27	Agree
4.	Compare to male, female students are not choosing office technology option because they feel that it is too difficult.	3.35	1.37	Agree
5.	Compare to female students, male students consider going for office technology option is a waste of time.	2.99	1.38	Agree

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6.	Studying office technology is just as good for male as for female.	3.63	1.14	Agree
Grand Mean		3.49		Agreed

Research Question Two: To what extent does job prospect influence choice of office technology option among business education students in colleges of education in north eastern, Nigeria?

From the table below the students' responses of item 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 with mean responses of 3.6, 3.98, 3.81, 3.85 and 3.76 respectively implies that all the items in the job

prospect have very high influence on students' choice of office technology option. The grand mean of 3.8 was obtained from the table, this 3.8 is compared with the 2.50 the index score for agree and found that grand mean 3.8 is greater than the 2.50 ($3.80 > 2.50$). The result therefore shows that job prospect has influence on business education students' choice of office technology option.

Table 2: Mean Responses of Students on the extent to which Job Prospects influence the Choice of Office Technology.

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Remark
7.	I choose office technology option because of the chance of being employed as secretary.	3.60	1.24	Agree
8.	Office technology options provide students with relevant skill to enable them to be gainfully engaged.	3.98	1.10	Agree
9.	Office technology option provides opportunities for one to function in different field of endeavor.	3.81	1.11	Agree
10.	The person with the knowledge of office technology can be self-employed.	3.85	1.15	Agree
11.	Office technology option graduate can sustain him/herself by setting up a business centre.	3.76	1.16	Agree
Grand mean		3.80		Agreed

Null Hypothesis One

Gender has no significant influence on choice of office technology among business education students in colleges of education in north eastern, Nigeria.

The result as depicted by table 3 revealed the overall R^2 value of .068 which

signifies that 6.8% of the choice of office technology is influenced by gender variable. The probability value obtained was less than the alpha value ($0.000 < 0.05$). The result shows that gender variable has significant positive influence on students' choice of office technology in colleges of education. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Table 3: Simple Linear Regression Analysis used for Testing Hypothesis One

Variable	Unst. Coeff.	Std. Coeff.	T	Sig.	R	R ²	Adj.R ²
	B	Std. Error					
Constant	3.137	.131	23.992	.000	.261	.068	.065
Gender	.186	.037	5.056	.000			

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Null Hypothesis Two

Job prospect has no significant influence on choice of office technology among business education students in colleges of education in north eastern, Nigeria.

In order to test the null hypothesis three regression analysis was used. The result in table 10 shows the co-efficient of determination R² of .037 this shows that the job prospect variable has

3.7 % influence on choice of office technology option, with associated probability value of 0.000 this probability value of 0.000 was compared with 0.05 set as alpha level for testing the hypothesis and it was found to be significant because 0.000 is less than 0.05. Based on this the, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, job prospect has significant positive influence on students' choice of office technology.

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression Analysis used for Testing Hypothesis Three

Variable	Unst. Coeff.	Std. Coeff.	T	Sig.	R	R ²	Adj.R ²
	B	Std. Error Beta					
Constant	3.291	.137	23.971	.000	.192	.037	.034
Job prospect	.130	.036	3.669	.000			

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The following findings were made:

1. The research question one which was further affirmed by corresponding null hypothesis revealed that gender has significant influence on business education students' choice of office technology option
2. The research question two as well as the corresponding null hypothesis shows that Job prospects has significant influence on business education students' choice of office technology option

of career that students make. According to his Findings on the level of influence gender played in career choice, showed that out of the 100 responses, 38% were positive while 30% responded negatively. 32% of the respondents remained neutral. Another study by Simiyu (2015) on influence of gender on career choice by students in polytechnics revealed that gender issues influence the choice of career among students in youth polytechnics.

The findings of research question two and test of corresponding null hypothesis also revealed that Job prospects has significant influence on students Choice of office technology option among business education students in north eastern Nigeria, this finding is in line with that of Hindi and Renninger (2006), where they state that the career opportunities of a particular course of study attract the number of students opting for that course. More so, Braden (2007) states that job prospect have significant influence on students' choice of career at various level of education. In the same vein the study also agrees with that of Asagwara (2011) in his study titled self-efficacy beliefs as aspirations and career trajectories where he asserts that job prospect has significant influence in terms of career decision. 25% of sampled students in his study responded that job prospect has significant influence in career choice.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:

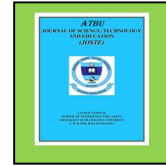
The result of research question one which was further affirmed by test of corresponding null hypothesis shows that gender has significant influence on students' choice of office technology among business education students in Colleges of Education in North East Nigeria. This goes in line with the observation of scholars like chukwuma (2011) who states that sex (gender) has influence on choice of academic pursuit. And Maina (2013) who asserted that gender factors play a role in influencing one's career, similarly the study conducted by Omari (2014) revealed that in some community there are gender roles and that in return impacts on the type

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CONCLUSION

The result of the study revealed that gender and job prospect significantly influenced the choice of office technology among business education students in colleges of education in north eastern Nigeria. By implication the problem of low enrollment of students in to office technology option, is as a result of lack of adequate awareness among the students on the relevance and prospect of the skills acquired in office technology and it's important in the world of work. It is therefore concluded that increase of students' enrollment in to office technology as a course of study at this level in north eastern Nigeria will not be achieve if adequate awareness programs are not provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the finding of the study it is therefore recommended that

1. Public enlightenment should be made on the skills acquired in office technology option is not restricted to any gender; hence both men and women can perform effectively.
2. Department of business education should assign level advisers and be charged with the responsibility to counsel the students on appropriate career choice in order to prevent the peer mentorship and advice towards the choice of career within the peer clique

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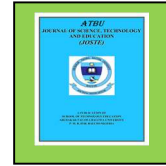
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