Determinants of Undergraduates' Decision to Study Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria

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Abstract

Every student that applies for a course at any tertiary institution has a rationale for the choice. Therefore, this study investigated the factors that influence undergraduates' decision to study Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. The population of the study was all the 214 registered students during the 2015/2016 academic session that cut across the four levels in the Department of Mass Communication. Since the study population was not large, all the students constituted sample for the study**.** The instrument of data collection was questionnaire. Complementing this instrument was in-depth interview which 20 students purposively selected were involved. Findings showed that, majority (61%) who voluntarily applied to study Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin was due to array of staff, facilities at the department (52%), and reputation of the University as a whole (41%), just as more than half of respondents (66%) indicated that they feel fulfilled studying Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin. The study concluded that although other factors with varying degrees of response rate including peer influence, parental role, job prospects, and proximity are responsible for students' decision to study Mass Communication, these factors are secondary. It therefore recommended, among other things, that the University and the Department, in particular, should sustain its standard so as to satisfy students' expectation and remain attractive to potential Mass Communication students.

Keywords: Undergraduate Students**,** Mass Communication, Motivation, Proximity, Reputation, University

Introduction

At the disposal of potential students seeking admission to a degree programme is an array of courses they have to make a choice. These courses cut across different disciplines including Law, Architecture, Engineering, Medicine, Arts, Social Sciences, Communication and Media or Information Sciences just to mention a few. The choice of course they study is likely to affect their later-life employment prospects, earnings, and job satisfaction. This is why it becomes necessary to properly guide prospective university students even if it involves subjecting them to outright compulsion in making decisions relating to their choice of course. Nevertheless, two issues arise. First, is the extent to which guidance and compulsion could be

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given to potential university students with regard to their course choices. Another is to understand the extent to which they could be trusted to make their own decisions.

Studies have established what motivates students' selection of a university as well as the suitability of the programme they wish to study as some of the most important considerations in students' university choice. In a study by Krampf and Heinlein (1981) cited in Fernandez (2010, p.116), findings were that prospective students "compared programmes offered by various institutions to assess their suitability." Also, students evaluate programmes based on the availability of courses and entry requirements, quality and variety of education (Shanka, Quintal & Taylor, 2005). Ambali (2016) added immortal values of an institution. Ambali pointed out that the immortal values University of Ilorin treasures are coded with ABCDE with each representing Activeness, Belief, Character, Discipline and Excellence respectively. Ambali further highlighted that the University is active throughout the year as it does not hesitate to take decisions on crucial matters; believing in oneself is crucial to self-actualisation; character is reflected in the University motto: Character and Learning; discipline links all other values, and commitment to the University to excellence is reflected in its mission statement which is to be an international Centre of Excellence in learning, research, probity, and service to humanity.

A pre-requisite to what qualifies students for some given courses is first and foremost, the subjects they study at Senior Secondary Certificate Examination and the qualifying examinations they are subjected to. At the University of Ilorin, having obtained the mandatory ordinary level results, students are required to enrol for the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) after which successful candidates sit for post-UTME examination hitherto 2016. Those who applied for direct entry were only required to sit for the post-UTME examination. Successful candidates are, therefore, expected to register for their respective courses of choice among which is Mass Communication (Students' Information and Regulations Handbook, 2015)

At the University of Ilorin, Mass Communication programme is domiciled in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences. The Department took off in the 2005/2006 academic session with 28 students in the Faculty of Arts and was later relocated to the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences. In 2008, the University Senate approved the establishment of the Faculty of Communication and Information Sciences to house the family of programmes that deal with communication and information. To this end, the Senate approved the movement of the Department of Computer Science from the Faculty of Science and Mass Communication from the Faculty of Business and Social Sciences to the new Faculty to join the other three newly established Departments namely Telecommunication Science, Library and Information Science and Information and Communication Science (Mass Communication Handbook, 2009). The Faculty was designed to take advantage of multidisciplinary interactions of the science and technologies of computing, information, and communication to grow into a flagship Faculty of the University.

So far, Mass Communication Department has produced seven sets of students with three First class grades - two from the first set in the 2008/2009 session and the third from the fourth set in the 2011/2012 session. It has also graduated its pioneer Master of Science (M.Sc.) students which began in 2014. UNESCO had visited the Department and had recognised the programme of Mass Communication in the Department as one of the standard Mass Communication-training institutions in Africa. The Department has interacted actively in many academic and professional programmes. It has won the annual Best of Best TV Competition for two times with two professionally produced documentaries that can stand any test of broadcasting production. The Department won the competition in 2008 with a production of Traditional Wedding in Ilorin and won again in 2011 with a production on ImoleBoja (Mass Communication Handbook, 2009).

The extensive practical engagement of the students has attracted great accolades from various media houses in the country where the students are undergoing internship and full time work. For example, the Department produces a biannual training newspaper and an annual Magazine named *Unilorin Watch* and the *Lens* respectively. It also partakes in two annual rigorous advertisement campaign management, which is attached to two courses namely Political Communication and Advanced Advertising and an annual PR campaign attached to MAC 312 – Public Relations Techniques. Besides, broadcast students engage throughout their period of training in radio broadcasting at the University FM station (Unilorin 89.3 FM).

Statement of the Problem

The decision students make regarding their courses of study in the University revolves around several factors. According to Fernandez (2010), several factors determine the rationale for the choice of courses that they will do. One of them is that students who finish their high school education must decide whether to pursue their tertiary education; another is that students who choose to further their education must make a choice regarding their programme or field of education and the institution of higher education. But their choice of course from a pool of courses in a particular institution is dependent on certain factors. This is because even where their choice course exists, staff strength, quality of teaching and availability of facilities for teaching-learning process among other considerations vary from one University to the other. Even as some literature exist on rationale for why students are attracted to study a course in an institution particularly, scanty literature exists in Nigeria and specifically on Department of Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin thereby creating a research void that needs to be filled. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to identify the factors that influence students' choice of Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin. Doing this will enrich literature on existing Departments and Universities.

Research Questions

i. What factors influence students' decision to enroll in Mass Communication degree programme at the University of Ilorin?

ii. What are the effects of studying Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin on students?

Theoretical Framework

The study made use of one of the motivational theories namely, Expectancy-Value Theory credited to scholars like John William Atkinson and Edward C. Tolman. The theory was developed due to the growing recognition of expectancies as determinants of motivation. According to Guay, Chanal, Ratelle, Marsh, Larose and Boivin (2010), motivation is the reasons underlying behavior. This implies the driving force behind one's decision or action.

The basic assumption of the expectancy-value theory is that behaviour or decision one takes depends on the perceived likelihood that the behaviour or decision will lead to the realization of a goal. Wigfield and Cambria (2010) reiterated that, in this theory, expectancies for success and subjective task values are reciprocally related to each other and directly related to achievement-related choices and performance. This presupposes that, at any given moment, individuals are faced with numerous alternative goals and choices. Each of these choices has its own subjective likelihood of attainment and assigned value. The expectancies and values are combined to yield a motivational tendency. At the end, the strongest motivational value is expressed in action. Probably, this informed Wigfield and Eccles (2002) to conclude that, "expectancies focus on future success and, as such, are distinct from, although related to, ability beliefs, which focus on present ability" (cited in Hood, Creed and Neumann, 2012, p.73)

The justification for using this theory is borne out of the researchers' conviction that, students, who aspire to enroll in a university for a degree programme are mainly motivated by the perceived value they feel they would benefit from the completion of the programme. Hence, their choice of course and particular university they feel will make them realise their dream; which is in turn, greatly influenced by several factors.

Review of Related Literature

The issue of what motivates students to study a given course in a particular university has been a subject of discussion in the public sphere. While the importance, of course, choices for potential undergraduates is clear, the area remains comparatively little studied by academic researchers. Few existing studies try to deeply probe into the reasons students opt for a course. In a study on tertiary course choice conducted in Victoria (Australia) by Kidd (1987), the result showed that students make tertiary level course choices based on aptitude and abilities that emerge during their high school years. The academic literature on course choices provides some further evidence regarding the role that enjoyment and perceived ability can play in students' choices. Blenkinsop, McCrone, Wade, and Morris (2006) conducted interviews with young people and their parents, and found that around a fifth of students cited their own perceived ability to do well in the course as a reason for doing particular courses, and that enjoyment of particular courses was often linked to their perceived ability. The authors also found that students paid particular attention to future income prospects when

making their choices. This portends that the conviction of one's ability and determination to study a course informs his decision to enroll in that course.

The reputation of the university's teaching staff is also considered to be an important factor not only in terms of teaching ability but also with regard to their friendliness, availability for consulting with students and their general interest in students' career aspirations. Given the growing numbers of higher education institutions, students are becoming more critical and analytical in their selection of educational institutions (Binsardi and Ekwulugo, 2003). Students' perceptions about the reputation and image of an institution are shaped by hearsay, past experience, and marketing activities that promote the institution (Ivy, 2001). Studies have shown that an institution's good image can strongly affect students' preference for the institution (Gutman and Miaoulis, 2003). Hence, universities need to develop a distinct image to maintain their competitive edge. Findings by O'Mahony, McWilliams and Whitelaw (2001) summarily, capped this that there was a general and consistent acknowledgment on the part of students that a university is not a homogenous entity. Rather it was seen to consist of a variety of attributes ranging from the reputation of the course and course content to the quality of facilities and services.

Another factor that has bearing on students' choice of university is its proximity to home. Shanka, Quintal and Taylor (2005) found that the location of an institution has a significant influence on the choice of university. The rationale for many students to only seriously consider universities that are located relatively close to their homes is that, such universities are unlikely to present excessive academic or financial burden.

Similarly, the role of peers, parents and even teachers is sometimes perceived to have a major factor of influence among students. Students often consult their peers and parents or other family members and even secondary school teachers in their quest for the choice of course and university. But in a study by McWilliams, O'Mahony and Whitelaw (2001), findings showed that these items were among the lowest scored on the questionnaire. In reference to Cabera and La Nasa (2000), Fernandez (2010) elucidated that parents can influence their wards in two forms. Fernandez explained that at the motivational level, parents maintain high educational expectations for their children. At the proactive level, parents become involved in school matters and discussion of university plans (Perna, 2000). Since peer and most importantly, parental influence plays a role in students' university choice, institutions of higher education take into account the expectations of both parents and students to meet their demands in an increasingly competitive higher education market.

Jin, Muriel and Sibieta (2011) summarised the foregoing that student course choice "ultimately represents a series of decisions about the sort of life they would like to lead in future, from more proximate concerns such as which teachers will instruct them and which of their peers will be in their class, to more distant concerns such as whether they will pursue higher education…and what jobs they have in mind" (p.24). This is a testimony that, some evidence exists on the inputs into young people's choices, particularly with regard to the issues they consider and the role played by information, advice and guidance.

Method

The paper made use of quantitative and qualitative methods. By the quantitative method, the study made use of questionnaire as an instrument of data collection which was administered on 198 respondents. The questionnaire was structured using predominantly, the Likert five option scale. Data collected were expressed in percentages and presented in form of charts**.** In the qualitative aspect, unstructured personal interview was conducted with 20 students on in-depth information on the motivational factors responsible for respondents' choice of university and course. In both methods, the students were purposively selected across the four levels in the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin. Data gathered were descriptively analysed.

Data Presentation and Analysis

In order to obtain data, the study made use of questionnaire which was administered on 198 respondents that cut across the four levels of the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin. This was because not all the 214 students that populate the department were in their respective classes when the copies of the questionnaire were administered. The study, therefore, recorded hundred percent retrieval rate and none of the copies of the questionnaire was invalidated. The hundred percent retrieval rate was assured as the students were not too many and were contacted in their respective lecture halls.

RQ1: What factors influence students' decision to enroll in Mass Communication degree programme at the University of Ilorin?

Several items in the questionnaire were used to answer this research question. Incidentally, all the items had to do with reasons students choose to study Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin as presented below. One of the factors or reasons was whether respondents voluntarily made their choice to study Mass Communication at the institution. Data showed that 49(25.3%) and 63(33%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively that their decision was voluntary as presented below.

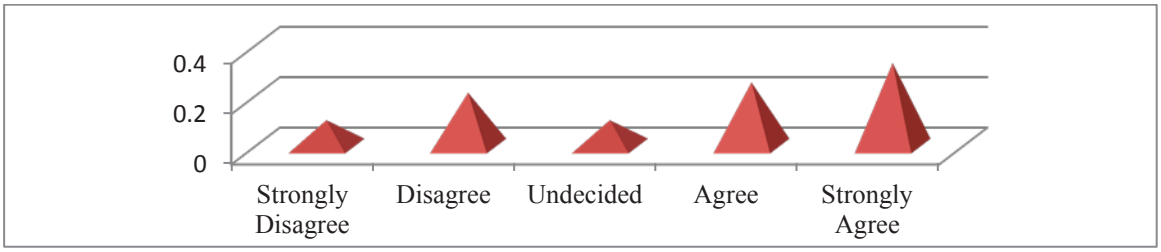


Figure I: Respondent's decision to study Mass Communication at University of Ilorin is voluntary

To get in-depth information about their choice of study at the University of Ilorin, one of the interviewees, who is a final year student said:

> It was my personal decision to study Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin and reasons are not far-fetched. Largely, the University is unique in terms of uninterrupted academic calendar and general conducive environment that enhances learning. Narrowing it down to the department, I considered it to be at the forefront of other departments across the country. This is based on the imprint some ex-students of the department left on me in the course of our interaction prior to my admission.

On peer influence, 71(36.7%) respondents strongly disagreed that peer influence was responsible for their choice of course just as 67(34.7%) also disagreed. This implies that much as there could be possibility of peers to influence students in choice of institution and course, this was lacking among the respondents.

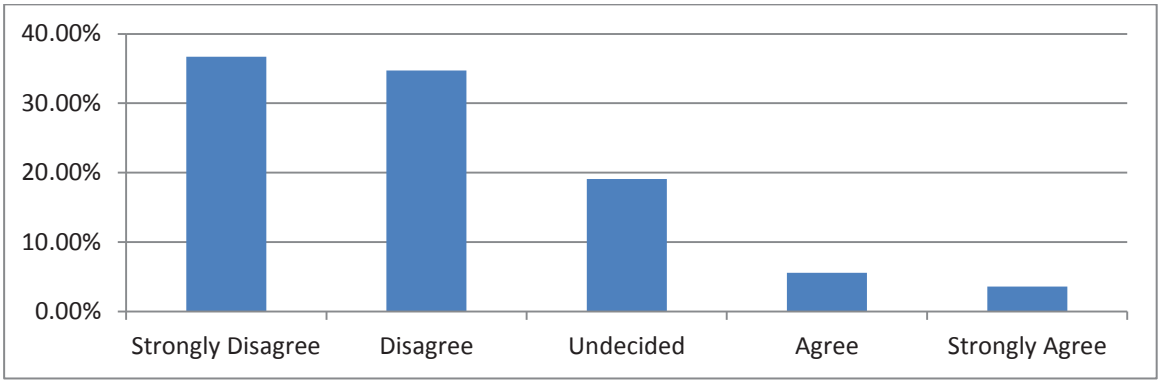


Figure II: Peer influence

When required to indicate whether parental influence informed their choice, 72(38%), 60(31%), 35(18%), 20(10%) and 6(3%) respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed, were undecided, agreed and strongly agreed respectively.

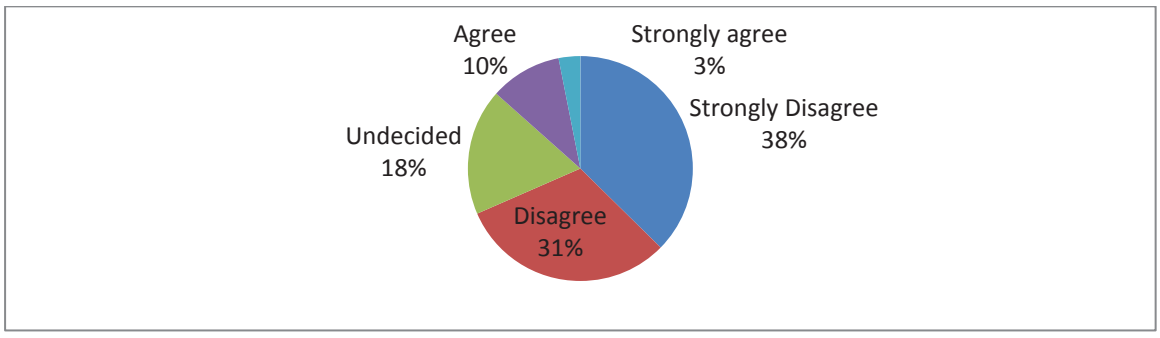


Figure III: Parental influence

In order to probe into parental influence on respondents' choice, of course, most of the interviewees attributed it to a personal decision. A 200 Level student expounded on the reason for choosing Mass Communication thus:

> Mass Communication had always been a course I have passion for. I admired and have continued to admire world class broadcasters on CNN (Cable News Network), Al Jazeera and even on Nigerian stations like Channels.

However, a female interviewee had a contrary opinion on the choice of Mass Communication as an initial course of study, she said:

> I had a faint idea about Mass Communication. What I wanted to study was Public Administration. But when my dad convinced me and advised on Mass Communication, I dropped the idea of Public Administration and the University of Ilorin became my indisputable first choice because I have a cousin here studying in another department who used to tell me a lot of good things about the institution.

In the case of prospects for a job, 30(16%) and 52(26%) respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that their decision was based on job prospects while 63(33%) were neutral. In contrast, 38(20%) and 10(5%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that job prospect was responsible for their decision to study Mass Communication.

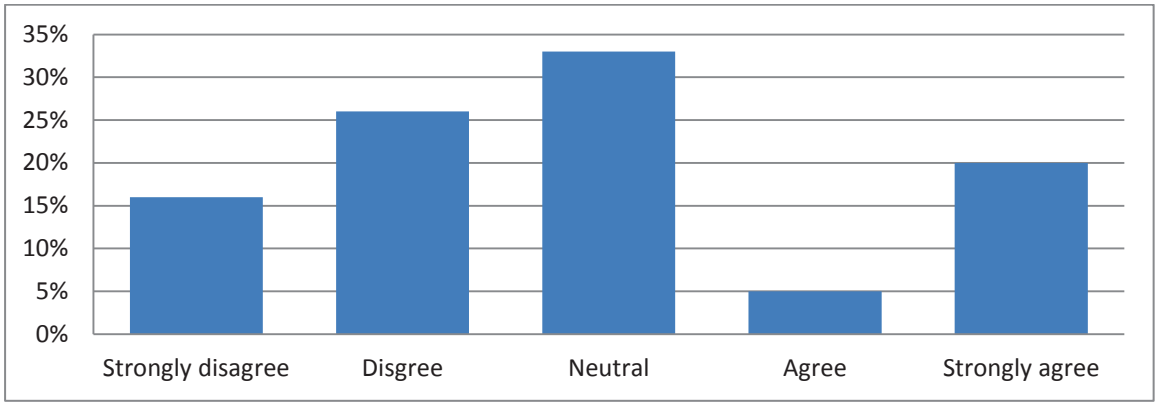


Figure IV: Job prospects

When respondents were asked to indicate whether the reputation of the University as a whole was the determining factor, 34(18%) and 41(21%) respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively while 37(19%) were neutral. On the contrary, 56(29%) and 25(13%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the good reputation of the University served as a pull factor for them to study Mass Communication at the institution.

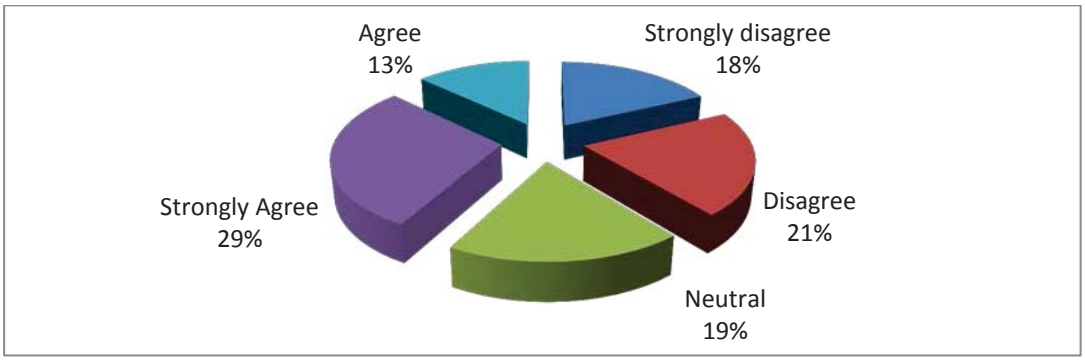


Figure V: Good reputation of the University

A male interviewee explained that:

> I can recollect my discussion with my friends about the stability of the institution's academic calendar when we were exploring universities to apply for admission. So, when the time came, I choose the University of Ilorin.

Similarly, another male student explained further:

> I got to know Unilorin for its steady calendar. It does not experience disruptions occasioned by cultists' activities or even industrial disputes at all. Before I applied to study Mass Communication here, I had a friend, in Medicine, who told me about the serenity of the environment as well as the good rapport between lecturers and students as compared to other universities across the country and that really heightened my interest to study at the University of Ilorin.

Another interviewee, who is an international student from Ivory Coast said:

> The image Unilorin has outside Nigeria is greater than most other universities in Africa. When I was looking for admission, I surfed the internet to get information on universities in countries like Kenya, Benin Republic, Cameroon and was opportune to interact with graduands of some of these institutions including the University of Ilorin. But graduands of the University of Ilorin proved to be real ambassadors of their institution. That served as a motivating factor for me to try the University.

A final year student, who shared a similar opinion corroborated that:

> When I wanted to enroll for a degree in Mass Communication, several universities came to mind. After serious discussions with friends and relations, I decided to augment the information I was yearning for by surfing the internet. In my estimation, what I learnt about the University of Ilorin surpassed other universities, outstanding as they might be. To me, its reputation as a stable institution that doesn't miss a session was the central consideration. So, I did not waste time to apply when the time came, and fortunately, here am I studying the course of my choice in my dream university.

On proximity, 59(31%) and 68(35%) respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively while 44(22%) were neutral that proximity was instrumental to their choice of the University. Eleven (6%) each however agreed and strongly agreed that proximity influenced their decision to study Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin.

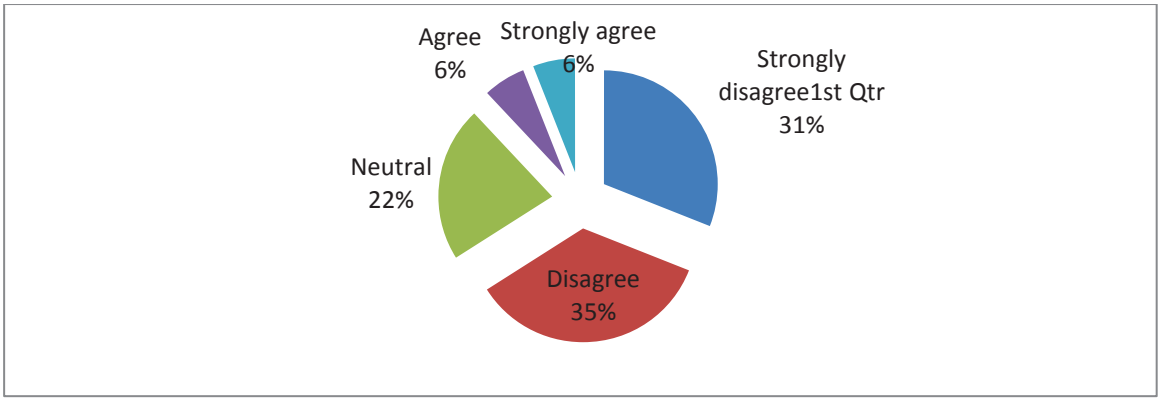


Figure VI: Proximity

In the case of availability of staff and facilities, 15(8%) and 31(25%) respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that availability of staff and facilities in the Department of Mass Communication served as pull factors. While 48(25%) were neutral, other 43(22%) and 56(29%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the array of staff and available facilities are responsible for their decision.

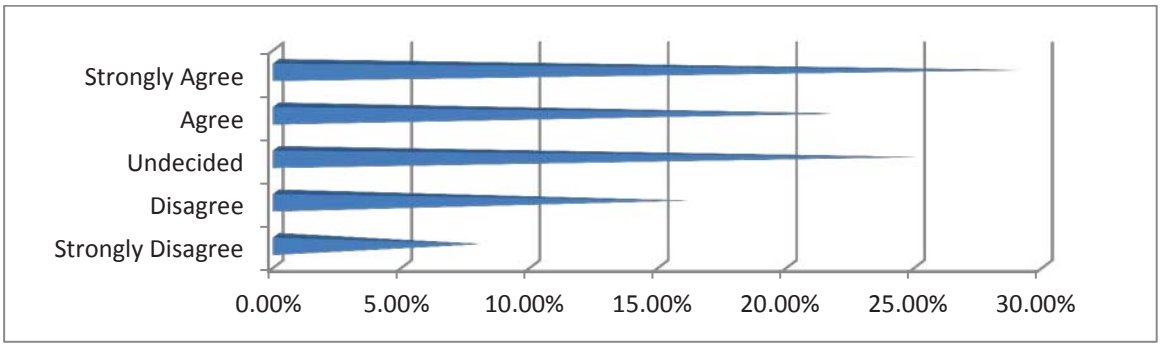


Figure VII: Availability of staff and facilities

To further probe into the issue of staff and facilities, respondents interviewed expressed almost similar views. A 300 Level student explicated that:

> Studying Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin is a pleasant experience. Apart from the peaceful environment which sharply contrasts high and incessant incidents of hostilities which are dominant features in other universities, the array of competent staff in the Department of Mass Communication are two of the plausible things worthy of note.

Corroborating what the above interviewee said, a first year student explained that:

> I never knew I would be missing this much if I was admitted in another department. The seriousness of numerous staff, their considerate stance, and eagerness to assist students are rare attributes that make one studying Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin pleasurable. However, much as the Department can boast of facilities, to my assessment, they are grossly inadequate. For example, there are no

printing facilities. Even though there is a vibrant radio studio, its Television studio counterpart is yet to be fully equipped. The same thing applies to the Editing Room. In the case of the Computer Laboratory and PRAD (Public Relations and Advertising) studio, they need serious upgrading.

RQ2: What are the effects of Studying Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin on students?

Four items in the questionnaire were used to answer this question. The first sought to know if respondents feel fulfilled studying Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin. Data showed that 21(11%) and 18(9%) respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed while 41(21%) were neutral. Sixty-four (33%) respondents, however, agreed that they feel fulfilled. Similarly, 49(26%) strongly agreed too that they feel fulfilled.

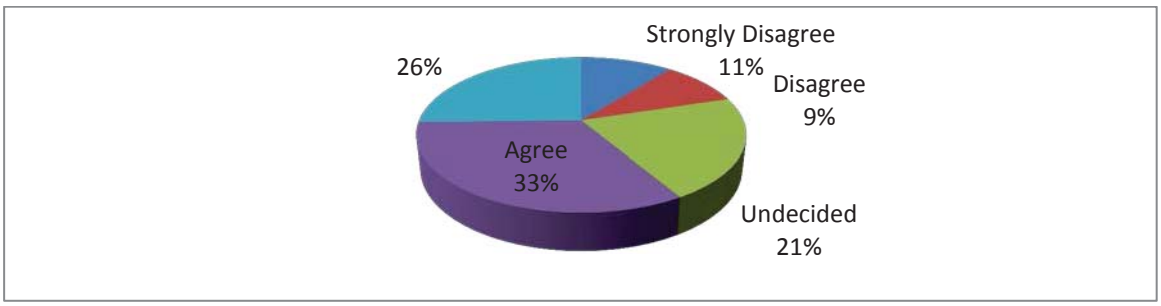


Figure VII: Whether respondent feels fulfilled as a student of Mass Communication

A 200 Level student explained that he felt fulfilled being a student of the Department. He stated categorically that:

> My decision to study Mass Communication is a fulfillment of my lifelong dream. As a pupil, I desired to be seen on the screen the world over and I felt studying Mass Communication was the key. This intention was reinforced when in my latter years as a youth, I came to realise that Mass Communication transcends appearing on the tube but more importantly to provide information capable of transforming society.

On whether respondents would advise other aspiring students to study Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin, 32(17%) respondents strongly disagreed. Similarly, 14(7%) also disagreed. However, 72(37%) and 60(31%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they would advise potential students to study the course at the University. Fifteen (8%) respondents were neutral.

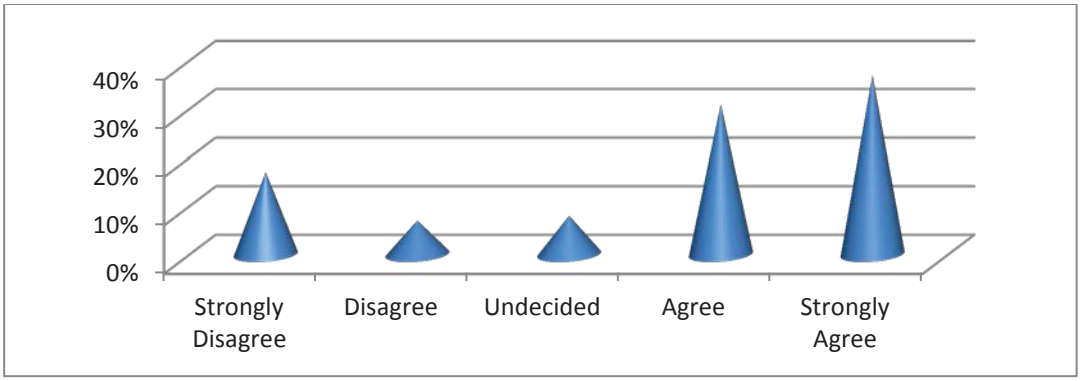


Figure IX: Advice to potential students to study Mass Communication at University of Ilorin

To further investigate whether respondents would encourage candidates seeking admission to study Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin, most of them responded in the affirmative. Another final year male student expressed his view thus issue:

> Why would I discourage any prospective students in the Department? Personally, I have no regrets what so ever studying Mass Communication here. Throughout my four-year stay in the Department, we have been exposed to a lot of things both in theory and practice. That is not to say, there have never been challenges here and there. But encountering challenges is just part of human existence which any rational person would acknowledge.

Moving away from the issue of advice was whether respondents cope with Mass Communication as a course of study at the University of Ilorin. Data showed that 11(6%) and 20(10%) respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively while 13(7%) were neutral. On the other hand, 94(49%) and 40(28%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they were coping with the course.

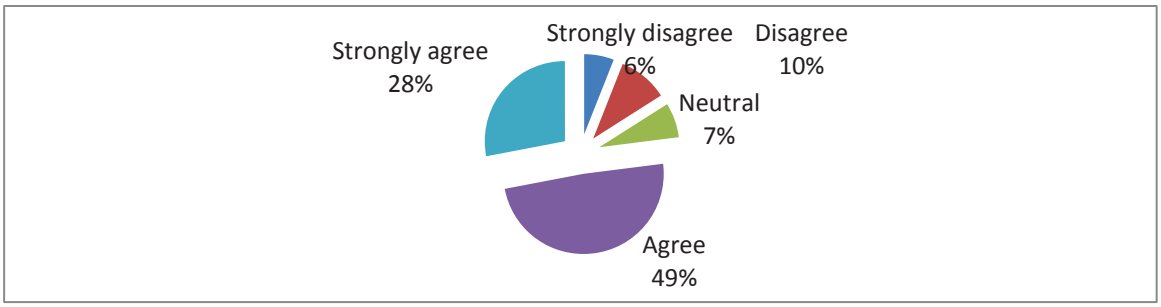


Figure X: Whether respondent copes with Mass Communication

When opinion of interviewees was sought, a male student in 200 level said:

> I would confidently say I am coping with my studies in the Department. Studying Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin is a pleasant experience. There is a favourable physical environment. But not just the physical environment, the social

> environment matters more. By this, I mean the cordial relationship between students and lecturers, particularly in the Department of Mass Communication, makes one enterprising.

Lastly, the study sought to know if Mass Communication is too demanding. Data showed that 22(11%) and 63(33%) respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that the course is demanding while 37(19%) were neutral. Forty-six (24%) and 25(13%) of them, however, agreed and strongly agreed that studying Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin is demanding.

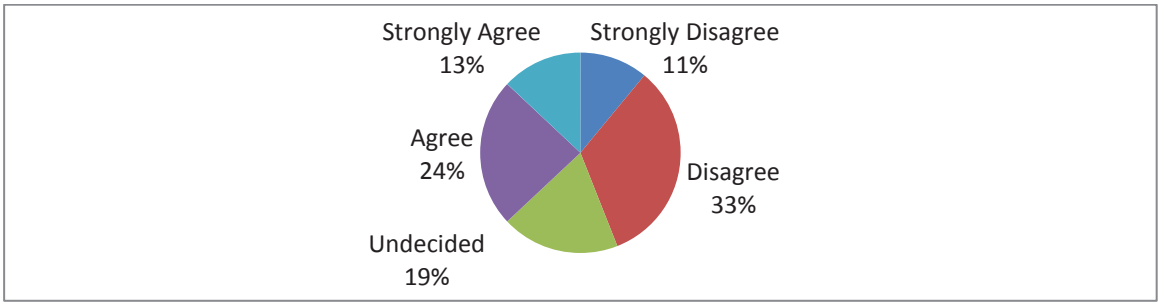


Figure XI: Mass Communication is too demanding

When interviewed for an in-depth explanation, a female 200level student explained that Mass Communication is a rigorous course which is contrary to what people who are not in the area may feel. Another informant corroborated the earlier view by stating emphatically that Mass Communication involves a lot of practical assignments.

Another student shared a contrary experience on the rigorousity of the course:

> To the best of my knowledge, the course is not demanding and I don't regret being a student in the Department of Mass Communication. I seldom hear my fellow students complaining about thoroughness, mounting assignments and things like that. But to me, these are normal things any serious student would expect… Okay, would one not complain if found in other courses like Law, Food and Nutrition, for example, where heavy financial burden is even tied to their assignments?

To further find out if informants would change their course of study if given the opportunity, another interviewee declared:

> No! No!! No!!! Given the opportunity, I would not change to another department. Reason is that it was out of my own volition to apply to study Mass Communication in the first place. Beside, I think the quality of teaching I receive justifies what is expected of a department.

Discussion of Findings

The data in this study have shown that various factors influence students' choice of course and institution. Findings further showed that more than half (58%) of respondents answered

in the affirmative that their decision was voluntary. Similarly, as many as 70% respondents disagreed that peer influence was instrumental in their choice of course and University of study.

When asked whether parental influence informed their choice, the majority (68%) disagreed that they are influenced by their parents. In the same vein, 42% of the respondents disagreed that they are influenced by job prospect as against 38% respondents who attributed their decision to job prospect. In the case of good reputation of the university, 42% agreed. This percentage is slightly above the 39% respondents whose response is on the contrary. The response of those who agreed that reputation is the compelling factor is further reinforced by one of the interviewees who said that *to me, its reputation as a stable institution that doesn't miss a session was a central consideration.* This confirms Gutman and Miaoulis'(2003) assertion that studies showed that an institution's good image can strongly affect students' preference for the institution. Contrary to Shanka, Quintal and Taylor's (2005) finding that the location of an institution has a significant influence on the choice of university, most respondents (66%) disagreed that their decision to study Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin is predicated on their proximity to the institution.

Noteworthy is the issue of competent staff and presence of training facilities in the Department. Data showed that as many as 53% respondents answered in the affirmative. One of the interviewees partially corroborated that *the seriousness of staff, their considerate stance, and eagerness to assist students are rare attributes that make one studying Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin pleasurable.* This validates findings by O'Mahony, McWilliams, and Whitelaw (2001), who declared that there was a general and consistent acknowledgment on the part of students that a university is not a homogenous entity. Rather it was seen to consist of a variety of attributes ranging from the reputation of the course and course content to the quality of facilities and services.

Regarding the implication of studying Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin, 59% respondents admitted that they feel fulfilled studying at the Department. This is echoed by one of the interviewees, who stated that *my decision to study Mass Communication is a fulfillment of my lifelong dream.* On whether respondents would advise other aspiring students to study Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin, 17% respondents strongly disagreed while 7% disagreed. However, 37% and 31% respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they would advise potential students to study the course at the University. This further finds expression in the words of one of the interviewees, who puts it rhetorically thus: *Why would I discourage any prospective student to come to the department?*

When asked if respondents were coping with the course, the majority (77%) agreed that they were coping with the course. In the case of whether respondents found the course too demanding, 37% respondents agreed contrary to 44% respondents who indicated that they do not find the course too demanding. The opinion of those who do not find it tasking is asserted by one of the interviewees, who noted that *to the best of my knowledge the course is not demanding and I don't regret being a student in the Department of Mass Communication.*

This is suggestive of respondents' drive and ability to fulfill their heart desire in conformity with value expectation theory. Wigfield and Eccles (2002) cited in Hood, Creed and Neumann(2012) underscored a fundamental assumption of the value expectancy theory that, expectancies focus on future success and, as such, are distinct from, although related to, ability beliefs, which focus on present ability.

Concluding Remarks

This study explored factors responsible for students' choice of a course of study and where to study it. Anchored on value-expectancy theory, the study operationalises on two research objectives. Findings showed varying degrees of responses from respondents on the various factors that influence decisions students make for their course of study and institutions. The study concludes that rather than peer influence, parental influence and location of the institutions; reputation, staff, facilities and personal decision are the primary factors responsible for the decision students take concerning their choice of course and where they wish to study it. It, therefore, recommends certain measures that could inform students' decision to study any course in an institution of learning.

Recommendations

i. Since students' decision to study Mass Communication at the University of Ilorin is voluntary, it is recommended that they should take into consideration the expectations of both themselves and their parents to excel in their dreams in an increasingly competitive higher education environment.
ii. Arising from the fact that job prospects are one of the least factors that motivates students to study Mass Communication, the study recommends enhanced remuneration, diversification and improved jobs environment relating to Mass Communication. This will serve as a push factor for the study of Mass Communication.
iii. Against the backdrop that good reputation plays a role in students' choice of University of Ilorin, management of the institution should build on existing standards they are known for to remain the toast of both parents and students.
iv. The study recommends that students should not base their decision on proximity but rely on quality assurance occasioned by competent staff and facilities. This recommendation is meant to reinforce response obtained in the study that respondents' decision to study Mass Communication is not based on nearness and quality of knowledge imparted unto students.
v. It is also recommended that students should remain committed and dedicated to their studies. This is against the backdrop of findings that most respondents do not find the course too demanding and are able to cope with their studies. In the case of few respondents whose response is, on the contrary, it is recommended that in taking a decision as to what and where to study, students should make a holistic consideration of all that is required to study a university programme.

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