

Nigerian **Journal** **of Educational** **Administration** **and Planning**

Vol. 18, No 3, 2018

SUPPORTED BY:



PROJECT 2018



Trends of Universities Candidates' Choice of Course Between 2014 and 2016

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Abstract

Admission into Nigerian universities has become a serious competition in recent times and likewise the choice of course of study. This paper examined the trend of universities candidate's choice of course between 2014 and 2016. The paper specifically looked into the most preferred and the least preferred course of choice between the stipulated period. All these were presented in tables. It was discovered that faculty of social sciences has the highest number of applicants while the faculty of pharmaceutical science has the least applicants within the periods reviewed. It was therefore concluded that between the period of 2014 and 2016, faculty of pharmaceutical and social science had the least and highest number of applicants into Nigerian universities respectively. It was recommended that proper career guidance should be given to the admission seekers during their secondary education period into universities to avoid further lopsidedness in the choice of courses into universities.

Key words: Trend, Universities, Candidates and Choice of Course

Introduction

Education can generally be viewed as formal, semi-formal and informal. Informal education system saw to it that guardians or parents inculcated into their wards or children values and norms, and also teach them handcraft occupations which in turn become their career. University education is an important level in the learning process; it is a critical component of human development and provides high-level skills necessary for every labour market. Knowledge accumulation and application have become major factors in economic development. Hence, students' choice and decision making in higher education has gained greater attention because higher education has become

competitive and market-oriented. Higher education enables individual to expand their knowledge and skills, express their thoughts clearly, grasp abstract concepts and theories, and increase their understanding of the world and their community. University education helps economic development of the country, which has the potential of enhancing the productivity of the nation.

Universities are of crucial importance for developing the intellectual capacity of individuals so that they can contribute to the national development after undergoing high level relevant manpower training (Tian, 2009). The importance of higher education can be judged from the manner it benefits a person financially, emotionally, socially, and intellectually. The decision to enrol for a particular course in higher institution is extremely important in the individual's life because during these university years one's future career is being built. Accordingly, education empowers man to perform in a justly, skillfully and satisfactory manner in whatever capacity he finds himself. Amoor and Aliyu (2014) further assert that it is a process of leading and initiating people to acquire necessary skills, facts, knowledge, habits and attitudes that will make them co-exist with others as useful and productive members of the society.

Career choice for most people is a lifelong process that individual uses for employment opportunities and to make a living through work professionally. According to Caparara (2001), each person undertaking the process of career choice is influenced by many factors, which includes; personal aptitudes, educational attainment of the parents and the context in which they live. In early days of human civilization there was no problem in making a choice of a career but nowadays industrialization and globalization with its consequences (positive and negative) shifted the paradigm and the need for course choices and selection for specific benefits hold sway in determining one's class state and role ascription/performance in the society (Ayuk, 2012). It became possible to monopolized a field if one had skills and knowledge since the polity and economy is becoming more knowledge based (Zoldsoki, 1996). This according to Ayuk (2012) more pressure on adolescent to make choices in respect to course of study which Erickson in Obidigbo (2004) asserts, marks a major turning point in the child's choice he or she makes in school, which he calls "a stage of identity and role confusion". This period defines the success or failure in one's life; because it is at this stage an adolescent discovers what his or her roles and skills are best suited. Edward (2006) argued that proper selection

leads to identifying and charting a noble course but failure leads to truancy, nonconforming attitudes, delinquency etc.

Choices that people make related to their course can be categorized to be influenced by two factors that are psychological and social. Social factors are part of an individual's social bonds, their parents, family, history and other characteristics of their environment. Psychological factors can be an individual's perception, cognitive and effective intentions, beliefs, ideas, personality and assessments related to forthcoming business environment (Ozen, 2011). Different inquiries on the life of the students have come up with different findings. The results of a quantitative study conducted in central Pennsylvania by taking rural young adults and adolescents as respondents indicated that influence exerted by an individual's family, society, state of economy, their interpretation of better job and financial constraints were major reasons that can impact their course selection (Ferry, 2006). A systematic review of 600 articles published in 2003- 2013 of low-income countries conducted by Puerto's EB (2013) determined intrinsic factors amongst medical students (age, sex, rural background) and extrinsic factors (salaries, governmental institutions, medical institutes reputation, training techniques) influence a medical student's decision to choose a career in primary care; and to establish that some factors were different among students in high-, middle- and low-income countries. The factors influencing this process differ from one individual to another, but there are also several factors common for many individuals. According to Domino, Libraire, Lutwiller, Superczynski, & Tian, (2006) and Yamamoto (2006) parents have a great influence on their sons' enrolment at university. The author Ming (2010) has referred to the factors of institutional nature that influence the student's decision making process and has identified various independent variables such as: the location of the university, the study programs, the reputation of the higher education institution, the existence of different educational facilities, the level of the tuition fees, the employment opportunities, the employed promotion, the promotion by university representatives, the possibility to visit the campus, the possibility to obtain scholarships.

Generally, it has been observed that many children of early age choose what their career choices are, but at the later years their motives changes. Some of these students make these choices at tender ages, others while in school and the last group, after college. Often times community and family view choice of course as a start to workplace

readiness, however, this plays a defining point in establishing adolescent in career path that opens and close opportunities. Also young adults through interaction with the context of family, school and community learn and explore university courses that ultimately lead to career choice. Hence, every candidate's choice of course made is aimed at improving the individual's resolve in the quest to contribute to societal enhancement and to better him or her while professionally finding comfort, motivations and happiness. This paper therefore aimed examining the trends of university candidates' choice of course between 2014 and 2016.

Statement of the Problem

The decision to enrol for the courses in higher institution is extremely important in the individual's life. The quality and variety of academic programmes are part of the issues raised as having a moderating effect on student decision to choose a course to study because during these university years one's career is being built. Therefore, individuals evaluate several alternatives offered by the university. Many youths make wrong choices in respect to career all over the world and indeed Nigeria due to ignorance, peer pressure, role models as well as prestige attached to certain careers without adequate vocational guidance and career counselling (Salami, 2004). And when this happen they become irrelevant in their departments, as such choice for them unwittingly expresses dissatisfaction and their value needs unattained; consequently, seriousness, truancy and frustration take the shine of them.

Ayuk (2012) observed that, an individual who ultimately do not contribute meaningfully to the society is "somewhat" a product of wrong career/course choice and unearned investment to himself, his family and a liability to the nation. Equally, Palmer (2005) maintained that adolescent indeed, should be guided to make course choices but not coerce by parents or any inducing factor that the individual is indisposed. When students make wrong choices without considering such requirements as self-discipline, dedication and longer length of time, the result would be that, the students find it difficult to meet up with the demands of these courses which may lead to academic frauds, like cheating in the examination and impersonating in all academic endeavour.

Several studies on candidates' choice of carrier have been carried out in Nigeria and across the globe. For example, Ahmed, Shariff and Ahmad (2017) carried out a study on factors influencing students' career choices. Zotorvie (2016) also investigated determinants of career choice among students of institute of chartered accountants, Ghana. None of these studies looked at trends of university candidates' choice of career in Nigeria. This paper aimed at finding out the trends of university candidate's choice of course between 2014 and 2016.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the trends of university candidate's choice of course between 2014 and 2016. Other specific purposes include;

- a. examining the trend of university candidate's choice of course based on gender between 2014 and 2016.
- b. ascertaining the most preferred choice of course among candidates to Nigerian Universities between 2014 and 2016.
- c. ascertaining the least preferred choice of course among candidates to Nigerian Universities between 2014 and 2016.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to pilot this study:

- a. What is the trend of university candidates' choice of course in Nigeria based on gender between 2014 and 2016?
- b. What is the most preferred course of choice among candidates seeking admission in Nigerian Universities between 2014 and 2016?
- c. What is the least preferred course of choice among candidates seeking admission in Nigerian Universities between 2014 and 2016?

Methodology

This study was a descriptive survey of expo facto which sought to examine the trends of University admission seekers between 2014 and 2016. The trend was limited to all candidates that sought for admission in all Nigerian Universities between 2014 and 2016. The data used for the study was a secondary data that were gotten from the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) office. The data collected was considered to be valid and reliable as the source was from the body that regulate admission into Universities in Nigeria.

Results

Research Question 1: *What is the trend of university candidates' choice of course based on gender in Nigeria between 2014 and 2016?*

Table 1

Trend of University Candidates' Choice of Course Based on Gender between 2014 and 2016

Case Summaries				Female		Male	
Year				Freq	%	Freq	%
2014	Faculty	Administration		85792	12.51%	76389	8.58%
		Agriculture		17740	2.59%	17650	1.98%
		Art		58938	8.60%	60232	6.76%
		Education		47163	6.88%	35124	3.94%
		Eng/Tech		21151	3.09%	186529	20.94%
		Law		45296	6.61%	42857	4.81%
		Medicine		160823	23.46%	109284	12.27%
		Sciences		88378	12.89%	146742	16.48%
		Social Sciences		160299	23.38%	215870	24.24%
		Administration		26974	18.52%	26666	12.81%
2015	Faculty	Agriculture		2635	1.81%	3875	1.86%
		Art		13378	9.19%	10058	4.83%
		Education		8973	6.16%	7291	3.50%
		Eng/Tech		4911	3.37%	35288	16.96%
		Environment		2134	1.47%	16702	8.03%
		Law		11064	7.60%	11481	5.52%
		Medicine		25271	17.36%	22161	10.65%
		Pharmacy		1152	0.79%	1198	0.58%
		Sciences		20801	14.29%	34560	16.61%
		Social Sciences		28319	19.45%	38805	18.65%
2016	Faculty	Administration		68375	10.88%	67422	8.47%
		Agriculture		15118	2.41%	14873	1.87%
		Art		36456	5.80%	33303	4.18%
		Education		39204	6.24%	28064	3.52%
		Eng/Tech		35718	5.68%	183704	23.07%
		Law		45293	7.21%	40760	5.12%
		Medicine		159081	25.31%	107188	13.46%
		Sciences		86305	13.73%	133754	16.80%
		Social Sciences		142900	22.74%	187110	23.50%

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Table 1 shows the trend of university candidates' choice of course based on gender in Nigeria between 2014 and 2016. Responses in table 1 indicated that out of 685,580 females' applicants in the 2014, 12.51% (85,792) selected administration, 2.59% (17,740) of the applicant selected Agriculture, 8.60% (58,938) choose Art, 6.58% (47,163) education, 3.09% (21,151) - Engineering, 6.61% (45,296) - Law, 23.46% (160,823) - Medicine, 12.89% (88,378) - Sciences, 23.38%

(160,299 - Social science. Hence, it was observed that majority of the female applicants selected Medicine followed by Social Science and so on.

Also, the result shows that out of 890,697 Male applicants in the 2014, 8.58% (76,389) selected administration, 1.98% (17,650) of them selected Agriculture, 6.76% (60,232) of them chose Art, 3.94% (35,124) - education, 20.94% (186,529) - Engineering, 4.81% (42,857) - Law, 12.27% (109,284) - Medicine, 16.48% (146,742) - Sciences, 24.24% (215,870) - Social science. Hence, it was observed that majority of the Male applicants selected Social sciences followed by Engineering and so on. Meanwhile, responses in the table, result shows that out of 628,450 females' applicants in the 2016, 10.88% (68,375) selected administration, 2.41% (15,118) of the applicant choose Agriculture, 5.80% (36,456) of the respondent chose Art, 6.24% (39,205)- education, 5.68% (35,718)- Engineering, 7.21% (45,293)- Law, 25.31% (159,081)- Medicine, 13.73% (86,305)- Sciences, 22.74% (142,900) - Social science. In the year under review indicated that majority of the female applicants selected Social sciences followed by medicine and so on.

Furthermore, result shows that out of 796,178 Male applicants in the 2016, 8.47% (67,422) selected administration, 1.87% (14,873) of them selected Agriculture, 4.18% (33,303) of them chose Art, 3.52% (28,064)- education, 23.07% (183,704)- Engineering, 5.12% (40,760)- Law, 13.45% (107,188)- Medicine, 16.80% (133,754)- Sciences, 23.50% (187,110) - Social science. The above table show a detailed account of the trend of choice of course based on gender from 2014 and 2016.

Research Question 2: What is the most preferred course among university admission seekers in Nigeria between 2014 and 2016?

Research question 2 was answered using the data presented in table 1. From the data in table 1, the most preferred course among university admission seekers in Nigeria between 2014 and 2016 was social science because it has the highest number of applicants on average.

Research Question 3: What is the least preferred course among university admission seekers in Nigeria between 2014 and 2016?

Table 2

Trend of University Candidates' Choice of Course in Nigeria between 2011 and 2016

Faculty	Years	Average Number of Applicants
Administration	2014	162,181.00
	2015	53,640.00
	2016	135,797.00
	Total	117,206.00
Agriculture	2014	35,390.00
	2015	6,510.00
	2016	29,991.00
	Total	23,963.66
Art	2014	119,170.00
	2015	23,436.00
	2016	69,759.00
	Total	70,788.33
Education	2014	82,287.00
	2015	16,264.00
	2016	67,268.00
	Total	55,273.00
Eng/Tech	2014	207,680.00
	2015	40,199.00
	2016	219,422.00
	Total	155,767.00
Environment	2015	18,836.00
	Total	18,836.00
Law	2014	88,153.00
	2015	22,545.00
	2016	86,053.00
	Total	65,583.66
Medicine	2014	270,107.00
	2015	47,432.00
	2016	266,269.00
	Total	194,602.66
Pharmacy	2015	2,350.00
	Total	2,350.00
Sciences	2014	235,120.00
	2015	55,361.00
	2016	220,059.00
	Total	170,180.00
Social Sciences	2014	376,169.00
	2015	67,124.00
	2016	330,010.00
	Total	257,767.66

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

Table 2 shows least preferred course among university admission seekers in Nigeria between 2014 and 2016. The table indicated that the least preferred course among university admission seekers in Nigeria between 2014 and 2016 was Pharmacy because it has the least number of applicants on average.

Conclusions

Based on the findings made in this study, the following conclusions are therefore made that;

1. Faculty of social sciences has the largest number of applicants into Nigerian universities between the year 2014 and 2016.
2. Faculty of pharmaceutical science has the least number of applicants into Nigerian universities between the year 2014 and 2016.
3. There is lopsidedness in the candidate's choice of course into Nigerian universities between the year 2014 and 2016.

Recommendations

In the light of findings and conclusions made in this study, the following are recommended that:

1. There should be proper career guidance for candidates seeking admission into university to enable them have a better understanding of the prospects in each of the courses in the university in relation to their potential in studying these courses.
2. Candidates should be encouraged to seek for studying other courses that available in the university aside social sciences courses provided they have what it take to study them.

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