

Gender Equality and Choice of Career: A Case Study of Tertiary Institution Students in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the gender equality and career choice among the students, using tertiary institution in Oyo town as a case study. Primary method of data collection was adopted in which 150 respondents from two tertiary institution (i.e., EACOED and FCES) were used. Simple percentages and chi-square analytical method were adopted to analyze the data gathered. The findings revealed that gender equality has significant relationship with student choice of career. It was also revealed that differences in gender has significant effect on the student choice of career. It is therefore recommended that both male and female students of tertiary institution should be given the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections without any form of discrimination. Also, tertiary institution should organise an orientation programme for the student seeking admission prior to being admitted to the school in order to assist and enlighten them in their choice of career.

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Introduction

Beyond reasonable doubt, one of the most controversial challenges facing the youth (student) of nowadays is the issue of gender equality and career choice. Gender equality means that women and men and girls and boys enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections (Wikipedia contributors, 2021). Investments in gender equality contribute to lifelong positive outcomes for children and their communities and yield considerable inter-generational payoffs, as children's rights and well-being often depend on the rights and well-being of women.

The process of making a choice is complex and unique for each individual depending on cognitive factors and the social structure of the individual's milieu. In career planning programmes, career choices are tentative from the standpoint that practically every choice involves some doubts about the credibility of the chosen career and the possibility that it can be successfully carried out over a little time (Irene & Nuhu, 2012). The choice of career involves a lot of deliberations as some factors must be considered in order to avoid future obstacles.

According to socioeconomic development worldwide, there is an increasing of new career alternatives (e.g. Information Technology (IT) jobs, data analyst/scientist) (Landry, Mahesh & Hartman, 2005). This seems like people have more career options than they did in the past. However, their career choice may be limited by gender bias. The perceived gender inequality in employment opportunities can block individuals from choosing their preferable choice. The previous research found work-related differences between males and females (Gilbert, Burnett, Phau & Haar, 2010). This means gender inequality in career choice still exists. Both males and

females may perceive that they are expected to do particular types of work in which they do not really need to do. Their career chances are possibly blocked by the perceived gender bias.

Gender inequality in career choice may be caused by gender role perceptions among people (Wesarat *et al.*, 2016). Ordinarily, women were expected to be more accountable for household duties. As time passed, the perceptions of gender role have been changed. Men's household responsibilities have increased in recent years (Huffman *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, gender equality in choosing a career is the main focus of this paper because it influences a person's career decision. One of the reasons for the lack of job applicants in some areas may be derived from cultural beliefs about gender (Correll, 2001). Moreover, gender inequality in our society could affect individuals' career decision. Males and females might value different factors related to career choice (such as intrinsic and extrinsic factors). This paper aims to study how gender equality has influence the career choice of tertiary institution Students in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine how gender equality has influence the career choice of tertiary institution Students. Specifically, this study was intended to analyzed the following:

- Whether there is a significant relationship between gender equality and student's choice of career.
- To examine the effect of sex differences on student choice of career.

Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis to be tested were:

H₀ 1: There is no significant relationship between gender equality and student's choice of career.

H₀ 2: Differences in sex does not have any effect on student choice of career.

Literature Review

Unal Tarhan and Koksall (2018), examine re-service teachers' profession perceptions within the context of gender using word association test technique and to identify the definition of the concept of "profession" depending on sex. The study was designed as a qualitative research and involves 250 pre-service teachers. Descriptive analysis method is used for analyses of the data. The results shows that the first profession pre-service teachers mention in their sentences about the concepts of "women and profession" is "teacher", whereas it is "worker" for the concept of "men and profession". Also, the study shows that professions that require university education among professions female pre-service teachers consider appropriate for women are teacher, nurse, doctor, lawyer, psychologist, engineer, pharmacist and architect.

Mesquita and Lopes (2018) analyse the perception that higher education students have about themselves and the degrees they have enrolled. More specifically, they analyse the gender stereotypes that persist within themselves and their perception about the assumed affinity between gender and areas and professions. The study follows a quantitative methodology approach, using a questionnaire for data collection. Students from six degrees in different areas participated in the study (social work, nursing, teacher training, engineering – informatics and mechanics and sports). There seems to exist an image of man and woman associated with some degrees and professions. Although all of the students assume a complete freedom of choice for

enrolling higher education degrees, the options seem to be determined by social and gender stereotypes and also by professional stability.

Tinu and Adeniji (2015) examines gender influence on job satisfaction and job commitment among Colleges of Education lecturers. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. The sample consisted of thirty male and thirty female lecturers from Osun State College of Education, Ila-Orangun. Questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data. Two null hypotheses were postulated and the data collected were analysed using t – testing at 0.05 level of significant difference on job commitment among Colleges of Education lecturers based on gender. The study recommended that equal employment opportunity should be given to both male and female lecturers.

Irene and Nuhu (2012) investigated gender as a factor in the career choice readiness at senior secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State. Samples were drawn from two senior secondary schools. A 20 items questionnaire was administered to the respondents. Data were analyzed using Chi-square. The main findings revealed that male and female secondary school students differ greatly in their career choice readiness. Other findings indicated that majority of the respondents have not reached the degree of readiness which permits commitment to a particular vocation or career.

Tariq, Tayyab and Jaffery (2018) study the differences in empathy levels of Medical Students based on gender, year of medical school and career choice. The objective of the study is to measure mean empathy scores of Pakistani medical students and to explore any association of empathy scores with gender, medical school year and future career choice. Cross-sectional survey design was used. The study was carried out in Shifa College of Medicine, Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University, during the academic year 2015-2016. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze student demographic data. Independent samples t -test was employed to check the significant differences between genders. Empathy score with advancing year of study was investigated using ANOVA. ANOVA with post-hoc Tukey's test was used to study the relationship between career choice and empathy score. The results show that the response rate was 70.94%. The mean score was 4.51 ± 0.69 . Females obtained greater, but statistically insignificant ($p=0.08$) empathy score (4.58) as compared to the male students (4.45). No statistically significant difference was seen between scores on the survey across the five academic years ($F=0.88$, $p=0.47$). Students who selected medicine and allied as career choice showed a significantly higher empathy score than those who opted for surgery. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was 0.78.

Godwin, Potvin, Hazari, and Lock (2016) investigated how first-year students' Mathematics and Physics identities and students' beliefs about the ability of science to improve the world predict choice of engineering as a career and whether these beliefs differ by gender. The result revealed that Mathematics and Physics identities are important for predicting engineering choice at the beginning of college. Recognition from others and interest in a subject are positive predictors of physics and math identities. Students' performance/competence beliefs alone are negative predictors of engineering career choice but are mediated by interest and recognition from others. Student identities and agency beliefs are significant predictors of engineering career choice, explaining 20% of the variance. We also found gender differences in students' Mathematics and Physics identities and agency beliefs.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The study uses a descriptive survey research design. The target population from which the sample was selected consisted of all tertiary institutions' students in Oyo State. However, two tertiary institutions were purposively selected. The participants for this study were tertiary institutions students randomly drawn from the two schools situated within Oyo, Oyo State in Nigeria. The two purposively selected schools were Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo and Federal College of Education, Special, Oyo. The choice of this group of participants was based on the assumption that majority of the students in the tertiary institutions falls within these adulthood stage of development (18 and above) which implies that they are preparing to enter the world of work.

Data Analysis

The sample frame for this study, that is, the total number of students in the tertiary institutions in Oyo town over which the results of this study can be generalized. The sample size used for this study was 150. The data was run with the computer programme SPSS/PC. The Simple percentage and Chi-square test were used to test the hypothesis.

SECTION A: Personal Data of the Respondents

Table 1: The Socio-Demographic Information of the Respondents

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Tertiary Institution		
Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo	75	50
Federal College of Education, Special Oyo	75	50
Total	150	100
Sex		
Male	67	44.67
Female	83	55.33
Total	150	100
Age		
Below 20 years	23	15.33
21 – 25 years	59	39.33
26 – 35 years	57	38.00
Above 35 years	11	7.34
Total	150	100

Field Survey, 2021

Table I shows the socio-demographic statistics of the respondents (i.e. students). It shows that 75 respondents are selected from the two tertiary institutions (EACOED and FCES) in Oyo town of Oyo state which are of 50% each of the population. There were more females 83(55.33%) than males 67(44.67%) that participated in the study. The age profile of the respondents was such that 23(15.33%) were within the age bracket of 20 years and below, almost majority of the respondents 59(39.33%) were between the age bracket 21-25 years, 57(38.00%) were aged 26-35 years, while 11(7.34%) of the respondents were 35 years and beyond.

Test of Hypothesis

Table 2: H_0 I = There is no significant relationship between gender equality and student's choice of career.

Group	Mean	Level of significance (%)	Degree of Freedom	X^2 - Cal	X^2 - Tab	Remark
Agreed	62.28	5	6	14.119	11.070	Reject the H_0
Disagreed	87.72					
Total	150					

Field Survey, 2021

Result Analysis

The analysis showed X^2 - Cal value to be 14.119 and X^2 - Tab valued to be 11.070. Since the X^2 - Tab 11.070 is less than X^2 - Cal 14.119, we therefore reject the null hypothesis (H_0) that there is no significant relationship between gender equality and student's choice of career, and we accept the alternative hypothesis (H_i) which states that there is significant relationship between gender equality and student's choice of career.

Table 2: H_0 2 = Differences in sex does not have any effect on student choice of career.

Group	Mean	Level of significance (%)	Degree of Freedom	X^2 - Cal	X^2 - Tab	Remark
Agree	65.74	5	5	13.268	11.070	Reject the H_0
Disagree	84.26					
Total	150					

Field Survey, 2021

Result Analysis

The analysis showed X^2 - Cal value to be 13.268 and X^2 - Tab valued to be 11.070. Since the X^2 - Tab 11.070 is less than X^2 - Cal 13.268, we therefore reject the null hypothesis (H_0) that differences in sex does not have any effect on student choice of career and we accept the alternative hypothesis (H_i) which states that differences in sex do have significant effect on student choice of career.

Discussion of Findings

In order to analyse and discuss the findings on the gender equality and choice of career among tertiary institution students in Oyo town, two research hypotheses were drawn.

The research hypothesis one determines whether there is a significant relationship between gender equality and student's choice of career. The study reveals that there exists a significant relationship between gender equality and choice of career among tertiary institution students in Oyo town. Also, it was observed that gender bias among tertiary institution student has something to do with their choice of career. Some of the respondents believe that male and female students do not enjoy the same rights and privileges when choosing their career.

The research question two examined the effect of sex differences on student choice of career, and findings reveal that sex differences has significant effect on student choice of career. There were some courses in which male student were more than female student, such as 'Home Economics department' and 'Fine & Applied Art department'. It was also revealed that some departments were male dominated, while some were dominated by female students, this simply means that student career choice (profession) depend on their gender. Agricultural science and Technical department are among those departments that are mostly male student while Primary Education Department (PED) has majority of student to be female.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the discussion of findings stated above, we concluded that gender equality has significant relationship with student choice of career. Also, gender differences have effect on choice of career of tertiary institution students in Oyo town.

On this note, it is therefore recommended that;

- The male and female students of tertiary institutions should be given the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections without any form of discrimination.
- Tertiary institutions should organise an orientation programme for the students seeking admission prior to being admitted to the school in order to assist and enlighten them in their choice of career.
- Irrespective of the course or department, there should be fair and just selection among the two sexes when offering admission, as this has to do with their future.
- Government should encourage the student by eradicating the problems of gender bias in their recruitment as this will go a long way in assisting the tertiary institution in their choice of career.

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