

Career Information Sources among Mass Communication Students of Select Higher Institutions in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the career information sources among students of Mass Communication in select Nigerian universities and polytechnics. The study adopted quantitative survey research method to gather data from 11 sampled public higher institutions across Nigeria. Focus was on the final year B.Sc. and HND students of public universities and polytechnics that pioneered Mass Communication programmes in the six geo-political zones of the country. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in analysing the data. The findings indicate that Mass Media, Internet, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Lecturers were the primary sources of career information for the students. Guidance and counselling services, parents and library resources were not very significant sources for career information among the students. The study concludes that mediated communication channels are vital sources of career information among the students of Mass Communication in Nigeria, and recommends that key stakeholders of Mass Communication education system in Nigeria should utilise more of the potentials of the mass media, Internet/ICTs and lecturers in communicating relevant career information to the students of Mass Communication in Nigeria.

Keywords: Career, Information, Sources, Students, University, Polytechnic

Introduction

Globally, higher educational institutions play significant role in providing career guidance and counseling services to the students. Academic programmes in institutions of higher learning are designed to train professionals that will occupy important positions in various professions in the labour industry.

The main aim of all higher education programmes on journalism and mass communication in Nigeria is to provide a professional training for manpower career development in all the mass communication areas of specialization (NBTE: 1989, NUC/BMAS: 2007). According to National Universities Commission (NUC) B.sc Mass Communication programme is designed; “to offer an undergraduate professionally oriented programme for aspiring Nigerian journalist, communicators, broadcasters, public relations and advertising practitioners” (NUC/BMAS, 2007, p.108). Also, National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) stated the goal of Higher National Diploma (HND) programme in mass communication in Nigerian polytechnics and other similar institutions is;

aimed at giving students a high level technological education in furtherance of professional careers in the mass communication industry. The knowledge and skills acquired would enable graduates to work in various areas of mass communication such as newspaper, magazine, radio, television, public relations, advertising, news agency, book publishing, film making, and government and corporate information services (NBTE, 1989, p.2).

The foregoing are the major professions available to mass communication graduates in Nigeria, although individuals may decide to build their career outside communication industry. The various level of learning and training process that students of mass communication pass through in Nigerian higher

institutions prepares them to acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them to choose a career among various communication professions.

Students of Mass Communication in Nigerian universities and polytechnics rely on variety of sources for career information that will enable them to make an informed decision on the kind of communication career they intend to choose after graduation. Information refers to “to messages used as the basis for decision-making” (Hoffmann, 2007: 153). This study examined the sources of career information of the final year undergraduate students of mass communication in Nigeria public universities and polytechnics.

Statement of the Problem

The major mass communication professions which are available to mass communication students in Nigeria to build their career around them include the following: journalism, broadcasting public speaking, creative writing, public relations, advertising, film production and book publishing. These professions emerged and developed in Nigeria at different times and perspectives. Adequate information is a basic requirement that will enable students to make informed decision on the kind of career they intend to choose after graduation from tertiary institution. The main sources of career information for the students of mass communication in Nigeria includes: mass media, library resources, internet and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), lecturers, parents, and guidance and counselling services. However, existing empirical literature on the career issues among students of mass communication in Nigeria have indicated that very few studies was conducted and most of them focused on gender representation on career interest of the students (Emenyeonu, 1991, Okunna, 1992 and Ashong & Batta, 2011, Ali, 2010, Diyo, 2015). Also, very few have examined an aspects of the sources of career information of the students of mass communication in Nigeria. Therefore, this study intend to fill the literature gap.

Research Questions

The study sets out to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the sources of career information by the students of mass communication in Nigeria?
- 2) What are the sources of career information among University and Polytechnic students of mass communication in Nigeria?

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Ajiboye (2007) conducted a study on university undergraduate’s student’s information seeking behaviour in Botswana. The findings indicated that academic information is the major kind of information required by the students with (64.1%) and the main source of the information is through internet with (54.4%) of the respondents. Also, level of study, course of study, and gender of the respondents have significant influence on student’s information seeking behavior. The study concluded that provision of information technology facilities in universities is a vital step for improving quality of higher education in Africa. Therefore, a concerted effort for the provision of ICTs facilities is required in African universities and make it accessible to the students.

In a comparative study was conducted by Petters & Asuquo (2009) on the awareness of occupational and labour market information among in – school youths in Calabar. The findings indicated that only (37.00%) and (48.00%) of the secondary school and university students respectively were aware of the concepts of occupational information. The study revealed that university students were more aware of the labour market trends than secondary school students with (40.00%) and (30.00%) of the respondents respectively. Also, friends/classmates and parents happen to be the most vital sources of occupational information with (65.00%) and (58.00%) of the respondents respectively. The study concluded that school

counselors should be alerted to their responsibility of providing occupational information to students at both secondary and university levels.

Research have shown that lack of high quality higher education training and information on labour market and industry contribute in reducing the quality of graduates produce by higher institutions as revealed by a study conducted by Ramakrishnan & Yasin (2011), on employment issues among Malaysian information and communication technologies graduates and graduating students. Toward identifying the causes of unemployment among Malaysian graduates of information and communication technologies. The study use quantitative and qualitative research approach and the sample were drawn from graduates and current undergraduate students of a public university. The findings identified several factors that are related to the unemployment issues among Malaysian ICTs graduates. The study discovered that mismatch of qualifications with employers needs as the first factor causing unemployment among ICTs graduates in Malaysia. Majority of the graduates strongly agreed that inadequate experience is the major reason with (mean = 1.08) followed by capacity to communicate fluently in English (mean = 1.94), than lack of interpersonal skills (mean = 2.93) and lack of ICT proficiency with (mean = 3.73). Moreover, majority of the fresh graduates stated that lack of ICT proficiency contribute the most to the unemployment with (mean = 1.64), followed by capacity to communicate fluently in English (mean = 2.50), than lack of interpersonal skills with (mean = 2.93), and few of the respondents strongly disagree with lack of experience as the cause for unemployment with (mean = 3.43). This shows that the graduating and graduates students of ICTs view this issue from different perspective.

Lack of demand and supply of information on labour market is another factor for unemployment among Malaysian ICTs graduates, as identified by the majority (89.19%) of the graduating and (87.1%) of the graduates students. Also, lack of students exposure to the real job market because of the disparity between institutions and industry, was identified by the majority (60.14%) of the graduating and (88.71%) of the graduates of ICTs students, as the factor causing unemployment. Lack of proper career guidance information was identified by the respondents. Majority (62.84%) of the graduating students stated that they choose their course based on their friends advices and only (4.39%) choose a course based on institution advice, and only (1.21%) of the graduates chose a course based on institutions advice. Lack of soft skills such as communication, management and leadership skills was identified by the respondents as the cause of unemployment among Malaysian graduates of ICTs. The result of soft skills testing shows that majority (mean = 3.03) are not confidants about their soft skills. While, (60.48%) of the graduating students strongly agreed that soft skills are important in securing a job in the labour market. Also, (50.40%) of the graduates students were not confident with their soft skills before they graduated.

Moreover, lack of exposure to real job market by the courses they offered was identified by graduate's students as the cause of unemployment. Only (27.42%) of the graduate students agreed that their university education curriculum are relevant to their present job, while (88.71%) agreed that they find difficulties in adapting themselves to the job they are doing as a result of poor exposure to the real job market. Another cause of unemployment identified by the respondents is lack of challenging course syllabus. Majority of the graduating students do not agree to the current mode of teaching and learning with (mean = 4.06), while the graduates students held similar view with (mean = 3.28) of the data analyzed. Moreover, (71.37%) of the graduates and (68.15%) of the graduating students strongly agreed that the students are memorizing huge theories rather than exploring and acquiring new information on the latest development in related to their ICT courses. Industrial training and internship was identified by the respondents as one of the factors that will contribute in enhancing the quality of ICT graduates in Malaysia. Majority (66.53%) of the graduate's students agreed that the industrial training supposed to be at least six month gaining experience in the relevant organization. Also, (85.48%) strongly agreed that internship training is very important in broaden the understanding of the student by enhancing their awareness about the world they are leaving.

Students' attitude to life was also identified by the respondents as the cause of unemployment among Malaysian ICTs graduates. Majority (65.73%) of the graduates stated that graduates are not committed to face challenges and risks in the society. The quality of lecturers and curriculum was also identified as a factor by the respondents. Majority (64.92%) of the graduates strongly agreed that higher institutions should look in to the background and skills of the academic staff in their respective institutions, In order to maintain the quality of knowledge delivery. Also, (87.90%) stated that for the institutions to succeed in the 21st century, the students need to be self-directed learners. Finally, teacher centered mode of higher education was identified by the respondents as the factor that reduces the quality of Malaysian ICTs graduates. Majority of the graduating students strongly agreed that their higher institutions are teacher centered not student centered. While majority (94.35%) of the graduates agreed that their learning environments were also teacher centered. The study concluded that the present students and graduates of ICTs in Malaysia are not certified with the standard of teaching and learning in their universities. As there are several factors that are causing unemployment problem among the graduates. Therefore, immediate action should be taken by the higher institutions to improve the curriculum and other learning infrastructure. In order to produce well trained graduate in to the labour market.

Entrepreneurship education was incorporated in to the Nigerian higher education curriculum in 2004 in an attempt to influence the career aspirations of the students, toward alleviating the problem of unemployment among graduates. This policy is making a gradual impact on the students. In a study conducted by Ekpoh & Edet (2011) on entrepreneurship education and career aspirations of tertiary education students in Akwa Ibom and Cross Rivers states. The study was conducted in two universities of the two states, to identify the impact of entrepreneurship education on career intentions of the students. The findings indicated the career aspirations of the respondents where (29.6%) preferred employment, (21%) preferred employment and part time business, (15%) preferred further studies and part time business. This implied that most of the graduates prefer to be in employment of others. Also, on the level of skills the students acquire at the end of entrepreneurship course. Majority (47.2%) of the respondents said they acquire moderate skills, while (28.8%) high skills and (24%) low skills. This shows that entrepreneurship courses can contribute in enhancing the student's level of skills on entrepreneurial activities. Moreover, the study was carried out with the following two hypothetical statements to test the student's gains on entrepreneurship education and barriers for stating their own business.

The benefit of entrepreneurship education to student is not significantly high. The result discovered that the calculated t-value of 30.314 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.65 at 0.05, level of significance with 499 degrees of freedom. This implied that the benefit of entrepreneurship education to students is significantly high. Thus, the entrepreneurship education is creating awareness on entrepreneurial activities.

Students perceived barriers to starting a business venture are not high. The result discovered that the calculated t-value of 6.443 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.65 at 0.05 level of significance with 499 degrees of freedom. This implied that a student perceived barriers to business startup is significantly high. This means there are factors that are militating against starting up a business by the students. The study concluded that the introduction of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities is creating a positive impact on the students.

Sometimes student's experiences a condition of indecision where they are expected to choose a particular career in their life. There are several factors that are related to career indecision as revealed by the study conducted by Talib & Aun (2009), on predictors of career indecision among Malaysian undergraduate students. Four Malaysian public universities were selected for the study to determine the level of academic achievement, career identity and the predictive factors of career indecision. The findings shows that majority (66.2%) of the respondents have moderate level of academic achievement with the mean score ($m = 2.99$ $SD = .446$). Also, majority of the respondents have high level of vocational identity with

mean score ($m = 26$, $SD = 3.53$). However, the result indicate low occupational information among majority of the respondents with the mean score ($m = 4.24$, $SD = .634$) resulting in high career barriers with a mean score.

Moreover, the findings on career indecision showed that there is no significant relationship between age and career indecision among Malaysian undergraduates with ($r = -.029$, $p > .05$). Also, gender was significantly correlated with career indecision with ($r = -.156$, $p < .05$), as the t-test analysis indicated that there is a significant difference of career readiness among male and female undergraduates with $\{ + (.1159) = 5.39$, $p < .001 \}$. Female undergraduates showed higher career indecision when compared to male undergraduate students.

Similarly, the result discovered that academic achievement was significantly correlated to career indecision among undergraduates with ($r = 0.71$, $p < .05$). This implies that undergraduate's students with higher academic achievement have higher career indecision and less ready for a career. Equally, there is significant relationship between working experiences and career indecision among Malaysian undergraduates with ($r = -.076$, $p = .01$) and vocational identity was significantly correlated with career indecision among Malaysian undergraduates with ($r = -.339$, $p < .01$).

The result also, discovered that occupational information was significantly correlated with career indecision among Malaysian undergraduates with ($r = -.223$, $p < .01$). This implied that those who have adequate information on occupation and career are more decided in career choices and active in career decision. Also, career barrier and career indecision was significantly correlated among Malaysian undergraduates with ($r = -.199$, $p < .01$). Finally, controlling for gender, academic achievement, working experiences, vocational identity, occupational information and career barrier do not contribute significantly to career indecision among Malaysian undergraduates. The result discovered through multiple regression analysis of the factors indicates that gender (male = $1.B = -.105$), academic achievement ($B = .086$), vocational identity ($B = -.264$) and occupational information ($B = -.142$) to be the predictors of career indecision. Thus, vocational identity ($B = -.264$) was the strongest predictor of career indecision among Malaysian undergraduates students. The study concluded that educators should take the necessary majors to provide effective career information through career guidance and counselling services specifically to female undergraduates. This will help them in making informed career decisions. Also, the career guidance services should be structured to apply multidimensional approach in providing relevant occupational information to serve various needs of the students.

In a study conducted by King, Madsen, Braverman, Peterson & Yancey (2008) on career decision making perspectives of low income urban youth in Los Angeles area of United States. Focus group discussion method was used to collect data from 91 participant representing African American, Latino, and Asian ethnic groups. The participant stated that school resources had minimal positive contribution to their career decision, they perceived school counselors, teachers, as not doing anything to help them in choosing a career despite their presumed roles in career guidance and information provision. Secondly, parents and family were identified by the participants as very influential in motivating their career decisions. They emphasized the relevance of parents and family members work and career experiences provide insights into their possible options.

Thirdly, the mass media particularly television were mention by some of the participants as a source of indirect information about various careers. This is more common in areas such as sport and entertainment, where the viewers saw the practitioners as role models to them. Fourthly, the participants identified work experiences as very influential in their career decision making. The students who had previous work experience, it helps them to crystallize career path or eliminate possible consideration of some occupations. Fifthly, life experiences were also identified by the participants as an important source of career information and decision, that is normally achieve through encounter with the practitioners such as

medical doctors, lawyers, engineers e.t.c. Sixthly, peer influences was also identified by the participant as less important source for career decision, as majority prefer to hang out with friends rather than discussing concrete issues.

The seventh source of career decision influence identified by the participants is mentors and role models. They describe these as an important support and guidance that minimizes the risk of growing in a risky environment with several social problems such as violence, poverty, discrimination e.t.c. Finally, the perceived barriers to career and education were frequently mentioned by the participants as an obstacle to their career decision making process. Generally, the participants have indicated high interest in building a career on highly prestige profession, such as doctors and lawyers. The empirical studies reviewed above didn't focus specifically on all the main career information sources of the students examine by this study rather, focused on other related variables on career aspirations of the students, hence the need for this study.

The researcher adopted the Media Ecology Theory (MET) propounded by Marshal McLuhan as the framework. The theory focus "on the principles that society cannot escape the influence of technology and that technology will remain central to virtually all walks of life" (West & Turner:2010 p429)

Methodology

This study used a quantitative research approach. "It comprises of the communication research methodologies that were developed from a positivist, empirical social scientific approach to measurement" (Gunter, 2000, p.23). This study was carried out with a survey method of communication research. It is a research method used to gather information on opinion and views of people about various issues and events in the society (Rubin, Rubin, Haridakis & Piele, 2010, Gunter 2000, Wimmer & Dominick 2011, Gunter 2002). Questionnaire was adopted as a primary instrument of collecting data for the study. The population for this study is the entire final year students of B.Sc. and HND mass communication, in select Nigerian public universities and polytechnics. The purposive sampling type was adopted in choosing the institutions, while a systematic random sampling procedure was used to select the number of students that participated in the survey from each tertiary institution. Therefore, fifty percent (50%) of the total population was drawn as the sample population in each institution with 1:2 ratio. This provides the total number of one thousand one hundred and twenty five (1,125) final year students of mass communication from the eleven tertiary institutions, which constitutes the sample size of the population for the study.

The criteria used by the researcher for selecting the public universities and polytechnics were the study was conducted, was based on the pioneer or oldest institutions that started B.A / B.Sc & HND mass communication academic programmes in each of the six geo - political zones of Nigeria. Therefore, for the universities in the North East, North West and North Central geo-political zones, the study was conducted at the University of Maiduguri, Bayero University Kano and Benue State University respectively. While in the South East, South-South and South West geo- political zones, the study was conducted at the University of Nigeria Nsukka, University of Uyo and University of Lagos respectively.

Equally, the polytechnics were selected from the 19th edition of Directory of Accredited Programmes of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). Therefore, in the North West and Central geo-political zones the study was conducted in Kaduna Polytechnic and Federal Polytechnic Bida respectively. While in the South West, East and South geo-political zones the study was conducted at Moshood Abiola Polytechnic Abeokuta, Institute of Management Technology Enugu and Federal Polytechnic Auchi respectively. There is no polytechnic selected for the study from the North East. This is because, based on the information available in the 19th edition of NBTE directory of accredited

programmes, HND mass communication programme in Federal Polytechnic Bauchi is yet to be fully accredited.

Findings and Discussions

Table 1: Sources of Career Information among Students of Mass Communication

s/n	Items	Response category		N=
		Yes	No	
1	Guidance and counseling services	10.1%	90.0%	961
2	Parents	10.5%	89.5%	961
3	Library Resources	29.7%	70.3%	961
4	Mass Media	55.8%	44.2%	961
5	Internet & ICT	49.3%	50.7%	961
6	Lecturers	36.4%	63.6%	961
7	Others (friends)	5.5%	94.5%	961

The Table 1 above shows the various sources of career information of mass communication students in Nigeria. The findings indicate that the major sources of career information of mass communication students in Nigeria are the mass media (55.8%) , the Internet and ICTs (49.3%) and the lecturers (36.4%). Moreover, cross tabulations of the respondent’s institution of learning and major sources of career information has reaffirmed these findings. This is contrary to the findings of King, Madsen et ‘al (2008) and Peters & Asuquo (2009) that concluded the teachers, parents, family, friends and classmate are major sources of career information to students. However, it was in line with the assumption of Media Ecology Theory (MET) that media fix our perception and expectation on social reality in society. Also, in accordance with the findings of Ajiboye (2007) that internet is the major source of information among students of tertiary institutions

Table 2. – Cross Tabulation Summary - Institutions and Major Sources of Career Information

	University Students %	Polytechnic Students %	Total N / %
Career Information Sources	50.3% (483)	49.7% (478)	483 + 478 = 961 (100%)
Mass Media	56.7% Yes 43.3% No	54.8% Yes 45.2% No	55.8% 44.2%
Internet & ICT	46.7% Yes	49.0% Yes	49.3%

	50.3% No	51.0% No	50.7%
Lecturers	36.2% Yes	36.6% Yes	36.4%
	63.8% No	63.4% No	63.6%
Library resources	28.9% Yes	30.4% Yes	29.7%
	71.1% No	69.6% No	70.3%
Parents	16.1% Yes	5.0% Yes	10.5%
	83.9% No	95.0% No	89.5%
Guidance & Counseling services	11.3% Yes	8.9% Yes	10.1%
	88.7% No	91.1% No	89.9%
Others (Friends)	7.1% Yes	3.9% Yes	5.5%
	92.9% No	96.1% No	94.5%

Table 2 above presents the summary of cross tabulations of the respondent institution of learning and the major sources of career information. The data reveal that majority of the university and polytechnic students of mass communication receive career information through the mass media with (56.7%) and (54.8%) of the respondents respectively, while, those that do not receive career information through mass media are (43.3%) and (45.2%) for the university and polytechnic respondents respectively. The university and polytechnic students that receive career information through the Internet and ICTs are (49.7%) and (49.0%) of the respondents respectively, while those that do not receives career information through this source are the simple majority with (50.3%) and (50.2%) for the university and polytechnic students respectively.

The chi-square tests of the major sources of career information of mass communication students and their institution of learning has indicated that there is no significant difference between students institution of learning and sources of career information for the students. The P-values are (.550), (.820), (.903), (.595), (.218) and (.031) respectively. These are greater than (0.05). However, only one chi-square test result have indicated that there is a significant difference between institution and parents as a source for career information for the students as the P-value is (.000) which is less than (0.05).

Therefore, based on the data presented in tables 1 and.2 it's evident that the major sources of career information among students of mass communication in Nigeria are mass media, internet & ICTs and lecturers. Also, there is no significant difference between institution of the students and their main sources of career information: mass media, internet & ICTs and lecturers.

The outcome of the study on the sources of career information for mass communication students in Nigeria is a reflection of the social reality of our contemporary society. The choice of mass media as the first major source of career information by the students is connected to the fact that it is the main source of information to the students of higher institutions in Nigeria on varieties of issues that affect students. This is evident in the manner in which large numbers of students gathered in campus common rooms and other social centers to watch various local and international television programmes. Also, majority of the students possess radio set receivers which enable them to listen to various programmes from many local,

national and international radio stations. There are also other students that read many local, national and international newspapers and magazines from libraries and other sources. Moreover, the new trend of establishing in-house broadcast and print media outfit by the department of mass communication in Nigerian universities and polytechnics for effective training has to engage the students actively in the production and consumption of mass media messages for various purposes.

The identification of Internet and ICTs as the second major source of career information by the respondents can be viewed from the significance of Internet and multimedia communication systems in the academic and social life environment. Students use the internet and ICTs to access various academic resources such as journals, textbooks, and conference / seminar papers. Also, through the Internet they may utilize various social media platforms to interact with professionals, family and friends and access many mass media messages online. The Increasing availability and accessibility of the Internet services through mobile phones, modems and wireless services in many higher institutions in Nigeria has contributed positively in enhancing the level of Internet use among students.

The identification of lecturers as the third major source of career information by the students of mass communication in Nigeria can be discussed from the significant role of lecturers that teach and instruct students on various academic engagements in higher institutions. Thus, the students spend most of their time on campus with their lecturers. Therefore, students learn many things from the theory and practice of mass communication. Moreover, the indication of library resources, parents, guidance and counseling, and friends as the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh sources of career information by the students respectively. Reading culture is rapidly diminishing among the students that is why their attitude towards library is very poor, as many students go to the library only when assignment is given or during examination period. Again, the libraries in some Nigerian higher institutions are in a deplorable condition with outdated reading materials, inadequate furniture and lack of Internet facility for e-library.

Similarly, the vital role of parents as an important source of career information to the students of higher institution is very weak. As a result of modernisation and globalisation, the traditional African family life was abandoned and replaced with the predominantly Western popular culture. Therefore, in many families in Nigeria parents do not have enough time to discuss some vital issues like career prospects with their children. Hence, this makes it very difficult for the students to receive any information on career from their parents. Equally, guidance and counseling services is a very weak source of career information for students of mass communication in Nigeria. This was as a result of the poor condition of guidance and counseling services at both community and schools levels. In other word, in adequate guidance and counselling services in schools and communities have failed to provide the most vital career information needed by the students. Finally, friends as a source for career information to the students is very weak, as a result of the fact that very few of the Nigerian youth have adequate knowledge about career and labour industry that they can provide to their friends.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has established that majority of the students of mass communication in Nigeria received career information through mass media, internet and ICTs and lecturers. Equally, library resources, guidance and counselling parents and friends were very insignificant sources of career information among the students. Moreover, the same channels emerged as the major sources of career information among university and polytechnic students of mass communication in Nigeria. The researcher concluded that the main sources of career information for the students of mass communication in Nigerian universities and polytechnics are mass media and internet/ Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Therefore, it was recommended that the stakeholders of mass communication education system in Nigeria should utilise the significance of mass media, the internet/ICTs and lecturers in communicating relevant career information to the students of mass communication in Nigeria.

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