

# Choice of Career of Nigerian Polytechnic Students: a Case of Urban and Regional Planning Program

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**Abstract**—Despite initiatives to raise the enrolment of undergraduate students in Urban and Regional planning (URP) program, the recorded studentship is below expectation. The study explored the factors that are most influential in attracting undergraduate students to URP program in a Polytechnic. To achieve the aim of the study a research survey was conducted. The sample surveyed comprised of 100 students enrolled in the URP program in two Polytechnics in Lagos, Nigeria. A quantitative analysis was used for analysis of the data collected. The findings of the study indicate that alternative admission choice, awareness of career opportunities and personal interest was the most influential factors. The outcome of the study will assist educational policy maker in making evaluations and decision on student intake for the program.

**Keywords**— *Polytechnic, program, student, undergraduate, urban and regional planning*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital role in facilitating social and economic progress of a country. The fact that it helps in enhancing the functional and analytical ability of a nation, as it opens up opportunities for individuals and groups to achieve greater success. Also, well-educated labour force is essential for faster economic growth (Goel, 2009). The Polytechnics in Nigeria were established primarily to educate and train middle-man power to fit more into the tactical and operational management level in an organization. Most of these institutions strive to run programs that can contribute to the development of their immediate environment and the nation at large.

In recent times livable, sustainable and smart cities development is a concern for human settlement. The attainment of such cities necessitates the need for proper urban cities planning. Urban cities planning is the responsibility of all the tiers of government and other stakeholders, for the formulation and implementation of planning legislations and policies. One of the stakeholders among the built environment professionals that play major role in urban city

planning are the urban and regional planners. These professional's are educated and trained toward the management of the orderliness of the interaction of human and features within the built environment.

Despite the fact that, education and training of urban and regional planners is a mandate to be driven by any society that seeks after decency of human settlement. The enrolment into Urban Planning programs in tertiary institution in Nigeria is low as compared to other related built environment and engineering programs. The reduction in student's enrollment to undertake the URP program as affected the number graduates and URP practicing professionals. According to TOPREC (2015), the number of registered URP professionals practicing in Nigeria is less than 4000 with ratio 1: 50,000 to Nigeria citizenry population.

This ratio indicates the deficiency and grossly inadequacy of the URP professional practice in Nigeria, which have culminate to the total urban planning disorderliness in many urban cities in the country. The disorderliness such as wrong roads design, wrong traffic indicators, illegal construction and trading, non complain to planning policy and so on has put the Nigerian cities in a societal menaced. The resonance effects such as littering, flood, traffic jam, incessant building collapse were day to day experiences in urban cities like Lagos. Therefore, the shortage in studentship for URP program in tertiary institutions and practicing professionals require to meet the demand of the growing urban population is a critical issue to be addressed.

This study is to identify the factors that can influence student's choice of career in URP program in Nigeria using two Polytechnics as a case study. The paper was divided into four sections. The introduction section looks at the overview of the main issues of the paper. The second section is the literature review where previous studies were critically review, while the third section is the research method the section shows the procedure taken to analysis the data using quantitative process. The fourth section of the paper deals with the discussion of findings and conclusion of the study. The findings of the study are believed to assist education and policymaker in facilitating young generation interest in the program.

## Literature review

Human achievement is pilot by career choice and endeavors. A person career can influence and shape his/her world whether physical, psychological, spiritually or physiological. Career is a chosen area of endeavour pursued academically and professionally through one's life. Derr, (1986) and Arthur, Khapova, and Wilderom (2005) see career as a sequence of jobs that an individual engage in during his/her work history. Career can also be a measure one's social class (Barley, 1989) or as an individual's own sense of form with reference to subjectivity (Stebbins, 1970). Choice making is an act from a person mind. Ability to making a quality choice or decision is vital to human success, because every choice make have consequences. As crucial as choice making process is, it's subject to various factors.

Factors that could influence choice of career in any program include amongst other are individual location, background/ ethnicity, society, education, age, gender, experience, (Tang et al., 1999; Goyette & Mullen, 2006 ). However, factors that influences career choice according to Tang, Fouad, and Smith (1999) are hinged on self-efficacy which can be influenced by family acculturation, family socio-economic status, and family involvement . It is believed that a person chooses an occupation bearing in mind that he/she can excel in it. Making choice is actually not an easy task especially for a growing child. Most of the infant still need a lot of parental guidance to make quality decision on their future endeavour. The parental guidance is footing on the family values.

The society , socialization and peer groups can be a determinant of career selection. Brown (2002) acknowledged that social institutions and the society affect career choice. According to Brown's environment where the prospective student grow up and the people mingles with are career choice influencer. Also, the background of such prospective student as in the academic subjects offered in elementary and secondary school, affect the process of future career decision (Goyette & Mullen, 2006).

Individual endowment such as talent, personal motivation and skills relating to students' capability and characteristics can count as a yardstick for prospective student career choice in a chosen subject (Muggonzibwa et al., 2000; Floyd & Gordon, 1998; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). In fact, student personality was a significant career choice factors of high school students (Borchert, 2002). This mean that student's personal attributes determine choice for selecting success pathway.

Acheivement of people in a certain career can also influence decision making for career selection. Other people attainment that can motivate a young career

seeker to decide to pursue a career path through mentorship, role model influence, media inspiration, guidance and counseling has been identified by Muggonzibwa, et al., 2000; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1973).

Alexander et al.( 2011) compared factors affecting career choice between Students from computer science and other disciplines. They found that interest in the career field is vital and important for decision making. Furthermore, factors such as students' examination scores, self efficacy in science, knowledge of available careers, gender and school resource contexts affect students' choice of science streams (Kinyota, 2013). The results of Kinyota's study also reveal that a majority of students had relatively little knowledge of available careers and how they are related to subject choices.

Factors that attracts prospective students to career in construction management in the United State was also identified (Bigelow et al., 2015; Koch et al., 2009; Moore & Gloeckner, 2007). Koch et al.,2009) attest that students interest in construction management,were hand on activities and inside-outside work environment. But in the study of Bigelow et al. (2015), internship and career opportunities, father in industry and father taking to work were identified as factors that attract female undergraduate students to construction management program. Likewise, Moore and Gloeckner (2007) identified that family background and individual factors, environmental factors and experiences in education, and sociological factors are career choice influential for woman in constructin management from childhood to graduation stage. Nevertheless, career choice decision making process is complex, not static and no standard criteria can define the process (Moore & Gloeckner, 2007).

## Study Area

Urban Planning education in Nigeria is said to have dated back to the second part of the 20th century immediately after the Nigerian independence in 1961, specifically at The Polytechnic, Ibadan with National Diploma. Thereafter at Yaba College of Technology and Kaduna Polytechnic commenced in 1972 and 1973 respectively. Auchi Polytechnic started in 1974 and later Lagos State Polytechnic in 1978. This metamorphosed into Higher National Diploma and Full Professional Diploma in The Polytechnic Ibadan in 1974 and 1977 respectively (Al-Hasan, Shaka, & Olowjoba, 2013). Currently, many Polytechnics and Universities offer Town/Urban and Regional Planning or as Geography and Regional Planning as this depend on the background of the proponents in the Polytechnic or University.

The two Polytechnics considered for this study were Yaba College of Technology and Lagos State Polytechnic in Lagos, Nigeria. The two institutions were selected due to the fact that both were pioneer schools that started educating Urban and regional Planners in the country. Also, from Jamb records over the years the two institutions recorded the highest numbers of student's intake. Furthermore, they are the largest polytechnics in Nigeria with students and staffs population and with more accredited programs.

Yaba College of Technology located in Yaba, within Lagos mainland local government area, is believed to be the cradle of higher education in Nigeria. It was established in 1947 as an immediate successor to Yaba Higher College, and owned by the Federal government of Nigeria. The school mandate is to provide full time and part-time courses of instruction and training in technology, applied science, commerce and management programmes was conferred on the institution by Decree 23 in 1969. The school is comprised of eight faculties and thirty-four academic departments with a total of sixty-four accredited programmes, which cut across the national diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND) and Post-HND levels. The present student population is about 15,000, while the total staff strength is about 1,600 (<http://www.yabatech.edu.ng/about.php>). Town Planning started as a course in the school of environmental studies in the institution since 1972.

Lagos State Polytechnic is owned by the Lagos State government. The Polytechnic is located in Ikorodu North Local Council Development Area, within Ikorodu Local Government Area. The institution operates from three campuses (Ikorodu, Isolo and Surulere). The institution was established by Lagos State Edict No. 1 of 1978, and on August 1, 1978, the School of Agriculture in Ikorodu was merged with the institution and the merger formed the nucleus of the present-day permanent site at Ikorodu. The Polytechnic operates six faculties namely: School of Management and Business Studies, School of Engineering, School of Environmental Studies, School of Applied Science, School of Agriculture, and School of Technology. The institution has a staff of over 964 (teaching and non-teaching), a large student population, comprising 6,030 full-time and over 12,000 part-time students and fifty-two accredited programmes in thirty-six academic departments across the various schools. The Polytechnic awards two classes of degree ordinary national diploma (OND) and higher national diploma (HND). Town and Regional Planning as a course in the school of environmental studies started in 1979.

## Research Method

A variety of methods are used to assess the factors that influence career choice. Koch, Greenan and Newton (2009) utilized questionnaire survey to

identify factors that influence students' choice of careers in construction management in the United States. Also, Bigelow et al. (2015) used a similar approach to investigate the most effective factors in attracting female

undergraduate students to construction management. However, it is important to note that the choice and adequacy of a research approach depends on the research problem (Wing et al., 1998).

In conducting the present study, the process entailed 2 major steps: comprehensive literature review: This was conducted to identify factors that influence the choice of career in URP program from previous research. Also, questionnaire surveys were used to collect data on the factors influencing career choice in URP program. The questionnaire instrument contained two sections i.e section A and B. Section A consists of questions on respondent information and pre tertiary institution experienced such as What is the name of your institution?; What is your age range?; What is your gender?; Indicate your education level; Did you enter the Polytechnic immediately after your secondary school?; Have you been employed before enrolling to study; Have you been involved in any Urban Planning related work or services before admission into the Polytechnic?; Would you have studied another course apart from Urban & Regional Planning?; Are you interested in the course afterwards?; Give your opinion on how to improve the career choice in Urban and Regional Planning. Section B contains 24 items/variables (i.e. factors that influence career choice in URP) on a Likert scale. For each item on the questionnaire, a five-point Likert scale was used, ranging from '1 = No influence to 5 = Highly influence'.

In order to have a broad spectrum of participation in the survey, 210 questionnaires were distributed to URP students in the two institutions using stratified random sampling. Out of the 210 questionnaires distributed, 100 were received and valid for further analysis, in which 56% of the respondents were from Lagos State Polytechnic while 44% were from Yaba College of Technology. This consists of 20% ND I, 34% ND II, 18% HND I, and 28% HND II students. In relation to gender, the survey indicates that 62% male and 38% female students participated. Respondents' age shows that 16% were below 20 years and 84% were between 21-39 years old. The valid data were analysed with mean score to find the average tendency of the influence of the identified factors on career choice. Also, a T test was carried out to find the level of significance of the factors and a regression analysis was done to establish the relationship between the pattern of how the factors influence the choice of the students in the two Polytechnics.

## Results

The results of the study indicate that alternative admission option (3.62) is the most influencing factor that determines career choice of students. Also,

YabaTech students also agreed that alternative admission option (3.63) is the major reason for them been in URP, while LaspoTech students believe that is the second most influencing factors (3.61). Personal interest (3.58) ranked as the second influential factor. Entrance qualification requirement (3.33) and career job opportunities (3.20) ranked as the third and fourth

influential factors respectively. The result also show that the most influencing seven factors for the both school fall within same pattern.

**Table 1: Mean of factors that influence career choice of students**

| Factors the influence career choice of student's | YabaTech |      | Laspotech |      | Overall |      | Sig. |
|--|----------|------|-----------|------|---------|------|------|
|  | Mean     | Rank | Mean      | Rank | Mean    | Rank |      |
| Alternative admission option                     | 3.63     | 1    | 3.61      | 2    | 3.62    | 1    | 0.00 |
| Personal interest                                | 3.30     | 2    | 3.80      | 1    | 3.58    | 2    | 0.00 |
| Entrance qualification requirement               | 3.18     | 3    | 3.45      | 4    | 3.33    | 3    | 0.00 |
| Career job opportunities                         | 2.84     | 4    | 3.49      | 3    | 3.20    | 4    | 0.00 |
| Basic knowledge in drawing/design                | 2.64     | 5    | 3.22      | 5    | 2.96    | 5    | 0.00 |
| Hands-on type work activity                      | 2.58     | 6    | 3.20      | 6    | 2.93    | 6    | 0.00 |
| Inside/outside work                              | 2.52     | 7    | 3.13      | 7    | 2.86    | 7    | 0.00 |
| Work/volunteer experience                        | 2.48     | 9    | 2.89      | 9    | 2.70    | 8    | 0.00 |
| Role model achievement                           | 2.14     | 12   | 3.04      | 8    | 2.63    | 9    | 0.00 |
| Father influence                                 | 2.30     | 10   | 2.69      | 11   | 2.51    | 10   | 0.00 |
| Internship training                              | 2.52     | 7    | 2.45      | 19   | 2.48    | 11   | 0.00 |
| Mentoring  | 2.14     | 12   | 2.71      | 10   | 2.45    | 12   | 0.00 |
| Mother influence                                 | 2.20     | 11   | 2.49      | 17   | 2.36    | 13   | 0.00 |
| Work supervisor                                  | 2.07     | 15   | 2.57      | 15   | 2.35    | 14   | 0.00 |
| Career counsellor                                | 1.98     | 16   | 2.63      | 14   | 2.34    | 15   | 0.00 |
| Graduate friend                                  | 2.14     | 12   | 2.49      | 17   | 2.33    | 16   | 0.00 |
| Information on Internet/ social media            | 1.95     | 17   | 2.64      | 12   | 2.33    | 16   | 0.00 |
| Tertiary undergraduate friend                    | 1.81     | 18   | 2.56      | 16   | 2.23    | 18   | 0.00 |
| Community service                                | 1.61     | 22   | 2.64      | 12   | 2.19    | 19   | 0.00 |
| Secondary school teachers                        | 1.73     | 20   | 2.27      | 22   | 2.03    | 20   | 0.00 |
| Extended family                                  | 1.80     | 19   | 2.22      | 23   | 2.03    | 20   | 0.00 |
| TV or magazine adverts.                          | 1.53     | 24   | 2.33      | 20   | 2.02    | 22   | 0.00 |
| Awareness campaign program                       | 1.61     | 22   | 2.28      | 21   | 1.98    | 23   | 0.00 |
| Family business                                  | 1.72     | 21   | 1.98      | 24   | 1.87    | 24   | 0.00 |

The less influencing factors are secondary school teachers ( 2.03),extended family (2.03), TV or magazine adverts (2.02), awareness campaign program (1.98),and family business (1.87). The results of the T test for level of significance of each of the factors shows that all the factors are significance at  $p < 0.05$  according to Table 1.

The relationship between the two polytechnics was also established to have a strong positive relationship ( $R = 0.646$ ), while all the factors are predictors of the model for career choice in URP as shown in Table 2. The result indicated that there is a similar pattern of influence of the factors on the student choice of undertaken URP program in the polytechnics.

**Table 2: Regression analysis for factors influencing career choice in URP**

| Model | R    | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .646 | .417     | .175              | .45678                     |

## Discussion of findings

This study focuses on the factors that influence the career choice of polytechnic students in undertaken a URP program in Nigeria. A questionnaire survey was conducted in two selected institutions. Descriptive and inferential statistics was adopted for the data analysis. The finding of the study indicates that alternative admission option is the major reason why most of the students study URP. This is in contrast with most studies on career choice (Bigelow et al. 2015; Tang et al. 1999; Goyette & Mullen, 2006). The results also reveal that 73% of the students were not interested in undertaken the course. But found themselves in the program due to the fact that they just need admission by all means. They then decided to settle for the URP program. It was also recorded that 69% of the students confessed that they wished to study another course and not URP. That is why, entrance qualification requirement also ranked high as an influencing factors which is related and may leads to the alternative admission option. This is due to the fact that if a student's cannot meet the entrance requirement to programs like engineering and sciences, most tends to sort it out with, or transfer by the school admission committee to other programs with lower student enrollment like URP.

The issues of personal interest, career opportunities and basic knowledge of drawing and design counts as career choice influencer according to the students. But out of the respondents, 79% have not been involved in any URP related works or services prior to their admission and only 18% had a direct admission into the institutions. That is an indication that there is need to facilitate the level of awareness of the program to increase student's enrollment. Awareness campaign program is ranked as less influencing factor by the student. This means that the stakeholders need to enact activities and program to educate the young school leaver's about URP and its prospects.

All the factors are also significant, indicates that all are crucial factors that influence the career choice in URP in Nigerian Polytechnics. Furthermore, there is a strong positive relationship between the influencing factors of the students in the two selected polytechnics. That suggests that the students in the URP program in the two institutions were influenced with similar factors.

## Conclusion

Due to the deficiency and grossly inadequacy of the URP professional practice in Nigeria, which have culminate to the total urban planning disorderliness in many urban cities in the country. With low enrollment of students in URP programs. The study focus on to identify factors that can influence student's in career choice in undertaken a URP program. Two pioneer Polytechnics was selected in Nigeria. A questionnaire survey was conducted with stratified random sample.

The findings of the study indicated that the level of awareness of the URP program is very low. So, there is a need for stakeholders to facilitate the process of information about the program to the young secondary school citizenry. The information dissemination can be via mentoring, counseling and campaign. Also, the indication of alternative admission option is not healthy for the profession because majority of the undergraduates were not interested in the profession which will affect their practice life. The results of the study are generalisable to represent the Nigerian context of factors that make students to undertake URP program. There is a need for further investigation into the factors that affect career choice in URP in Nigeria considering more sample including the university and private tertiary institutions in the country accredited to run the program, and how the factors influence undergraduate academic performance.

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