

## Inherent and External Factors as Determinants of Specialization in Mass Communication

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### ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is to determine the intervening factors that are likely to influence the choice of area of specialization in mass communication including the print media, broadcast media and public relations and advertising among undergraduates of mass communication. Survey research design was used in the study with 221 participants as sample size drawn from a population of 496 participants. Findings indicate that some inherent and external factors influence career choice among undergraduates. To this end mass communication undergraduates, are expected to look out for personality traits that best signpost their inherent professional and intellectual capacity as well as positive environmental factors in making choice of career.

**Keywords:** Mass Communication, Specialization Undergraduates, Sequence.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Mass communication is a wide field of communication that involves the use of intermediaries as the mass media to reach target audience. The study of mass communication in most institutions of higher learning comes under other names as media studies, information and communication studies, and language and communication arts among other names. However this study focuses on universities that offer the course as mass communication. The broad nature of the field of mass communication makes it necessary for specialization in various areas of mass communication including print media, electronic media, public relations and advertising. Specialization forms the basis of professionalization which requires training in a formal institution over a period of time and in some cases belonging to a professional body. Professionalization and specialization according to Krishnan [2009: 26] is a process through which an activity becomes a means for people to make a living.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Making a wrong choice or venturing into an area of specialization that does not reflect a student's interest and ability may constitute academic problem for a student as he or she will have to struggle with courses he or she is not cut out for. This may eventually lead to academic failure leaving him or her unprepared to face challenges in the labour market and ultimately lead to professional incompetence.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives are to:

- ❖ Determine the influence of internal and external factors on mass communication undergraduates in choosing areas of specialization.
- ❖ \*Determine the ratio distribution of specialization preference among the sequence of print media, broadcast media, public relations and advertising.

### **Research Questions**

- ❖ \*What factors influence mass communication undergraduates in choosing areas of specialization?
- ❖ \*What is the ratio of distribution of specialization preference among the sequence of print media, electronic media and public relations and advertising?

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Available literature and empirical studies related to this study are reviewed with a view to relating the study with similar studies in specialization and career choice. This will bring to the fore the submission of scholars on the issue of specialization or career choice in the field of mass communication and other disciplines. Issa and Nwalo [2008] have observed that only a few undergraduate students in Nigeria usually apply to study library and information science as a first choice course. Many of those who are eventually admitted into the library schools came on account of their failure to secure admission to other preferred departments. This development tends to turn library schools in Nigeria into dumping grounds for candidates who could not be admitted to study their preferred courses. That the majority of prospective undergraduates choose to study this course only as a last resort is undesirable for the future of a profession as dynamic as librarianship especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Nigeria.

The implication of this is that most of them will not be fulfilled after graduation. Fitting into a job will be difficult. Giving their best will equally be difficult as they are not cut out for their course of study on which basis they will be employed. This further shows that some students study certain courses out of frustration, making the available desirable when the desired is not within their reach. In Nigeria, the observation by Issa and Nwalo, [2008: 3 ] is that many youths go into unsuitable careers out of frustration, due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers or as a result of the prestige attached to the course without adequate vocational guidance and career counselling. The findings of this study are not far from the reality on ground even among students of mass communication. This may account for reason why most media houses have more non professionals than professionals working as journalists. Some graduates of mass communication hardly fit in on the job because of lack of interest in practicing as professionals even when they have the certificate. The decision of such people on their course of study may have been influenced by factors apart from their personality which informs the interest of an individual in a course of study and sustains such interest in working as a professional in the chosen career after graduating from the university.

According to Purcell et al,[2008: xii], the decision to enter higher education and choice of higher education institution is influenced by both socio-economic and cultural factors. Parents' socio-economic background and experience of higher education had a clear impact upon whether a student decided to apply for higher education. Traditional applicant who had parents with experience of higher education are most likely to state that they had chosen to apply for higher education because it was the normal thing for someone like them to do with alternative not considered. These, mainly traditional applicants also appeared to have received carrier information and advice from the widest range of sources. The study which was the findings from the five future track survey of the class of 2006 applicants for higher education carried out in England showed that family influences was regarded both positively and negatively by applicants for higher education.

When family members had experienced higher education, they were able to offer useful advice. The study also revealed that older applicants were more likely to be embarking on clearly vocational courses, showing their more employment oriented approach to education but the younger applicants were most likely to be choosing non-vocation options. Getting a job has become the measuring standard in choosing a career in the face of unfavourable economic conditions particularly in developing countries of Africa and Asia. Some parents, guardians, teachers and career counsellors are more concern with what become of the students after graduation in terms getting a job rather than self - fulfilment, self- actualization and personal esteem of the students and the joy that goes with it. This position has in no small measure derailed most student from fulfilling their dreams and contributing to knowledge as they fail to do what they know how to do best robbing the world of genius in some areas of human endeavour who would have helped to discover the world more than what has been done. Some intellectuals may have been misdirected.

Some students gave reasons for their choices according to White (2007: 123-144) Some attributed their choice of preference of course of study to parental influence, influence from career counsellors, and influence from peer among other reasons. White (2007: 157) linked choices in career to sex. According to him, previous research in both compulsory and post compulsory education has found that students' choice of subjects and courses, as well as their vocational plans are strongly gendered and tend to correspond with traditional pattern of participation in both education and the labour market. He however sees the situation changing as more female now enrol for male dominant fields of study as medical studies. Fizer (2013: 1) in a research paper at the University of Ternerssee, indicated that the family is a major factor that influence the career choice of students. According to him, out of the 128 students surveyed in a study to determine factors affecting career choice of college students enrolled in agriculture, 27% chose family as the most important factor influencing their choice of major.

21% of the students chose a career in agriculture that is personally rewarding and 20% chose participation in agriculture clubs as the most important factors affecting their choice. other factors that influence students career choice as revealed in the findings of the study include passion, salary, past experience, race, gender role models including parents, teachers or and career counsellors, job opportunities, campus visit, friends. 89% of the 128 students in the study believe they will work in their area of study. 88% of them believe that there are good excellent opportunities in agriculture. 83% believe that their careers will make a positive impact on the world. Beside economic advantage which most people advance as reason for choosing a career, some parents and family decide on career for members of the family for the pride of it. Some others do so to keep what the family is known for.

In a cross sectional study by Gedde, Donald, Bodenz, Payman, James, Tielsch, Yunhee, Harry and Quigley in [2003: 125] among 222 graduating ophthalmology resident in the United States of America, to identify factors influencing graduating ophthalmology residents to pursue subspecialty training or a career in comprehensive ophthalmology, findings show a desire to acquire special skills, perceived prestige and a perceived predicted favourable job market were the primary factors that predicted subspecialty training in a multivariate analysis. Anticipated work hours and geographic (location) were major factors influencing a comprehensive ophthalmology career choice. They further revealed that exposure to role models during particular clinical rotations is strongly associated with medical students' choice of a clinical field for residency training. Life style issues also are of primary importance in the decision making process for medical students when choosing a specialty area.

Summarily, the findings show that financial issues, learning potential, perceived more favourable job market, and prestige, preferred practice setting /geographical location and residency training (mentoring research experience, Academic career aspirations (interest in an academic career and university versus non university practice type), life style issues (working hours) anticipated type of clinical practice (acquisition of special skills, challenging diagnostic problems, continuity of care , peer interactions, types of patient problems and working with new technology), timing of career decisions before, after onset of ophthalmology residency training) and gender were important in the decision to pursue subspecialty training in ophthalmology.

Borcher (2002: 35) in a research paper at the University of Wisconsin Stout Menomonie, USA adopted survey research to determine factors that determine career choice of college students. Findings from the study indicated that the decision by students to major in a particular career is informed by three key factors. These three factors according to him include environment, opportunity and personality. From the finding environmental factors including influence from external sources as parents, mentors, peer groups, teachers and counsellors are seen as important but not the most important factor when defining career. Economic opportunities in terms of available resources /fund to sponsor education and job opportunities in terms of getting good paid job on the chosen career is also seen as an important factor in choosing a career but not the most important. In all, the finding revealed that personality is the most important career choice factor. Splaver cited by Borcher (2002: 35) matched career with ability urging students to become familiar with their personality in order to guide their career choice. This naturally enables the individual blend into a career that will help him or her actualize self- fulfilment and attain set goals.

White (2007: 153) asserts that the occupational aspirations and expectation of the young people are a central concern as the extent to which the influence choices may increase our understanding of decision making process. So there is a strong relationship between the aspirations and expectations and their relationship to the choices made by the students. According to Hae, Young and Suran Lee [2013: 98] in a study carried out in South Korea to determine the influence of self- regulatory decision making on career choice, it was found that to make wise career decisions, an individual must take into account his or her own personal characteristics while examining the available information about the vocational world. Furthermore, the individual has to control various internal and external factors that can interfere with the decision-making process, such as a procrastinating tendency or a conflict with parents. Altogether, these activities could be interpreted as self-regulation, which comprises self- monitoring and self-control. Hence, an individual could benefit from the self-regulatory ability while choosing a career.

The research showed the significance of self-regulatory ability in career decision-making circumstances. Such abilities enable adequate career choices and consequently facilitate happiness with these decisions. The results also demonstrate the influence of self-regulated decision making on major-related career choice via major satisfaction, indicating the role of regulatory ability in choosing a satisfying academic field that can lead to related employment. This research has established a theoretical contribution to understanding the connections among self-regulated decision making, fit, and satisfaction with career path and with major-related career choice.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAME WORK**

Expectancy theory” is applied to guide this study.

### **Expectancy Theory**

The recognition of expectations and incentives in motivation has resulted in what is today known as expectancy theory. The assumption of the theory is that our behaviour is undertaken with the likelihood that the behaviour will lead to a good outcome and value of the set goals. It is assumed that, individuals are faced with challenges. Expectancies and values are expected to yield a motivational drive where the strongest motivation wins

Myers [1995: 556-557], citing Julian Rotter (1982) specifically believes that a person’s decision to engage in a behaviour is determined by two things. The first is what the person expects to happen following the behaviour and secondly the value the person places on the outcome. To Rotter as cited by Myers, [1995: 556] behaviour is determined not only by the kind of consequences called positive reinforcement but also by expectation that a particular behaviour will result in these consequences. Bernstein et al [2003: 534] who also cited Rotters [1982] illustrated the theory with this example; people spend a lot of money on cloths to be worn at a job interview because of two reasons. First; past learning leads them to expect that doing so will help get them the job. Secondly, they place a high value on the job.

Rotter according to Bernstein et al focused mainly on how expectation shapes particular behaviour and action in a particular situation. This theory is relevant to the study because it is obvious that expectations drive people into adventure. Likewise, a student is likely to choose a particular area of specialization base on his or her expectations. A mass communication undergraduate who expects to be connected to important personalities could do so through journalism as a platform to meet with such people. Also, those who expect glamour and fame could venture into public relations. Some mass communication undergraduates believe that going into advertising will lunch them into the corporate world and boast their income. It is possible to see such undergraduates, venturing into advertising

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The survey research method was adopted in this study. According to Wiseman and Aron (1970: 37) cited by Wilson (2008: 90) survey research is a method for collecting and analyzing social data via highly structured and often very detailed interview or questionnaire in order to obtain information from large numbers of respondents presumed to be representative of a specific population.

#### 3.2 Population

The total population of the study is 496 undergraduate students. The students are four hundred and three level undergraduate students of Kwara State University and Babcock University This is made up of 149 four hundred level undergraduate students and 167 three hundred level undergraduate students of Babcock University [316]. The others are 90 three hundred level undergraduate students and 90 four hundred level undergraduate students of Kwara State University [180].

#### 3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The study adopted the simple random sampling technique in selecting respondents to ensured that respondents have equal chance of being selected within the study population. It equally ensured that the sample size cuts across both male and female three hundred and four hundred level undergraduates of both Kwara State University and Babcock University that make up the study population.

YaroYamene’s formula cited by Owuamalam (2012: 110) was used to determine the sample size.

$$S = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$S = \frac{496}{1 + 496(0.05)^2}$$

$$S = \frac{496}{1 + 496 \times 0.0025}$$

$$S = \frac{496}{1 + 1.2375}$$

$$S = \frac{496}{2.2375}$$

$$S = 221$$

#### 3.4 Instrument of Data Collection

The questionnaire was used as instrument of data collection. The questionnaire was administered to undergraduate students to gather data from them on the factors that influence their preference of print media, electronic media, public relations and advertising.

#### 3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis is Descriptive Statistical Analysis. The frequency distribution table, simple percentage and chart were used to represent data.

#### 4. DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

##### 4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents data with tables, frequencies, percentages and charts.

**Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

| Variable | Frequency | Percent [%] |
|----------|-----------|-------------|
| Male     | 52        | 23.5        |
| Female   | 169       | 76.5        |
| Total    | 221       | 100.0       |

From Table 1, majority of the study participants were females 76.5%, n=169 while males had 23.5%. n=52 proportion of the study participants.

**Table 2 Distribution of Respondents by Age**

| Variable           | Frequency | Percent [%] |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Less than 20 years | 97        | 43.9        |
| Age 21-30          | 124       | 56.1        |
| Total              | 221       | 100.0       |

In table 2, the most represented age category was 21 to 30 years. 56.1%). n=124. While other remaining respondents who were between 21 to 30 years had 43.9%, n=97 representation (n=97).

**Table 3 Distribution of Respondents by Institution**

| Variable               | Frequency | Per cent[%] |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Babcock University     | 141       | 63.8        |
| Kwara State University | 80        | 36.2        |
| Total                  | 221       | 100.0       |

Babcock University students were more represented than Kwara State University with 63.8%, 36.2%, n=141 against 36.2%, n=80 as indicated in table 4.3

**Table 4 Distribution of Respondents by Level**

| Variable  | Frequency | Percent [%] |
|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Level 300 | 116       | 52.5        |
| Level 400 | 105       | 47.5        |
| Total     | 221       | 100.0       |

In this table, respondents who were in 300 Level were 52.5%, n=116 of the study participants while those who were 400 Level students constituted 47.5% , n=105 of the respondents.

Tables 5 to 15 illustrate the factors that mass communication undergraduates consider in selecting areas of specialization.

**Table 5 Personal Interest/ability and Choice of Area of Specialization**

| Variable          | Frequency | Percent[%] |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 148       | 67.0       |
| Agree             | 63        | 28.5       |
| Neutral           | 5         | 2.3        |
| Disagree          | 4         | 1.8        |
| Strongly Disagree | 1         | .5         |
| Total             | 221       | 100.0      |

In this Table, 67.0% strongly agreed that personal interest influenced their choice of career in mass communication. 28.5% agreed while 1.8% and 0.5% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively with 2.3% being neutral.

**Table 6 Ambition to Actualize Dream and Choice of Specialization**

| Variable          | Frequency | Percent[%] |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 115       | 52.0       |
| Agree             | 75        | 33.9       |
| Neutral           | 19        | 8.6        |
| Disagree          | 9         | 4.1        |
| Strongly Disagree | 3         | 1.4        |
| Total             | 221       | 100.0      |

Strongly Agree+ Agree is 85.9%, n= 190..Strongly disagreed and disagreed is 5.5%, n=12. While 8.6% , is neutral

**Table 7 Fame and Choice of Specialization Area**

| Variable          | Frequency | Percent[%] |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 49        | 22.2       |
| Agree             | 57        | 25.8       |
| Neutral           | 56        | 25.3       |
| Disagree          | 43        | 19.5       |
| Strongly Disagree | 16        | 7.2        |
| Total             | 221       | 100.0      |

From table 7, 48% (Strongly Agree + Agree= 106) of the respondents consider fame while 26.7% (Disagree + Strongly Disagree =59) do not consider fame in the choice of area of specialization in mass communication.

**Table 8 Financial Incentive/Expectation and Choice of Specialization Area**

| Variable          | Frequency | Percent[%] |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 41        | 18.6       |
| Agree             | 72        | 32.6       |
| Neutral           | 50        | 22.6       |
| Disagree          | 38        | 17.2       |
| Strongly Disagree | 20        | 9.0        |
| Total             | 221       | 100.0      |

On financial incentives and expectations, strongly agree+ agree=51.2%, n= 113 while strongly disagree and disagree is 26.2% , n=58. While others are neutral

**Table 9 Influence of Role Models on Choice of Specialization Area**

| Variable          | Frequency | Percent[%] |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 45        | 20.4       |
| Agree             | 70        | 31.7       |
| Neutral           | 46        | 20.8       |
| Disagree          | 38        | 17.2       |
| Strongly Disagree | 22        | 10.0       |
| Total             | 221       | 100.0      |

Strongly Agree+ Agree in table 9 is 52.1%,n=105 while strongly disagree and disagree is 27.2%, n=60

**Table 10 Peer Influence on Choice of Area of Specialization**

| Variable          | Frequency | Percent[%] |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 13        | 5.9        |
| Agree             | 32        | 14.5       |
| Neutral           | 28        | 12.7       |
| Disagree          | 63        | 28.5       |
| Strongly Disagree | 85        | 38.5       |
| Total             | 221       | 100.0      |

20.4%, n=45 strongly agreed and agreed to be influenced by peers while 67.0%, n=148 strongly disagree and disagree.

**Table 11 Encouragement by Lecturers in Choice of Area of Specialization**

| Variable          | Frequency | Percent[%] |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 10        | 4.5        |
| Agree             | 26        | 11.8       |
| Neutral           | 30        | 13.6       |
| Disagree          | 84        | 38.0       |
| Strongly Disagree | 71        | 32.1       |
| Total             | 221       | 100.0      |

Strongly Agree+ Agree is 16.3%,n=36 while strongly disagree and disagree is 70.1% , n=155

**Table 12 Career Counsellors and Choice of Area of Specialization**

| Variable          | Frequency | Percent [%] |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 16        | 7.2         |
| Agree             | 31        | 14.0        |
| Neutral           | 30        | 13.6        |
| Disagree          | 78        | 35.3        |
| Strongly Disagree | 66        | 29.9        |
| Total             | 221       | 100.0       |

Very few respondents agreed that career counsellors influenced their choice of area of specialization in mass communication. Strongly agree and agree is 21.2%, n=47 Strongly disagree and disagree is 65.2%144

**Table 13 Hope of Good Job and Choice of Area of Specialization**

| Variable          | Frequency | Percent [%] |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 70        | 31.7        |
| Agree             | 71        | 32.1        |
| Neutral           | 43        | 19.5        |
| Disagree          | 24        | 10.9        |
| Strongly Disagree | 13        | 5.9         |
| Total             | 221       | 100.0       |

The majority of the study participants agreed that hope of good job influenced their choice of area of specialization. Strongly agree and agree is 63.8%, n=141 while strongly disagree and disagree is 16.8%, n=37

**Table 14 Desire to Connect with Important Personalities and Choice of Area of Specialization**

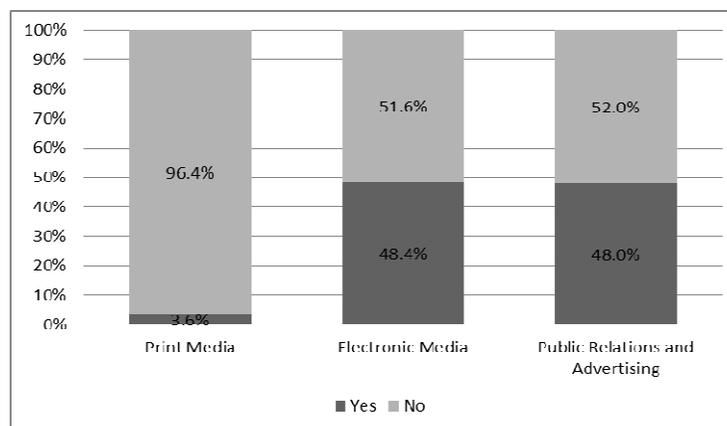
| Variable          | Frequency | Percent [%] |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 67        | 30.3        |
| Agree             | 77        | 34.8        |
| Neutral           | 34        | 15.4        |
| Disagree          | 28        | 12.7        |
| Strongly Disagree | 15        | 6.8         |
| Total             | 221       | 100.0       |

In 4.14, majority of the study participants, strongly agree and agree put at 65.1% ,n=144 agreed that the desire to connect with important personalities is considered before they select an area of specialization in mass communication. While strongly disagree and disagree put at 19.5%, n=44 disagreed

**Table 15 Parents/Family Influence on Choice of Specialization Area**

| Variable          | Frequency | Percent [%] |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly Agree    | 25        | 11.3        |
| Agree             | 32        | 14.5        |
| Neutral           | 27        | 12.2        |
| Disagree          | 63        | 28.5        |
| Strongly Disagree | 74        | 33.5        |
| Total             | 221       | 100.0       |

From Table 15, few respondents strongly agree and agree put at 25.8%, n=57 agreed that their parents/family influenced their choice of area of specialization in mass communication. 62.0%, n=137 disagreed.



**Figure 1: Ratio of Specialization Preference among Respondents**

Only 3.6% of the study participants indicated their preference for print media. While 48.4%, 48% respectively indicated their choice for electronic media and public relations and advertising

## **5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

From the descriptive statistical analysis, table 1 shows that majority of the study participants were females put at 76.5%, (n=169) while males had 23.5%, (n=52) proportion of the study participants. This shows that there are more females studying mass communication than males. Table 2 indicates that the most represented age category was 21 to 30 years (56.1%) while other remaining respondents who were less than 20 years had 43.9% representation. On the representation of participants in the study by institution, table 4.3 depicts that Babcock University students were more represented than Kwara State University (63.8%, and 36.2%) respectively. This is related to the proportional representation of respondents by institution. From Table 4, respondents who were in 300 Level were 52.5% of the study participants while those who were 400 Level students constituted 47.5% of the respondents. This implies that the respondents by level were almost equally represented in the study.

**Descriptive statistical analysis from table 5 to table 15 provides answer to research question one:**

### **What are the factors that influence mass communication undergraduates in choosing areas of specialization?**

In table 5, respondents indicated to a large extent that personal interest and ability made them to choose their area of specialization in mass communication (Strongly Agree and Agree=95.5%, n=211). This suggests that personal interest is a very important factor in the choice of area of specialization in mass communication. Purcell et al support this position noting that course of choices were related to applicant's personal characteristics and previous experiences. According to Hae, Young and Suran Lee [2013: 98] in a study carried out in South Korea to determine the influence of self-regulatory decision making on career choice, it was found that to make wise career decisions, an individual must take into account his or her own personal characteristics while examining the available information about the vocational world. Splaver cited by Borcher (2002: 35) matched career with ability urging students to become familiar with their personality in order to guide their career choice.

Similarly, majority of the study participants according to Table 6 agreed that ambition to actualize their dreams and attain one's full potential influenced their choice of area of specialization in mass communication (Strongly Agree+ Agree= 85.9%, n= 190). This means that undergraduates' ambition to actualize dreams is a major factor that is considered in the choice of area of specialization in mass communication. This factor aligns with Abraham Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs which according to Myers, (1995: 400) assumes that we are driven to satisfy our needs from the lower needs which are physiological needs of food, water, shelter, sex, and so on to the highest needs to live up to ones' fullest potential. According to Purcell et al [2008: xii], realizing their dreams and potentials was the most common reason for undergraduate choosing a career.

According to Table .7, fame is not a decisive factor considered by many undergraduates in the process of selecting an area of specialization in mass communication. A little below half of the respondents, (Strongly Agree + Agree=48%, n= 106) consider fame while 26.7% (Disagree + Strongly Disagree=26.7%, n=59) do not consider fame in considering the choice of area of specialization in mass communication.

From Table 8, a little above average of the study participants (Strongly Agree+ Agree=51.2%, n= 113) indicated that incentives/ expectation is considered in the choice of area of specialization in mass communication and not by a large proportion of them. This is in line with the expectancy theory with the assumption that what behaviour is undertaken depends on the perceived likelihood that the behaviour will lead to good and a subjective value of the set goal. In a study in the United State of America among Black/African American and White college students regarding future income, future status, and making a difference in society as influences on high school completion, college attendance, and career choice in the United States of America, Andrew, Saron and David [2007: 4] identified two significant differences between Black/African American and White college students. Black/African American college students indicated that future income and future status had a greater influence on their career choice than on the career choice of their White counterparts. Their finding revealed that American college students place a high value on income and financial independence.

Table 9 shows that role models influence a little above half of the study participants in the choice of area of specialization in mass communication (Strongly Agree+ Agree=52.1%, n= 115). This analysis suggests that not all mass communication undergraduates are influenced by role models in their choice of area of specialization in mass communication. Gedde et al [2003: 125] revealed that exposure to role models during particular clinical rotations is strongly associated with medical students' choice of a clinical field for residency training. Table 10 illustrates that peer influence is not a major factor that is considered in the choice of area of specialization in mass communication by undergraduates. This is because only 20.4% (Strongly Agree+ Agree, n= 45) of the study participants agreed that peer influence made them choose their areas of specialization in mass communication.

Table 11 depicts that lecturer's encouragement/influence is not considered by undergraduates in the choice of area of specialization in mass communication (Strongly Agree+ Agree=16.3%, n= 36). This suggests that undergraduates might not to a large extent take many of their lecturers to be role models whom they could emulate especially in the choice of area of specialization in mass communication. According to Table 12, very few respondents agreed that career counsellors influenced their choice of area of specialization in mass communication (Strongly Agree+ Agree=21.2%, n= 47). This means that career counsellors might not be given ample opportunities to influence the area of specialization of undergraduates in mass communication. According to Table 13, majority of the study participants agreed that the hope of getting a good job influenced their choice of area of specialization (Strongly Agree+ Agree=63.8%, n= 141).

This suggests that majority of undergraduates, select specific areas of specialization with the hope that it would get them a good job. In a cross sectional study by Gedde, et al [2003: 125] among 222 graduating ophthalmology resident in the United States of America, to identify factors influencing graduating ophthalmology residents to pursue subspecialty training or a career in comprehensive ophthalmology, findings show a desire to acquire special skills, perceived prestige and a perceived predicted favourable job market were the primary factors that predicted subspecialty training in a multivariate analysis.

Majority of the study participants from Table 14 (Strongly Agree+ Agree=65.1%, n= 144) agreed that the desire to connect with important personalities is considered before they select an area of specialization in mass communication. This analysis means that social capital is projected to be one of the gains of selecting specific areas of mass communication over others most especially specializations that are perceived by undergraduates to offer the chance to meet important personalities. From Table 15, few respondents agreed (Strongly Agree+ Agree=25.8%, n= 57) that their parents/family influenced their choice of area of specialization in mass communication. It is suggested from the analysis that majority of the study participants are given free hand to select their area of specialization in mass communication by their parents and family. These indications differs from the position of Alexander et al [ 2009: 1] in a survey research carried out in South African on 1,868 students to determine factors that influence their career choice.

The researcher came up with result that over 60% agreed that external advice influence the career choice of students including advice from friends and family members and those who work in similar career. According to Purcell et al [2008: xii], career choice starts from the background of parental influence; the level of education and social exposure of students' parents and guardians plays a dominant role in building their careers. Fizer (2013: 1) in a research paper at the University of Ternersee, indicated that the family is a major factor that influence the career choice of students. According to him, out of the 128 students surveyed in a study to determine factors affecting career choice of college students enrolled in agriculture, 27% chose family as the most important factor influencing their choice of major.

**Answer to research question two: what is the ratio of specialization preference among the sequence of print media, electronic media and public relations and advertising? The answer is provided in figure 1.** The figure illustrates that respondents do not prefer to specialize in print media to a very large extent. This is because only 3.6% of the study participants indicated their preference for print media. Furthermore, respondents preferred specializing in electronic media and public relations and advertising almost at an equal proportion or sequence (48.4%, 48%) respectively. This indicates that almost an equal proportion of the study participants preferred to specialize in electronic media and public relations and advertising which further suggest that both areas of specialization in mass communication are almost equally preferred.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that some factors as personal interest, ambition to actualize dreams, desire to be connected to important personalities, role models and hope of getting a good job, incentives/expectations, and influence undergraduates' choice of area of specialization in mass communication. Other factors as fame, influence of lecturers, parents/family factors, career counsellors do not significantly influence undergraduates' choice of areas of specialization as indicated in the findings with over 50% of the study participants in the study agreeing that these factors do not influence their choice of area of specialization. It can also be concluded from the findings that respondents do not prefer to specialize in print media to a very large extent as only 3.6% of the study participants indicated their preference for print media. On the other hand, respondents preferred specializing in electronic media and public relation and advertising with equal proportion of 48.4% and 48% respectively. The study shows that there are more female studying mass communication than males as majority of the study participants were females with 76.5%, while males had 23.5% proportion of the study participants. Also the age bracket of students studying mass communication is within 21 years and 30 years. The percentage is put at 56.1%)

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Mass communication undergraduates should be encouraged to choose area of specialization base on their personal interest, potentials, dreams and aspirations as indicated by participants in this study. They should be given free hand to choose areas of specialization that aligns with their interest, dreams and aspirations. The curriculum for the print media as an area of specialization in mass communication should be redesigned and the print media profession repositioned to make it attractive for undergraduates to develop interest in specializing in it and subsequently practice. This is necessary against the background that only 3.6% of the participants in this study indicated interest in specializing in the print media against 48.4% and 48% respondents who indicated interest in specializing in electronic media and public relations and advertising respectively.

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