



Exploration of Information Sources, Course Specialisation and Career Aspirations in Public Relations and Advertising among Mass Communication Undergraduates of Babcock University

¹Olomjobi. O. T. (PhD), ²Morka, E. (PhD) & ³Akintayo, J. B. (PhD)

^{1&3}Department of Mass Communication, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria

²Department of Mass Communication, Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi Uku, Delta State, Nigeria

E-mails: olomjobio@babcock.edu.ng; nenait3@gmail.com; AkintayoB@babcock.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The broad and multifaceted nature of mass communication often makes choosing an area of course specialisation in the academic field a challenging task for students. This study sought to examine information sources consulted before choosing a course specialisation, factors influencing the choice, and career aspiration patterns among mass communication undergraduates of Babcock University specialising in Public Relations and Advertising (PRAD). The survey research design was adopted for the study. The complete enumeration technique was applied in selecting the entire 107 students specialising in PRAD at the university. Findings revealed that the respondents mostly consulted seniors/graduates and their classmates as information sources before choosing their course specialisation. It was discovered that personal interest, media influence, and job prospect/financial expectation were the leading factors influencing course specialisation choice among the respondents. It was also revealed that the respondents predominantly aspire to pursue a career in public relations than in advertising. The study concluded that internal motivation, conviction and expectation proved a more superior driver than external agencies in students' choice of course specialisation and career aspiration. It was recommended, among other things, that mass communication undergraduates should be well guided to choose career paths that align with their interests and abilities.

Keywords: Course specialisation, Public Relations and Advertising (PRAD), Information sources, Career aspirations, Personal interest, Unbundling of Mass Communication

Journal Reference Format:

Olomjobi. O. T., Morka, E., & Akintayo, J. B. (2021): Exploration of Information Sources, Course Specialisation and Career Aspirations in Public Relations and Advertising among Mass Communication Undergraduates of Babcock University. *Humanities, Management, Arts, Education & the Social Sciences Journal*. Vol. 9. No. 1, Pp 29-42. Article DOI No - dx.doi.org/10.22624/AIMS/HUMANITIES/V9N1P3 Available online at humanities-managementjournal.info

1. INTRODUCTION

In any academic field of study, course specialisation forms a basis for preparing students towards career professionalism. The choice of an area of specialisation represents a fundamental indicator of what career direction a student desires to take. Through specialisation, an individual is able to focus on a particular aspect of a profession and is prepared for work with a high level of competence in knowledge and skill.



As Krishnan (2009) posits, course specialisation makes it possible for students to be purposefully trained for a specific work career, serving thereby as an incubating platform for them to eventually belong to a professional body.

Mass communication is a field of study offered in many institutions of higher learning across the globe. The course is branded in some institutions with such other nomenclatures as Media Studies, Information and Communication Studies, and Language and Communication Arts. Mass communication involves various areas including journalism, publishing, radio broadcasting, television broadcasting, digital media, public relations, and advertising. Each of these areas holds a variety of career opportunities for students after their study. The broad and multifaceted nature of the field of mass communication, thus, makes it imperative for students to specialise in certain areas of the field at some point during their study. The choice of an area of specialisation in mass communication- to borrow from Mishra et al. (2017) phraseology- is often “akin to choosing a path while at a crossroads” (p. 1).

In Nigeria, the academic field of mass communication has experienced some remarkable growth. Its study in the country began in the 1960s, with the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (in 1961) and the University of Lagos (in 1967) offering courses in journalism for students to earn a diploma in Mass Communication (Chioma et al. 2015; Emenyeonu, 1991). In other words, the study of mass communication at its inception in Nigeria was just limited to journalism. This, however, is no longer the case as the mass communication curriculum in Nigerian tertiary institutions has been expanded to accommodate other cognate areas of the field. The eventuality of expanding the curriculum has been identified as a contributing factor to the upsurge in the population of candidates who seek to major in mass communication over the years (Emenyeonu, 1991).

The current system in many Nigerian universities is one in which mass communication students have to choose an area of specialisation when they reach their third year (300 level). The course specialisation options available to students to choose from, in most instances, are: Journalism, Broadcasting, or Public Relations and Advertising (PRAD). Meanwhile, the National Universities Commission (NUC) recently unbundled Mass Communication as a degree programme, prescribing that a faculty of Communication and Media Studies would have to be created to house seven separate degree courses, namely: Journalism and Media Studies, Public Relations, Advertising, Broadcasting, Film and Multimedia Studies, Development Communication Studies, as well as Information and Media Studies (NUC, 2020).

While the “unbundling process” remains at a formative stage, this study is focused on the currently subsisting system of course specialisation selection among mass communication undergraduates in tertiary institutions across Nigeria. Empirical studies on course specialisation choices and career aspirations among mass communication undergraduates in the country have mostly been concentrated on journalism (see, for example, Apuke, 2016; Chioma et al., 2015). The present study diverts from this research trend to fill a major gap in extant literature. A preliminary inquiry made by the researchers indicate that PRAD has, in recent years, always been the most popular course specialisation among mass communication undergraduates of Babcock University, a foremost Nigerian private university.



Based on the foregoing, this study sought to examine the information sources explored, factors influencing the decision to choose PRAD as an area of specialisation, and the predominant career aspirations in public relations and advertising among mass communication undergraduates of Babcock University.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Mass communication students, more often than not, find themselves in a state of dilemma when they reach the point of choosing an area of specialisation. Their confusion is often borne from inadequate knowledge and familiarisation with the options available to them. Generally speaking, sparse professional information tends to limit and force students to make career choices outside the range of their abilities and interests (Reep & Drambrot, 2012). When students do not consult the right information sources before deciding which area to specialise in, they are, invariably, predisposed to making academic misjudgments that can have adverse repercussions on their future professional careers.

To the extent that course specialisation can affect the actualisation of educational and post-educational goals (Al-Rou, 2013), it can be mooted that a student develops an academic problem for himself or herself when such student ventures into an area of course specialisation that does not align with his or her interests and abilities. The student may struggle with courses in that area of specialisation, which may eventually lead to academic failure. Consequently, the student would have to repeat courses, or, in extreme cases, advised to withdraw from the institution after years of acutely poor academic performances. Even when the student scales through the academic requirements, he or she may yet leave the institution unprepared to face challenges in the professional world, and never get to maximise his or her true potentials as would have been the case if the area of course specialisation had been gotten right from the outset.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What information sources do mass communication students of Babcock University explore before choosing PRAD as their course specialisation?
2. What factors influence the decision-making process of mass communication students of Babcock University in the choice of PRAD as their course specialisation?
3. What career options in public relations and advertising do mass communication students of Babcock University predominantly aspire towards?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Course Specialisation and Career Aspiration

Course specialisation represents an avenue for students to find career directions for themselves. It is from this perspective that Krishnan (2009) asserts that every academic discipline should draw from a distinct set of knowledge and skills institutionalised in a curriculum such that would develop autonomy in professional training, competence and ethics in order to build a community of professionals who would cultivate distinct professional habits.



He added that the more an academic discipline is linked to a career path or profession outside academia, the more successful it would aid the professionalisation of students.

Occupational aspirations and expectations are a central concern among young people. Indeed, students all over the world are usually faced with the task of making a decision on the area of specialisation which they want to pursue as career (Issa & Nwalo, 2008). White (2007) asserts that there is a strong relationship between the career aspirations and course choices made by students. The choice of a course of study in school and subsequent paths to follow in terms of career are a tough decision prospective undergraduates are often faced with. Purcell (2008) carried out a research study on the relationship between high education, career decision-making and labour market trends in England. Findings of the research revealed that those with higher entry qualifications and those opting for areas of study at the most occupationally directed end of the spectrum exhibited greatest clarity about their career directions. However, those with lower educational qualification and those opting for languages, historical and philosophical studies had lower likelihood of having a clear career direction.

Young et al. (2013) point out the importance of self-regulatory abilities while choosing a career path. According to them, self-regulation can help an individual's "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" (Young et al., 2013, p. 98).

2.2 Factors Determining Course Specialisation and Career Choice

The choice of a course specialisation and career path by a student is usually engendered by certain factors. Students are often influenced by what the mass media interpret as career and the various television personalities they watch, while parents, other family members, and friends also hold considerable influences at particular points in time (Danis, 2002; White 2007). In a quantitative study, Sugahara and Boland (2009) reported that parental influence was relatively strong in deciding the vocational choices of students. It was also discovered that close friends exercised significant influence on students' choice of an area of specialisation. Meanwhile, financial reward was discovered to be an insignificant factor in the career choice decision of the respondents.

In another study, Alexander et al. (2011) found out that external advice- encompassing advice from friends, family members and those who work in a similar career- influenced the career choices of students. Career outcome or expectation was another factor indicated as a motivation for choosing career by students. This involves starting salary and prospects of getting a first job, stable job as well as career with fairly general economic climate, good prospect for promotion and professional development, good long term salary prospects, job satisfaction, and opportunities to work in different kinds of business.

Some empirical studies have focused on exploring the influence of particular factors on the choice of course specialisation among students studying communication-related courses in the university. Hoag et al. (2017), for instance, investigated the likelihood of media studies students choosing journalism as an area of specialisation. The study considered the influence of media exposure, technology use, mediated salient referents, and unmediated salient referents.



A sample of 2,107 students were recruited from five communication majors offered at three public universities in the US. The five communication majors across the three selected universities from which respondents were recruited were: advertising, journalism, public relations, telecommunications, and speech, rhetoric or organisational communication. It was found out that the likelihood to specialise in journalism was related to the amount of news consumed by respondents. The study also revealed that mediated referents, involving news anchors and journalists seen on television, positively influenced the choice of journalism, while there was a negative relationship with the choice of other communication majors. Conversely, unmediated referents, encompassing parents, teachers, and job supervisors, influenced all communication majors except those who chose journalism.

Similarly, Mishra et al. (2017) examined the factors that influence the choice of areas of specialisation among communication undergraduates of a major university in Oman. The study used a sample of 72 students from an accessible population of 125 students in the Department of Communication of the selected university. Findings of the study showed that a large percentage of the respondents indicated preference for specialising in public relations compared to those who opted for specialisation in digital media and journalism. It was shown that the students were mainly influenced in their choice of course specialisation by such factors as family advice, job opportunities, and assessed level of difficulty of the area of specialisation. The study also revealed that before deciding on an area of course specialisation, the respondents consulted information sources such as family, senior/graduate students, classmates, media, and advisors/teachers.

2.3 Course Specialisation and Career Choice among Mass Communication Students in Nigeria

Mohammed and Malam (2015) investigated the influence of academic factors on career choice among mass communication students in 11 sampled public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The researchers focused on the final year mass communication students in public universities and polytechnics where the mass communication programme was pioneered across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The study analysed data collected from 961 students. Results of the study indicated that broadcast journalism, advertising, and public relations were the major mass communication professions most preferred by the students. It was also revealed that courses taught, lecturers, and learning facilities were the major academic factors that motivated career choices in mass communication among the respondents.

Perusal of extant literature shows that empirical studies on the choice of an area of course specialisation among mass communication students in Nigerian tertiary institutions have mainly focused on journalism. For instance, Emenyeonu (1991) examined the motivations for the choice of course and career preferences among female students in journalism training institutions in Nigeria. The study found that most of the respondents considered journalism to be a profession appropriate for women as much as it is suited for men. It was revealed that most of the respondents preferred a more glamorous career in television, radio, public relations, or advertising than in journalism. The study also showed that marital status was an important factor in the career choice of the respondents.



Chioma et al. (2015) investigated career considerations in journalism among female mass communication students of Redeemers University (RUN). The authors studied a sample of 100 female students drawn from a target population of 163 female students across 100-400 levels. Findings showed that a majority of the respondents were aware of the various career options in journalism. Many of the respondents indicated a willingness to consider a career in journalism, especially in the area of photojournalism. Most of the respondents agreed that journalism was a good profession, but they perceived female journalists to have less career opportunities in journalism than male journalists.

In a similar study, Apuke (2016) examined the career considerations in journalism among female mass communication students of Taraba State University. The researcher collected data from a sample of 100 female mass communication students of the university. Results of the study revealed that the respondents were, on the average, interested in practicing journalism when they graduate from school. However, many of the respondents preferred advertising and news casting to reporting and other forms of journalism. Findings also revealed that gender discrimination is a major factor that may discourage female students from pursuing a career in journalism upon graduation.

2.4 Expectancy Theory

This study is anchored on the expectancy theory. The theory evolved from Vroom's (1964) theory of motivation. The expectancy theory recognises that certain expectations and incentives tend to motivate certain patterns of behavior. The assumption of the theory is that people undertake certain actions when there is the likelihood that their behaviors will lead to a good outcome. It is posited that individuals are faced with challenges but expectancies and values tend to yield a motivational drive. The tenets of the theory are encapsulated thus:

1. Individuals respond to stimulus based on their needs, motivation and past experiences.
2. An individual's behavior is dependent on personal choice and conviction. In other words, people tend to identify choices that meet their needs and they are often intentional in behaving in ways that will actualise their expectations.
3. Individuals have divergent needs and it is these needs that drive their attitude and behavior to key into a particular action.
4. From options available to them, individuals tend to choose the ones that best suit their needs and best increase their output or reward.

Myers (1995) asserts that a person's decision to engage in a particular action is determined by two things. The first is what the person expects to happen following the action and, second, the value the person places on the outcome. In essence, an individual's behavior is determined not only by the kind of consequences (called positive reinforcement), but also by expectation that a particular behavior will result in these consequences (Myers, 1995). This theory is relevant to the study based on the assumption that preconceived expectations drive people to engage in certain courses of action. Going by this, it is conceivable that a student may choose a particular area of course specialisation based on his or her expectations to enjoy a good career in that area of specialisation after school.



3. METHOD

This study adopted the survey research design. The target population of the study is a total of 107 students in 300 level specialising in PRAD at the Department of Mass Communication, Babcock University. Since mass communication students in the university are only legible to choose an area of specialisation in their third year, this study purposively delimited its focus to 300 level students on the premise that the process of selecting an area of specialisation would still be a fresh experience among them. The complete enumeration technique was applied in selecting the entire 107 students for survey.

A structured questionnaire was the research instrument used to gather data. The questionnaire contains multiple choice questions to elicit responses on the respondents' demographic details, information sources explored in the selection of course specialisation, and the areas of career aspiration. Using a 5-point Likert scale, the questionnaire also presents items to elicit information on factors that influence the decision of the respondents in choosing PRAD as their area of course specialisation.

The questionnaire was validated using content and face validity. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents in a class session with the assistance of a lecturer in the department. Out of the 107 copies of questionnaire administered, only 93 copies were retrieved, representing 86.9% return rate. When sorting the retrieved copies of the questionnaire, 22 copies of the questionnaire were deemed to be invalid mainly because they were not appropriately filled. Hence, data analysis for this study was based on 71 valid copies of the retrieved questionnaire. The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 25 was used to process data, and results were presented using frequency counts, tables and charts.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Participants' Demographic Distribution

The demographic details of the study participants indicate that 39 (54.9%) of the respondents fell in the 17-19 age bracket, 30 (42.3%) were between 20 and 22 years, while 1 (1.4%) respondent was in 23-25 age bracket and the 26-above age bracket respectively. Since more than half (54.9%) of the participants were between the ages of 17 and 19 and 42.3% were between the ages of 20 and 22, it could be said that the respondents for this study were majorly made up of adolescents and young adults. In terms of gender, 57 (80.3%) of the respondents of this study were females and 14(19.7%) were males. This means female students dominantly outnumbered male students.



Research Question 1: What information sources do mass communication students of Babcock University explore before choosing PRAD as their course specialisation?

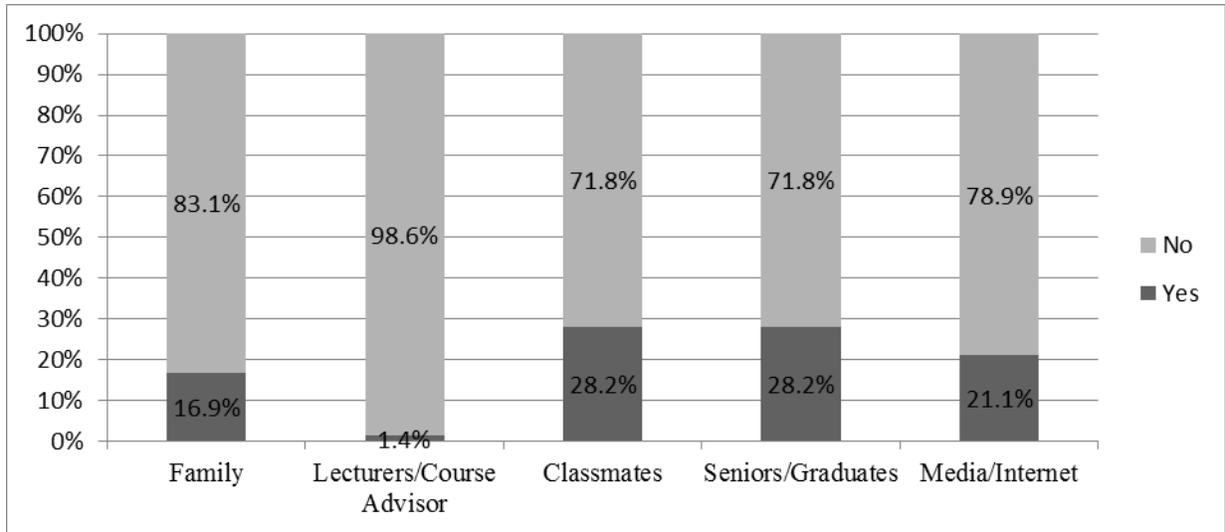


Figure 1: Information Sources Explored before Selection of Course Specialisation

Figure 1 shows that many PRAD students of the Mass Communication Department, Babcock University explored information from classmates (28.2%) and seniors/graduates (28.2%) as sources at equal proportion before choosing their course specialisation. The media/Internet was next (21.1%), followed by family (16.9%). Meanwhile, lecturers/course advisor constituted the least source of information explored by the students before selecting their area of specialisation.

This implies that informal information sources such as classmates, seniors/graduates, the media/Internet and family were the preferred sources of information used by students in the PRAD class. However, the formal source of information in terms of lecturers/course advisor was least utilised by the students before selecting their area of specialisation.



Research Question 2: What factors influence the decision-making process of mass communication students of Babcock University in the choice of PRAD as their course specialisation?

Table 1: Factors that Influence Students' Choice of Course Specialisation

Items	Mean (\bar{x})	SD	Average Mean
Personal Interest			
My decision to choose an area of specialisation was based on the ambition to actualise my dream.	4.30	0.70	4.13 (SD=0.92)
I chose my area of specialisation because it is an area I have been interested in for a long time.	3.96	1.13	
Media Influence			
I chose my area of specialisation because I like the way professionals in that area are portrayed in the media and movies.	3.92	0.75	3.85 (SD=0.81)
I chose my area of specialisation because I want to be popular like my role model(s) in the media.	3.79	0.88	
Job Prospect/Financial Expectation			
I decided to choose my area of specialisation because I think it would be easy to secure a job in that area after school.	3.73	1.00	3.56 (SD=1.17)
I decided to choose my area of specialisation because the salary and other financial incentives there are lucrative.	3.38	1.33	
Academic Reasons			
I chose my area of specialisation because I know I would be able to cope with the courses better than the alternative area.	3.58	1.10	3.22 (SD=1.10)
I chose my area of specialisation in order to improve my academic result (CGPA).	2.86	1.10	
Items			
Peer Influence			
I chose my area of specialisation because of the good things my classmates had said about it.	3.14	1.12	2.89 (SD=0.98)
I chose my area of specialisation because many of my friends chose it too.	2.65	0.83	
Parental/Familial Influence			
My choice of an area of specialisation was inspired by my parents'/relatives' profession.	2.72	0.88	2.71 (SD=0.93)
The area of specialisation I have chosen was based on the preferred choice of my parents.	2.70	0.98	
Lecturers' Influence			
I chose my area of specialisation because my lecturer(s) made me feel I could succeed in the area by what he/she said in class.	2.62	0.95	2.56 (SD=0.84)
I chose my area of specialisation because a lecturer(s) directly advised me to go into it.	2.51	0.73	

KEY: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, U=Undecided*** Decision Rule if mean is ≤ 1.49 Undecided; 1.5 to 2.49 = Strongly Disagree; 2.5 to 3.49 = Disagree; 3.5 to 4.49 = Agree; 4.5 to 5 = Strongly Agree



Table 1 depicts that PRAD students agreed that personal interest ($\bar{x} = 4.13$, $SD=0.92$), media influence ($\bar{x} = 3.85$, $SD=0.81$) and job prospect/financial expectation ($\bar{x} = 3.56$, $SD=1.17$) were the leading factors that influenced their decision when selecting their course specialisation. On the other hand, the participants, on the average, disagreed that academic reasons ($\bar{x} = 3.22$, $SD=1.10$), peer influence ($\bar{x} = 2.89$, $SD=0.98$), parental/familial influence ($\bar{x} = 2.71$, $SD=0.93$) and lecturers' influence ($\bar{x} = 2.56$, $SD=0.84$) affected their decision-making process when selecting their course specialisation. This further suggests that although academic reasons, peer influence, parental/familial influence had a low impact on the participants' decision to select PRAD as their area of specialisation, lecturers had the least influence on the decision of the students.

Research Question 3: What career options in public relations and advertising do mass communication students of Babcock University predominantly aspire towards?

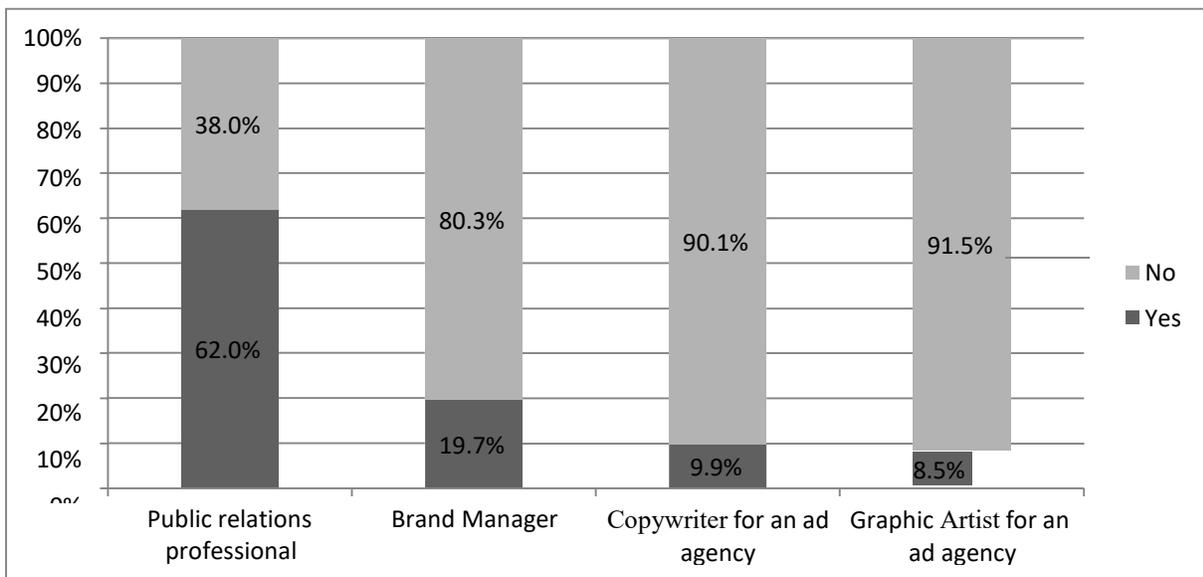


Figure 2: Career Paths Participants Aspire to Work

Figure 2 shows that majority of the participants aspire to work as public relations professionals (62%), followed by those who desire to become brand managers (19.7%), advertising copywriters (9.9%), and graphic artists for an advertising agency (8.5%). This implies that the students predominantly aspire to eke out a career in the public relations profession upon graduating from school.



5. DISCUSSION

This study was aimed at examining information sources explored in the process of selecting PRAD as an area of course specialisation, factors influencing the choice of the course specialisation, and career aspirations in public relations and advertising among mass communication students of Babcock University. Results revealed that the respondents accordingly explored seniors/graduates, classmates, media/Internet, family members, and lecturers/course advisor as information sources during the process of deciding which course specialisation to select. This aligns largely with the findings of the study by Mishra et al. (2017). Meanwhile, that the participants in this present study mainly consulted seniors/graduates and their classmates over other information sources suggests they favoured informal interpersonal communication with fellow young people who have had first-hand experience as well as those currently in the same shoes as themselves in the endeavor of making a course specialisation choice.

The study showed that personal interest, media influence, and job prospect/financial expectation were the major driving factors that influenced the decision of the respondents to choose PRAD as their area of specialisation. The findings here somewhat diverges from Hoag and colleagues' (2017) study in which it was indicated that media referents had a significant negative relationship with the choice of communication majors (including public relations and advertising) other than journalism, while unmediated referents in the form of parents and teachers had a significant positive influence on the choice of communication majors (including public relations and advertising) other than journalism among undergraduates. The opposite appears to be affirmed in this study.

Furthermore, with personal interest ranking top among other influential factors in the present study, it can be inferred that the students were, first and foremost, self-motivated towards picking their area of course specialisation in line with the career they want to pursue after school. This finding contrasts with the aspect of prior studies (see, for example, Alexander et al., 2011; Mishra et al., 2017; Sugahara & Boland, 2009) which have mooted external agencies- mainly parents, family members and friends- to be major influencers of the course and career choices made by students. Although the participants in this present study, notably, relied heavily on their classmates and family members as information sources when considering what course specialisation to select, their final decision, as shown by the results of this study, was neither based on peer influence nor familial influence. In other words, most of the students did not choose PRAD to blindly follow the footsteps of their friends and classmates or simply to heed to the direct or indirect "pressure" from their parents and other family members. The inference here is that many of the students were adequately self-motivated, which probably speaks to their "self-regulatory abilities" to exert control over internal and external factors in their career decision-making process (Young et al., 2013).

Through this study it can be established that there may sometimes be an overlap between information sources consulted and factors influencing students' decision to choose an area of specialisation. That is to say that an external agency (a person or medium) consulted by a student for information on course specialisation options may tend to, ultimately, influence the decision of such student to select a particular area of specialisation. It was, for instance, revealed in this study that the media (encompassing mainstream media and the new media) were appreciably consulted by the respondents in sourcing for information on course specialisation options in mass



communication, while it was also shown that the media exerted significant influence on the respondents in their decision to choose PRAD as their area of specialisation. This study has also shown that the inverse could be the case: when an information source (person or medium) is lowly or not consulted at all, there is little possibility that such would hold any tangible influence on students' decision about which course area to specialise in. This is underscored by the finding that lecturers/course advisors were the least utilised information sources among the respondents, and, somewhat correspondingly, had the least influence on the decision of the respondents to specialise in PRAD.

Another finding of the study was that more than half of the respondents aim to practice public relations as a profession, as against advertising, upon graduating from school. This indicates that career aspirations among the students was predominantly skewed towards the public relations profession than the advertising profession. It is noteworthy that the PRAD course specialisation involves two fields of career opportunities: public relations, on the one hand, and advertising, on the other. One inference from the finding here is that a majority of the PRAD students would likely be more interested in public relations courses than advertising courses, which may lead to a disequilibrium of some sorts in the focus and performance of the students. This consequence, meanwhile, can be feasibly mitigated against in the near future, considering the prospect that an unbundled Mass Communication degree across Nigerian tertiary institutions holds; whereby, among other communication programmes, Public Relations would stand as a separate programme from Advertising.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that mass communication undergraduates consult an ample range of mediated and unmediated referent sources in the process of deciding what course specialisation to select. Nevertheless, they are dominantly predisposed to interpersonally engaging with information sources comparable with themselves in terms of age and experience. It has been established in this study that students were more propelled to select their course specialisation from personal interest, media influence, and job prospect/financial expectation than from academic reasons, peer influence, parental/familial influence, and lecturers' influence. It can, therefore, be concluded that internal motivation, conviction and expectation may well prove to be more influential than external agencies in determining the course specialisation and career choices of students. Granted, the internal motivation drive of an individual is usually forged from the advisory or exemplary resources provided by external agencies at the outset. Once the mind is set on the value and expected outcome of a decision, however, it becomes more difficult for an external agency to alter the course of action an individual would subsequently undertake.

By way of recommendation, it is important for mass communication undergraduates to be thoroughly exposed to information about the areas of specialisation, as well as the career options, available to them in the field of study from the period of their entry into the university. A good knowledge of these would go a long way in helping the students to make the right decision for themselves in terms of selecting their course specialisation. This becomes all the more pertinent given the present drive towards making the unbundling process of the Mass Communication degree programme take off soon across tertiary institutions in Nigeria.



Mass communication undergraduates should always be encouraged and well guided by parents, teachers, and counselors to choose an area of specialisation that aligns with their interests, abilities, potentials, and aspirations. Particularly, lecturers and course advisors should reevaluate and bolster their advisory role to the students. They should be both accessible and approachable. This is imperative based on the findings of this study that lecturers/and course advisors were the least consulted information sources on course specialisation options and also had the least level of influence on the decision of the students to specialise in PRAD.

This study has attempted to fill a gap in literature. Yet, more studies are needed to further elucidate on the reasons mass communication undergraduates tend to specialise in public relations and advertising. The present study delimited its scope to one level of an undergraduate programme in a single university. The scope can be expanded in future studies to reflect a multiple of levels and different universities. Also, future researchers would have to consider and set their studies within emerging contexts around the Mass Communication degree programme across Nigerian tertiary institutions; particularly after the unbundling process must have gained definite implementation.

REFERENCES

1. Alexander, P. M., Hoimner, M., Lotriet, H. H., Matthee, M. C., Pieterse, H. V., Naidoo, S., Twinomurizi, H., & Jordan, D. (2011). Factors affecting career choice: Comparison between students from computer and other disciplines. *Journal of Science and Technology*. <http://doi.org/10.1007/S10956-010-9254-3>.
2. Al-Rfou, A. N. (2013). Factors that influence the choice of business major evidence from Jordan. *Journal of Business and Management*, 8(2), 104-108.
3. Apuke, D. O. (2016). Career considerations in journalism among female mass communication students of Taraba State University. *World Scientific News*, 57, 13-22.
4. Chioma, P. E., Okere, S., Alao, O., Atakiti, I. O., & Jegede, O. O. (2015). Career considerations in mass communication among female mass communication students of Redeemers University. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5(14), 1-8.
5. Danis, R. L. (2002). The career wheel: An exercise for exploring and validating one's career choices. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 39, 61-69.
6. Emenyeonu, N. B. (1991) Motivations for choice of course and career preferences of Nigerian female students: Implications for the status of media women in a developing nation. *African Media Review*, 5(2), 72-83.
7. Hoag, A., Grant, A. E., & Carpenter, S. (2017). Impact of media on major choice: Survey of communication undergraduates. *NACADA Journal*, 37(1), 5-14.
8. Issa, A. O., & Nwalo, A. (2008). Factors affecting the career choice of undergraduates in Nigeria. *Library and Information Science African Journal*, 18(1), 3-15.
9. Krishnan, A. (2009). *Course specialisation in academic disciplines*. Routledge.
10. Mishra, N., Ismail, A., & Al Hadabi, S. J. (2017). A major choice: Exploring the factors influencing undergraduate choices of Communication major. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Gulf Perspectives*, 14(2). <http://doi.org/10.18538/lthe.v14.n2.292>.
11. Mohammed, S., & Malam, M. N. (2015). Career choice and influence of academic factors among students of mass communication in Nigeria. *International Journal of Communication*, 210-221.



12. Myers, D. G. (1995). *Psychology*. Wadsworth Publishers.
13. National Universities Commission [NUC] (2020). NUC unbundles Mass Communication. <https://www.nuc.edu.ng/nuc-unbundles-mass-communication>
14. Purcell, K. (2008). Applying for higher education: The diversity of career choices, plans expectations. UK. Warwick Institute for Employment and Research.
15. Reep, D., & Drambrot, F. (2012). Television's professional women: Working with men in the 1980s. *Mass Communication Quarterly*, 64, 5(14).
16. Sugahara, S., & Boland, G. (2009). The accounting profession as a career choice for tertiary business students in Japan- A factor analysis. *Education and International Journal*, 18(3), 255-272.
17. White, P. (2007). *Education and Career Choice*. Palgrave Macmillan.
18. Young, H., Woo, Y., & Lee, S. (2013). The effect of self-regulated decision making on career path and major related career choice satisfaction. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 50, 98-109.