
Perceived Barriers and Postuniversity Career Plans among Education Students in Bayero University Kano, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examines perceived barriers and post-university career plans among level 400 education students. The study used 217 samples comprising of male and female across all the BA and BSc (Ed) programmes. A researcher-developed instrument was used in the process of data collection having satisfied validity and reliability requirements. The instrument was subjected to construct validity procedure using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and then Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The internal consistency of the instrument was also assessed and found to be .70. The study consider gender, age and parental occupations as perceived barriers and specialized training, self-employment, paid job, and pursue of higher degree as post-university career plans. Independent t-test was used to assess whether post-university career plans differ among gender and age as well as ANOVA for parental occupations. Multivariate Analysis (MANOVA) was employed in examining main and interaction effects of perceived barriers and post-university career plans. The results show that no significant difference was found among gender, age and parental occupations across post-university career plans. However, no significant main and interaction effects were found. It is concluded that perceived barriers do not have significant influence on career plans of students and its therefore recommended that students should be given more career information, options and orientation for successful job entry.

Keywords: perceived barriers, career plan, undergraduate, education, students

INTRODUCTION

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) presents a relatively new approach to the understanding of the processes through which individual form interest, make choices and achieve varying level of success in educational and career pursuits (Lent, Brown and Hackett, 2000). The SCCT pays attention to cognitive–person variables (self-efficacy, outcome expectation and goals) and how these variables interact with other aspects of person and environment (e.g. gender, ethnicity, social support and barriers) to help in shaping one’s career development.

Similarly, SCCT provides a theoretical framework for understanding perceived barriers as potentially important contextual factors in the relationship between career choice, interest and attainment (Mc Whirter, Torres and Salgado, 2007, Lent, Brown and Hackett, 2000).

Gender and ethnic differences in perceptions of career and educational barriers (Mc Whirter, Torres and Salgado, 2007, Swanson, Daniels, & Tokar, 1996 etc) encourage more exploration of the construct. Lent, Brown and Hackett (2000) noted several important issues relative to the examination of perceived barriers in conjunction with career outcome variables. Most of the studies (e.g. Torres, 2004, McWhirter et al., 2000) involving perceived barriers and career-related constructs paid attention to career decision-making self-efficacy, vocational skills self-efficacy, and outcome expectations. Other studies, examined relationship between perceived barriers and other variables. Flores and O’Brien (2002) found anticipated occupational barriers to be a significant predictor of prestige of career choice in a sample of Mexican American high school girls. Chen, Blumberg, and Austin (2001) found that a set of contextual variables composed of perceived barriers, ethnic identity, and acculturation accounted for a significant amount of variance in the non-traditional career considerations of girls, but not boys, in a sample of Asian American high school students.

Lent, Brown and Hackett (2000) suggested that barriers research should distinguish between internal and external contextual barriers and highlighted the need to attend to barriers that are specific to the developmental task faced by the individual. In considering the preposition, the present study used gender and age as internal factors whereas parental occupation as external barrier.

The paucity of studies on the relationship between perceived barriers and career outcome variables such as plans, choices and attainment motivated the researcher to carry out the study. In addition, most of the studies on perceived career barriers among colleges students were carried outside developed countries (Mc Whirter, Torres and Salgado, 2007 ; Albaugh & Nauta, 2005; Lindley, 2005; Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001; Quimby & O'Brien, 2004 etc) with little or no study in developing countries in Nigeria.

In the presents study, age and socioeconomic status (SES), parental occupation and gender are considered as perceived barriers and it is worthy to note that gender is one of the barriers postulated by the theory. On the other hand, post career plans include specialised training, self-employment, paid job and higher degree. Students are being faced with barriers that impediments actualization of career plans and little or no study especially in this part of the world that has so far been carried out that examines the perceived barriers especially in relation to career plan among potential graduating students in the university. Therefore, understanding the nature of perceived barriers to career plans among undergraduate students of Bayero University Kano is critical at the moment especially during this period of high competitive labour market. In line with Lent, Brown and Hackett (2000) recommendations, the present study is set to the following objectives:

1. To determine the socio demographic characteristics of BA and BSc (ED) students in the Department of Education Bayero University, Kano
2. To examine whether post-university career plans differ based on gender of the students
3. To find out the interactive effect of perceived barriers and post-university, career plans among Education students in Bayero University, Kano

METHODOLOGY

The study used 541 undergraduate Level 400 students in the department of education covering the entire programmes being offered in the department. The study specifically considers students pursuing BA and BSc (Ed). The population of the study comprises of both male and female students with an average of age of 24. The samples of the

study were drawn from the larger population and 217 (109 males and 108 females) considered based on the recommendation of research advisor (2006). Multistage cluster sampling technique was employed involving selection of education students, then selection of level 400 and finally selection of sample size and the samples were proportionately distributed on the basis of gender across the programmes.

The study employed survey design and 217 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and 181 returned, indicating 83% responses rate. The surveys are completed by undergraduate students in education department pursuing BA and BSc (ED). The students are within early and late adolescents stages of development. The survey followed a standard administration procedures and the completion time ranged from 10 to 15 minutes. The completed and retrieved measures were used for analysis in the study.

The self-developed questionnaire used in the study comprises of socio-demographic characteristics gender, age and parental occupation (SES) and twenty items with five Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree covering four dimensions that consists of specialized training, self-employment, paid job and high education with five items. The internal consistency of instrument was .70. The validity indicators KMO, Communities, Anti-image matrix are all reach the .50 requirement which were obtained through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Similarly, instrument was also subjected to Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFI) with CMINDF having .4 , and CFI , TLI, and GFI all with .08 , indicating the instrument has satisfactory internal consistency, good fitness indicators and capable of measuring what I purported to measure.

RESULTS

Research Question: What are the socio-demographic characteristics of education students in Bayero University, Kano?

Table 1: Descriptive information

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	136	75%
Female	45	25%
Age		
Adolescence	63	35%

Adult	118	65%
SES (Parental Occupation)		
Civil servant	83	46%
Self-employed	61	34%
Business	23	12%
Trading	14	8%

Table 1 shows the result for the demographic characteristics of education students consisting of gender, age and occupation. The results demonstrate that majority of the respondents were males 136 (75%) while the least were female accounting for 45 (25 %). The findings for age of the respondents show that majority were adult accounting for 118 (65%) and the least were adolescence accounting for 63 (35%). The results for parental occupation of the respondents indicate that majority of the parents are civil servant 83 (46%), followed by self-employed 61 (34%), business 23 (12%) and finally trading 14 (8%).

The findings revealed that majority of students in education Department are male adults with parents working in public service

Hypotheses Testing

H1: There is no significant differences in Post-university career plans based Gender

Post Career plans	Mean	SD	t	p
Specialized Training	3.14	0.94	1.79	.074
Self-employment	2.78	0.75	1.53	.127
Paid Job	2.58	0.41	.004	.997
Higher Education	2.89	1.15	.763	.440

Independent t-test was employed in testing the hypotheses between post-university career plans (specialized training, paid job, self-employment, higher education) and genders. The results show that no differences among gender in specialized training, ($t(173) = 1.79, p = .074$), self-employment ($t(170) = 1.53, p = .127$), paid job ($t(169) = .004, p = .997$) and higher education ($t(170) = .763, p = .440$). Similarly, no significant difference based on age was found in specialized training, ($t(170) = -.700, p = .485$), self-employment ($t(168) = -1.093, p = .276$), paid job ($t(166) = -1.268, p = .207$), and higher education ($t(167) = -1.088,$

$p = .278$). Therefore, the hypotheses are all accepted and it is concluded that no post-university career plans do not vary based on gender.

H2: There is no significant interaction effect of gender, age and parental occupation (SES) on post-university career plans

Multivariate analysis was employed in testing the hypothesis and in the preliminary assessment, Box’s M test for homogeneity of variance was found significant at $p < .001$, Pillai’s Trace is used instead of Wilks’s lambda as the multivariate test statistic as recommended by Tabachnik & Fidell (2001) while Partial eta is used as the effect size indicator.

Table 2 shows that the post-university career plans include specialized training, paid job, self-employment, higher education (dependent variables), while gender (two levels), age (two levels) and parental occupation as socio-economic status (four levels) (independent variables)

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Post-University Career Plans by Perceived Barriers Gender, Age and SES (Parental Occupation)

Categorical Variables	Specialized Training		Self-employment		Paid job		Higher degree	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Gender								
Male (n=136)	3.30	1.34	2.93	1.11	2.64	1.17	2.90	1.17
Female (n= 45)	2.98	.800	2.63	.737	2.51	.710	2.87	1.12
Age								
18-24 (n=63)	3.15.	1.36	2.73	.602	2.51	.710	2.72	.887
Above 24 (n=118)	3.27	1.19	2.93	1.20	2.71	1.24	2.94	1.23
Parental Occupation								
Civil servant (n=83)	3.25	1.39	2.73	.694	2.62	.830	2.95	1.41
Self-employed (n=61)	3.16	.642	3.07	1.44	2.61	1.22	2.80	.717
Business (n=23)	3.44	1.97	2.69	.849	2.90	1.72	2.65	.676
Trading (n= 14)	3.23	.829	3.11	.866	2.54	.750	3.00	.806

Univariate results demonstrate that no significant difference for gender in specialized training, $F(1) = 1.49, p = .224$, self-employment $F(1) = .007, p = .931$, paid job $F(1) = .205, p=.651$ and higher degree $F(1) = .030, p = .862$. Equally, The results for age show no significant difference in specialized training, $F(1) = .000, p = .984$, self-

employment $F(1) = .093, p = .760$, paid job $F(1) = .557, p = .456$ and higher degree $F(1) = .004, p = .951$.

Similarly, the results for SES (parental occupation) did not differ in specialized training, $F(1) = .154, p = .927$, self-employment $F(1) = .691, p = .559$, paid job $F(1) = .090, p = .965$ and higher degree $F(1) = .145, p = .933$.

The results show that no significant interaction effect main effects for gender, Pillai's Trace = .012, $F(4) = .446, p = .775, \eta^2 = .012$; age, Pillai's Trace = .005, $F(4) = .176, p = .952, \eta^2 = .005$ and SES (parental occupation), Pillai's Trace = .024, $F(12) = .290, p = .991, \eta^2 = .008$. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant interaction effect of gender, age and parental occupation on post-university career plan is accepted.

DISCUSSIONS

The current study extends age and SES (parental occupation) as perceived to Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) postulation in addition to gender in perceptions of career plans. Most of the studies involving perceived barriers focused on college students (e.g. Albaugh & Nauta, 2005; Lindley, 2005), college students of colour (Ali, McWhirter, & Chronister, 2005). The present study provides further understanding of the role of perceived barriers in the career plans among adolescents in the developing countries. Previous studies indicate that during adolescence both gender perceived barriers to career development (Cardoso & Ferreira Marques, 2001).

The findings of first hypothesis indicate that no significant difference was found in post-university career plans (specialized training, paid job, self-employment, higher education) with respect to gender. However, the present study is contrary to the previous findings e.g Lindley, 2005 and it could be attributed to the calibre of the respondents who are being trained as teachers.

The findings of the second hypothesis demonstrate there is no significant interaction effect between the perceived barriers gender, age and SES (parental occupation) and post-university career plans, indicating that gender, age and parental do not constitute barriers as perceived by students in relations to post-university career plans irrespective of the programme (BA and BSc (ED)). The finding is also inconsistent with Ali, McWhirter, & Chronister (2005). The finding also

could be attributed to the fact that teaching profession always prepare trained teachers for inclusiveness. This may be the reason why gender, age and SES do not limit the opportunity of potential teachers in specialized training, paid job, self-employment and pursuing higher education. The findings indicate that graduates of BA and BSc (ED) have the capacity to actualize their goals and could explore existing irrespective of gender, age and SES.

The implication of the study is that undergraduate education students are capable of meeting their post-university career plans after graduation especially with adequate enabling environment. In the same vein, the study indicates that undergraduate students of education have a number advantages by the virtue of their training can engage in specialized training, self-employment, take paid teaching job or pursue higher education irrespective of gender, age and SES (parental occupation.).

However, the study is limited to perceived barriers that include gender, age and (SES) parental occupation among undergraduate education students pursuing BA and BSc (ED) as well as post-university career plans that comprise of specialized training, self-employment, paid job and higher education. Other perceived barriers and post-university education plans are delimited

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of the study was to extend previous literature by examining gender, age and SES (parental education) as perceived barriers associated post-university career plans among undergraduate adolescents in Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria. The results associated with specialized training, self-employment, paid job and higher education plans, in relation to perceived barriers. It is therefore concluded that BA and BSc (ED) students in Bayero University, Kano have all the potential to actualize post-university career plans especially with adequate guidance.

The study discovered that gender; age and SES (parental occupation) do not constitute barriers to post-university career plans in the area of specialized, training, self-employment, paid job and higher education among undergraduate education students in Bayero University, Kano. Therefore, it is recommended that gender, age and SES should be considered when making future career plan. The

findings is the study provided evidence that enabling environment is required to help these young people use their knowledge, skills and experiences acquired for self and national development. Similarly, it is recommended that further studies on perceived barriers should be extended to cover other students in the university

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