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Students' Perception of Career Choice in Estate Management: A Study of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi, Nigeria

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Abstract - Estate management as a course is still a very young course in Nigeria compared to courses such as Law, Medicine and Engineering amongst others. The study looked at the variables that influence students choice of career path as it has to do with Estate Management. Graduating students and those who just graduated from the school were adopted as the population sample for the study. Structured questionnaires were analyzed and the simple descriptive statistics were used for the study. The outcome of the study shows that the students are fully aware of the course before they applied to study it and have no regrets choosing a career in estate management. It recommends that more orientation should be given to students in the choice of their career at an early stage before coming to university.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Career selection is one of many difficult task students are faced with as this determines their future plans. The decision usually affects them throughout their future lives. The essence of who the student is will revolve around the students' future ambition. The job one engages in, most often is influenced by the training the person receives from the school. It appears most students career choice is determined by events and prevailing circumstances rather than their inert ability and goal oriented pursuit. The resource available to most students in secondary school appears to be the University Matriculation Examination (UME) brochure fabricated by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). Many Students rely on expert advice of guidance and counseling teachers in their schools (if such persons are available) in order to make a choice on their career paths. (Weiler, 1977).

Over the years in Nigeria, it is evident that many students gain admission to study estate management in tertiary institutions without good grasp of what the course is all about. Many of such students after their first year either change course of study or drop out of the

university. Egbenta (2008) asserts that the problem of students dropping out of the University is not peculiar to Nigeria alone as about 20% of students at university of Bath drop out of higher education every year. Godbey (2011) reports that 6% of nations' teaching force leaves the profession yearly and more than 7% change schools in East Carolina. Early and Bright (2007) report that job satisfaction promotes career comfort and decisiveness predicts organizational commitment. The study concluded that career is relevant in a contemporary work environment. This implies that an employee's knowledge of the field of study is an important ingredient in achieving excellence in the work environment.

Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) developed a sociological theory of career decision making. The theory on one hand sees human beings as free agents making their own decisions on a free market and deterministic theories where human beings are regarded as being ruled by societal structures on the other hand. The study revealed that none of the students choose the profession because it makes a good living. Santrock (2005) contested that school teachers and counselors can exert influence on children's career development on the ground that school is a place where students first encounter the world of work. In many empirical studies in different societies (Blau & Duncan, 1967 in Pafilis & Mylonakis, 2011) and in Greece (Kassimati, 1998), the primary role that education plays in the career of individuals has been proven. The studies show a very strong relationship between the level and type of education and the profession that a person practices. This implies the choice of the level and type of education that could be considered as being primary while that of the profession as secondary.

Family plays the main role in choosing the level of education since it is Cardinal Avenue through which the child gets his/her first contact with the social environment. A series of studies by economists and sociologists summarized the role of the family to majorly include: reproductive, economic, educational and psychological which will affect the individual, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly to its occupational choices (Psachoropoulou & Kazimias, 1985; Kassimati, 1998)

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In order for the individual to effectively and efficiently use his/her education, to acquire the requisite experience and offer in the development of the society, the primary step is the right choice of the profession to pursue. The employment of individuals, in all societies and all times, was the focal point of social structures. In particular, the distribution of persons in various professional roles and developments over time defined the character of each society (Filiatis, 1978 in Pafilis & Mylonakis, 2011). Bowles (1972) noted that the socio-economic status is positively correlated to plans for post-high school studies, while Wright (1979) argued that education and occupation of the father affects the educational aspirations of the children. According to Osakinle and Adegoroye (2008), factors that influence adolescents' choice of career are sex, location of choice maker, environment, school's influence (peer and curricular content), and religion, child up-bringing and family values. It follows that when parents work and enjoy their jobs; adolescents learn work ethics from both of them. It was argued that the development of work value is transmitted more strongly in the same-sex parent adolescent relationship than in the opposite-sex parent-adolescent relationships. Betz (2002) and Gates (2001) in Osakinle (2010) noted that many female have been socialized to adopt nurturing roles rather than career or achieving roles, that they traditionally have not seriously planned for, and have restricted their career choices to careers that are gender biased. Male and female make different choices because of their experiences socially and the ways the social forces structure opportunities available to them. Egbenta (2008) citing Janik and Rejniss (1994) outlined some requirements for embarking on real estate career; that the work requires in-depth knowledge of all facets of the field, well developed communication skills and personality traits that include careful attention to detail, honesty, a cool temperament, creativity, patience, assertiveness, foresight, and perseverance. The choice of career therefore in estate management is one that should be carefully made. It is against the foregoing the study asks the following questions: What informs student choice of estate management course? What prevailing circumstance makes a student study estate management? To what extent is the student interested in the course of study? The study aims at examining the students' perception on estate management choice of career in the university.

II. STUDY AREA

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University is one of the few universities that were created by the second republic civilian administration led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari in 1981. When the school came into being, it also had the Faculty of Environmental Technology at

inception. The faculty that currently has eight departments (Architecture, Building, Estate Management, Environmental management sciences, Industrial Design, Land Surveying, Quantity Surveying and Urban and Regional Planning) was bereft of Estate management as a department until 1994. The department is about the youngest in the faculty. The course is a five (5) year programme occurring in five different levels as against some other departments in the humanities whose study duration is four (4) years.

The students are expected to go for Industrial Training first in 200L level for three (3) months and the second field training is in their 300 level which is also for three (3) months while the third field training happens in their 400 level second semester and it is for six (6) months. The aim of this is to expose the students to real world of work and also provide a platform for the students to get a feel of what the course is about.

III. METHODOLOGY

A structured questionnaire was designed for this study and was administered to the immediate graduated class of estate management students and the graduating class of the same department in Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi. This was done in order to capture the mind of those who have gone through all the process there are in the making of an estate surveyor and valuer.

The simple descriptive analysis was adopted using frequency and percentages. A total of 118 questionnaires were distributed and retrieved from the respondents representing a hundred percent (100%) success rate in the actual field work and this same number was considered good for analysis and was used.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Six (6) key variables were adopted for discussion as they relate to perception of students in their choice of career in estate management, they are discussed below.

The place of awareness cannot be over emphasized in choice of course by a prospective student as a lot of them are familiar with courses such as how, medicine, Engineering Accumulating and the like. Estate management happens to be one of those courses that are young in most universities and there is the tendency of most people misconstruing what the course is all about. Based on the above, the level of awareness of the respondent with respect to the course was sought.

Table 1: Rating of information about Estate Management

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Well informed	44	37.3	37.3	37.3
	Informed	46	39.0	39.0	76.3
	Somehow Informed	25	21.2	21.2	97.5
	Indifferent	1	.8	.8	98.3
	Not Informed	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	118	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 reveals that students' level of awareness will go a long way in determining whether or not they would seek admission into the department out of their own free volition and not out of frustration. The results show that a cumulative of 90 (76.3%) of the respondents

are either well informed 44 (37.3%) or informed 46 (39.0%) about the course before coming in to study it. It is thus obvious that they knew what the course was all about before opting for it and were not total novice as at the time they were admitted to study the course.

Table 2: Reason for choosing Estate Management

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Dreams Course	30	25.4	25.4	25.4
	Parental Influence	10	8.5	8.5	33.9
	Peer Influence	15	12.7	12.7	46.6
	Motivated by previous work experience	12	10.2	10.2	56.8
	Early School Counselor	6	5.1	5.1	61.9
	Change of Admission by the Institution	33	28.0	28.0	89.8
	Others	12	10.2	10.2	100.0
	Total	118	100.0	100.0	

If the students actually chose estate management as a course, the question then would be 'what inspired that choice'? Table 2 went a step further to inquire the major reason why the students chose Estate Management as a course as against other courses available to them. 33(28.0%) of the students actually stumbled into the course due to change of course during admission by the school while 30(25.4%) of the students actually opted for the course because it is their dream course. Next in declining order is peer influence 15 (12.7%). However, shocking is the fact that the role of school counselor came a distant last 6(5.1%) which in fact raises the question whether there are counselors at that level of education or their role is just not recognized. The result here can be argued that there could still be some relationship with what was obtained in table 1 as the students could actually be well informed about the course and still prefer to study some other course based on the popularity associated with such a course and merely choose estate management as a second choice probably because they did not meet

up with the cut-off mark of their first choice, hence they settled for estate management.

If the above is the case, there is the need to for the study to check the incidence of the students choosing Estate management as a course of study and this was treated as reflected in table 2.

Table 3: Incidence of coming to the department

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Personal Choice	68	57.6	57.6	57.6
	Change due to Academic incapacitation	21	17.8	17.8	75.4
	Choice due to perceive prospect of the course	15	12.7	12.7	88.1
	Admitted against personal wish	14	11.9	11.9	100.0
	Total	118	100.0	100.0	

The response got however shows that entry into Estate management was based on personal choice 68 (57.6%) while 21 (17.8%) of the respondents enrolled due to the academic deficiency. This implied that the students must have actually developed some likeness or interest in the course before they applied to study it in the university.

Table 4: Preference of Est. Mgt. to other courses

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Most preferred	42	35.6	35.6	35.6
	Preferred	40	33.9	33.9	69.5
	Somehow preferred	22	18.6	18.6	88.1
	Indifferent	10	8.5	8.5	96.6
	Dislike	4	3.4	3.4	100.0
	Total	118	100.0	100.0	

If the students did choose to study Estate Management as a course as an alternative compared to other courses available, table 4 sought to know the level of the respondents' preference of the course to other courses available to them. The result in the table shows that a cumulative of 82(69.5%) respondents rated the course as either preferred 40(33.9%) or most preferred 42(35.6%) coming least in the table was "Dislike" for other courses. The implication of this is that the respondents liked and preferred the course before opting to study the course.

Table 5: Rating of Interest in Estate Management

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Interesting	97	82.2	82.2	82.2
	Somehow Interesting	17	14.4	14.4	96.6
	Regrettable	1	.8	.8	97.5
	Indifferent	2	1.7	1.7	99.2
	Not Sure	1	.8	.8	100.0
	Total	118	100.0	100.0	

So far during the course of the study the interest of the respondents in the course from table 5 97(82.2%) of the respondents rated the course as being interesting while a negligible percentage of respondents found the course either regrettable, or indifferent or not sure.

Table 6 : Intended place of work

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Public Sector(Ministry, L.G.A)	20	16.9	16.9	16.9
	Private Sector(Banks, Oil Company, Property Companies e.t.c.)	60	50.8	50.8	67.8
	Private Practice(Estate Surveying and Valuation Firms)	27	22.9	22.9	90.7
	Will not practice	5	4.2	4.2	94.9
	Not sure	6	5.1	5.1	100.0
	Total	118	100.0	100.0	

There is a way students normally pass on information down the line on issues that they are interested in. This implies that the students who found the course as being interesting would definitely pass the information down the line to as many people that they came in contact with or even mentored. Table 6 finally looked at the intended place of work the respondents would want to work in majority of the respondents preferred to work in private sector employment 60(50.8%) while 27(22.9%) of the respondents would like to be involved in private practice.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Generally the study attempted to capture the mind of students studying estate management in Abubarkar Tafawa Balewa University as regards the choice of a career in Estate management which is a relatively new course in Nigeria as against other popular courses such as Law, accounting, Medicine and Engineering amongst others. The study revealed that the students already had a prior knowledge of what the course was all about and it was a choice they made on their own and not based on external influences from either parents or peers. However, it was also revealed that some of them had to opt for the course because they could not get admitted into the institution based on their course of first choice. It implies that Estate management was a second choice as it were to those who stumbled into the course due to academic deficiency. An area which the study however did not cover was what their first choice was as this was not within the scope of the research. It however is not out of place if a further study is done to look at that aspect.

Also, the study concentrated only on Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University in Bauchi which the only university is offering the course in Bauchi State of Northern Nigeria but one of the three tertiary institutions offering the course in the state, the other two institutions are polytechnics. A broader study that would look at a

global picture would also give a clearer view as to the perception of students in tertiary institutions.

It is obvious that estate management as a course is still in its pupillage stage and more needs to be done by stakeholders in carrying out awareness campaign to the grass root particularly to students in secondary schools and the institution should also be at the fore front of this campaign. Career orientation should be built in college curriculum to enable students know what they are going for in life at an early stage.

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