

**FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICES AMONG MASS
COMMUNICATION STUDENTS**

BY

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**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

SEPTEMBER 2025,

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS
COMMUNICATION, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD
OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A.) DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION**

SEPTEMBER, 2025

DECLARATION

This project is based on a study I did in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, under the supervision of Prof. Uchenunu Ambrose. All analyses and fact findings are products of my personal works and research, where the views of my opinions and others have been expressly used and

defined. They have all been duly acknowledged.

ELIZABETH AMAYO OGHOGHO
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CERTIFICATIONS

This is to certify that Elizabeth Amayo Oghogho, in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, completed this project in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Arts degree in

mass communication.

Professor Ambrose Uchenunu
Project supervisor

Date

Dr. Daniel Ekhareafo
Head of Department

Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God, for his faithfulness, mercy, and help, to be able to express and expand my knowledge through this research.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My utmost thanks are to the lord Almighty, for his mercy, his favor, and his faithfulness in my life and my academic pursuit. For the strength and grace to finish this project work. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

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ABSTRACT

Mass communication is a broad department with various niches. This can sometimes make it difficult for students to have a defined career choice. This study was carried out to explore the factors that shapes the career decisions of mass communication students, paying close attention to personal motivations, industry influences, and hands-on learning, questionnaire was used to gather data on 1240 Mass communication students, the results showed that career choices are not determined by a single factor but are instead the outcome of several overlapping influences, The results also shows how role of the media exposure alongside industry trends shapes students career decisions. This study was necessary cause even though some studies have mentioned these issues individually, there was a lack of a comprehensive study to address the personal, social, and institutional influences affecting students, which would direct students towards a logical and favorable career decision. Hence the empirical importance of carrying out the study.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The panic of growing older has been a constant threat in the minds of many youths. This is because growing older requires one to make more informed choices. Top among these choices is the career path to take, McQuerrey (2015) stated that choosing a career path can help one to set professional goals and develop a strategy for getting to where they are aiming. Interestingly, career decisions made can either make or mar the entire future of an individual. According to Khazi and Aqlaq (2017, p.187), “the influence of career choice has a lasting impact on an individual. It serves to be a predictor and determinant of their prospective level of income, nature of work and consequently leaves a mark on the personality, demeanour and outlook of an individual. Thus, one wrong decision can change the fate of an individual”. As newbies in the field of adulthood, youths, particularly undergraduate students, often get lost in the labyrinth of career choices. A. H. Majid and Houcine Meddour (2016) noted that career choices for undergraduate studies are a crucial decision for all

individuals as it decides the path for their future life, life expectations, the standard of living, etc.

These choices are often influenced by different factors such as environment, finance, childhood experience and many more. This aligns with Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (2001), cited in Khazi and Aqlaq (2017) an individual's environment, talents, skills, and academic achievement exert an influence on career choice. Asante (2010) also noted income, job opportunities, personal interest, and the school guidance department, while Taylor and Buku (2006) identified students' intellectual ability, aptitudes, influence of schooling, family, personality, self-concept, sex difference, values, prestige, remuneration, risk factors, security, satisfaction, needs and interest among the factor influencing career choice. In recent times, career decision-making has been altered due to technological advancements. This has made career selection more challenging, as individuals must now also evaluate whether a chosen path can adapt to technological advancements while remaining financially rewarding.

Every student, at a certain point in their academic journey, must decide on a career path. Making the right choice is critical, as it affects their future satisfaction, stability, and productivity. Oladele (as cited in Nyarko-Sampson, 2013) emphasizes

that a well-informed career decision helps students become more poised, emotionally balanced, and confident. Supporting this view, Okojide et al. (2018) argue that when undergraduates align their career choices with their interests and abilities, they are more likely to experience personal and professional fulfillment. Similarly, Nwosu (2023) notes that clarity in career decisions enhances students' sense of direction and reduces anxiety, ultimately contributing to better academic and life outcomes. This showcases the importance of deliberate and informed career planning among students, particularly in a fast-changing job market. In an ever-growing media environment where technology has birthed several other career parts from the within the media sphere, many students often find it difficult to as pick their struggle. As noted by Deuze (2007), the evolving media landscape requires students to adapt to rapid technological changes and develop new digital competencies. This shift may influence students to pursue emerging roles such as digital strategists, content creators, or social media managers, which were not traditionally part of the Mass Communication curriculum. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine factors influencing career choices among mass communication students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing number of students enrolling in Mass Communication programs across Nigerian universities, a significant gap exists between academic training and actual career engagement in the field. Many graduates either abandon core media professions or switch to unrelated sectors after graduation. This raises questions about the factors guiding their career decisions. Studies have shown that personal interests, societal expectations, industry realities, and gender dynamics all play a role, but the specific combination and influence of these factors in the Nigerian context remain underexplored. Furthermore, challenges such as poor remuneration, job insecurity, and limited professional growth in the media sector discourage many students from pursuing careers in journalism, broadcasting, or public relations. Female students, in particular, face additional pressure from cultural and family expectations, which further complicates their career paths in a male-dominated industry. While some studies have addressed these issues individually, there is a lack of comprehensive research that captures the full range of personal, social, and institutional influences affecting Mass Communication students' career choices in Nigeria today. This study seeks to fill that gap by identifying and analyzing the critical factors that shape these decisions.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To identify the factors that influence career decisions among Mass Communication students.
2. To examine the role of media exposure and industry trends in shaping students' career choices
3. To assess the impact of internships and practical training on students' career choices.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the factors influencing career decisions among mass communication students?
2. What are the roles of media exposure and industry trends in shaping students' career choices?
3. How does internship and practical training impact students' career choices

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study holds relevance across several groups, in the academic terrain, it provides valuable data for researchers and lecturers in communication and social sciences, offering information into how career decisions are shaped by social, personal, and environmental factors. The findings can help bridge the gap between

academic theory and real-world application, encouraging curriculum reviews that reflect current industry realities. For students and youths, particularly those studying Mass Communication, the study offers clarity on the challenges and opportunities within their career paths. It helps them understand how factors such as mentorship, media exposure, family expectations, and gender norms can shape their professional decisions. This awareness empowers them to make informed, confident choices about their futures. To parents, the study sheds light on the role they play, directly or indirectly, in their children's career choices. Many parents still hold traditional views about job security and professional prestige, often discouraging their children from pursuing media-related careers. This research can challenge such perspectives and encourage more open, supportive dialogues between parents and their children. Finally, for institutions, especially universities and media organizations, the study highlights the need for career support systems, practical exposure, and policy changes that better prepare students for the evolving media landscape. Institutions can use the findings to improve training programs, internship placements, and partnerships with media industries, ultimately reducing the disconnect between education and employment.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study will be restricted to undergraduate mass communication students of the University of Benin. This demography was chosen for this study following their proximity to the researcher. Uniben, as a public university also presents the researcher with individuals from all aspects of the society. Hence, opinions from Uniben students are considered appropriate for the researcher.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

Factors: In this study, “factors” refer to the specific personal, social, academic, and environmental elements that influence or shape the career choices of Mass Communication students.

Career: This refers to the specific field or professional path a Mass Communication student plans to pursue after graduation. This includes areas such as journalism, public relations, advertising, broadcasting, digital media, and related communication roles.

Students: These are individuals currently enrolled in a Mass Communication undergraduate program at a recognized Nigerian tertiary institution.

Mass Communication: Operationally, it specifically refers to the university or polytechnic program in which the respondents are enrolled.

Influence: This refers to the measurable impact or effect that various internal and external factors have on students' career decisions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of Career and Career Choices

The idea of choice is crucial to human life. Since everyone has options in life, each person must make their own decisions. Therefore, everything that occurs to a person, whether it be good or bad, is a decision made by any person among the many options life presents. Making a decision is a choice in and of itself, even if one chooses not to choose among all of life's options. A career encompasses the sequence of occupations and roles an individual undertakes throughout their working life, reflecting their professional journey and personal development. Okobiah and Okorodudu (2004), cited in Odebode, Adebayo, Jekayinfa, & Aburime (2019) described career as a pattern of decisions, transactions and adjustments that affects people's roles in work, education, family, community development and leisure. Career is important in human's life because it defines the personality of an individual. Therefore, choosing an appropriate career is significant in the life of

individuals as it helps to determine their future. According to Alliyu (2015), a career represents the broad opportunities available for lifelong vocations, structured within a framework of strategies aimed at achieving personal goals. It involves the exploration of various vocational and academic endeavors to fulfill personal, economic, and intellectual aspirations. Career choice, therefore, refers to the process by which individuals select a particular profession or occupation. According to Iyer & Siddhartha (2020, p.240.) “These career choices are proven to be one of the most critical turning points in the lives of an individual. While the general claim states that a good career choice yields a good level of income”. However, Abdo, Majid, & Abdulrazak (2016). (2016) claim that career determines individual income, personality and perception of life for a long period of life. This decision is influenced by a combination of factors, including personal interests, abilities, values, and the socio-economic environment. As noted by Uwaifo (2009), career choice is a conscientious decision that requires individuals to align their personal desires with available opportunities, often necessitating deliberate effort and self-awareness. Making informed career decisions at an early stage is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, early career choices can significantly impact an individual's academic performance and motivation. Igere (2017) observed that

students who select courses aligned with their interests and career aspirations tend to exhibit higher levels of engagement and academic success. Conversely, students who are placed in courses they did not initially choose may experience reduced motivation and academic challenges. Secondly, early career decisions influence long-term job satisfaction and career progression. Yunusa, Ibrahim, Mainagge, & Haruna (2022) highlighted that factors such as academic performance and family support play a significant role in shaping students' career decisions, which in turn affect their future job satisfaction and stability. Students who make career choices that align with their strengths and interests are more likely to experience fulfillment and success in their professional lives. Furthermore, early career guidance can help mitigate the challenges associated with career indecision and transitions. Abubakar (2013) emphasized the importance of career guidance programs in schools, noting that participation in such programs enhances students' ability to make informed career choices and reduces the likelihood of future career conflicts. Early exposure to career information and counselling enables students to understand the requirements and prospects of various professions, facilitating better decision-making.

In Nigeria, where socio-economic factors and limited access to career information can hinder effective career planning, early career decisions become even more critical. Uwaifo (2009) pointed out that many Nigerian students make career choices based on external pressures rather than personal interests, leading to dissatisfaction and career instability. Implementing comprehensive career guidance programs at the secondary school level can address this issue by providing students with the necessary tools and information to make choices that align with their individual goals and the realities of the labor market.

2.2 Mass Communication as a Field of Study

Mass Communication is a rapidly evolving field that plays a vital role in shaping public opinion, culture, and societal development. In Nigeria, the discipline has expanded significantly, encompassing various subfields that reflect both traditional and emerging media practices. What makes mass communication a unique course of study is its flexibility as it has the ability to adapt to trends and development occurring over time. An understanding of these subfields and the career opportunities they offer is essential for students, educators, and practitioners aiming to thrive in the communication terrain.

Subfields of Mass Communication

One of the foundational subfields is Journalism, which involves the collection, verification, and dissemination of news and information. Nigerian journalists work across print, broadcast, and digital platforms, often covering complex beats such as politics, education, and health. Institutions like the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) established in 1955 have played a key role in standardising and professionalising journalism education and practice in the country. In journalism, roles include reporters, editors, correspondents, and news analysts. These professionals are the watchdogs of society, responsible for informing the public and holding power to account. Broadcasting, which includes radio and television, remains a significant component of Mass Communication as a matter of fact many individuals who is not learned in the field of mass communication have the notion that mass communication is all about broadcast. The reason for this is not far-fetched because in the early stages of mass communication in Nigeria, broadcasting and journalism were the common field of practice. Broadcast professionals such as news anchors, producers, and technical staff manage content delivery to mass audiences. The liberalisation and deregulation of the Nigerian broadcast space have led to a boom in private radio and TV stations, offering more

employment opportunities. This field of mass communication is controlled by the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). Established in the year 1992 Public Relations (PR) is another major area, focusing on managing relationships between organisations and the public. PR professionals in Nigeria operate in both public and private sectors, crafting strategic communication campaigns, managing crises, and building brand reputation. The Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), founded in 1963, regulates and guides ethical standards in this profession. Advertising is a more commercial sphere of mass communication that deals with creating persuasive messages to promote products or services. In Nigeria's competitive consumer market, advertising professionals work in agencies or corporate marketing departments, designing campaigns for print, radio, television, and increasingly, digital platforms. With the rise of online media, digital advertising has become a crucial skill set as there is a rising demand digital advertising specialists who understand algorithms, audience targeting, and campaign analytics. In a bid to achieve a professional standard in the Nigerian advertising eco-system Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) was founded in 1989. Finally, Digital Media is transforming how information is consumed and shared. It includes social media management, blogging, video production, and mobile

journalism. As digital penetration deepens in Nigeria, careers in digital content creation, online marketing, and multimedia storytelling are increasingly in demand. Okoro, Nnayelugo, Nwafor and kenneth (2021) argue that digital proficiency is now a core requirement for media professionals Deuze (2007) notes, the integration of digital technologies has reshaped media professionalism, demanding a fusion of creative and technical skills. **2.3 Factors Influencing Career Choices of Students**

In Nigeria, various factors influence students' career decisions, ranging from personal interests to socio-economic conditions. Understanding these factors is essential for educators, policymakers, and career counselors aiming to guide students effectively. According to Kerka (2000) cited in Aminat et al (2019), career choice is influenced by multiple factors, including personality, interests, self-concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and financial facilities. This follows that each individual undertaking the process is influenced by several factors. This aligns with McQuaid & Bond (2003) cited in Aminat et al (2019) which states that Students perception of being suitable for particular jobs also has been found to be influenced by a number of factors including ethnic background, year in school, level of achievement, choice of science subjects, attitudes and differences in job

characteristics. Hewitt (2010) opined that factors influencing career choice can be intrinsic or extrinsic or both. What this means is that the decision on what career path to follow can either be psychological or physical. A few of these numerous factors will be examined below;

Personal Interests and Aptitudes

Personal interests and inherent aptitudes play a crucial role in career selection. Students are more likely to pursue careers aligned with their passions and strengths. Owie (2003) posits that intrinsic interest is a primary motivator for individuals when choosing a career path, often influenced by prior academic achievements. This suggests that students' engagement and success in specific subjects can shape their career aspirations. Similarly, Shertzer and Stone (2003) argue that a lack of interest can lead to low efficiency, whereas developing interest in a subject enhances performance and goal attainment in one's chosen career. For instance, a student with a flair for writing may gravitate towards journalism or creative writing. Recognizing and nurturing these interests from an early stage can lead to more satisfying career outcomes.

Parental and Family Influence

Family expectations and parental guidance significantly impact students' career choices. According to Kavitha et al (2020) "Parents are seen as idols by children and many parents may also pressurise their child/children towards their own or another particular career path that they seem fit". Research provides evidence that a very large part of the career decision of any individual is majorly influenced by parental and other factors related to family (Shumba and Naong, 2012; Gemici et al., 2014; and Mishkin et al., 2016). Aspects like family factors, peer influence, role-models, career benefits also impact career choices for undergraduate studies (Shumba and Naong, 2012). In Nigeria for instance, many households play an active role in directing their children's career paths, often based on their perceptions of job security and prestige. This influence can sometimes lead students to pursue careers that align more with parental expectations than personal interests.

Gender

Gender significantly influences career choice, especially in traditional societies like Nigeria, where cultural norms shape perceptions of "appropriate" professions for males and females. Girls are often steered toward careers considered less demanding or more "feminine," such as teaching, nursing, or public relations, while boys are encouraged to pursue more rigorous fields. This aligns with Kavitha

et al (2019) which states that this gender stereotype influences females to pursue careers that are artistic and social like teaching, childcare, etc, men are asked to develop an inclination towards high paying & masculine activities. According to Njeri (2013), cited in Kavitha et al (2019, p. 242) “The determinant comes into existence from the secondary school where students are taught that there are different job roles of males and females. It is also important to understand that people who pass on this information also lack vocational guidance and therefore gender become the most significant factor influencing career choice”. Abati and Ayoola (2019) revealed that many female Mass Communication students shy away from journalism due to safety concerns, irregular work hours, and societal bias. Similarly, Chime (2019) reported that cultural and religious beliefs often discourage female students from entering male-dominated professions, with family influence playing a strong role in guiding them toward more socially accepted paths. Gender stereotypes also affect students’ perception of opportunities. Though progress is being made, gender-based expectations still limit many students’ career options.

Peer Influence

Peers can also impact students’ career decisions. Discussions with friends about future aspirations and perceptions of certain careers can sway students

towards or away from specific professions. Peer influence is particularly strong during adolescence, a critical period for career decision-making. Kolawole (2023) noted that peer pressure significantly influenced adolescents' career choices, accounting for approximately 28% of the variation in career decision-making among the students.

Educational Environment and Exposure

The educational environment and exposure to various professions within the school setting significantly influence students' career choices. In Nigeria, the quality of education and the breadth of professional exposure provided by schools play pivotal roles in shaping students' career aspirations. Schools that offer comprehensive career guidance and expose students to a range of professions enable more informed decision-making. Access to information about different career paths broadens students' horizons, helping them make choices that align with their interests and abilities. For instance, institutions that integrate career counseling into their curriculum provide students with the tools to assess their strengths and interests, facilitating more personalized career planning. Moreover, educational reforms and investments in Nigeria have aimed to enhance the quality of education

and expand students' exposure to various career options. Programs such as the N-Power initiative under the National Social Investment Program offer young Nigerians job training and education, thereby influencing their career trajectories. Additionally, mentorship programs like those facilitated by the African Youth Mentorship Network connect students with professionals across different industries, providing insights into various career paths. These initiatives underscore the importance of a supportive educational environment and diverse professional exposure in guiding students toward fulfilling career choices.

Labor Market Trends

Current labor market conditions and employment opportunities influence career choices. Students are more inclined to pursue careers in fields with high demand and perceived job security. Awareness of market trends and future job prospects can guide students towards careers with better employment opportunities.

Government Policies and Educational Reforms

Government policies and reforms in the education sector can steer students towards particular careers. Initiatives that promote vocational training and

entrepreneurship, for example, can encourage students to consider alternative career paths beyond traditional professions.

Technological Advancements

The rise of technology and digital media has introduced new career opportunities, influencing students to explore fields like information technology, digital marketing, and content creation. Exposure to these emerging fields can inspire students to pursue careers that align with modern technological trends.

Financial Status

Financial status significantly influences students' career choices, particularly in contexts where economic constraints limit access to education and professional opportunities. In Nigeria, students from lower-income families often face challenges that shape their career decisions, steering them towards more immediately accessible or financially secure professions. Moreover, the cost of education and professional training can be prohibitive for students from low-income families, limiting their career options. Scholarships, financial aid, and government-sponsored programs can mitigate these barriers, but access to such resources is often limited or competitive. Kavitha et al (2019) noted that before enrolling in any

programme, the expenditure and fees of the course are a factor considered a length. Boudarbat and Montmarquette (2009) in their research found that monetary value is the dominant factor that influences any individual's career choices. It suggests that students usually weigh the earnings they would make post the degree being scrutinised, along with searching for degrees with higher earnings by the students who have held a profession.

2.4 Role of Media Trends in Students' Career Decisions

The decision-making of every individual often depends on the level of information the person has acquired over time. The media can be described as channels through which information reaches a targeted audience. In every society, the need for information cannot be overemphasized as it is what helps in the progress of the society. As a major driver of the society it is responsible for closing the information gap amongst every individual in the society. According to Wanyama (2012), cited in Sarah, Tarsilla and Paul (2019, p.14) "mass media are all media technologies (internet, television, newspaper and radio) used for mass communication". Mass media has been found to bridge this gap by transforming the way people think and make decisions since it contributes to character development, language and habit formation (Noshina, Mian, Irfaan & Rao, 2014). In concordance

with this, Nong (2016) opines that many job opportunities are available, but limited access to reliable information hinders career choice. Mass media influence career selection process by shaping personal choices since it contributes to character development, language and habit formation (Noshina, Mian, Irfaan & Rao, 2014; Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). Wanyama (2012) asserts that information technology, mass media and communication systems have resulted in high acceleration in globalization and career trends as people try to realign themselves to cope with the effects of globalization. Social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have become arenas where various professions are showcased, often glamorising certain careers. Students are exposed to curated lifestyles and success stories, which can shape their career aspirations. For instance, the rise of content creators and influencers has introduced new career possibilities that were previously non-existent. Studies in the United States of America, Australia, and Nigeria reveal that media, including TV, radio, the internet, newspapers, and social media platforms have influenced students' decisions to pursue careers in journalism and librarianship (Borchert, 2010; Dana, 2017; Busayo, 2017). Furthermore, According to Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) and Adedeji, Ojelabi, Lekan and Adefarati (2017) cited in Sarah, Tarsilla and Paul (2019, p.15) "high school students' career choice was

influenced by notable personalities in certain professions as seen on television, heard on radios as well as read on print media”. These results corroborates with Wanyama (2012) who observed that 76.7% of secondary school students in Kisii County indicated that career of people seen or read on media had influenced them a lot on the choice of career that they had purposed to pursue. In the same vein Efunwole and Sijuwade (2023) that 67.2% of students acknowledged social media as a major influence on their career choices. These platforms provide students with access to a plethora of information about various professions, enabling them to make more informed decisions. Despite the benefits, reliance on media trends for career decision-making poses challenges. Adeosun and Akinwalere (2023) highlighted issues such as misinformation, distractions, and moral decadence associated with excessive social media use among students in tertiary institutions. These factors can lead to misguided career choices if students are not equipped with critical media literacy skills.

2.5 Empirical Review

Mohammed (2020), conducted a study on Career Preference among University Students of Mass Communication in Nigeria. The study investigated the career choice among students of mass communication in Nigerian universities. The

study adopted quantitative survey method of communication research to gather data from six (6) sampled public universities across Nigeria. It focused on the final year B.Sc students of mass communication in Nigerian pioneer public universities that started mass communication academic programmes in the six geo political zones. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in analyzing the data. The findings indicated that Broadcast journalism, public relations and print journalism are found to be the major mass communication professions preferred by the students. Equally, core and elective departmental courses, core and elective general studies courses and two month SIWES attended by the students are the major factors of university system of mass communication education that motivate the student's career choice. The study concluded that the most preferred professions by students of mass communication in Nigeria are public relations, broadcast journalism and print journalism. It was recommended that the stakeholders of these professions should prepare to accommodate the teaming potential university mass communication graduates that will build their career after graduation.

A study was conducted by Ali (2010) on the attitudes of female students of mass communication toward journalism as a career in Nnamdi Azikwe University Awka. The findings support the positive hypotheses that; female mass

communication students have negative attitude towards journalism as a career, there is discrimination against the female journalist, female journalists are shy in carrying out their duties, there are wrong impressions about the female journalists, and female roles as mothers and wives are some of the problems facing journalists. The study concluded that majority of the respondents prefer teaching as the most suitable career for women as it afford them time to attend to family issues and prevent them from discrimination and other difficulties experience by female journalists. Also, Nigerian cultural orientation and religious beliefs are major factors that contributed to the negative attitude of female mass communication students towards journalism.

Chuang, Walker, and Caine-Bish (2009) conducted a study on student's perceptions of career choices: the impact of academic major. The study was conducted among students of three major academic programmes; hospitality management (HM), human development and family studies (HDFS), and nutrition and dietetics (ND) at a university in northeastern Ohio United States. The findings indicated that a student's academic major play a significant role in their career choice, as there is significant difference in the career decision making of the respondents from the three academic programmes. The main areas of differences

are career decision self-efficacy, career outcome expectation and commitment to career choices. Majority of the students stated that personal interest is the most influential factor in making their career choice. Also, they stated that they relied on faculty staff expertise to guide them to make well informed career choice. The study concluded that faculty members in the university have a vital role to play in the career development of their students.

2.6 Theoretical Review

2.6.1 Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in the 1970s, explains how individuals make rational decisions based on available information, personal attitudes, and social norms. The theory posits that a person's intention to perform a behavior is the most immediate predictor of that behavior. This intention is shaped by two core components: attitude toward the behavior (how positively or negatively a person feels about doing it) and subjective norms (how much social pressure they feel to perform or avoid the behavior). TRA assumes that individuals act based on logical reasoning, considering both personal beliefs and the influence of others. For example, if someone believes a career is rewarding (attitude) and their peers or family support that career (subjective norm),

they are more likely to pursue it. The theory provides a structured framework for understanding deliberate decision-making, especially in areas involving significant personal and social implications, like career choices.

The Theory of Reasoned Action is highly applicable to this study on the factors influencing Mass Communication students' career choices. Students don't choose careers randomly, they form intentions based on their personal evaluations of the career (attitudes) and the perceived expectations of people around them (subjective norms). For instance, a student may have a positive attitude toward becoming a journalist due to passion or interest but might choose public relations instead because family or mentors view it as more stable or prestigious. This interplay of personal preference and social influence, as explained by TRA, helps clarify why students often compromise or shift their choices. By applying TRA, this study can better understand how students weigh personal desires against external pressures in forming their career intentions. It also supports the inclusion of variables like peer influence, parental expectations, and perceived career value as key factors in career decision-making processes.

2.6.2 Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura in 1977, emphasizes that people learn behaviors, attitudes, and values through observation, imitation, and modeling. Unlike purely behaviorist theories, which focus on direct reinforcement, Bandura argued that learning can occur in a social context without direct experience. Key components of the theory include attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Individuals observe others (models), process what they see, and, if motivated, replicate those behaviors. This theory also highlights the role of cognitive processes and self-efficacy, belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations, as central to learning. Bandura demonstrated this through his famous Bobo doll experiment, which showed that children mimic aggressive behavior modeled by adults. Social Learning Theory underscores the importance of the environment, media, and social interactions in shaping behavior and decision-making. In essence, people are not passive learners; they are actively influenced by observing others and their outcomes in various social settings.

Social Learning Theory is directly relevant to this study on factors influencing career choices among Mass Communication students. Students are frequently influenced by the behavior, success, and career paths of peers, lecturers, public figures, and media professionals. For example, seeing a popular broadcaster

or successful PR expert on social media can motivate students to pursue similar careers, especially when such figures are portrayed as successful and fulfilled. This observational learning extends beyond admiration, it shapes real choices. Peer discussions, mentor relationships, and exposure to media trends serve as learning moments, allowing students to evaluate and imitate career paths they perceive as desirable. The theory also explains why students from similar environments often choose similar careers; they are influenced by shared models and experiences. Thus, Social Learning Theory provides a strong psychological basis for understanding how external social factors contribute to internal career decision-making processes among communication students.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A research design is simply the action plan that outlines how data will be obtained and used in a study. In this study, the survey research design was employed. Check & Schutt (2012), noted that a survey is the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions. This

type of research allows for a variety of methods to recruit participants, collect data, and utilise various methods of instrumentation

3.2 Population of study

The population of study is that group about whom we want to be able to draw conclusions. The population of this study therefore, comprises all full-time and part-time undergraduate Mass Communication students in the University of Benin, whose population is estimated at 876 students for full-time and 364 students for part-time, making it a total of 1240 students. (University of Benin, Department of Mass Communication, 2025).

3.3 Sample Size

Sample size is a group of subjects that are selected from the general population and is considered a representative of the real population for that specific study. Okwechime (2011), describes it as any part of a population taken in a specific manner, and the larger the population of the study, the larger the sample size for the study.

The sample size of this study was determined using the Taro Yamane formula:

Taro Yamane Formula: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N [e]^2}$

Where n= Sample size.

N= Population size

E= Margin of error at 0.05

Therefore: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N (0.05)^2}$

$n = \frac{1240}{1 + 1240 \times 0.0025}$

$n = \frac{1240}{1 + 3.1}$

$n = \frac{1240}{4.1}$

$n = 302.4$

Therefore, n is approximately, 302.

3.4 Sampling Technique

The researcher used the simple random sampling technique to choose study participants. Each member has an equal chance of being selected using the simple random technique, which selects a tiny, random sample of the total population to represent it as a whole. This method was driven by the researcher's goal to fairly portray the population and achieve reliable results.

3.5 Instruments of data collection

The questionnaire is the tool used to gather data for this study. The questionnaire was separated into two portions (sections A and B), namely demographic and psychographic. The former gathered the respondents' biographical information, while the latter gathered their answers to the study topic. There were 4 questions in section A and 10 questions in section B.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

This refers to how the researcher intends on administering the questionnaire or collection of data. The questionnaires were administered or distributed to respondents through personal delivery to the 302 samples and was retrieved on the spot to avoid shortage.

3.7 Validity of the Instrument

According to Okwechime (2011), validity is used to establish confidence that a given research instrument can produce acceptable results and significant information. In order to confirm and authenticate the research instrument prior to administration, the project supervisor scrutinized, examined, and oversaw the questionnaire used in this study.

3.8 Reliability of Study

A measure is deemed fit to be reliable if it can produce the same result when repeated. It is also a quality of a measure being dependable, stable and consistent overtime (Okwechime, 2011). To ascertain the reliability of the research instrument, the test-retest method was adopted. In applying the test-retest method, 20 copies of the questionnaires were given to 20 students and was retrieved and analysed, the same task was repeated after two weeks and it yielded the same result. This made the researcher approved the instrument as reliable.

3.9 Method of data analysis

The data analysis method in this research work was a frequency table as a statistical tool. This method was adopted because of the ease of analysis and clarity of presentation of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Data Presentation

Table 1: Respondents' Level of Study

Level	Frequency	Percentage %
100	31	10.2%
200	115	38%
300	37	12.2%

400	119	39.4%
Total	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The data above shows that the majority of the respondents were 400 level students which amounts to 39.4% of the total sample, followed by 200 level students, which make up 38% of the total sample.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	56	19%
Female	246	81%
Total	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data shows that 56 respondents which is 19% of the total sample were male, while 246 respondents which is 82% of the total sample were female. This implies that majority of the respondents for the study were female.

Table 3: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage %
Below 20 years	88	29%
21-35years	195	65%
36-40years	19	6%
Total	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data displays that 88 respondents which is 29% of the total sample were below 20 years, 195 respondents which is 65% of the total sample were within the age of 21-35years, while 19 respondents which is 6% of the total sample were within 36-40years. This indicates that majority of the respondents were within the age of 21-35years.

Table 4: Respondents Area of Interest?

Area of Interest	Frequency	Percentage %
Journalism	30	10%
Public Relations	63	21%
Advertising	52	17%
Broadcasting	73	24%
Digital Media	84	28%
Total	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The data above shows that 30 respondents which is 10% of the total sample have interest in journalism, 63 respondents which is 21% of the total sample have interest in public relations, 52 respondents which is 17% of the total sample have interest in advertising, 73 respondents which is 24% have interest in broadcasting, while 84 respondents which is 28% of the total sample have interest in digital media. From the above data majority of the respondents are interested in digital media.

Table 5: Do you agree that your interest influence your career choice?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	128	42%
Agree	37	12%
Neutral	23	8%
Disagree	81	27%
Strongly Disagree	33	11%
Total	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data shows that 128 respondents which is 42% of the total sample strongly agree that personal interest influence their career choice, 37 respondents which is 12% of the total sample agreed, 23 respondents which is 8% of the total sample were neutral, 81 respondents which is 27% of the total sample disagreed, while 33 respondents which is 11% of the total sample strongly disagreed.

Table 6: Who influences your career choice the most?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Parents	73	24%
Peers	45	15%
Lecturers	27	9%
Industry Professionals	65	22%
Self	92	30%
Total	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The data above shows that 73 respondents which is 24% of the total sample stated that their parents influence their career the most, 45 respondents which is 15% of the total sample said it is their peers, 27 respondents which is 9% of the total sample said it is their lecturers, 65 respondents which is 22% of the total sample said theirs' is industry professionals while 92 respondents which is 30% of the total sample said it is self. The above analysis shows that majority of the respondents self influence their career choices.

Table 7: Does your financial background influence your career decision?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	277	92%
No	25	8%
Not Sure	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data shows that 277 respondents which is 92% of the total sample believes that their financial background influence their career choices, 25 respondents which is 8% of the total sample don't believe so.

Table 8: To what extent do gender roles or expectations affect your career preference?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Very high extent	52	17%
High extent	31	10%
Neutral	16	5%

Low extent	183	61%
Very low extent	20	7%
Total	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data displays that 52 respondents which is 17% of the total sample said gender roles influence their career choices to a very high extent, 31 respondents which is 10% of the total sample said it is to a high extent, 16 respondents Which is 5% of the total sample were neutral, 183 respondents which is 61% of the total sample said it is to a low extent, while 20 respondents which is 7% of the total sample said it is to a very low extent.

Table 9: How often do you follow trends in the media industry (e.g., new platforms, job roles, or influencers)?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Often	153	51%
Not often	111	37%
Not at all	36	12%
Total	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The data above states that 153 respondents which is 51% of the total sample said they often follow trends in the media industry, 111 respondents which is 37% of the

total sample said not often, while 36 respondents which is 12% of the total sample said not at all. The above analysis shows that majority of the respondents often follow trends in the media industry.

Table 10: Which media platform has influenced your career interests the most?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Television	42	14%
Radio	28	9%
Newspaper	4	1%
Social Media	126	42%
Blogs or Online Forums	102	34%
Total	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The data above shows that majority of the respondents which is 42% of the total sample are mostly influenced by social media platforms, followed by blogs or online forums which is 34% of the total sample.

Table 11: Have media trends (e.g., rise of influencers, digital journalism) affected your career preference?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	187	62%
No	90	30%
Not sure	25	8%
Total	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data shows that 187 respondents which is 62% of the total sample have had their career choices influenced by media trends, 90 respondents which is 30% of the total sample have not, while 25 respondents which is 8% of the total sample were indifferent.

Table 12: Do you agree that current industry demands influence your choice of specialization?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly Agree	203	67%
Agree	28	9%
Neutral	11	4%
Disagree	43	14%
Strongly Disagree	17	6%
Total	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data shows that 203 respondents which is 67% of the total sample strongly agreed that current industry demands influence their choice of specialization, 28 respondents which is 9% of the total sample agreed, 11 respondents which is 4% of the total sample were neutral, 43 respondents which is 14% of the total sample disagreed, while 17 respondents which is 6% of the total sample strongly disagreed. This implies that majority of the respondents believes that current industry demands influence their choices.

Table 13: Have you undergone any internship or practical training as part of your program?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	206	68%
No	96	32%
Total	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above data shows that 206 respondents which is 68% of the total sample have undergone internship or practical training as part of their program, 96 respondents which is 32% of the total sample have not.

Table 14: If yes, how did your internship experience influence your career decision?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Made me more interested in the field	57	19%
Made me reconsider my initial career choice	72	24%
Had no impact	96	32%
Helped me specialize or focus	77	25%
Total	302	100%

Field Survey, 2025

The above analysis shows that internships have not impacted majority of the respondents' career choices.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: What are the factors influencing career decisions among mass communication students?

The findings of this study reveal that career decisions among mass communication students are influenced by a combination of personal, social, and structural factors. Data from Table 5 shows that a majority of respondents (42%) strongly agreed that personal interest shapes their career paths, while 30% in Table 6 reported that self-motivation was their strongest influence. This finding aligns with Uwakwe (2017), who argued that individual passion and self-drive are central to career determination among media students in Nigeria. However, external factors also matter, as seen in the Table, 24% of respondents acknowledged parental influence, while 22% cited industry professionals. Additionally, Table 7 revealed that 92% considered financial background a major determinant. This supports Ekwueme and Obayi (2018), who observed that socioeconomic constraints often limit students' ability to pursue preferred career paths in Nigeria's media sector. Gender roles, however, played only a marginal role, with 61% stating they had little effect, suggesting a gradual shift away from traditional gendered career stereotypes.

Research Question 2: What are the roles of media exposure and industry trends in shaping students' career choices?

The findings of this study reflect the significant role of media exposure and industry trends in shaping the career decisions of mass communication students. Data from Table 9 revealed that more than half of the respondents (51%) frequently follow media industry trends, while 37% do so occasionally, and only 12% do not. This suggests that students are highly attuned to the changing landscape of the media environment. Social media emerged as the most influential platform, with 42% of respondents identifying it as shaping their career interests, followed by blogs and online forums at 34% (Table 10). Traditional media such as television (14%), radio (9%), and newspapers (1%) were far less influential, indicating a generational shift towards digital platforms. The influence of emerging industry trends is equally striking. As shown in Table 11, 62% of respondents admitted that developments such as the rise of influencers and digital journalism have affected their career choices. Similarly, Table 12 demonstrates that 67% strongly agreed current industry demands influenced their specialisation, with another 9% in agreement. This highlights how closely students align their aspirations with labour market realities, often gravitating towards areas with higher employability, such as digital media, content creation, and broadcasting.

These findings resonate with Nwosu (2020), who argued that students' professional trajectories in communication fields are increasingly moulded by the rapid growth of digital platforms and global industry trends. Thus, exposure to media innovations not only informs students' choices but actively redirects them towards high-demand, future-oriented specialisations.

Research Question 3: How does internship and practical training impact students' career choices?

The findings demonstrate that internships and practical training play an important but uneven role in shaping career decisions among mass communication students. As shown in Table 13, 68% of respondents had undergone internship or practical training, while 32% had not. This distinction is critical in interpreting Table 14. The 32% who reported “no impact” on their career decisions corresponds almost entirely to those who never participated in an internship, rather than students who had unsatisfactory experiences. Among those with internship experience, the outcomes were consistently significant: 37% reported that internships helped them specialize or focus, 35% said it made them reconsider their initial career choice, and 28% became more interested in their chosen field. This suggests that internships are not neutral experiences but actively shape students' self-perception and career trajectories, whether by reinforcing interest, sharpening focus, or redirecting

aspirations. The findings align with Okoro and Agbo (2019), who argued that well-structured internships in Nigerian media provide crucial exposure that bridges theoretical learning with professional practice. However, they also noted inconsistencies in access and quality, which explains why a sizeable minority of students in this study reported no impact, stemming from lack of participation rather than ineffectiveness.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter present the summary, findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of this study.

5.1 Summary

This study was designed to research on the factors influencing career choices among mass communication students. The study objectives were to identify the factors that influence career decisions among Mass Communication students, examine the role of media exposure alongside industry trends in shaping students' career choices and assess the impact of internships and practical training on students' career choices. The study employed the theory of reasoned action and the social learning theory, which laid the foundation for further discussions in the study. The survey research design was used alongside a questionnaire, which served as the instrument for collecting relevant data for the study from a sample size of 302 and proper analysis was done using the simple percentage table.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The results of this study, drawn from 302 Uniben Mass Communication students, are as follow;

1. Mass communication students' career choices are shaped by a blend of personal interests, socioeconomic conditions, media exposure, and experiential learning.
2. The strong influence of digital platforms and industry trends indicates that students are highly responsive to shifts in the media landscape.
3. Internship experiences actively shape students' self-perception and career trajectories, whether by reinforcing interest, sharpening focus, or redirecting aspirations.

5.2 Conclusion

This study explored the factors that shape the career decisions of mass communication students, paying close attention to personal motivations, industry influences, and hands-on learning. The results showed that career choices are not determined by a single factor but are instead the outcome of several overlapping influences. Personal interest plays a strong role, yet financial background and the opportunities open to students also weigh heavily on their decisions. In other words, while students exercise personal agency, their choices are also shaped by the realities of their environment. One of the most striking findings is the influence of digital platforms and industry trends. Social media, blogs, and online forums have

become powerful spaces where students draw career inspiration and direction. This demonstrates how responsive students are to changes in the media landscape and how quickly they adapt to new possibilities. It also reflects the wider shifts happening in communication industries, where technology and audience behaviour continue to redefine what is possible. Many students are therefore positioning themselves for future careers in areas like digital journalism, broadcasting, and content creation. Finally, internships and practical training were found to be transformative experiences. For many, they helped sharpen their focus, deepen their interest, or even redirect their career paths. Far from being routine requirements, internships stand out as meaningful stages in career development, bridging the gap between theory and professional practice. Thus, mass communication students' career choices are often determined by their personal interest mediated by exposure and experiences available to them

5.3 Recommendation

The following are the recommendations of this study;

- 1. Strengthen Career Guidance and Support Systems:** Since students' career choices are influenced by a mix of personal interest and

socioeconomic realities, universities should provide structured career counselling programs. These should help students balance passion with practical considerations such as financial constraints and employment opportunities, ensuring more informed and sustainable career paths.

- 2. Integrate Digital Media Trends into the Curriculum:** Given the strong influence of digital platforms and industry shifts, mass communication programs should update curricula regularly to include training in areas like social media strategy, digital journalism, content creation, and emerging media technologies. This will better prepare students for the realities of a rapidly evolving industry.
- 3. Expand and Improve Internship Opportunities:** Since internships significantly shape students' career trajectories, institutions should partner with media organisations to provide more placements that are structured, relevant, and skill-oriented. This will ensure that practical training reinforces learning, builds confidence, and helps students make better-informed career decisions.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Department of Mass Communication
Faculty of Arts
University of Benin,
Benin City, Nigeria,
May, 2025.

Dear respondent,

REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF ITEMS IN QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a final year student of the above-named department/ institution. I am researching the **factors influencing career choices among mass communication students.**

This research is in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass communication.

To give accurate data for this study, you have been carefully chosen. The study adheres closely to research ethics, which safeguards the respondents' confidentiality. Your submission of any information will only be used for scholarly purposes.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

**Elizabeth Amayo
Researcher**

QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Demographic Data

1. What is your level of study? (a) 100 Level (b) 200 Level (c) 300 Level (d) 400 Level
2. Gender: (a) Male (b) Female
3. Age (a) Below 20 years (b) 21-35years (c) 36-40years
4. Area of Interest? (a) Journalism (b) Public Relations (c) Advertising (d) Broadcasting (e) Digital Media

Section B: Psychographic Data

5. Do you agree that your interest influence your career choice? (a) Strongly agree (b) Agree (c) Neutral (d) Disagree (e) Strongly disagree
6. Who influences your career choice the most? (a) Parents (b) Peers (c) Lecturers (d) Industry professionals (e) Self
7. Does your financial background influence your career decision? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure

8. To what extent do gender roles or expectations affect your career preference?
(a) Very high extent (b) high extent (c) neutral (d) low extent (e) very low extent
9. How often do you follow trends in the media industry (e.g., new platforms, job roles, or influencers)? (a) Often (b) Not often (c) Not at all
10. Which media platform has influenced your career interests the most? (a) Television (b) Radio (c) Newspapers (d) social media (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, YouTube) (e) Blogs or Online Forums
11. Have media trends (e.g., rise of influencers, digital journalism) affected your career preference? (a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure
12. Do you agree that current industry demands influence your choice of specialization? (a) Strongly agree (b) Agree (c) Neutral (d) Disagree (e) Strongly disagree
13. Have you undergone any internship or practical training as part of your program? (a) Yes (b) No
14. If yes, how did your internship experience influence your career decision? (a) Made me more interested in the field (b) Made me reconsider my initial career choice (c) Had no impact (d) Helped me specialize or focus

