DETERMINING FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' ACCEPTANCE OF FIELDS OF STUDY DIFFERENT FROM THEIR CHOSEN CAREER CHOICES IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

This study borders on why would prospective students accept admission in fields of study different from their chosen careers, especially as it can negatively impact the lives, work, and accomplishments of the students throughout their lives. The ranked responses of 106 students of University of Benin, Nigeria was analyzed using the weighted mean score and descriptive discriminant analysis. Among the ten identified influencing factors, the first identified link factors which include overwhelming urge for a university education, I have waited too long to get into university, and difficulty of gaining admission into public universities was the most significant independent and combined influencing factors. The results revealed that no single factor can influence students' decision to accept admission in fields different from their chosen fields of study, unless for a combination of the identified factors. In addition, the results revealed that gender has no significant influence on the choice of factors.

Keyword: Prospective student, career choice, fields of study, weighted mean score, descriptive discriminant analysis

1.0 Introduction

Right career choice often leads to life fulfillment; however, when prospective students accept fields of study that are different from their career choices, not only does it conflict with their personal interests, but it can negatively impact the lives, work, and accomplishments of prospective students throughout their lives [1]. The prospective student seeking admission to a public tertiary institution or university of choice had already chosen the field of study, and only waiting to gain admission into the public university in order to fulfil the dreamed career/profession. Public universities are schools that have been set up by the government to educate the generality of people regardless of their economy, social or political status in the society. But, every public university in Nigeria has a carrying capacity. The carrying capacity indicates that prospective students are admitted on the basis of available facilities. In other words, the number of students admitted is not expected to exceed the number of facilities available – course by course, department by department, faculty by faculty. This affects both access and equity in public university education, and makes admission to public universities in Nigeria not only difficult, but competitive as a result of limited spaces.

In University of Benin, Nigeria, the admission team otherwise known as University Admission Board (UAB) oversees the administration of standardized admission exams and the processing of applications for prospective students' placements into various fields of study representing their career choices. The UAB also determine the carrying capacity for the various fields of study/departments. However, when the prospective students are admitted to the university, some of these prospective students who could not make the cut-off mark in their chosen fields of study (usually a maximum of two) are given other fields as options. The alternative fields of study offered could be within the faculty for which the prospective students chosen fields of study are domiciled or completely outside the faculty. This means that prospective students are offered admissions to pursue career paths regardless of their career choices, potentials and academic abilities. Consequently, these admitted students may find it difficult to face the challenges of academic workload in given fields of study or subject areas as options. In addition, the admitted students may not feel motivated to perform well, and can impede their incentive to work seriously to achieve a good result at the end of graduation. In most cases, some of these students'

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shop for other preferred fields of study at the end of their first session in order to still fulfil their career choices. These class of students face a lot of challenges ranging from attendance of lectures in two departments due to unnecessary delays in processing of their transfers letters, as well as outright denial of such transfers almost at the end of the second session/semester. For those in science based courses, majority of them are often advised to withdraw when it becomes obvious that they cannot cope with the challenges of academic workload. At other instances, few of these students are allowed probation to carry less credit workload, but majority of these same students are oftentimes unable to pass or improve on their performances. Consequently, they are asked to withdraw from the current field of study and advised to shop for any other field in a different department/faculty willing to accommodate them at a lower level. A few of these students come back after graduation to apply for admission into their earlier chosen field of study in order to still fulfill their dream career choice.

The administrative policy of admitting prospective students in fields other than their chosen fields of study is a common norm in most public universities in Nigeria [2]. One probable reason for sustaining this policy in most Nigeria's public universities is inadequate funding. Inadequate funding remains a major challenge facing Nigeria's public universities. Besides, the conventional sources of funding such as government subvention which hardly can take care of the recurrent expenditures, donations, and endowment fund among others, the major source of public universities internally generated revenue (IGR) is the students' tuition fees/levies. The amount of tuition fees the tertiary institutions are able to generate as IGR depends largely on their carrying capacities. Hence, public universities will always make policy that will ensure their carrying capacity is sustained, and even enact policies that will enable them admit beyond their carrying capacity in order to generate more financial resources to carry out its functions effectively.

 Most of the research papers on career choice focused on factors that can influence career choice prior to being admitted to university. This include childhood fantasies [3]; culture [4]; personality type [5]; previous experiences [3]; gender [6-8]; personal interests [9-10]; life roles [3]; skills, abilities, and talents [9]; social and economic conditions [9]; family/parents [4, 9-11]; media [6]; teacher [12-13]; and peers influence [6]. All the aforementioned predictors of career choice only influence the career choice of prospective students prior to their admission to university. But why would a prospective student accept admission in a field that is different from the field of study for which he or she has applied? This is a pertinent question that constitute a gap in existing literature to be filled by the present study. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the factors influencing a prospective student's acceptance of admission in fields different from their chosen fields of study using the University of Benin as a case study. The rest of the article is structured as follows: First, existing literatures on perceived factors that can influence prospective students to accept admission in fields different from their chosen fields of study. This is followed by a description of the research materials and methods used in the study. The results of our enquiry are then discussed. Finally, the concluding remarks are presented.

2.0   Literature Review

Career choice has been well established as a major challenge in young people's and students' development lives. Akosah-Twumasi et al [10] as cited in [14-15] opined in their paper that career choice is reported to be associated with positive as well as harmful psychological, physical and socio-economic inequalities that persist well beyond the youthful age into an individual's adult life. Previous researchers have identified many shocking reasons why prospective students choose the wrong career path before gaining admission to a university. This include desire for prestigious degrees by parents and guardians while ignoring the inborn skills of their children/wards [4, 9-11]; ignorance about other careers by parents and prospective students [4, 9-11]; peers influence [6]; dearth of career counselors in most educational institutes in Nigeria making people (in particular parents and relatives) without adequate knowledge to assume this role [16-18]; desire for professions with high employment opportunities without adequate knowledge of the demands of the profession [19]; and desire for professions with self-employment opportunities due to rapidly increasing high employment rate for university graduates in Nigeria [20, 21]. However, none of these studies could identify the factors/reasons that influence a prospective student to accept admission in a field that is different from his or her chosen field of study when offered admission by a public university. This study therefore sought to investigate the probable reasons/factors that influences prospective students to suddenly lose their right to insist on their chosen fields of study, but rather grab whatever fields of study offered them by the university's UAB. Hence, the choice of factors reviewed here is based on their perceived ability of influencing prospective students to accept admission in fields different from their chosen fields of study based on sample responses from one-on-one interviews with colleagues and faculty admissions officers, as well as with affected undergraduate students from the University of Benin.

2.1   *Fulfilling an uneducated parent's desire for a university education*

Study done by [13] found that respondents indicated that mothers (52.50%) and fathers (18.75%) were regarded as the most significant family members that impacted positively on students' career choices, followed by siblings or guardians

(16.25%). According to [22], parental opinion/values sometimes put an emphasis on a specific career. However, in a situation where a parent is not formally educated, such parent may not be well informed as regard the importance of choosing the right career. Hence, such parent desire for his/her child might just be a university education without placing any emphasis on a specific career choice. Consequently, there will be high probability of prospecting students from such background accepting any fields of study offered them by university admission board in order to fulfil their parents' desires of a university education.

2.2   Overwhelming urge for a university education
Recently, the demand for university education has grown phenomenally. Every Nigerian Youth thinks if he doesn't go to a university, then he is a failure [23]. For them, university education is a vehicle for social mobility, personal development and empowerment. In addition, past experiences may also lead to an overwhelming urge for university education by a prospective student. For example, a prospective student who have being denied several opportunities of a gainful employment as result of his/her not having at least a university education will definitely be faced with a compelling need for a university education regardless of the field of study. Such a prospective student will grab whatever field of study offered him or her by the university's UAB.

2.3   Difficulty of gaining admission into public universities
In 2019, It was reported that "about two million students applied for the Unified Tertiary and Matriculation Examinations (UTME) and Direct Entry. The country's tertiary institutions had a target of 600,000, but they ended up admitting 612,557 as of June" [24]. Considering the current estimate of Nigeria population based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data released by National Population Commission (NPC), Nigeria's population is about 216 million with a median age of 18.1 years [25]. Thus, due to the paucity of space in the available universities in the country, access to public universities in Nigeria remains a serious challenge. Hence, every prospective student seeking admission to a public university is faced with a lot of competition. No doubt, a prospective student is likely to grab whatever course offered him or her by the university's UAB.

2.4   Possibility to work anywhere regardless of discipline
In Nigerian labor market, your career or discipline has little influence on the job you can do. In other words, a chemist can work in a bank, a holder of a bachelor's degree in marketing can work with the police force, a holder of an associate's degree in automotive technology will always work for a pharmaceutical company and so on. Unfortunately, this practice has not only made the pursuit of a career in Nigeria very difficult, but could be seen as a possible reason why some prospective students will settle for any course offered them by the university's UAB as long as they are able to graduate with a university degree at end of the program.

2.5   Possibility of inter-faculty/ intra-faculty transfer
Just as some Nigerian universities accept transfers from one university to another, so it is possible to transfer from one faculty to another or from one department to another within the same faculty. This means it is possible for a prospective student to change its field of study after being admitted while proceeding to 200 level in the university. In University of Benin, all transfer students admitted into 200 level must have a strong Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), and their UTME requirements must meet that of the university's as well as that of the Department's the student is transferring to. As a result of the possibility of transfer window at 200 level, most prospective students willingly accept any course offered them by the university's UAB provided it is possible for them to transfer from the fields of study they were admitted into to their preferred choices at 200 level. However, many of such attempts had been let down either due to the student inability to meet up with the aforementioned requirements, or due to a sudden change in transfer policy of the particular department/faculty.

2.6   I may not obtain a higher jamb score in the next exam
In order to restore confidence in the polity, the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) introduced the Computer-Based Testing (CBT) in the 2015 UTME with the objective of eliminating all forms of examination malpractice and promote the use of electronic testing in Nigeria. The influence of CBT on students' academic performance in JAMB examination in Nigeria had been positive and remarkable over the years ranging from cost reduction, saving of time, impartial assessment, prompt release of results and improved reliability. However, the use of CBT formats in writing JAMB exam in Nigeria still remains a nightmare for thousands of candidates across the country because of the several challenges found to be associated with the CBT mode of examination. A study by [26] revealed that dearth of computers, failure of internet servers, power failure, slow booting of computers, loss of time in the process, and offering candidates' subjects they never registered for are prevalent challenges in CBT. Besides, one of the first steps to securing admission to

the University of Benin is for the prospective student to obtain a minimum of score of 200 points in the UTME. Consequently, a candidate who is able to obtain a high jamb score (of 200 points and above) under conditions which lack test civility would certainly not want to write the exam again. Such prospective student is likely to grab whatever course offered him or her by the university's UAB.

2.7   *I have waited too long to get into university*
In Nigeria, admission to public universities takes into account several factors which often result in many prospective students waiting a long time to enter university. A major factor is the admission quota for each public university set by the National University Commission (NUC). The admission quota is the number of students that a university is permitted to admit into each academic session according to its carrying capacity. Once an institution has admitted the number of students it is authorized to admit, other applicants who have applied to that institution will not be offered admission to that university, regardless of the fact that they have scored above the cut-off mark. This means that these affected students will have to wait another year of admission to be admitted if only they are able to obtain yet a higher score above the cutoff mark that will secure their admission. If not, they may need to wait longer to be admitted to university. Another factor is that JAMB cut-off marks are not enough for admission as there is additional one cut-off mark to beat before being admitted – the Post UTME cut-off marks. The Post UTME is another exam given to prospective students by some institutions after UTME. In some public universities in Nigeria including University of Benin, a prospective student need to score high in UTME and Post UTME with complete Ordinary level results recognized by the university in order to secure admission. In other words, having a higher UTME score is not enough to guarantee your admission. You have to as well pass and do well in the post UTME or screening to obtain an aggregate score not less than 50 to be admitted. These additional barriers contribute to a longer wait time to get into university.

2.8   *I had a number of low jamb scores before passing the exam*
In addition to the several challenges found to be associated with the CBT mode of writing JAMB examination in Nigeria, the issue of low marks scored by majority of the candidates has continue to elicits reactions from stakeholders and parents. Recently, the 2021/2022 UTME result turned out to be very abysmal and condemnable. Of the 6,944,368 applicants who participated in the exam, only 973,384 passed with minimum scores (typically 160 to 180 points) to obtain admission to public universities in Nigeria. This shows that only 14% passed while 86% representing the total of 5,970,984 woefully failed [27]. The availability of mobile phones coupled with the increasing presence of social media handles like Facebook, Instagram and Tiktok brings enormous distractions to the reading behavior of students. Other notable reasons why students obtain low scores (less than 160 points) include failure to follow the syllabus, failure to apply speed in the exam, and Lack of computer literacy leading to inability of candidates to operate the computers during exams. Hence, judging from the aforementioned challenges and reasons why students obtain low marks in UTME, one may conclude that obtaining a high score of at least 200 points and above could best be described as a big triumph for any JAMB candidate, and would not want to waste such opportunity.

2.9   *Fear of exceeding the age limit for National Youth Service Program upon graduation*
Generally, in Nigerian universities, a prospective student must be 16 years by October/December of the admission year before he can be offered admission. Although the 16 years' age limit requirement for university admission has no legal backing. However, it has become the gold standard for universities in Nigeria including University of Benin probably for the purpose of potential admission seekers to be physically and emotionally mature for studies in a university. Similarly, an undergraduate student who is over the age of 30 at the time of graduation will not be able to participate in the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) program of one year. This means that a prospective student or applicant has only 14 years of grace (from 16 years) to complete his program of study in a higher educational institution to be part of the NYSC program. The NYSC is a program set up by the Nigerian government to involve Nigerian graduates in nation building and the development of the country. A Discharge Certificate is given to every youth corps member at the end of the program, while a Certificate of Exemption is given to graduates whose ages are more than thirty (30) years as at the time of their graduation. However, the NYSC Certificate of Exemption is often taken as a bad omen. Therefore, a prospective student who has waited long before gaining admission, with the mindset that his graduation year may be extended due to incessant strike by the Academic Staff Unions of Universities (ASUU), as well as the possibility of repeating a class (or transferring from one subject area to another) cannot be ruled out, is likely to grab whatever course offered him or her by the university's UAB.

2.10   *My friends were already admitted to the university*
Most prospective students become desperately eager to get into the university when their friends gain admission to a university. The absence of their friends often creates a deep sense of loneliness and longing in them. This is further aggravated if such prospective students come from homes where they have parents who sometimes control them and blame

them for everything. In most cases where this happens, the prospective students are likely to grab whatever course offered them by a university's UAB as long as it gives them a chance to get together with their friends and relieve them of the hassle of staying with their parents.

3.0   Research Method
3.1   Study Area
The University of Benin (UNIBEN), Benin City, Edo State was founded on Saturday 23rd of November, 1970. It started as an Institute of Technology with the first batch of one hundred and eight (108) students from different parts of Nigeria to study courses on sciences and mathematics. It was accorded the status of a full-fledged University by the Nigeria "National Universities Commission" on the 1st of July, 1971. On the 1st of April 1975, the University at the request of the State Government, was taken over by the Federal Government and became a Federal University of the federal republic of Nigeria. UNIBEN currently has two campuses with fifteen faculties including a central library called John Harris Library. The University of Benin has a teaching hospital known as the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), with all specialties and medical areas, there are also various units such as SERVICOM (an acronym for Service Compact with all Nigerians), Medical Records, House of Nurses and Physicians, laundry services, catering and much more. According to statistics released by JAMB, the University of Benin had the highest number of admission applications (with a total number of 102,900 applications representing 5.93%) for any university in Nigeria during the 2012 UTME registration [28]. UNIBEN has remained among the sixth most sought-after Nigerian universities with a current yearly average of 70,000 applications till date. However, the average Nigeria university has a carrying capacity of 4,500, with UNIBEN having an average carrying capacity of 7,000. In addition to the carrying capacity of the university, each subject area/department has projected student enrolment at least for the first ten years. In a bid to ensure that the best students are admitted, and with a fair spread of her carrying capacity across the various faculties/departments in every sessional admission, the university's UAB often allocates cut-off marks to all fields of study offered by the university. Therefore, only those required number of applications with highest scores above the cut-off mark for chosen fields of study are admitted. The remaining applicants including those who could not make the cut-off mark in their chosen fields (usually a maximum of two) are offered admissions into other fields of study.

3.2   Data Collection
The study involved students of University of Benin (UNIBEN). The population of the study comprised undergraduate students whose current fields of study are different from their chosen fields of study, sampled from selected fields of study across faculties/schools of the University of Benin for 2019/2020 session. The rationale for not selecting respondents from all fields of study or faculties/schools stems from the fact that not all fields of study are affected by the university administrative policy of offering admission to prospective students in fields different from their chosen fields of study. For example, the university's UAB cannot offer a prospective student admission to study medicine or law if the prospective student had not applied for the aforementioned field of study either as first or second choice.

Besides the interview that was first conducted with few selected staff and affected students of the University of Benin, structured questionnaires were administered by posting it on the students general WhatsApp group (the general WhatsApp group contains students' numbers across all levels for each field of study) of the selected fields of study. The affected students were asked to fill out the questionnaire and repost on their WhatsApp group chart. A permission was sought from each of the selected field of study/department president for the corresponding author's number to be included in their WhatsApp group for a period of three weeks for the purpose of collating the responses. The choice of students general WhatsApp group chart was to ensure that all affected students are reached and to significantly reduced the cost of administering questionnaires. A total of one hundred and two (102) affected students responded to the questionnaire titled why do students accept fields that are different from their chosen first or second fields of study offered them by the university? Out of this number, 59 were males while 43 were females. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A – dealt with the respondent's demographic data such as sex, age, and field of study. Section B had - 10 questionnaire items in a 7 (from 1 to 7) point modified Likert–type scale model that will elicit information on factors influencing prospective student's acceptance of admission into fields that are different from their chosen fields of study.

The questionnaire was constructed by taking into consideration all the probable influencing factors obtained from the pre-conducted interview with few selected staff and affected students of the University of Benin. A 7-point Likert scale questionnaire was designed to capture the respondents' opinion as regards the factors influencing their acceptance of admission into fields that are different from their chosen fields of study. The point ranges between 1 to 7 which represents "strongly disagree", "disagree", "somewhat disagree", "neither agree nor disagree" "somewhat agree", "agree" and "strongly agree", respectively. The respondents were expected to rank in order the extent to which the factors influence their decision to accept admission into fields that are different from their preferred fields of study. Data collected were analyzed using the weighted mean score (WMS) and descriptive discriminant analysis (DDA).

3.3   *Weighted Mean Score*

Like in arithmetic mean, all values in the data set or distribution are assumed to be of equal importance. In order to reflect the influence of the Likert scale points used to measure the respondents' opinion, we used the weighted mean score (WMS) given as

$$\overline{x} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i * w_i}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i} \tag{1}$$

where x_i = frequency of respondents' opinions based on the Likert scale for each identified influencing factor and w_i = Likert scale points

3.4   *Descriptive Discriminant Analysis*

When the basic question of interest pertains to group differences with respect to a set of outcome variables, Descriptive Discriminant Analysis (DDA) will be the preferred statistical technique to use [29, 30]. When dealing with two groups, the linear combination of the discriminating variables, *Xs* for the ith individual $\left(i = 1, 2, \cdots, n_g\right)$ of group g (g = 1, 2) may be written as

$$Z_{ig} = b_1 X_{i1g} + b_2 X_{i2g} \tag{2}$$

where Z_{ig} is the LDF score for the ith individual in group g, b_i are the raw weights and X_i are the outcome (or discriminating) variables. In Fisher's discriminant function analysis, separation between groups is expressed in terms of the difference between the linear combination of the means for group 1 and group 2 defined as

$\overline{Z}_1 = b_1 \overline{X}_{11} + b_2 \overline{X}_{21} + \ldots + b_P \overline{X}_{P1}$ and $\overline{Z}_2 = b_1 \overline{X}_{12} + b_2 \overline{X}_{22} + \ldots + b_P \overline{X}_{P2}$. If we define

$$
\begin{aligned}
D &= \overline{Z}_1 - \overline{Z}_2 \\
&= b_1\left(\overline{X}_{11} - \overline{X}_{12}\right) + b_2\left(\overline{X}_{21} - \overline{X}_{22}\right) + \ldots + b_P\left(\overline{X}_{P1} - \overline{X}_{P2}\right) \\
&= b_1 d_1 + b_2 d_2 + \ldots + b_P d_P
\end{aligned} \tag{3}
$$

then the criterion for the maximum separation between the groups can be achieved by maximizing the discriminant criterion

$$\lambda = \frac{D^2}{V} = \frac{\left(b^T d\right)^2}{b^T W b} \tag{4}$$

where V is the within groups sum of squares of the linear discriminant function, Z defined in Equation (1), W is the pooled within-group sum of squares and cross products matrix for group 1 and 2, and $d = d_i$ in Equation (3). To determine the value of the discriminant weights, b, that maximizes the discriminant criterion, λ we take the first derivative of Equation (4) with respect to b and equate to zero. This yield;

$$\left(\frac{V}{D}\right) d = W b \tag{5}$$

Multiplying both sides of Equation (5) by W^{-1}, and setting (V/D) =1, since it will not affect the proportionality among the elements b, we may state

$$b = W^{-1} d \tag{6}$$

Hence the values of the raw coefficients b_i obtained by means of Equation (6) are substituted in Equation (1) to yield the linear discriminant function,

$$Z = b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + \ldots + b_p X_p \tag{7}$$

Two of the basic assumptions of DDA that must be tenable for us to have a valid conclusion include: (1) test of Equality of Group Means which will enable us examine whether there is a significant difference between the two groups (i.e., male and female prospective students) on each of the outcome variables, and (2) test of significance of the linear discriminant function (LDF) to permit the conclusion that the male and female prospective students do not differ significantly on the basis of the LDF.

4.0   Results
4.1   *Weighted Mean Score*

The obtained WMS for each factor using Equation (1) was employed to rank the identified factors that influence students' decision to accept admission in fields that are different from their chosen fields of study in the order of their influence or

importance so as to establish the most significant factors. Table 1 shows the weighted mean scores and the rankings of the factors influencing students' decision to accept admission in fields that are different from their chosen fields of study. The results in Table 1 reveals that "overwhelming urge for a university education" ranked 1st as the most important factor with a weighted mean score of 5.81, while "I have waited too long to get into university" and "difficulty of gaining admission into Nigeria's public universities" ranked 2nd and 3rd with weighted mean scores of 5.58 and 5.57 respectively. Also in Table 1, the "fear of exceeding the age limit for national youth service corps (NYSC) program upon graduation" was ranked as the least important factor that influences students' career choice with a weighted mean score of 3.47.

Table 1. Factors Influencing Students' Decision to Accept Admission in Fields that are Different from their Chosen Fields of Study.

Influencing factors	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	WMS	Rank
Fulfilling an uneducated parent's desire	12	19	10	12	16	22	11	4.09	9th
Overwhelming urge for a university education	01	03	01	06	25	28	38	5.81	1th
Difficulty of gaining admission into public universities	02	07	05	03	19	32	34	5.57	3th
Possibility to work anywhere regardless of discipline	08	13	15	15	17	23	11	4.30	8th
Possibility of inter-faculty/ intra-faculty transfer	04	10	03	06	16	38	25	5.29	5th
I may not obtain a higher jamb score in the next exam	04	03	04	12	22	32	25	5.36	4th
I have waited too long to get into university	05	05	02	03	21	31	35	5.58	2th
I had a number of low jamb scores before passing	16	07	03	10	09	27	30	4.86	6th
Fear of exceeding the age limit for NYSC Program	25	15	15	12	13	13	09	3.47	10th
My friends were already admitted to the university	11	08	05	12	23	20	23	4.76	7th

Note: *(1)= strongly disagree; (2)= disagree; (3)= somewhat disagree; (4)= neither agree nor disagree; (5)= somewhat agree; (6)= agree; (7)= strongly agree*

The possible reason why this factor came the least may be because 80% of respondents were less than 20 years old, 18% were between 20 and 24 years old, and the remaining 2% were above 24 years old. This means that the likelihood that any of the respondents will exceed the age limit of the NYSC Program upon graduation is close to zero.

When the weighted mean scores in column 9 of Table 1 are rounded to the nearest whole number, the ten identified influencing factors can easily be grouped into three different link factors or groups. A cursory look at the Table 1 shows that the first link factor, which represents the first three influencing factors with ranked values 1 to 3, can be regarded as the most significant link factor influencing students' decision to accept admission into subject areas that are different from their chosen careers, with a weighted mean range of 5.81 to 5.57. The second group or link factor represents the ranked influencing factors four to seven with a weighted mean range of 5.36 to 4.76, while the third group represents the ranked influencing factors eight to ten with a weighted mean scores of 4.30 and 3.47 respectively.

4.2   Descriptive Discriminant Analysis

The influence of gender in career choices has been documented in many studies [6-,8,31,32]. However, the study by [33] revealed that gender did not influence students' choice of careers. Hence, descriptive discriminant analysis (DDA) was used to determine if there is a significant difference in the choice of factors influencing the students' decision to accept admission in fields which are different from their chosen fields of study between male and female prospective students. However, we tested for multivariate normality and equality of variance-covariance matrices and their results were not tenable. The violation of multivariate normality and equality of variance-covariance matrices assumption may become an issue when the focus is on classifying subjects into one of several groups (which is the focus of predictive discriminant analysis, PDA), and not on revealing major differences among groups (which is the focus of descriptive discriminant analysis, DDA) [34, 35]. Results from subjecting the ten identified influencing factors shown in Table 1 to DDA using the DISCRIMINANT subprogram in SPSS are presented in Table 2, 3 and 4 respectively. The SPSS selected outputs that are presented in this section are based on their relevance to the study objective.

Table 2. Group Statistics Table

Male or Female	Mean	Std. dev.	Valid N
Male (Group 1)			
Fulfilling an uneducated parent's desire	3.9661	2.02541	59
Overwhelming urge for a university education	5.7797	1.28744	59
Difficulty of gaining admission into public universities	5.5593	1.51169	59
Possibility to work anywhere regardless of discipline	4.2203	1.94819	59
Possibility of inter-faculty/ intra-faculty transfer	5.2373	1.77472	59
I may not obtain a higher jamb score in the next exam	5.1186	1.65138	59
I have waited too long to get into university	5.4237	1.68363	59
I had a number of low jamb scores before passing the exam	4.6949	2.23031	59
Fear of exceeding the age limit for NYSC Program	3.4746	2.07909	59
My friends were already admitted to the university	5.0169	1.82409	59
Female (Group 2)			
Fulfilling an uneducated parent's desire	4.1395	1.97100	43
Overwhelming urge for a university education	5.8372	1.34395	43
Difficulty of gaining admission into public universities	5.7442	1.54447	43
Possibility to work anywhere regardless of discipline	4.2326	1.77062	43
Possibility of inter-faculty/ intra-faculty transfer	5.5581	1.59317	43
I may not obtain a higher jamb score in the next exam	5.7674	1.28799	43
I have waited too long to get into university	5.9302	1.45398	43
I had a number of low jamb scores before passing the exam	5.1628	2.11492	43
Fear of exceeding the age limit for NYSC Program	3.6744	2.13498	43
My friends were already admitted to the university	4.7442	2.09413	43

A close look at Table 2 suggest that none of the influencing factors are good discriminators as their mean values between the groups are essentially close or equivalent. In other words, there are no significant differences between the prospective male and female students on each of the influencing factors using group means. To further corroborate the above finding, results of test of significance of the Wilks's lambda (Λ) used in an ANOVA (F) test of mean differences is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Tests of Equality of Group Means Table

	Λ	F	Df1	Df2	Sig.
Fulfilling an uneducated parent's desire	.998	.187	1	100	.667
Overwhelming urge for a university education	1.000	.048	1	100	.827
Difficulty of gaining admission into public universities	.996	.365	1	100	.547
Possibility to work anywhere regardless of discipline	1.000	.001	1	100	.974
Possibility of inter-faculty/ intra-faculty transfer	.991	.885	1	100	.349
I may not obtain a higher jamb score in the next exam	.956	4.595	1	100	.034
I have waited too long to get into university	.975	2.520	1	100	.116
I had a number of low jamb scores before passing	.989	1.143	1	100	.288
Fear of exceeding the age limit for NYSC Program	.998	.225	1	100	.637
My friends were already admitted to the university	.995	.491	1	100	.485

A cursory look at Table 3 shows that only the sixth influencing factor has a significant value (of 0.034) less than 0.05 significant level, but its Lambda value is still close to 1 just like others. Hence, Table 3 provides strong statistical evidence of non-significant differences between means of prospective male and female students for all the identified influencing factors.

In Table 4, we observed a non-significant discriminant function with 90.4% proportion of total variability unexplained. The results in Table 4 support the assertion that if there are no significant differences between two or more groups, it is not worth proceeding any further with any discriminant analysis (DA) procedure, whether PDA or DDA.

Table 4. Wilks' Lambda Table

Test of Function(s)	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
1	.904	9.621	10	.474

5.0 Discussion and Recommendation

The study revealed that the score (when rounded to the nearest whole number) of each influencing factor in each of the three identified link factors or groups were equivalently equal. This finding suggests that no single identified factor can influence a student's decision to accept admission to a field of study that is different from his or her chosen field of study, except for a combination of the identified influencing factors.

The current study found that the first link factors (or group 1), which include overwhelming urge for a university education, I have waited too long to get into university, and difficulty of gaining admission into Nigeria's public universities were the most significant independent and combined factors influencing students' decision to accept admission into subject areas that are different from their chosen careers. The finding asserts that a prospective student with overwhelming urge for a university education who have waited too long to get into university, and fully aware that admission to Nigeria's public universities is difficult is most likely to accept admission to a field other than his or her chosen field of study. Also, the current study found that the second link factors, which include I may not obtain a higher jamb score in the next exam, possibility of inter-faculty/ intra-faculty transfer, I have had several low JAMB scores before passing this one, and my friends were already admitted to the university were the second significant independent and combined factors influencing students' decision to accept admission into subject areas that are different from their chosen careers. The finding affirms that a prospective student who has been able to achieve a higher jamb score that will guarantee admission to university having failed in one or more attempts, and whose friends already at the university had informed him or her of the possibility of inter-faculty/intra-faculty transfer is also more likely to accept admission to a field other than his or her chosen field of study. While the current study also found that the third link factors, which include possibility to work anywhere irrespective of your discipline, fulfilling an uneducated parent's desire for a university education, and fear of exceeding the age limit for NYSC Program upon graduation were the least significant independent and combined factors influencing students' decision to accept admission into subject areas that are different from their chosen careers. The finding also affirms that a prospective student whose parent desire is just a university education, and knows that in the Nigerian labor market it is possible to work anywhere regardless of your discipline, and not wanting to exceed the age limit for the NYSC program is likely to accept admission to a field other than his or her chosen field of study.

The findings of this study have shown that gender has no significant influence as regard the choice of identified factors that influence students to accept admission in fields that are different from their chosen fields of study when offered admission by public university. The finding corroborates the study by [31] which found that gender has no influence on students' choice of careers.

As all research, our study has a limitation. This study focused mainly on University of Benin, Nigeria. Future studies should consider data set of a cross-section of students admitted into fields of study different from their chosen fields of study from several public universities within Nigeria in order to achieve complete understanding about the factors influencing students' decision to accept admission into subject areas that are different from their chosen careers. Considering the negative impact of obtaining a degree different from a chosen career, it is appropriate to recommend that government regulatory bodies and administrators at Nigeria's public universities develop policies to improve and expand the facilities of our public universities, as well as providing more funding in order to prevent the negative impact associated with prospective students being offered fields different from their chosen fields of study by Nigeria's public universities.

6.0 Conclusion

The essence of the study was to establish factors that influence students to accept admission in fields that are different from their chosen fields of study. The public university administrative policy of offering admission to prospective students in fields different from their chosen fields of study without the consideration of the child's potential, choices, and academic abilities often results in serious consequences on the child's future aspirations. The current study on factors influencing students to accept admission in fields that are different from their chosen fields of study may be the first of its kind to be carried out in Nigeria. Thus, the study makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge as it established the factors that influence students' acceptance of fields of study different from their chosen career choices in Nigerian public tertiary Institutions.

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