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Trends of Specialisation in Mass Communication Education: Implications for Journalism Practice In Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the trends of specialisation among students who are enrolled for mass communication studies in selected Nigerian tertiary institutions. The study was framed out of the observation that students of mass communication are increasingly disinterested in journalism aspects of mass communication. The main objective was to provide empirical evidence on the specialisation interests of these students during their mass communication training programmes as well as the impact of their choices on mass communication training and its impact on the profile of practitioners of journalism in Nigeria. Through the survey method, stratified and purposive sampling procedure was adopted to gather data from two hundred and six respondents from three universities, a federal polytechnic and a college offering mass communication as a discipline. Data collected were analysed using percentage and frequency. The result indicates that the majority of students prefer public relations, advertising or broadcasting rather than journalism as a field of specialisation. Based on this finding, it was concluded that only few graduates of mass communication are likely to take up journalism practice in future, thus diminishing the hope of injecting professionally trained persons into the practice of journalism in Nigeria.

Key Words: Specialisation, Journalism Training, Broadcasting, Public Relations, Advertising, Gender.

Introduction

The idea of specialisation in the field of mass communication is inevitable if we consider the multi-disciplinary nature of the discipline. Mass communication which is made possible by the presence of a medium

capable of disseminating the same message to a large heterogeneous audience dispersed in time and space; is a discipline that bears its influence on many fields. In virtually all the departments in the universities and polytechnics offering the course; the curriculum content is designed to provide training in journalism, public relations/advertising, and broadcasting. Before the advent of mass communication as a course of study in Nigerian universities, each of the fields was studied independently as shown in the literature review section of this paper. Even after Mass Communication was introduced, the first set of graduates in the 70s and early 80s were given general training and recruited into any of the fields. Thereafter, the training orientation was reorganised to provide for specialisation in print journalism, broadcasting and public relations and advertising.

In the course of career building, both as students and lecturers of mass communication, the researchers in this study had observed that students preferred to enrol in broadcasting and public relations/ advertising sequence. Further interaction with graduates of mass communication indicates lack of interest in seeking employment in newspaper or magazines houses. Would this result in lack of professionally trained persons in the practice of journalism in Nigeria; especially in the light of the observations that led the Nigeria Union of Journalists to insist that whoever wants to practice journalism in Nigeria must possess at least a diploma in mass communication/ journalism from recognised institution? This had been done in the hope that those with professional training would take over from the present practitioners' profile dominated by people from fields other than mass communication/journalism.

Available literatures on mass communication education focus on the appropriateness of locating mass communication in either Arts or Social Sciences. (Salawu, 2009&Mojaye, 2009). Akinfeleye (2008) also documents the inadequate personnel and equipment in mass communication training in Nigeria. There is not yet any study that examines the implication of the trend of specialisation among students of mass communication on the practice of journalism in Nigeria. This study examines direct factors that determine the choice of area of specialisation among students of mass communication. The study is also aimed at documenting the interest of students in pursuing journalism as a career later in life. Specifically, the questions of interest to this study are:

1. What is the trend of specialisation in the sequences of mass communication in the selected Nigerian institutions/departments of mass communication?
2. What is the trend in the choice of specialisation among students enrolled in mass communication in the selected institutions/departments of mass communication?
3. What is the relative gender dimension to specialisation in mass communication among students in the selected institutions/department?
4. Is there a difference between respondents' choice of career in any of the fields of mass communication at the points of entrance and at the points of graduation?
5. What is the comparative number of students who are likely to pursue journalism as a career as compared to Public Relations/Advertising and/or broadcasting?

Objective of the study

Based on the sociological and empirical need of this study, it attempts to analyse the trend of specialisation among students of mass communication in the principal areas of public relations/advertising, broadcasting and print. It also ascertains if there is significant gender dimension to specialisation in mass communication. The study is also interested in the indication of interest in journalism as a career among students. Specifically, the study attempt to achieve the following objectives:

1. Determine the relative trend of specialisation in the sequences of mass communication in the selected institutions/departments of mass communication
2. Examine the gender dimension to specialisation in mass communication among students in the selected institutions/department
3. Identify the number of students who are likely to pursue journalism as a career as compared to Public Relations/Advertising and/or broadcasting.

Literature Review

Specialisation in Mass Communication

Specialisation is associated with Adam Smith's classical work 'Wealth of Nation' (Ceapraz 2008) in which he expounded the concept of the division of labour. In the academic discipline, specialisation applies to the practice of focusing on a sub set of a discipline. The concept of specialisation allows persons to concentrate their skills on tasks at which

they are most skilled. In the context of mass communication training, specialisation is the categorisation of courses into print journalism, broadcasting, public relations and advertising by allowing students to focus their intellectual energies and learning plans to acquiring skills in any areas of interest in the mass communication rubric. From theoretical perspectives, Specialisation optimises the endowments inherent in individuals.

Gender and Mass Communication

The literature on gender in the context of journalism and mass communication rarely considers the issue of professionalism. The focus understandably is to key in into the debate on gender equity and level of participation of women in journalism. For instance, Ikem (1996) did an extensive review of the participation of women in journalism in Nigeria and concluded that women journalists are faced with certain challenges. These challenges are exemplified by the low visibility of women in journalism and through sex-identity discrimination in favour of male counterpart in both role assignment and social recognition/acceptance. Okunna (2004) re-echoed the observation of Ikem and noted further that this low participation of women in media has resulted in the marginalisation of women in communication generally. According to her, an analysis of the news content of five national newspapers and four newsmagazines indicates that women are still very invisible in the country's news media. The International Federation of Journalist (iFJ) took a leap higher than the concern about quantity representation to the level of equity and quality of participation of women in journalism and mass communication media generally. The iFJ survey examined the following:

Women in Journalism

Women in Union

Equal Pay for Equal work

Portrayal of women in Media

The survey covered journalists across Asia pacific, Europe, America, and Africa. The conclusion of IFJ was that: Today, women can be found in all newsrooms. They work in print, broadcasting and on-line media; they cover every issue from education to war and their numbers in journalism continue to rise. As more and more women gain economic independence, they are a group to reckon with for advertisers and media owners. And even where individual women are not in a position to "cast their vote at the newsstand" women media associations demand better coverage on behalf of women. Media owners disregard women's concerns at their

peril. But the IFJ survey shows that there is no room for complacency. Nor is it right to think that the struggle for equality in journalism has been won. Many issues remain unresolved and as long as women are still impeded by discrimination over the top jobs, or have less access to training, or continue to be forced into impossible choices between career and family, journalists' unions must keep women's rights at the top of their agenda.

Mass Communication Training in Nigeria

The training of journalists in Nigeria trailed the practice of journalism by almost a century; even then the first of sets of training organised within Nigeria were on short term in-house or vacation courses. Journalism practice in Nigeria is historically marked with the establishment of *Iwe Iroyin* in 1859 (Fred Omu, 1996), while the training of journalists, according to Akinfeleye (1987) started in 1954, through non-formal arrangement. This arrangement subsisted up till the 1960s in various forms and by different interested organisations. In 1954, a "Vacation Course in Journalism" was organised by the colonial rulers. It was followed by a 1959 United State Information Service (USIS), sponsored "Journalism Travelling workshop" and a "Nigerian Journalism Course" by International Federation of Journalists in 1960. (Akinfeleye, 1987; in Uyo and Dare 1996, 2008). The seemingly stillness in the perception for formal training of local journalists was attributed to the historical colonial experience under the British rulers; and the concurrent use of the press by the nationalists to fight for emancipation from the colonial subjugation. The portrait of the earlier journalists in Nigeria was captured vividly this way by the erudite scholar of press history in Nigeria; Professor Fred Omu. According to him; *The early newspaperman with few exceptions did not have any formal professional training nor were they educated much beyond the secondary school level. However they exuded self-confidence as they were men of stature active in politics and social life. They were erudite, talented, resourceful and enterprising(Omu, 1996:10).*

The concern of these men described by Omu as 'erudite and talented' was to use the media for educating the populace to acquire knowledge 'as to form the basis of a strong public opinion which the colonial government could not ignore'. Unlike other professions such as law, medicine and the likes; the British colonial government, taking a clue from their home government; did not regard journalism or any of the fields of communication that were later to be consolidated into Mass

Communication discipline; as a profession requiring any formal training. As a matter of fact; formal training for journalism in Britain, relative to other Western nations particularly the United States of America USA; is still a recent phenomenon. Low literacy level is yet another contributing factor to the standard of journalistic education. 'It has become a truism that low literacy rate can contribute to a low degree of journalism education and also to low standard of journalistic performance' (Akinfeleye 2008, p.98).

In the field of broadcasting, the situation is akin to what is obtained in the print media. This is in spite of the fact that the use of television for public enlightenment and education was vaunted as the *prima facie* motivation for establishing the first television station by the government of the Western region. In 1959, there was no arrangement or collaboration with existing institution for the formal training of broadcasters locally. Rather recruitment into broadcasting was from the core civil service of people with basic skills in writing, not necessarily in the arts of broadcast production.

Radio broadcasting which preceded television about three decades earlier (the re-diffusion arrangement in 1932) was established to serve the British colonialist in the tasks of disseminating information to the populace. An observer pointedly noted that:

The British established the Empire Service, designed to serve their colonies and dominion in Canada, Australia, India, and Anglophone Africa. For their dominion imperialistic motivation, the British colonial master consciously and conscientiously promoted the use of African vernaculars. The objective was to build enough African audience. This would boost their propaganda programmes (Bourgalt, 1994, p 69).

It was not until 1956, that 'a two year in-service training, (obviously conceived in the mentality of civil service training), was arranged for radio broadcasters in the news department of the then Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) now the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN). In 1957, the FRCN in-service training programme was developed into a training school for the training of staff members of the Corporation on regular basis. The school equally admitted, on regular basis, media staff from other broadcasting organisations across the country. The training offered by the school covered all areas of broadcasting including journalism, engineering, production and marketing. Similarly, the Nigerian Television Authority has a television

college located in Rayfield, Jos, Nigeria. The college trained staff and non-staff across the nation in all areas of television broadcasting. It has just been upgraded to a degree awarding institution and affiliated to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in Kaduna State.

The incorporation of the fields of communication such as Public Relations, Advertising and Broadcasting, Journalism as an academic field of studies however happened in the 60s with the establishments of Department of Mass Communication at the University of Nsukka in 1962, and the University of Lagos in 1967. In a study on Mass communication/Communication Studies in Nigeria, Mojaye, (2009) said that out of 71 universities in Nigeria, 43 of them offer mass communication/communication studies. As at the time of this study in November 2010, more universities offering mass communication as a course of study have been established. Amongst them is the Kwara State University, Malete which is included in this study. Apparently pressed by the inability of existing universities to cope with high admission demand on yearly basis, the federal government announced the establishment of six new universities to be located in states where there was no Federal Government owned university. Many of them when they come on board will add to the number of institutions offering mass communication course. At the last count not less than 13 Polytechnics and monotechnic offer courses in mass communication. Prominent among the monotechnic offering journalism course in Nigeria is the Nigerian Institute of Journalism (NIJ) which was founded in 1971 in Lagos; with tripartite funding by International Press Institute (IPI), the Nigerian Newspaper Proprietors' Association (NPAN) and the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), until 1975 when the (IPI) withdrew (Akinfeleye, 2008 p 103).

Issues in Mass Communication Education in Nigeria

Since the time universities in Nigeria have started offering mass communication as a course of study a number of issues have emerged. Among these issues are:

Academic/disciplinary location of mass communication (Arts, social sciences/ICT/management)

Training-Centred Issues (facilities, human resources, student population)

Specialisation (print, broadcasting, advertising, public relations).

Academic/ disciplinary location (Arts/social sciences/ICT)

The pioneer school of journalism in Nigeria; the Jackson College of Journalism at the University of Nigeria Nsukka; was located in the Arts/ humanities faculties just as the graduates of the department of mass communication University of Lagos, which followed that of Nsukka; were awarded Bachelor of Arts Degree (B.A). The department of mass communication in the University of Lagos had since relocated to faculties of social sciences and now award Bachelor of Science (B.sc), Degree. Beyond mere nomenclature, location of mass communication has been a subject of regulatory issues. Mojaye (2009) had noted that the National Universities Commission NUC, through its accreditation team; at least in an instance, advised a department found in the Faculty of Arts to relocate to the Faculty of Social Sciences (Mojaye, 2009 p 219). In fact some scholars are of the view that the location of the first college of journalism in a University, at Nsukka, in the Faculty of Arts was erroneously located (Nwosu, in Mojaye 2009).

Salawu (2009) however, dismissed such entanglement on the locational trajectory of mass communication as needless. He asserted that the indignation about the location of mass communication departments within universities in Nigeria is unnecessary. Rather than making an issue out of the location, he believes, we should be more anxious about the contents of the mass communication curricula. He anchored his argument on the assertion of McQuail (2005) 'that the study of communication has to be interdisciplinary'; and in the light of Severin and Tankard's (1992) elaboration on the nature of mass communication: *It is a skill in the sense that it involves certain fundamental learnable techniques such as focusing a television camera, operating a tape recorder or taking notes during an interview. It is an art in the sense that it involves creative challenges such as writing a script for a television programme, developing an aesthetic layout for a magazine ad or coming up with a catchy lead for a news story. It is a science in the sense that there are certain principles involved in how communication works that can be verified and used to make things work better* (Severin and Tankard, 1992: 1).

Perhaps the foregoing positions have not taken cognisance of another dimension to the vocational 'furore' of Mass Communication in the universities. The trend now is to group mass communication with Information and Communication Technology related courses. This is the present situation in the University of Ilorin, Kwara State University, The Federal Polytechnic, Offa and Osun State Polytechnic Ire. This trend is still like a fad will soon catch up with other tertiary institutions. This innocuous trend is already exerting pressure on the arts/social sciences

orientation of mass communication. Given the course system in the university, based on liberal philosophy requiring students to take some courses in the faculty, the curriculum of mass communication is being gradually wielded of social sciences courses in order to accommodate faculty courses and avoid burdening students with too much workload. The implication is that graduates of mass communication may be high in ICT skills and be less in social sciences understanding. Rather than dismiss the issues as needless, it would seem imperative to pay more attention to it in view of the trend as noted here. Some senior academic have queried the insistence of mass communication departments not to admit candidates from pure science background since it is in the same faculty with computer science, Information and Communication Science and Telecommunications.

A discipline that is so fluid to the point of no fixed location within the rubric of academic discipline must of necessity; suffer identity crisis.

Training Environment-Centred Issues (facilities, human resources, student population)

Akinfeleye (1987, 2008) listed at least six challenges or what he called major barriers to effective media (mass communication) education in Nigeria. (1) Inadequate teaching staff (2) Accommodation (3) Textbooks (4) Large classes (5) Out dated infrastructures and (6) Poor salary. Some of these challenges are being mitigated, largely, as consequences of continuous engagement of government by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in Nigeria. However, some of them are also becoming acute if not intractable. An example is inadequate teaching staff. Apart from having few qualified academic staff teaching undergraduate courses (which leads to excess work load) few of the over forty universities offering mass communication in the country have National Universities Commission's full accreditation approval to run PhD programme.

The provision of mass communication education in Nigerian tertiary institutions can be grouped into two areas-the department approach and the School/faculty approach. The outlook of this approaches are as follows.

The *department approach* treats the sub-set or sequences under mass communication as a field of specialisation after training in the basic courses such as the arts of news writing, theoretical orientation, introductory aspects of broadcasting, public relations and advertising, and research skills. After this basic exposure, students are advised or divided

into 3 areas of specialisation; Broadcasting, Print journalism and Public relations/ Advertising. This approach was pioneered by the University of Lagos and seemed to be the preferred approach among most of the Universities across the country. It is important to note however, that students, at this stage, also offer other general and required/ compulsory mass communication courses (such as development communication, mass media management, critical issues in mass communication etc.) besides courses from their individual areas of specialisation.

In the *School/ Institute/Faculty Approach* students are admitted into a four year programme to read courses in the sequences or fields of specialisation. Each of these sequences forms a separate department of print media, broadcast media, public relations and advertising. Some of the many private universities springing up in Nigeria are attempting to follow this pattern. The issue with the school approach to the study of mass communication as noted by Salawu (2009:20) however is that many of the schools using this approach 'lack the requisite manpower, infrastructure and facilities' to realise this ambition. Aside this challenge, the **school/institute approach** offers a viable route to solve the problem of identity and can resolve curriculum design issues for mass communication studies. An integrated curriculum for all fields of mass communication can be fashioned out. In short mass communication deserves a faculty status just as law enjoys currently in the Nigeria university system.

Research Methodology

Survey method was employed to carry out this study. The study population comprised Students of Mass communication from five tertiary institutions offering mass communication course in Kwara State. These institutions are University of Ilorin, Kwara State University, Al-Hikmah University, The Federal Polytechnic Offa and College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies. A preliminary survey was conducted to determine the population of mass communication students in each of the institutions under study. Findings revealed the following as the total of student population in each of the institutions:

University of Ilorin:	75
Kwara State University:	45
Al-Hikmah:	70
The Federal Polytechnic Offa:	447
College of Arabic & Islamic Legal Studies:	356

The respondents were firstly selected through stratified sampling method to ensure fair representation of students across all levels in the mass communication departments of the selected institutions. Thereafter, Purposive sampling procedure was adopted to ensure equal representation of all departments. Dominick (1993) quoted in Alao (2010), provided the motivation as well as the justification for the recourse to purposive sampling when he noted that purposive sampling methods 'enables the researcher(s) to select subjects on the basis of quality'

The study sample consists of 74 students selected from Federal Polytechnic, Offa and College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies. In addition, a total of 132 students were selected from the three universities. Thus, a total of 206 Mass Communication Students (comprising both male and female and drawn from all levels of their degree/national diploma programme) constituted the sample for the study.

DATA PRESENTATION

The key findings of this study are presented as follows:

Table 1: Population Distribution of Mass Communication Students in the Selected Institutions

Institution	Population
UNILORIN	75
KWASU	45
AL-HIKMAH	70
OFFA POLY	447
CAILS	356
TOTAL	994

The total population of all mass communication students in the selected institutions was found to be 994. Out of these, students of the Federal Polytechnic Offa (Offa Poly) and College of Arabic and Islamic legal Studies (CAILS) are in the majority with the populations of 447 and 356 respectively. The University of Ilorin (UNILORIN) has 75 mass communication students while Al-Hikmah University has 70 and Kwara State University (KWASU) has the least population of 45.

Note: a total sample of 206 students was surveyed for the study and the institutions are categorised into two; university (comprising UNILORIN, KWASU and Al-Hikmah) and polytechnic (comprising OFFA POLY and CAILS)

Table 2: Population Distribution According to Types of Institution and Gender

Institution	Sex		Total %
	Male	Female	
Polytechnic	38 %	62%	100% (n=74)
University	32%	68%	100% (n=132)
Total	33%	67%	100% (n=206)

Table 2 indicates that female students offering mass communication in both categories of institutions are generally more than their male counterparts. While the female mass communication students in the polytechnic constitute 62% of the total population of 74 in that category of institution, the male students are only 38%. At the university level however, the disparity in gender is somewhat reduced with the female amounting to 68% while the male make up 32% of a total of 206 students. However, it can still be inferred that female mass communication students are more than the male.

Table 3: Choice of Specialisation According to Gender

Sex	Sequence			Total%
	PRAD	B'CAST	PRINT	
Male	38%	51%	11%	100% (n=69)
Female	31%	62%	7%	100 % (n=136)
Total	33%	58%	9%	100% (n=206)

Of all 206 mass communication student who participated in this study, the Public Relations and Advertising sequence has 38% of the male and 31% of female; The Broadcasting sequence has 51% of the male and 62% of the female; while 11% of the male and 7% of the female fall in the Print sequence. The implication from this table is that more male students are enrolled in the broadcast area of specialisation, followed by the Public Relations and Advertising and then the Print sequence. The same goes for the female students. Across all sequences however, the female students are generally more than their male counterparts.

Table 4: Preferred Choice of Sequence at the Point of Entrance by Students According to Institution

Institution	Preferred Sequence at Point of Entrance			Total%
	PRAD	B'CAST	PRINT	
Polytechnic	30%	60%	10%	100%(n=74)
University	36%	56%	8%	100%(n=132)
Total	33%	58%	9%	100%(n=206)

At the start of their diploma programmes, 30% of Mass Communication students in the Polytechnic had preference for Public Relations and Advertising Sequence, 60% preferred to specialise in Broadcasting; while 10% wanted to go for the Print sequence. The trend at the University is similar. While 36% preferred to study Public Relations and Advertising, 56% were interested in Broadcasting and only 9% preferred the Print sequence. This shows that the popularity of Public Relations and Advertising sequence as well as Broadcasting sequence; and the low interest in the Print area of specialisation had already been in the mind of the students even before they were exposed to the fundamentals of each area of specialisation. It is interesting to note, from this table 5, that the preferred choice of specialisation at the entry point is somewhat consistent with the current trend of specialisation in the sequences when compared with data in the previous tables.

Table 5: Preferred Choice of career by students after graduation according to institution

Institution	Choice of career			Total%
	PRAD	B'CAST	PRINT	
Polytechnic	33%	66%	11%	100%(n=74)
University	39%	52%	9%	100%(n=132)
Total	33%	57%	10%	100%(n=206)

Stating the preferred choice of career after graduation from the field of mass communication, 23% of students of the Polytechnic indicated interest in Public Relations and Advertising, 66% went for Broadcasting and 11% chose Print. For students of the university, 39% preferred Public Relations and Advertising career; 52% are interested in Broadcasting and 9% preferred Print. This table shows that there is an increase (66%) of interest to pursue broadcasting after graduation among polytechnic/college students when compared to their preference at the

point of entrance which was (60%), as shown in table 5. While interest in print remains constant both at the point of entrance and at graduation for university and polytechnic students, (9% for university, and 11% for polytechnic), there is a slight drop in broadcasting among university students (52% after graduation from 56% at the entrance point). Interest in pursuing public relations and advertising remains consistent around 30%.

Table 6: Preferred area of specialization after graduation according to gender

Sex	Career Choice			Total%
	PRAD	B'CAST	PRINT	
Male	35%	54%	11%	100%(n=69)
Female	32%	59%	9%	100%(n=137)
Total	33%	57%	10%	100%(n=206)

A total 35% of male students who participated in this study preferred to take up their career in Public Relations and Advertising, 54% in Broadcasting and 11% in Print. On their part, 32% of the female preferred Public Relations and Advertising; 59% preferred Broadcasting and 9% preferred Print journalism. This table shows that from gender perspectives, there are few variations between the students' current choice of specialisation and career choice after graduation. When compared with table 3, it is observed that the interest in pursuance of broadcasting, public relations and advertising remains consistently higher than the print journalism which continued its low attraction among the students.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from this study reveal that mass communication studies in Nigeria at present indeed provide formal training of students for professionalism in three broad areas of the field, namely; Public relations and Advertising/Integrated Marketing, Broadcasting and Print journalism. This is unlike in the early days of journalism training in the country which according to scholars was characterised by such features as non-formal training arrangement, short term training sessions/duration and general training without specific areas of specialisation (Omu, 1996; Akinfeleye, 1987).

From gender perspectives, the study shows that there are more female than male studying mass communication. The relative gender dimension

to specialisation in mass communication among students in the selected institutions/department shows that there are more female than male in both public relations/advertising and broadcasting but more male in the print (newspaper/magazine journalism). The obvious implication of this on journalism practice is the marginalisation of women and this may further deepen the marginalisation of women issues in media public discourse. Earlier studies on the female gender bias of journalism practice in Nigeria such as Ikem (1994) and Okenna (2004) had documented this trend. However, the higher number of female students in general and in broadcasting as well as public relations and advertising in particular goes to show that there is an improved opportunity for participation of women in the media. This is an indication that there are likely to be more women in the public relations and advertising and broadcasting careers.

Implications for Journalism Practice in Nigeria

Data from this study show an obviously low level of interest in print journalism among Nigerian students. Before the advent of formal training in Mass Communication, the media as well as print journalism has been dominated by practitioners from other fields of endeavour. With the introduction of mass communication as a field of study in our Nigerian higher institutions, the expectation is that students of the course would graduate to occupy suitable positions in the field. In fact, as stated earlier, the Nigerian Union of Journalists had insisted that practitioners must hold a minimum of National diploma in Mass Communication or Journalism from a recognised institution.

However, majority of respondents in this study, drawn from Mass Communication Institutions in Kwara State of Nigeria, have their specialisation interest skewed towards broadcasting, public relations and advertising at the detriment of print journalism. Only 10% are currently studying print journalism as their specialised field and the only the same 10% are interested in taking up their career in this area. The obvious implication of this is that there would still be dearth of sufficiently and professionally trained print journalists in the country. The field would either have very few practitioners or still be dominated by either people from other fields entirely or those trained in other areas of mass communication who could not get employed into their own specialized fields.

In respect of those who are specialised in print journalism however, this offers them a better opportunity of becoming professional Journalists with

adequate training from the scratch thus adding more value to Nigerian Journalism practice.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted from the view point that the hope of injecting professionally trained mass communication graduates into the practice of journalism in Nigeria would be achieved if the students are disposed to it from the training level. Since the preponderance of candidates who aspire to read mass communication goes through the polytechnic and the university, the study explored the empirical situation of sequence preference and career choice among the students.

From the data available in this study we can conclude that the relative trend of specialisation in the sequences of mass communication among students in the selected institutions/departments of mass communication is to divide the students into public relations and advertising, commonly referred to as PRAD; the broadcasting area incorporating some courses in film and video productions and the print sequences which contain the courses that have direct bearing on newspaper/magazine journalism.

The study equally concludes that the relative number of students who are likely to pursue journalism as a career as compared to public relations/advertising and/or broadcasting are abysmally low. With ten percent of the sampled respondents specialising in the print sequence while in school and the same number indicating willingness to pursue print(newspaper/magazine journalism) as career, it is save to conclude that(subject to replication across institutions) there would be dearth of professionally trained mass communication graduates of tertiary institution venturing in to journalism.

RECOMMENDATION

The data contained in this study, even though limited in scope in its spatial coverage, it is enough a discouraging signal in the hope of professionalism in journalism practice in Nigeria. It is therefore recommended that all stakeholders should collaborate to fashion out a way of motivating students to pick interest in journalism without necessarily jeopardising others specialisation's interest.

It is also imperative to commission a special project on the issues with a view to dig into the factors responsible for the trend in specialisation in

mass communication training which is skewed currently against journalism.

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