

GENDER AND PUBLIC SECTOR JOBS PREFERENCE AMONG URBAN YOUTHS IN IBADAN

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ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, decent work is the aspiration of many youths and the development of any nation is largely influenced by the type and quality of work carried out either in the public or private sector. Although there are evidences of youths' preference for public sector jobs in Nigeria, the preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies have not been empirically examined. Investigation of this sort is important in order to examine the root of gender discrimination and to prepare for social tension that may likely arise where youths' aspirations differ from social realities. To investigate government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies that are preferred, a survey was carried out using conclusive research design to collect primary quantitative data from urban youths in Ibadan, Nigeria. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as simple percentages, cross tabulation and chi-square. The results showed that almost all the respondents preferred federal government jobs and six government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies were most preferred. The association between sex and preferred level of government employment was not statistically significantly different ($p > 0.05$). In addition, the findings showed that there is no statistically significant difference between sex and preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies ($p > 0.05$). The root of gender discrimination can therefore be traced to other sources other than job preference. An environment that provides equal employment opportunity for both sexes without gender discrimination of any kind will help the youths to get their dream jobs thereby facilitating the attainment of sustainable development goal eight.

Keywords: Gender; Decent work; Public sector jobs; Government ministries, Parastatals and/or Agencies

INTRODUCTION

In the year 2015, the United Nations adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), known as the Post-2015 or Development Agenda, with its 169 targets, envisaged to guide and inform global policy for the next fifteen years. The Development Agenda (encapsulate in SDGs) was a successor to the Millennium Development

Goals (MDGs) that were set in the new millennium and ended its mission in the year 2015. This Agenda addressed a range of critical social, economic, political, environmental and interrelationship concerns. While MDGs might have been set out by the world powers without due participation of and consideration for the underdeveloped countries (Amin, 2006), the

SDGs have been acclaimed to be a product of participatory and inclusive exercise. This is supported by the fact that almost all the countries across the globe (193 out of 196) considered and voted for the adoption of the SDGs. The SDGs are rooted in a discourse of the 1948 United Nations (UN) constitution which established universal human rights, and they are accompanied by the acknowledgement that equality must be applied to both opportunities as well as outcomes (Razavi, 2016; United Nations Organization, 2015).

In order to promote universal human rights and ensure gender equality, there is need to empower the marginalised group (especially the women) and put measures in place so as to check the expanding gaps between the rich and the poor which tend to have been feminised (Eboiyehi, Bankole, & Eromonsele, 2006; Oyekola & Oyeyipo, 2020). One way to empower the marginalised group is to provide decent work for them (Rai, Brown, & Ruwanpura, 2019). This is the focus of SDG 8.5, 'to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value'. In Nigeria, decent work is the aspiration of many youths and the development of any nation is largely influenced by the type and quality of work that is carried out either in the public or private sector. But decent work for all cannot be achieved without eliminating gender discrimination which may find expression in job aspiration and preference, work orientation, recruitment process, on the job performance, organisational

appraisal, and evaluation team (Oyekola & Oyeyipo, 2020). In other words, 'to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls across the globe', all forms of discrimination against women and girls must be put to an end. This is important because existing studies have shown that discrimination against women reduces their economic value thereby increasing their marginalisation and vulnerability (Chen, Zhao, & Yu, 2017; Kim & Park, 2018; Rai et al., 2019; von Gruenigen & Karlan, 2018). Evidences of gender discrimination abound in the Nigerian workplace and these affect the economic growth of the country (Eboiyehi et al., 2006; Fapohunda, 2012).

Discrimination based on gender (or sex) is a common civil rights violation that takes many forms, including sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination, and unequal pay for women who do the same jobs as men. Gender discrimination in the workplace continues to be a major problem in the workplace. It occurs whenever an individual is treated differently on account of their gender and may affect anything from hiring decisions to promotions (Andrews, Santos, Cook, & Martin, 2018; von Gruenigen & Karlan, 2018; Oyekola & Oyeyipo, 2020). What is the source of gender discrimination? The actual source of this discrimination is yet to be empirically investigated. In other words, empirical studies are yet to verify the existence of gender disparity among Nigerian youths in their work preference. This study fills this gap by examining whether there is gender discrimination among youths' preference for government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The public sector is a popular career choice for Nigerian youths. Work, career or job as may be called in the pre-colonial Nigerian society was cherished and valued by both genders. In fact, work was part of people's way of life. Despite its importance to the society, there was no preference for certain jobs more than the other. Every job was seen as equally significant to the advancement of society (Okoli & Jacob, 2014; Olugbile, 1997). Actually, every job was family-based. Families were easily defined by the type of jobs they practised. New generations simply grew to prefer the careers known to their families. This continued until there was disruption in work orientation through the coming of the Europeans and the eventual establishment of public service in major cities. The establishment of public service alone would not have actually accounted for such preference, but for the importance the colonial master attached to it. This shifted the orientation of Nigerian youths from being self-employed to seeking careers in the public service. Preference for public sector jobs has been globally reported both in the developed and developing countries (Ajani & Oyekola, 2019; Barsoum, 2015; Hyder & Reilly, 2005; Light, 2003; Norris, 2004; Rose, 2015). Despite satisfactory quality of work life in some Nigerian private institutions however (Adebimpe, Babajide, & Prince, 2002; Rasak, Oyekola, Asamu, & Ben-Caleb, 2019), Nigerian youths still prefer public sector jobs (Ajani & Oyekola, 2019). The specific preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies are however yet to be investigated.

Generally, any service provided or

supported by the government or its agencies is referred to as public service. In other words, public service refers to government jobs such that those who are employed render services that are run for the use of the general public and it encompasses all such responsibilities that are backed by the government even outside the executive arm of government (Joanna, 2013; Marshall & Murtala, 2015). The history of public service and the consequent emergence of unemployment in Nigeria can be traced to the genesis of paid employment. Wage employment was not a common feature of pre-colonial Nigerian society. Contact with the outside world (especially the Europeans) changed the structure of pre-colonial Nigerian society and even the mentality of the people therein. With the coming of a united Nigeria through the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates in the year 1914 by the then governor of Nigeria, Lord Frederick Lugard, came a burgeoning public sector (and private sector) jobs which marked the beginning of a unified public service in Nigeria (Ayeni, 2002). The public services were then set up both in the North and South headed by Lieutenant Governors and all the original officers of the two public services were expatriate managers. At this time, indigenous people of Nigeria occupied low rank positions.

After less than a decade of the introduction of this system of civil service administration, educated Nigerians, led by Herbert Macauley (the Father of Nigerian nationalism), started challenging the status quo. As a group, they agitated greater political and administrative participation in

the nation's affairs. The outcome of this was the birth of the first constitution ever recorded in the history of the country – Clifford Constitution of 1922. The subsequent constitutions increased Nigerian participation in government and public service as a whole. With the introduction of federalism in 1954, three Regional Civil Services were established at the centre of each region within the same era (Nkwede, 2013). The federal and regional services thereafter nurtured a career civil service within their respective domains. Consequently, the public services of the then regional governments from 1954 to 1960, the year of independence, and up to 1966, were direct offshoot of the British colonial public service administrative structure; in terms of ethics, values, tradition, training, procedures and esprit de corps (Anazodo et al., 2012). During this period, five public services were established, namely; the Federal Public Service, the Public Services of the Northern Region, the Eastern Region, the Western Region and that of the Mid-Western Region. As at this time, Nigerians began to be more visible occupying the front-seat in public sector (as well as private sector) and, concurrently, started looking down on agriculture (Olugbile, 1997).

Today, Nigeria is a country with a very large public sector. There are thirty-six states and a federal capital territory. Apart from the federal civil service, each state government operates its own civil service. There are also many government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies established by the federal and state governments. There is a third tier of government – the local government – with its own structures extending through

every nook and cranny of the country. These provide enlarged opportunities for the teeming (unemployed) youths to pursue their careers and to seek paid employment. Although there is evidence of preference for public sector jobs among Nigerian youths, the specific government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies are yet to be empirically investigated.

A number of challenges still remain in the Nigerian public service. Right before her independence, Nigeria had been embarking on the quest to reform the public service with the main aim of addressing the ills in the administrative system in particular and in the country as a whole. To attain this objective, various public service reforms had taken place. However, instead of these reforms to bring about the desired goals, they only laid foundation for the need to further reform the service. What were the factors impeding the implementation of these reforms? Politicization of the top echelon of the Nigerian public service, gender discrimination and favouritism/nepotism are some of the many challenges facing the Nigerian public service (Adebayo, 2004; Ajani & Oyekola, 2019; Ijewereme, 2015; Okorie & Onwe, 2016). These problems are rampant in the Nigerian public service and they further encourage gender discrimination. Also, these do not encourage transparency and accountability which in turn have capacity of hindering national development. This study therefore, is set to investigate preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies as well as elements of gender discrimination in work preference.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

A number of theories have been applied to the study of individual actions especially as it pertains to her/his preferences. For example, Social Action Theory was propounded by Max Weber in the 19th century and developed by Talcott Parsons in the 20th century to explain the complexity of society through the meanings individuals attach to actions and interaction (Parsons, 1937; Weber, 1978). Every society can be analysed at two different levels: the level of cause or objective structures that influence people's lives and the level of subjective meanings which individuals attach to their actions (Weber, 1978). These two levels are the key determinants of individual actions and interactions in the society. In addition, Preference Theory, as a sociological theory, was developed by Catherine Hakim and it seeks both to explain and predict women's choices regarding investment in productive or reproductive work (Scott & Marshall, 2005). The theory specifically explains women's domestic and public life using five socio-economic conditions which jointly create a new scenario: contraceptive, equal opportunities, white-collar, part-time jobs and lifestyle (Hakim, 2000). Both Social Action Theory and Preference Theory, among many others, fail to combine the influence of individual rational choices and environmental factors to explain preference for public sector jobs, hence, the reason for the choice of Rational Choice Theory and Social Cognitive Career Choice Theory in this study.

Rational choice theory has its roots in neo-classical economics as well as Unitarianism and Game Theory (Cook & Levi, 2008;

Simpson & Harrell, 2007). The theory focuses on actors, especially their intentions, which are undertaken to achieve objectives that are consistent with their preference hierarchy. Actors have choices (or expectations) and their actions are directed towards achieving them (Scott, 2000). These choices are rationally determined and they propel actors toward achieving certain ends while taking into consideration two major constraints on actions: scarce resources and social control. Those with adequate resources secure public sector jobs more easily than those with little or no resources. In other words, those who have resources (such as social support and academic qualifications) find their way into public service faster than those who do not. Having seen a slight possibility of their job expectations being met within the limit of their actions, youths continue to prefer public sector jobs irrespective of their current employment status (Ajani & Oyekola, 2019; Barsoum, 2015; Rose, 2015). Nigerian youths often consider themselves unemployed until they are given appointment in the public sector. This goes with rational choice theory's methodological individualist position which attempts to explain all social phenomena in terms of the rational calculations made by self-interested individuals. Rational choice theory views social interaction as social exchange, modelled on economic action. Nigerian youths are motivated by the high rewards such as job security and monetary benefits and low costs toward seeking public sector (Ajani & Oyekola, 2019). This increases youth preference for public sector

jobs as their expectations continue to rise, believing that cost-benefits ratio in the public service cannot be compared to any other. This strong preference for public sector jobs emanated from the career expectation Nigerian youths intend to meet or achieve. And until they secure employment in the public service, they will continue to see public sector jobs as the only means to achieve their career goal.

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is rooted in Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, especially self-efficacy theory and it provides an overarching framework to understand the development of career interest, career choices and career performances (Lent, 2005; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). Social Cognitive Career Theory postulates a mutually influencing relationship between people and the environment. People's career interests, choices and performances are influenced by self-efficacy, outcome expectations and personal goals; which in turn are the result of environmental factors (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Lent et al., 2002). In developing interest in a certain job, self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations are significant. The dependence of these constructs on one another is what functions to influence behaviour (Bandura, 1986). Someone's success in a particular job increases others' confidence to perform such or similar job. Likewise, failure in a particular job decreases confidence to perform such or similar job. Additionally, the higher the probability of attaining success in a particular job, the more likely a person pursues such or similar job, but lesser probability of success attainment reduces

the pursuit of such or similar job. Furthermore, when an individual observes the career success of another, s(he) is likely to believe that s(he), too, can accomplish the same. Conversely, if the individual watches others fail, especially after investing a substantial amount of effort, the individuals' beliefs about their own efficacy is theorized to decrease. Lastly, considering the low risk that goes with the public sector jobs, which results in low anxiety, the psychological states of many Nigerian youths are influenced toward seeking employment in the public service. These effects may be explained by the fact that people tend to expect more desirable outcomes in career in which they see themselves to be efficacious (Bandura, 1986).

People make rational job decisions based on what they believe the consequences are. If an individual has low self-efficacy and thus expects failure and negative consequences, s(he) will not attempt the behaviour. In contrast, a high self-efficacy individual will likely expect positive outcomes and will also be more willing to exert effort in order to attain success. The decision between public sector careers and self-employments, for instance, may be viewed as a cognitive process in which individuals compare the relative desirability of each career option. This cognitive process also encapsulates important affective reflections when making an employment decision. If an individual believes public sector jobs is more likely to lead to valued outcomes than becoming self-employed or working for others in the private sector, then s(he) is more likely to be drawn to the public sector. Hence, both rational choice theory and

social cognitive career theory suggest that the factors influencing youth preference for some government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies are both individually and culturally determined.

METHODS

The study was carried out in Ibadan South west Nigeria. Ibadan is the largest metropolitan geographical area in Nigeria and the third largest metropolitan area (by population) after Lagos and Kano (Demographia, 2016). The study adopted conclusive research design as it seeks to generate findings that will be practically useful in reaching conclusions or decision-making (Hedrick, Bickman, & Rog, 1993; Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffele, 2012). The research is descriptive in nature and seeks to investigate preference for government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies among urban youths in Ibadan, Nigeria with due consideration for gender. Since conclusive research design usually involves the application of quantitative methods of data collection and data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Vogt et al., 2012), the study employed primary quantitative data source in order to generate data that will aid comprehensive and unbiased inferences. The study population consisted of youths between ages 15 and 40 years who were final year students, fresh graduates of tertiary institutions, self-employed workers, and workers in both private and public paid employments. Although African Union Commission (2006) defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 35 years, the age of youth in this study was extended

to 40 years so as to accommodate workers in the public and private sectors. A sample size of 505 respondents was selected for this study using quota non-probabilistic sampling technique because first, it involved selection to meet certain criteria and second, the sample frame for the segment of the population targeted was not available. Structured questionnaire (consisting of both closed-ended and open-ended questions) was administered on each category of youths to generate quantitative data. A total of 505 copies of questionnaire were collected and analysed for this study. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as simple percentages, cross tabulation and chi-square.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Socio-demographic characteristics

The mean and median ages of the respondents were approximately 30 years and 28 years respectively. Most (82.2 percent) of the respondents were Christians. Males represented 51.3 percent of the sample and almost 4 out of 5 (79.2 percent) of the respondents belonged to the Yoruba ethnic group. In addition, a majority (58.6 percent) of the respondents were single while others (41.4 percent) were married. Those without children represented 60.6 percent of the sample while 31.1 percent of them had between one and three children; whereas only 8.3 percent of them had between 4 and 6 children. Approximately two-third (66.5 percent) of the respondents earned between ₦10,000 and ₦49,999

monthly, and above 90 percent had tertiary education. Further details of the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Preference for level of government employment and factors influencing such preference

The data on preference for level of government employment are presented in

Table 2. The data originated from an earlier empirical study which showed that 362 out of 505 respondents preferred public sector careers, representing 71.7 per cent of the respondents who showed preference for public sector careers (Ajani & Oyekola, 2019). The Table 2 therefore analyses only the 362 respondents who preferred public sector careers and it shows that almost all (95.6 percent) the respondents preferred federal government careers.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on socio-demographic characteristics

Independent variables	n	%
Age		
15-20 years	54	10.7
21-25 years	123	24.4
26-30 years	127	25.1
31-35 years	71	14.1
36-40 years	130	25.7
Religion		
Christianity	415	82.2
Islam	90	17.8
Sex		
Male	259	51.3
Female	246	48.7
Ethnic group		
Hausa	6	1.2
Igbo	63	12.5
Yoruba	400	79.2
Others such as Edo and Fulani	36	7.1
Marital status		
Single	296	58.6
Married	209	41.4
Number of children		
None	306	60.6
1-3 children	157	31.1
4-6 children	42	8.3
Average monthly income		
Below ₦10,000	61	12.1
₦10,000 – ₦49,999	336	66.5
₦50,000 – ₦99,999	69	13.7
₦100,000 and above	39	7.7
Total	505	100.0

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to preferred level of government employment and factors influencing such preference

Preferred level of government	n	%
Local government	5	1.4
State government	11	3.0
Federal government	346	95.6
Factors influencing the preferred level of government		
Job security	71	19.6
Comfortable/less stressful	18	5.0
Money issue (such as pay scheme, secured pay, etc)	194	53.6
More preferred in terms of exposure, opportunities, etc	43	11.9
No retrenchment and more efficient	7	1.9
Proximity to my family	11	3.0
Social responsibility	7	1.9
Challenging work	4	1.1
No reason, just my wish	5	1.4
Prestige	2	0.6
Total	362	100.0

The proportion of those who preferred state government (3 percent) and local government (1.4 percent) careers were infinitesimal. This suggests that federal government (among the three tiers of government) is the most promising employer of labour to Nigerian youths.

Investigation on the reasons for the preferred level of government employment are also presented in Table 2. Majority (53.6 percent) of the respondents claimed that monetary benefits (such as pay scheme and secured pay) were responsible for their preferred level of government employment, most especially federal government employment compared to state and local government employments. The second factor influencing preferred level of government employment was job security and 19.6 percent of the respondents affirmed this. Moreover, 11.9 percent of the respondents preferred certain level of government, most especially, federal

government employment, because of the exposure and opportunities it offers. Further details are provided in Table 2.

Nigerian youths specially preferred federal government job mostly because of monetary benefits such as pay scheme, secured pay, as well as gratuity. While some state and local government workers were receiving half salary, and others having their salaries delayed for months; federal government workers were not experiencing such difficulties as much. Also, the national revenue formula, which allocates more resources to the federal government indicates that federal government has the lion share in the nation's resources and consequently, has more resources to serve its employees. As a result, a rational Nigerian youth, having considered cost-benefit ratio within social constraints, would prefer federal government jobs. This affirms the relevance of rational choice theory and social cognitive career theory in explaining

preference for public sector jobs among Nigerian youths. Also, the findings confirm those of the existing studies which found preference for federal government jobs '(Ajani & Oyekola, 2019; Barsoum, 2015; Rose, 2015).

The respondents who preferred state and local government jobs considered proximity to family and opportunity to serve their immediate communities. These respondents probably had strong attachment to their localities and they believed that their impact would be more evident when they serve their immediate community. This altruistic service motive encouraged their desire to contribute meaningfully to their localities since they would not have the opportunity to be transferred to a far region or 'strange' culture within the nation.

Preference for government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies

This section investigates preference for twenty-one government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies as presented in Table 3. The choice of these government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies was based on their relevance to national development, recent happenings in the public sector that gained public attention, focus of existing literature on public sector jobs and authors' personal investigations. The information presented in the table shows clearly that certain government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies were more preferred than the others. While the results evince low preference for many government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies as they fall below average selection ($86 = 1810/21$; total number of

selection divided by total number of government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies); only six government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies (Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation [NNPC], University, Nigeria Immigration Service [NIS], Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN], Nigeria Customs Service [NCS], and Nigeria Port Authority [NPA], accordingly) had above average selection (86), hence their higher preference. In other words, among those who preferred careers in the public service, one-tenth (9.9 percent) preferred to work with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). This was followed by 8.9 percent of those who preferred careers in the public service and they indicated their preference for careers in the University. Careers in the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) followed these top lists and this was affirmed by 8.0 percent of those who preferred public sector careers. Moreover, 7.7 percent of the respondents who preferred public sector careers indicated their interest in seeking careers with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). The next on these top lists was Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and 7.4 percent of those who preferred public sector careers indicated their interest to work therein. The sixth most preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies was Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) and 4.9 percent of those who preferred careers in the public service showed their preference to seek careers therein. Only 0.1 percent of those who preferred careers in the public service did not show interest in certain government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies. Rather, they preferred careers in any

government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies.

The 'none' category reflected the respondents who selected less than five government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies. In other words, since respondents were expected to select five government

ministries, parastatals, and/or agencies, anyone who selected less than the expected count was considered to have selected none for other selections. This explains the reason for increasing proportion of 'none selection' as the selection moves towards fifth. Further details are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies

Ministries, parastatals and/or agencies	1st selection n(%)	2nd selection n(%)	3rd selection n(%)	4th selection n(%)	5th selection n(%)	Total selection n(%)	Rating
Aviation	46(12.7)	11(3.0)	5(1.4)	4(1.1)	8(2.2)	74(4.1)	8th
Banking – CBN	56(15.5)	33(9.1)	18(5.0)	13(3.6)	20(5.5)	140(7.7)	4th
Civil defense	10(2.8)	5(1.4)	6(1.7)	5(1.4)	4(1.1)	30(1.7)	18th
CS (S)	23(6.4)	15(4.1)	6(1.7)	11(3.0)	12(3.3)	67(3.7)	9th
C.E.	10(2.8)	17(4.7)	11(3.0)	10(2.8)	10(2.8)	58(3.2)	11th
FRSC	10(2.8)	13(3.6)	18(5.0)	8(2.2)	10(2.8)	59(3.3)	10th
Hospitals	17(4.7)	15(4.1)	11(3.0)	10(2.8)	2(0.6)	55(3.0)	13th
Media	12(3.3)	8(2.2)	12(3.3)	11(3.0)	5(1.4)	48(2.7)	14th
Nigerian Army	14(3.9)	7(1.9)	12(3.3)	12(3.3)	11(3.0)	56(3.1)	12th
NCS	9(2.5)	40(11.0)	29(8.0)	35(9.7)	21(5.8)	134(7.4)	5th
NIS	21(5.8)	27(7.5)	36(9.9)	25(6.9)	35(9.7)	144(8.0)	3rd
NNPC	51(14.1)	35(9.7)	34(9.4)	35(9.7)	24(6.6)	179(9.9)	1st
NPA	10(2.8)	15(4.1)	29(8.0)	18(5.0)	17(4.7)	89(4.9)	6th
Polytechnic	2(0.6)	9(2.5)	12(3.3)	13(3.6)	7(1.9)	43(2.4)	15th
Power sector	5(1.4)	5(1.4)	4(1.1)	11(3.0)	7(1.9)	32(1.8)	17th
Prison	0(0.0)	4(1.1)	4(1.1)	3(0.8)	1(0.3)	12(0.7)	21st
DSS	4(1.1)	4(1.1)	5(1.4)	14(3.9)	13(3.6)	40(2.2)	16th
Telecom.	3(0.8)	17(4.7)	19(5.2)	15(4.1)	22(6.1)	76(4.2)	7th
NPF	3(0.8)	2(0.6)	3(0.8)	1(0.3)	6(1.7)	15(0.8)	20th
Transportation	2(0.6)	0(0.0)	1(0.3)	8(2.2)	9(2.5)	20(1.1)	19th
University	52(14.4)	30(8.3)	19(5.2)	24(6.6)	36(9.9)	161(8.9)	2nd
Any sector	2(0.6)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(0.1)	22nd
None	0(0.0)	50(13.8)	68(18.8)	76(21.0)	82(22.7)	276(15.2)	
Total	362(100.0)	362(100.0)	362(100.0)	362(100.0)	362(100.0)	1810(100.0)	

CBN-Central Bank of Nigeria

CS (S)-Civil Service (Secretariats)

C.E.-College of Education

FRSC- Federal Road Safety Corps

NCS - Nigeria Customs Service

NIS - Nigeria Immigration Service

NNPC - Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation

NPA - Nigerian Ports Authority

DSS - State Security Service

Teleco.-Telecommunication

NPF-Nigeria Police Force

The findings presented in Table 3 showed that some government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies were more preferred than the others. Seeking careers in the Oil and Gas Industry was probably considered most financially rewarding among young Nigerians possibly because it remained the major source of government revenue since the nineteen seventies and the workers were better remunerated than those working in other parastatals, ministries or agencies. In fact, this industry accounts for more than 70 percent of the nation's revenue (Farabiyi, 2015; Onwe, 2013) until recently when government saw the need to diversify the economy. This, coupled with academic scholarship given to young Nigerians in their early tertiary education, may have opened the eyes of youths to this promising government parastatal; hence, their preference for it.

In addition, there is preference for careers in the University because Nigerian university academics represent the critical mass of scholars in the society, capable of transforming and developing it. Development-oriented research capable of championing development is carried out in the university settings, and this might have explained the preference for this ministry among youths. Moreover, the agreement between the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in January 2009 aided better condition of service, university funding and University autonomy and academic freedom among others cogent matters (Irshad, 2012). These among others also possibly geared youths' interests in seeking careers in the University.

The event of March 2014 demonstrated that Nigerian youths preferred careers in the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS). The historic event recorded the deaths of 23 Nigerians and many more were injured in stampedes that occurred during the recruitment exercise conducted across the nation. The financial reward, condition of service, possible exposure and mission statement of this paramilitary agency may further contribute to the preference for NIS among the Nigerian youths.

Table 3 further shows that youths preferred careers in the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Central Bank of Nigeria issues legal tender currency in Nigeria, maintains Nigeria external reserves to safeguard the international value of the legal tender currency, promotes and maintains monetary stability, among others. Considering these functions, it is no doubt that this agency houses the nation's wealth and this might account for high preference for this government agency among the youths. The high level of corruption in the country also explains the strong desires among Nigerians to make money by all means; hence, youths' choices of careers in the Central Bank of Nigeria.

In addition, the findings showed that Nigerian youth prefer to work in the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS). Career in this government paramilitary agency is highly challenging and engaging especially in this economic recession when government makes changing policies that affect closing and opening of Nigerian borders to certain goods. This period equally poses opportunities for some greedy employees in the NCS to acquire illegal wealth from

unfortunate importers and exporters. The question of corruption, among some other factors, might explain the reason for preferring this government paramilitary agency.

Nigerian Ports Authority was established in 1954 during the colonial rule by ports Act (Cap 155 of the law of the Federation of Nigeria – amended 1999) as an operating port with the responsibility of providing port services. This government parastatal attracts trained personnel and provides highly skilled port services. Employees in this government corporation are quickly exposed to more career opportunities and are also prone to engage in corrupt practices so as to acquire unjust wealth. This might explain high preference for this government parastatal among the youths. Next section examines gender basis for preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies.

Association between sex and preferred level of government careers

This section investigates the association between sex and preferred level of government employment as indicated in Table 4. The investigation shows that among

those who preferred to work for the federal government, 50.5 per cent were males. Also, of those who preferred to work for the state and also for the local governments, 66.7 per cent were both females. The positive association between sex and preferred level of government employment was very weak as indicated by the value of Cramer's V (0.062). Also, the Pearson chi-square (χ^2) value confirmed that the association was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). In other words, the statistical inference shows that no specific sex preferred a particular level of government to seek employment; rather, both sexes most preferred federal government employment.

Association between sex and first preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies

This section analyses gendered preference for preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies as presented in Table 5. The table shows that among those who selected banking job (specifically CBN) as their first preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies to work in, 56.5 per cent were females.

Table 4: Association between sex and preferred level of government

Preferred level of government	Sex		Total n(%)
	Male n(%)	Female n(%)	
Local government	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)	3 (100.0)
State government	3 (33.3)	6 (66.7)	9 (100.0)
Federal government	150 (50.5)	147 (49.5)	297 (100.0)
Any level	26 (49.1)	27 (50.9)	53 (100.0)
Total	180 (49.7)	182 (50.3)	362 (100.0)

Cramer's V = .062

$\chi^2 = 0.712$

Table 5: Association between sex and first preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies

First preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Aviation	20 (43.5)	26 (56.5)	46 (100.0)
Banking (e.g. Central Bank of Nigeria)	26 (46.4)	30 (53.6)	56 (100.0)
Civil defense	3 (30.0)	7 (70.0)	10 (100.0)
Civil Service (secretariats)	13 (56.5)	10 (43.5)	23 (100.0)
College of Education	4 (40.0)	6 (60.0)	10 (100.0)
Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC)	3 (30.0)	7 (70.0)	10 (100.0)
Hospitals	8 (47.1)	9 (52.9)	17 (100.0)
Media	8 (66.7)	4 (33.3)	12 (100.0)
Nigerian Army	6 (42.9)	8 (57.1)	14 (100.0)
Nigerian Custom Service	4 (44.4)	5 (55.6)	9 (100.0)
Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS)	12 (57.1)	9 (42.9)	21 (100.0)
Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation	22 (43.1)	29 (56.9)	51 (100.0)
Nigerian Port Authority	8 (80.0)	2 (20.0)	10 (100.0)
Polytechnic	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	2 (100.0)
Power sector	1 (20.0)	4 (80.0)	5 (100.0)
State Security Service (DSS)	4 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (100.0)
Telecommunication	2 (66.7)	1 (33.3)	3 (100.0)
The Police Force	1 (33.3)	2 (66.7)	3 (100.0)
Transportation	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)	2 (100.0)
University	32 (61.5)	20 (38.5)	52 (100.0)
Any sector	2 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (100.0)
Total	180 (49.7)	182 (50.3)	362 (100.0)

Cramer's V = 0.263

 $\chi^2 = 0.199$

Of those who selected federal and state universities as their first preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies to work in, 61.5 per cent were males. Among those who selected NNPC as their first preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies to seek employment, 56.9 per cent were females and of those who selected Aviation as their first preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies to work in, 56.5 per cent were females. In addition, among those who selected Civil Service (secretariats) and Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) as their first preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or

agencies to work in, 70 per cent were females and 57.1 per cent were males respectively. The Cramer's V (0.263) evinced weak positive connection between respondents' sex and preferred government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies. The Pearson chi-square (χ^2) value confirmed that the connection was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that preference for federal government ministries, parastatals and/or agencies exist among urban youths in

Ibadan, Nigeria; and monetary benefits (such as pay scheme and secured pay) were responsible for such preference. Six government ministries, parastatal and/or agencies (The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation [NNPC], Universities, Nigeria Immigration Service [NIS], Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN], Nigeria Customs Service [NCS], and Nigeria Port Authority [NPA]) were most preferred. The study further concluded that there is no gender difference

in youths' preference for federal government ministries, parastatal and/or agencies. An environment that provides equal employment opportunity for both sexes without gender discrimination of any kind will help the youths to get their dream jobs thereby facilitating the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal Eight. Future research can be conducted in other regions using larger sample size and adopting mixed methods research design.

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