

*Michael Jules Tripartite Taxonomy of Career Choice Relevance:
A Dichotomization of Career Path Usefulness*
October, 2018
MJE Resources

**MICHAEL JULES TRIPARTITE TAXONOMY OF CAREER CHOICE
RELEVANCE:
A DICHOTOMIZATION OF CAREER PATH USEFULNESS**



**THREE WAY
CAREER RELEVANCE**

Michael Oghenenyoreme Jules

MICHAEL JULES TRIPARTITE TAXONOMY OF CAREER CHOICE RELEVANCE: A DICHOTOMIZATION OF CAREER PATH USEFULNESS

Michael O. Jules
(M.Ed., In V.)
Department of Vocational and Technology Education
Faculty of Education, Niger Delta University
Wilberforce Island
Bayelsa State

e-mail: miklestheory@gmail.com
michaeljules42@yahoo.com
www.admissionsandutme.com
www.admissionsandutme.com
[+234 806 060 9054](tel:+2348060609054), [+2348050706635](tel:+2348050706635)

Abstract

Today, numerous students enter into courses that are not relevant to their immediate environment. This is due in part to changing practices and paradigm shift which had greatly influenced the way we operated in the not-too-far past that courses which were somewhat important are now being phased out. This paper on Michael Jules' tripartite taxonomy of career choice relevance attempt to dichotomize the usefulness of career paths into three major categories, namely – the business, employability and social relevance. The author maintained the view that students aspiring to choose a career should endeavor to place these three perspectives in focus before taking decisions. Consequent upon the issue at hand, corresponding suggestions were also made to guide the students.

Keywords: Tripartite Taxonomy, Career Choice Relevance, Career Path Usefulness

Introduction

In today's vibrant societies, students who are on the course of choosing career paths often consider various factors before ascertaining their choice. In his earlier study on five considerations before career selection, Michael (2017) maintained that the major five factors that influences students' choice of a career include their own capacity, finance, imposition, peer influence, and relevance of such course to the world of work and economy in general. Building on the fifth factor, which is the relevance of such a career path, Michael therefore, conceptualize a taxonomy of career relevance. This taxonomy was informed as a result of massive unemployment amongst Nigerian youths.

Within and outside the research community, several factors have been found to influence choice of career. Chen (1997) found that context greatly influence career choice. Ferry, (n.d.) studied factors influencing career choices of adolescents and young adults in rural Pennsylvania and found family, school, and community to have significant influence on students' career choice. Melissa (n.d.) outlined childhood fantasies, culture, gender, interests, life roles, personality types, previous experiences, skills, abilities, talents, social and economic conditions. These studies veered extensively outside the scope of the relevance of such a career as the factor determining its selection. Very few researchers, if any, had earlier done any work on the need to rely on career relevance as a sine qua non for career selection.

The major focus of this paper is to dichotomize career relevance into three broad categories – career *business* relevance, career *employability* relevance and career social relevance. This is due in part, to the fact that most career paths are not relevant and scarcely useful to their immediate environment, therefore, students who are ready to choose a career must be properly guided and groomed to take up something that they can benefit from in the long run. Their career choice should not be based on their *rose-colored* view of what happens elsewhere through the viewing of movies and begin to apply it to their environment whereas, such path may not be beneficial to them in the long run.

The Author's Concern

In developing economies, there has been high unemployment rate due to lack of production capacity and overdependence on foreign countries for luxurious goods and services. This high rate of unemployment has necessitated the author to reason that instead of young ones to venture into careers that makes them tend to depend solely on employment as the only source of benefitting from their education, students should rather adopt a paradigm shift where more focus is on how

graduates can utilize their experience from the university to conceptualize, develop and sustain their businesses.

The above pre-understanding of the implications of a chosen career will make undergraduates veer into areas of careers with much business relevance. It is under this context that this taxonomy dwells.

Dichotomizing Career Relevance

In dichotomizing the relevance of a career, the author portrays a career as being relevant in terms of business, employment and social life. That is, the extent to which a graduate is able to secure a dependable employment is a consequence on how such career is relevant to the immediate environment. In the same vein, the extent to which a student is able to conceptualize, develop and sustain a business is also dependent on the relatedness of such career to a particular business endeavour. Additionally, the extent to which a graduate is able to pry into the social life with his/her experience from the university is also a consequence of such career usefulness to the identified and unidentified needs of the social environment. Accordingly, the three divisions are explained in detail below:

1. Business Relevance:

A career is said to be business relevant to the extent that such a career holder is able to utilize such a career path in developing a personal business. Today, many students either take up, being forced, or diverted in the universities to careers that are sometimes not having business relevance. Although the success in any career endeavour is first and foremost dependent on how the individual sees and utilized it, it is most likely that many careers cannot help the holders to make headways in the business environment. Those holding these set of careers and doing business may be doing so as a result of their personal understanding of business they had elsewhere.

A very good example of careers with very low business relevance is Philosophy. While the choice of Philosophy as a course of study may not be a bad choice in itself, it is very likely that students certified in Philosophy will have very little or no relation with the business world. If for example, I am to establish an office and render philosophy consultancies, who will be my client? If at all I have clients, will the patronage from the overall clientele sustain the business? What institutions or individual need the services of a philosopher as a businessman? These are the indicators we are looking at when we talk of courses having business relevance.

Also, for courses like Geology, it will also be difficult for graduates to startup a business with their certification. Like the questions posed above, if I, for instance set up a business as a geologist, true I may have clients, but will the extent of patronage sustain my endeavor? We must understand the principle of the business as a going concern and to be realized, consistent patronage must be attained through the delivery of quality and relevant services.

On the other divide of the discourse are courses/careers that are business relevant. Take a look at courses like Educational courses, Agricultural courses, Medicine, Law, etc. These courses, when utilized are self sufficient. This is to say that as a teacher, even where there is no employment, one can start up a school, and the idea of a school business is a very profitable one if not the most profitable. When well handled, a school business can sustain a venture to attain his/her immediate needs.

On the other, let us take Agriculture as a case study. Food production in the global community is one that has been on since the beginning of man himself. From time immemorial, man has sought to manipulate ideas to come out with best approaches in arriving at what he can consume. Till date, agriculture has remained the lifeblood of all nations, hence, venturing into agricultural business even as a graduate is one that is likely to be profitable. Apart from being consultants, graduates certified to be Agriculturist can actually startup mini farms, poultries, fish ponds, snail farming amongst other profitable agricultural ventures.

2. Employability Relevance:

Aside being relevant in the business environment, the author also maintained that a good career should first and foremost be relevant to the extent of enabling holders seek sustainable employments. Despite the high rate of unemployment, good courses enable holders to better source for employment even where they are scarce. Accordingly, the author is of the view that youths who intend to take up careers should source for alternative career choice, where after choosing a career as a path of interest, such decision should be subjected to an employability test. This is to make the bearer not to have complications emanating from unemployment after graduating from such a course of study.

Today in Nigeria, the employability index is at an all time high. Therefore, students aspiring for university education must understand the employability of their aspiring courses before they delve into such field hastily. This is to avoid the occurrence of choosing courses that will make them unemployable in the near future. Pitan and Atiku (2017) studied structural determinants of students'

employability: Influence of career guidance activities. The authors looked at opportunity awareness and self-awareness skills dimension having the greatest influence on employability; the authors suggests that understanding one's strengths and weaknesses, and having knowledge of the labour market, is of utmost importance in shaping undergraduates' employability in Nigeria.

Ghayur and Churchill (2015), were of the opinion that opportunity awareness and self-awareness are basic in achieving one's career goals, because the more understanding one have of oneself and available opportunities, the more likely one is able to have personal definition of success and make informed decisions. This result proves that the two variables, viz. work-based learning and real-world engagement under which the constructs opportunity awareness and self-awareness skills were measured, are dominant in enhancing students' employability (Pitan and Atiku, 2017). The position of Pitan and Atiku (2017) further strengthened the point emphasized here that a good course is one that have high employability index and in accordance with the points above, students are advised to be aware of the labour market before they make rash choices that are not beneficial to them in the labour market.

Pitan (2016) identified 8 causes of unemployability to include poor curriculum system, poor learning environment, disparity between employers' and graduates' views on employability, inadequate funding, dearth of guidance counseling and career services units, inadequate collaboration between universities and employers of graduates, inadequate and unsatisfactory student industrial work experience scheme (SIWES), and poor commitment of undergraduates to developing themselves. Nevertheless, none of these causes included relevance of a course as an indicator of graduates' employability.

Subjecting the Teaching Profession to Employability Test in the Nigerian Context

It is out of place to discuss other profession in this paper and leaving the teaching profession behind. Therefore, the author attempt to analyze the teaching profession's employability within the Nigerian context. Here, the author underscores the Nigerian teacher employment as unhealthy and thus, needs prompt attention. A situation that made the Federal Government of Nigeria to establish the N-Power programme that employs thousands of Nigerian teachers. Despite this stride by the federal government, the author sees the N-Power programme in emolument Nigeria as below the standard of a graduate teacher, hence, it is

difficult to calculate it as a sustainable employment programme for the teeming graduates.

In Nigeria, indications from past studies shows that the rate of unemployment experienced by university graduates is increasing by the day (Emeh, Nwanguma & Abaroh, 2012; Pitan 2010, 2015). Evidence in support of this assertion shows that out of over 40 million unemployed youths in the country, 23 million are unemployable possibly due to their lack of necessary skills and career relevance for employment (Emeh, Nwanguma & Abaroh, 2012). Also, Mahmood (2014) claimed that about seventy percent of the 80 million youths in Nigeria are either unemployed or underemployed. According to Akanmu (2011), many graduates who find work are not gainfully employed, and for those who found fulfilling employment in spite of everything, their employers raised serious concerns about their skills and fitness for the job. Similarly, Pitan and Adedeji (2012) revealed an overall skills mismatch of 60.6 percent among employed university graduates, with critical deficiencies in communication, information technology, decision-making, critical thinking, interpersonal relationship, entrepreneurial, technical and numeracy skills.

The above data indicates that teachers who are part of the general unemployed graduates suffer hugely from unemployment in the country. This is not to say that the teaching profession is not relevant employability wise. Nonetheless, the lack of employment opportunities becomes the major challenge here. Accordingly, graduate teachers will do well to involve setting up a school business as part of their plans so as to make their profession gainful to them. As earlier posited by the author, school business is a lucrative endeavor if adequately planned, financed and managed. Teachers involved in school business can therefore, make themselves useful first, then to their immediate and far environment.

3. Social Relevance

Away from the above two dichotomy of career relevance, a career path can also be relevant in a social way. By this, the author mean that certain course of study can provide avenues for social engagements from which holders can benefit from. A very good example of this is the Medical profession. Today, in radio and television stations, we see professional medical doctors with years of experience being invited or hosting programmes to engage with their publics. By being invited some of these guests are paid to give professional explanations on specific issues. Additionally, by hosting such programmes, such programmer can solicit for partnerships or sponsorships from banks and other organizations. And from all of

these, monies are realized. Aside radio and television programmes, medical personnel have also been known for planning free programmes for the public that are sponsored by the government and other concerned NGOs. For instance, the United Nations through its numerous agencies like the UNESCO, USAID, UNICAF, etc, had sponsored programmes locally in their bid to benefit the international community. These are some of the ways that a socially relevant career can benefit the holders.

Again, on the part of teachers, for example, their career can also be socially beneficial and relevant. In contemporary vibrant societies, more learning takes place involuntarily online than in the classroom. This is what is referred to as the social curriculum. The social curriculum as defined by Cortes (1981) is the massive, ongoing, informal curriculum of family, peer groups, neighborhoods, churches, organizations, occupations, mass media, and other socializing forces that “educate” all of us throughout our lives. This type of curricula can now be expanded to include the powerful effects of social media (YouTube; Facebook; Twitter; Pinterest, etc) and how it actively helps create new perspectives, and can help shape both individual and public opinion. The social curriculum is important to this third career relevance because in teaching, one can actually sustain his/herself. Take online, distant learning for example, teachers can actually start teaching online and organize a certain form of widely accepted training and realizing money from the process.

Even from their personal social profiles, graduate teachers can conceptualize teaching practices that can bring benefit to society. The first approach in social life is to be good in what you do. If you are a vocational business researcher, you must be very vibrant and sound in your line of study. Being good, you now have something to give. Even from the social environment, a teacher can begin to organize live programmes that persons from the internet can see, become interested and attend your programmes. The fact remains that there are numerous programmes that can be hosted by graduate teachers if they are good and vibrant. There is much benefit in teaching, something many have not realized. By teaching in the social environment, persons who may pick interest in what you do may decide to strike deals that can actually benefit such innovative teachers. Today’s society is begging for intellect, and those who are innovative enough to invent ideas from nowhere are greatly benefitting from it.

Significance

The author believe that this paper will be beneficial to students who are about to choose a career path within the secondary-tertiary level. Also, graduate students who are forging ahead to embark on their post graduate programmes will also find this paper useful. They can decide whether or not to follow their previous undergraduate field, by using this taxonomy to ascertain the relevance of their previous courses. Parents too may find this paper useful. Not many parents understand the importance of a career relevance to the future career prospects of the child. By this paper, many parents would know that there is urgent need for pre-ascertaining the relevance of a career in modern society before one can actually go into it. The author also expects that this paper will assist the relevant government agencies to reassess the usefulness of many courses within the tertiary level. This is to ensure that the courses with lesser prospects are modified to gain more relevance in the scheme of things.

Conclusion

From the dichotomization above, it is hereby stated that a career can have a tripartite relevance which borders on business, employability and social relevance. Based on this understanding, students can conveniently choose a career knowing how best they can utilize it to their benefit in the future. With a basic understanding of a career prospect, it is easier for students choose and make headway upon graduation.

The Way Forward

So much can be attained to set things right if adequate plans and actions are in place. Before aspiring for a course of study, students must have a basic awareness of such course. Accordingly, the following steps are suggested.

1. A student aspiring to choose a career must first ascertain if the certification in such a field can aid him/her in doing business in any event employment fails. This will foster a bright career prospect.
2. Before choosing a career, students must understand if their future institutional certification is still useful to the environment they are about entering. This is to eliminate employment problems.

3. Students should look beyond the immediate environment in their search for employment and development of businesses. Much more can be attained online if they learn to conceptualize ideas that benefit society. This is because in the long run, society will call and they will reap from their innovations.

References

- Akanmu, O. (2011). Graduate employment and employability challenges in Nigeria. Paper presented at the British Council Global Higher Education Conference, Hong-Kong, March 12.
- Chen, C. P. (1997). Career projection: Narrative in context. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 54*, 279-295.
- Cortes, C. E. (1981). The societal curriculum: Implications for multiethnic educations. In Banks, J.A (ed.) *Educations in the 80's: Multiethnic education*. National Education Association
- Emeh, I. E., Nwanguma, E. O., & Abaroh, J. J. (2012). Engaging youth unemployment in Nigeria with youth development and empowerment programmes: The Lagos state in focus. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business, 4*, 1125-1141.
- Ferry, N. M. (n.d.). Factors influencing career choices of adolescents and young adults in rural Pennsylvania. *Journal of Extension*. Retrieved from <https://www.joe.org/joe/2006june/rb7.php>
- Ghayur, K. & Churchill, D. D. (2015). *Career success: Navigating the new work environment* (2nd ed). Charlottesville, VA: CFA Institute.
- Mahmood, A. (2014). 80% of Nigerian youths are unemployed. Information Nigeria. Retrieved from <http://www.informationng.com/2014/06/80-of-nigerian-youths-are-unemployed-cbn-official.html>.
- Melissa, V. (n.d). What factors influence a career choice? Retrieved from https://osumarion.osu.edu/assets/marion/uploads/What_Factors_Influence_a_Career_Choice.pdf
- Pitan, O. S. & Adedeji, S. O. (2012). Skills mismatch among university graduates in Nigeria labor market. *US-China Education Review, 2*(1), 90-98.
- Pitan, O. S. & Atiku, S. O. (2017). Structural determinants of students' employability: Influence of career guidance activities. *South African Journal of Education, 37*(4), 1-13.

- Pitan, O. S. (2010). Assessment of skills mismatch among employed university graduates in Nigeria labor market. *Unpublished Ph.D Thesis*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan.
- Pitan, O. S. (2015). An assessment of generic skills demand in five sectors of the Nigerian labor market. *Public and Municipal Finance*, 4(1), 28-36.
- Pitan, O. S. (2016). Towards enhancing university graduate employability in Nigeria. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303997149_Towards_Enhancing_University_Graduate_Employability_in_Nigeria.