

# A Study of the Marketing Mindset: Undergraduate Student Choice of Marketing Major in a Business-Biased Public University in Ghana

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## Abstract

Motivations for undergraduate student choice of marketing major have critical strategic human resource planning and long-term career satisfaction importance. Yet few studies have been devoted to it. Based on four hypotheses, this study examined the correlation between job, personal, educational and gender factors, and undergraduate students' choice of marketing major, and influential relationship of various close affinities (individuals) with that choice in a business biased Public University in Ghana. A cross-sectional quantitative study based on a population sample size of 527, this research examined 21 variables captured in a closed-ended questionnaire administered to a sampled student population of marketing major students for three-month duration. Descriptive analysis, Chi-Square test, multiple linear regressions, Pearson correlation, factorial and component analyses were calculated of data. Whiles results indicated the female gender is not correlated to choice of marketing profession, personal interest factors was positively related to the choice, followed by the nature of marketing, quality and reputation of lecturers, and job related factors.

**Keywords:** decision making, marketing major, influencers, nature of marketing, job related, gender and marketing

## 1. Introduction

### *1.1 Background to the Study*

Recently, there has been renewed interest among business organizations about the strategic importance of career and human resource strategic planning and their impact on organizational competitiveness, performance, and sustainability. Among the focus of this interest is the influence of socio-economic, personal, and education related factors on undergraduate students' choice of business major and consequent student satisfaction in their future jobs and careers. Research evidence suggests positive relationship between stable and long-term employment and higher organizational productivity while excessive and frequent employee turnover are associated with low productivity, high costs of hiring, training, placement of new hires, and learning curve effects (Silva & Toledo, 2009; Abowd & Kramarz, 2003) on overall organizational productivity. Moreover, frequent employee turnover has adverse consequences for known organizational work patterns and organizational culture and employee motivations (U.S. Department of Education, 1998, 2001; Blacks & Ashford, 1995). These contrasts have triggered and spurred research interests as well. Studies investigating what motivates undergraduate students to select business majors (Cohen & Hanno, 1993; Kim, Markham, & Cangelosi, 2002; Noel, Michaels, & Lavas, 2003; Pritchard, Potter, & Saccucci, 2004) have suggested that whereas the occupation of students' parents, socioeconomic factors (Leppel, Williams, & Waldauer, 2001) are important considerations, student personality traits, student interest in the subject, curriculum and teaching-learning environment factors, future job availability, students aptitude for the subject, future potential associated with that major (Kim et al., 2002; Mauldin et al., 2000; Pritchard et al., 2004), job availability, perceived social prestige associated with the major, flexibility, and financial rewards (Adams, Pryor, & Adams, 1994) are also key considerations in the decision making process.

Admittedly, these past research evidences have thrown much light on factors that students consider important in the choice of business majors including accounting and finance (Felton, Buhr, & Northey, 1994; Cohen & Hanno,

1993). Yet, the explicit lack of concentration of research evidence on marketing major students provides urgent need for additional studies. To be sure, business major at the undergraduate level is wide and diverse in scope, with each discipline requiring different aptitudes, motivations and even job prospects and financial rewards (Cohen & Hanno, 1993; Tom, O'Grady, & Swanson, 1995; Aggarwal, Vaidyanathan, & Rochford, 2007). Thus, while the longstanding evidence that multiple factors influence undergraduate students in their choice of business major is not in doubt, research evidence of relationship between those factors and undergraduate students' choice of marketing major and gender differentials is scanty and limited. This is not to suggest there are no works on the subject; some studies examined certain aspects of marketing major, for example what interests first year undergraduate students to take principles of marketing as a subject (Ferrell & Gonzalez, 2004) and marketing professionals' perception of the changing marketing environment (Smart, Kelley, & Conant, 1999). More importantly and directly, our search of the academic literature delving specifically into why students select marketing major turn out few studies (Javier, 2007; Pappu, 2004; Tom, Sanson, & O'Grady, 1995) and including research evidence on personalities that may have played influential role in student decisions. This study attempts to fill this knowledge gap and extend knowledge of individual, educational, and job level factors to undergraduate student choice of marketing major, students' perception of the female gender and its relationship with marketing and the influence of key individuals in that decision in a business biased public University in a developing country higher educational context.

### *1.2 Literature Review*

Prior studies addressing reasons why undergraduate students select marketing major is highly limited, though research covering the broad area of business major has received extant attention in the academic literature (Kumar & Kumar, 2013; Malgwi, Howe, & Burnaby, 2005; Noel, Michaels, & Levas, 2003). Thus, while business major, in its broad form, perceived to be lucrative, was hugely popular with undergraduate business students because of the perception that it has both job and economic prospects (Kumar & Kumar, 2013; Malgwi, Howe, & Burnaby, 2005), marketing major, a branch of that discipline received far less research attention. Indeed, search through most known databases for prior studies on why undergraduate students select and pursue marketing major turn out a handful of research articles. Yet, given the significant relevance of business broadly to marketing and marketing itself as a business discipline, the present review of literature focuses on relevant research on student choice of business majors in its broad form and marketing specifically. First, previous studies have shown that students are influenced by a gamut of factors as they select courses in the business discipline. Whereas some of the studies have underscored the increasingly dynamic and complex nature of the process of major selection (Astin & Panos, 1969; Levine, 1976), other studies have suggested that marketing educators need to acknowledge the significance and relevance of key decision factors for purposes of influencing such contextual factors in the selection (Stafford, 1994; Schmidt, Debevec, & Cornm, 1987). Indeed, Schmidt, Debevec, and Cornm (1987) even sees educator-student relationship in a supplier-buyer terms and explained that marketing educators as suppliers of educational services must necessarily understand both the behavior of choice and influences of students. According to Kleine (2002) this knowledge is valuable because "a student's major often becomes an important part of his or her self-definition" (p.15) and that "the more a student identifies with being a marketing major, the more committed he or she will be to enacting behaviors that lead to success as a marketing student" (p.15). More importantly, the literature on the selection of business major has highlighted the potential competition of marketing major with other business disciplines for student attention and interest. Labarbera and Simonoff (1999) argued that other majors like accounting and finance might be highly preferred over marketing due to possible association of those majors with better economic benefits. In such case, students who did not get accepted into those majors as first choice tend to select marketing major only as a last resort, thus this major playing second fiddle to other competing majors (Cohen & Hanno, 1993; Adams, Pryor, & Adams, 1994; Felton, Buhr, & Northey, 1994). Extending this premise, Hugstad (1997) further argues that when students select marketing major only when all available options to them fails, the quality of enrolled marketing major students would be typically affected.

Yet, outcome of review of the limited literature addressing why students pursue marketing major at the undergraduate level provides some evidence that among influential factors undergirding the choice is the alignment of the discipline with the personal interests of students (Javier, 2007; Rappu, 2004; Kim, Markhan, & Cangelosi, 2002), the discipline's human and people-centeredness (Javier, 2007). Additional common reasons identified in the research material include alignment of marketing with other courses, which then offers students the flexibility to combine it with other disciplines (Rappu, 2004), the relevance and utility of marketing knowledge for starting new businesses, potential financial and job prospects of the marketing major (Rappu, 2004; Kim, Markhan & Cangelosi, 2002; Swanson & O'Grady, 1995), and the wide applicability of marketing to

diverse disciplines and fields of life (Rappu, 2004). Moreover, the academic reputation of teachers in the program and early exposure to introductory courses in marketing that students received (Rappu, 2004), the quality of the actual of the marketing programs (Swanson & O'Grady, 1995) and the reputation of marketing as a career in the public's eye (Swanson & O'Grady, 1995) matter seriously to marketing students.

Although Kim, Markhan and Cangelosi (2002) also found that marketing major students cared less about the reputation of the marketing major at the particular university they enrolled, the quality of teaching instruction available to students, parental influence, and the extent that the major was promoted by educators influenced student's decision to pursue marketing major. Similarly, several other investigators (LaBarbera & Simonoff, 1999; Keillor, Bush, & Bush, 1995; Newel, Titus, & West, 1996) also found that academic reputation, parental influence, the nature of the school's marketing curriculum and the relevance of available courses, and even student peers could have significant influence in student decision making.

Whiles this review underscores undergraduate student's motivations for pursuing marketing major, there appears to be inconsistency in the reasons and the potential importance students attached to the plethora of individual, educational, and job-related factors, the role of gender and personality influences in student choice. Indeed, Rapu (2004) suggested that a variety of intervening socio-cultural settings might account for the differentials in rankings of important factors (Rappu, 2004). The divergences and lack of commonly agreed factors may be partly explained by the limited studies on the subject, thus different economic zones, educational institutions and environment seem not to have consistently ranked factors, personalities that they can generally relate. Thus, this research gains its urgent need from some of these limitations of available literature. Our study extends knowledge of critical factors underscoring undergraduate student choice of marketing major in a developing country environment, key personalities associated with students' academic major choice and their involvement in student decision making, and the relevance of gender factors in the marketing major choice decisions.

### *1.3 Research Hypothesis*

The study developed research hypotheses. The statistical tests used were the chi square, multi regression and factor analysis.

H1: Female Gender influences the choice of marketing major.

H2: Personal interest, nature of marketing, job related factors, quality and reputation of lecturers are significant to the choice of marketing as a major.

H3: Personal interest, nature of marketing, job related factors, quality and reputation of lecturers are inter-correlated.

H4: Influencers (celebrities, colleagues, parents, relatives, personal choice, tutors) is associated to students' choice of marketing major.

## **2. Conceptual Framework**

To identify the relevance and importance of elements that inform students decision to select marketing major at the university level, a conceptual framework (in Figure 1) demonstrates the possible relationship between personal interest, nature of marketing, job related factors, the quality and reputation of lecturers and undergraduate student choice of marketing major. The framework also included the relationship between marketing and the female gender. Figure 1 shows both independent and dependent variables, and the significance of the independents variables to the choice of marketing as a major.

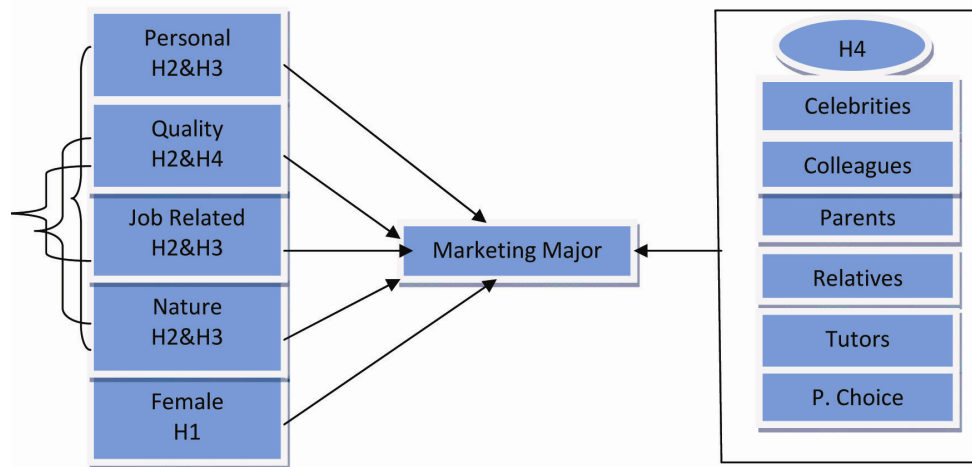


Figure 1. Hypothesized model

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Approach and Sampling Methods

This research, conducted in a business-biased public University in Ghana, employed a cross-sectional quantitative research approach. The study was conducted from November 2013 to February 2014 and included a target population of all undergraduate marketing major students in the university (2010–2011 to 2013–2014 year groups). Based on a simple random sampling technique, 527 students were selected to answer questionnaires via www.google.doc.com online survey platform.

#### 3.2 Data Collection Methods

The questionnaire, containing both continuous and categorical data, constituted the main primary data collection instrument. Aside demographic data of respondents, all other questions were based on the Likert scale, covering questions on the reasons for offering marketing and categorical data for questions on whether marketing was a female profession, and personalities that influenced students in their choice of the major.

#### 3.3 Reliability Analysis

Questionnaire reliability analysis was conducted using 100 students, which turn out a Cronbach alpha of 0.83 on personal interest, 0.67 on nature of marketing, 0.76 on quality and reputation of lecturers and 0.82 on job related factors. According to George and Malleery (2006) the closer the alpha is to 1.00, the greater the internal consistency of the items being measured, demonstrating the internal consistency of these factors measured. SPSS version 20 was used to run the reliability analysis, factor analysis, and regression for data collected while Excel 2013 was used to create frequency table.

### 4. Data Analysis

#### 4.1 Chi-Square Test of Independence for Marketing and Female Gender

The Chi-Square test of independence was calculated based on the formula below to determine whether marketing major is influenced by the female gender.

The chi-square formula

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e} \quad (1)$$

The expected count is calculated using this formula  $f_e = \text{total row multiplied by total column divided by grand total}$ .

$$f_e = \frac{390 * 19.0}{527.0} = 14.1$$

$$= \frac{(15 - 14.1)^2}{14.1} + \frac{(4 - 4.9)^2}{4.9} + \frac{(375 - 375.9)^2}{375.9} + \frac{(133 - 132)^2}{132.1} = 0.06 + 0.17 + 0.01 + 0.01 = 0.25$$

$$df = (r - 1) * (c - 1) \quad (2)$$

$$= (2 - 1) * (2 - 1) = 1$$

Pearson Chi Square test shows ( $x^2_{calculated} = 0.25, df = 1, x^2_{tabulated} = 3.84146, \alpha = 0.05$ ). With the  $X^2$  calculated  $0.25 < X^2_{tabulated}$ , therefore the null hypothesis is accepted indicating that marketing major is not influenced by female gender.

Table 1. Chi square of independence for marketing and female gender

		Marketing as a female major			Total
		Yes	No		
Gender	Male	Count	15(3.8%)	375(96%)	390
		Expected Count	14.1	375.9	390.0
	Female	Count	4(2.9%)	133(97%)	137
		Expected Count	4.9	132.1	137.0
Total	Count	19	508	527	
	Expected Count	19.0	508.0	527.0	

#### 4.2 Predictive Test of Choice of Marketing Major

A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict choice of marketing major based on students' Personal Interest (PI), Nature of Marketing (NM), Quality and the Reputation of Lecturers (QRL) and Job Related factors (JRF). A significant regression equation was found ( $F(4, 522) = 501,769, P = 0.000 < 0.05$ ).

A multiple regression equation was determined by  $y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \varepsilon$ ,

$$\text{Marketingasamajor} = 16.753 + 1.006x_1 + 0.979x_2 + 0.574x_3 + 0.801x_4 + 13.17311$$

All the independents variables contributed significantly to the choice of marketing as a major, *personalinterest*  $\beta = 0.407, t = 19.807,5$  had a moderate correlation, *natureofmarketing*  $\beta = 0.253, t = 12.378, p < 0.05$  revealing a weak positive relationship, *quality&reputationoflecturers*  $\beta = 0.283, t = 12.207, p < 0.05$  indicating a weak positive correlation and *jobrelatedfactors*  $\beta = 0.484, t = 20.769, p < 0.05$  meaning a weak positive correlation with the depend variable.

Table 2. Coefficients of regression model

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.	Results
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	16.753	2.174		7.706	.000	Accepted
Personal Interest	1.006	.051	.407	19.807	.000	Accepted
Nature of Marketing	.979	.079	.253	12.378	.000	Accepted
Quality and Reputation of Lecturers	.574	.047	.283	12.207	.000	Accepted
Job Related factors	.801	.039	.484	20.769	.000	Accepted

a. Dependent Variable: Marketing

Note.<sup>a</sup> Dependent Variable: Marketing.

Overall model  $F=501.769; p < 0.05 R^2=0.891; \text{Adjust } R^2=0.794$ .

#### 4.3 Factor Analysis

Factor analyses reduced the twenty-eight (28) statements in the questionnaire of the reasons why students pursue marketing major to most common reasons among respondents. The factor analyses met the required statistical assumptions under Kaiser–Meyer Olkin index ( $KMO=0.559$ ) and the Bartlett's test and high Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) that assured that the sample of 527 items are fit for the principal component analysis. The Bartlett's test of Sphericity value  $p < 0.05$  also indicated the factor analyses test is significant. Eigen values  $\geq$

1 showing the factor is preferred is extracted from the variables. The result in Table 3 revealed that only eleven (11) components to be extracted, meaning the most preferred reasons taking into accounts when opting for marketing as a major in the university. As shown these questions (based on same questions used by Rapu, 2004) were considered the most important:

- *X7=courses offered by the marketing department covers the marketing function comprehensively,*
- *X14=the marketing department offers variety of courses,*
- *X2=I like the subject area of marketing,*
- *X4=it is easy to combine marketing with my other business major,*
- *X3=marketing graduate have good chance of getting well-paid jobs,*
- *X6=knowledge in the marketing area would be useful to run a business,*
- *X17=it gives knowledge that I can apply in real life,*
- *X23=it is an interesting area*
- *X9=lecturing style in the introductory marketing course impressed me,*
- *X19=it closely matches with my other business major,*
- *X27=staff members in the marketing department are very helpful to students,*

The eleven (11) components accounted for 63.28 % cumulative percent of the total 100%, meaning the remaining components accounted for 36.72%.

Table 3. Eigen values

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
X <sub>7</sub>	3.236	11.558	11.558	3.236	11.558	11.558
X <sub>14</sub>	2.161	7.719	19.277	2.161	7.719	19.277
X <sub>2</sub>	1.999	7.141	26.418	1.999	7.141	26.418
X <sub>4</sub>	1.887	6.740	33.158	1.887	6.740	33.158
X <sub>3</sub>	1.437	5.132	38.290	1.437	5.132	38.290
X <sub>6</sub>	1.431	5.109	43.399	1.431	5.109	43.399
X <sub>17</sub>	1.252	4.472	47.871	1.252	4.472	47.871
X <sub>23</sub>	1.166	4.165	52.036	1.166	4.165	52.036
X <sub>9</sub>	1.071	3.826	55.863	1.071	3.826	55.863
X <sub>19</sub>	1.054	3.765	59.628	1.054	3.765	59.628
X <sub>27</sub>	1.022	3.649	63.277	1.022	3.649	63.277
X <sub>26</sub>	.983	3.511	66.788			
X <sub>18</sub>	.973	3.475	70.264			
X <sub>28</sub>	.948	3.385	73.649			
X <sub>20</sub>	.916	3.272	76.921			
X <sub>25</sub>	.855	3.053	79.973			
X <sub>8</sub>	.799	2.852	82.825			
X <sub>21</sub>	.769	2.746	85.571			
X <sub>11</sub>	.716	2.558	88.128			
X <sub>22</sub>	.673	2.404	90.533			
X <sub>16</sub>	.627	2.240	92.773			
X <sub>1</sub>	.556	1.987	94.760			
X <sub>15</sub>	.520	1.856	96.615			
X <sub>24</sub>	.465	1.661	98.276			
X <sub>10</sub>	.365	1.303	99.579			
X <sub>13</sub>	.117	.418	99.997			
X <sub>12</sub>	.001	.003	99.999			
X <sub>5</sub>	.000	.001	100.000			

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

#### 4.4 Ranking of Personalities Influencing of Choice of Marketing Major

Table 4 captures responses on personalities who influenced students to select marketing major. It shows that personal choice or decision of the student had the highest 70% accounting for the 1<sup>st</sup> position in the ranking ( $t=1.905$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), relatives in 2<sup>nd</sup> position ( $t=2.439$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) with 9%, tutor 8% at 3<sup>rd</sup> position ( $t=2.979$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), colleagues 7% at 4<sup>th</sup> position ( $t=6.159$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), parent had 6%, at 5<sup>th</sup> position ( $t=5.989$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and finally celebrity had the lowest with 1%, at 6<sup>th</sup> position ( $t=0.051$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). The statistical data shown clearly those students mostly make their own decision to offer marketing major.

Table 4. Descriptive table of personalities influencing choice of marketing

Personality	Frequency	Percent	Rank	t-values	Sig.
A Celebrity	6	1%	6 <sup>th</sup>	.051	.959
A Colleague	35	7%	4 <sup>th</sup>	6.159	.000
A Parent	30	6%	5 <sup>th</sup>	5.989	.000
A Relative	46	9%	2 <sup>nd</sup>	2.439	.015
A Tutor	43	8%	3 <sup>rd</sup>	2.979	.028
Personal Choice	367	70%	1 <sup>st</sup>	1.905	.017
Grand Total	527	100%			

Source: Field Data.

#### 4.5 Interrelation of Independent Variables

Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the relationship among Personal Interest, Nature of Marketing, Job related factors, and the Quality and Reputation of Lecturers. The results summarized in the table 4 revealed that all the relationships were found to be significant at either the  $p<0.001$  or  $p>0.05$  level.

Table 5. Intercorrelation of independent variables

Correlations		Personal	Quality	Job rotated	Nature
Personal	Pearson Correlation	1	.674**	.518**	.456**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	531	531	531	531
Quality	Pearson Correlation	.674**	1	.743**	.646**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	531	531	531	531
Job rotated	Pearson Correlation	.518**	.743**	1	.509**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	531	531	531	531
Nature	Pearson Correlation	.456**	.646**	.509**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	531	531	531	531

Note. \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## 5. Discussion

Four major hypotheses occupied the attention of this study. First, we attempted to examine the correlation between marketing and female gender; second, the correlation between a number of factors and undergraduate student choice of marketing major; the interrelation between those stated variables and finally, the relationship between specific personalities in the life of undergraduate marketing students and their influence of student's decision to pursue marketing. From the analysis of data, a number of findings emerged that largely confirms previous studies on the subject and further extend knowledge in other important areas of the subject.

### 5.1 Marketing as a Female Profession

Evidence available leads to the rejection of the hypothesis that marketing is a female profession. Results indicate respondents did not perceive marketing as a profession mainly for females. This finding is significant because it

seems inconsistent with assumptions made in the research of Smart, Kelly, and Conant (1999), and further taken up by Rapu (2004) and Javier (2007) that suggests demographic variables particularly gender and age factors could be important contextualizing factors in pursuit of marketing major, as growing proportions of females become an everyday reality. To test that assumption for instance, Rapu's study examined the gender and age in their study of Australian and New Zealand marketing major students. Our finding confirms Rapu's study that also found no significant relationship between gender and choice of marketing major in the two countries studied. Thus, although in a study of personality traits and career choice, Datu (2012) found that career choice is significantly associated with gender, yet, the overwhelming rejection of the gender factor grossly undermines this perception and suggest that students use more rational and objective factors in the decision-making to pursue marketing as a business major. While our study may have confirmed Rapu's previous finding, additional research is needed into this relationship and gender differentials and marketing major across economic zones.

### *5.2 Decisional Factors and Choice of Marketing Major*

Based on the evidence that marketing is not a female profession, and our suggestion that students appear to base their decision to pursue marketing major mainly on rational and objective considerations (various other past studies by Tom, O'Grady, & Swanson, 1995; Keillor, Bush, & Bush, 1995; and Newell, Titus, & West, 1996; Juric, Todd, & Henry, 1997; McCullough, Tansuhaj, & Ronarithivichai, 1987 also confirm this objective factor argument), we further argue that this objective standard and rational view appears supported by our findings to the second hypothesis of this study. This second hypothesis examined the relationship between various factors and the selection of marketing major. As other previous studies have found (Javier, 2007; Rapu, 2004) respondents in this study suggest that their personal interest in the discipline was the main reason why they chose to study marketing major. This finding is particularly interesting because it appears that economic and geographical differences (Rapu studied New Zealand and Australian students and current study in Ghana) did not contextualize what students considered significant reasons for their choice of marketing major. Similarly, our study is in line and confirms previous research findings (Javier, 2007; Rapu, 2004; Tom, O'Grady, & Swanson, 1995; Keillor, Bush, & Bush, 1995; Newell, Titus, & West, 1996) that demonstrates the first place relevance of intrinsic motivation or personal interest of students above all other factors.

Moreover, in line with above previous studies cited, our findings also further confirm that the nature of Marketing as a business discipline, the quality and the reputation of Lecturers, and Job related factors, ranked highest as factors that influence student considerations. In our case, we found that personal interest, nature of the discipline, quality and reputation of lecturers, and job factors ranked in that order of preference for students or non-career factors being more important than career factors. Significant in this finding as in past studies (Javier, 2007; Rapu, 2004) is the lesser place respondents accorded job related factors, ahead of personal and course related factors. This finding is inconsistent with O'Brien and Deans (1995) whose study found among 1st-year marketing students a preference for career prospect as their foremost reason, which suggests that even in Ghana, as in most developing countries, where economic and financial factors could be significant considerations for career graduates, the job related factors including financial security seem less of importance.

Also, our finding suggest that the relevance of marketing knowledge to addressing variety of student's aspirations was the second most significant reason why students chose the major. This finding is also consistent with the outcome of the research by Rapu (2004) and Juric, Todd and Henry (1997) that identified the utility of marketing knowledge to variety of student's aims. In addition, the third hypothesis demonstrated that all four factors were interrelated; though the factors ranked highest to lowest in considerations, the finding from this hypothesis indicates personal factors, nature of marketing, quality and reputation of lecturers, and the job related factors are related. Our finding is also consistent with previous studies in which students seem to concentrate on few and some selected factors. For example, whereas first year marketing students in the UK were concerned with prior knowledge, the popularity of marketing (O'Brien & Deans, 1987), the employment potential, public perception of the subject, and the quality of marketing program were critically important in the study of Tom, O'Grady, and Swanson (1995) and then Keillor, Bush, and Bush (1995) and Newell, Titus, and West (1996) together identified academic reputation, previous course work that students took, the nature of the marketing curriculum, and the influence of peers as key considerational factors. Similarly, we find as Schmidt, Debevec and Comm (1987) also found in their study of US marketing major students in colleges, that course-related factors were considered more significant than non-course related factors. Students identified nature of the marketing as a discipline and the quality and the reputation of their lecturers as more important than non-academic factor of job or career prospects.



### 5.3 Personalities and Choice of Marketing Major

A major contribution to knowledge on the subject is that respondents suggest their decision to pursue marketing major was entirely a personal choice but not a decision that was influenced by celebrities, tutors, parents, and relatives. This finding appears consistent with our earlier findings that suggest students mostly chose marketing based on interest in the subject. This finding further supports the view that student's interest and personal choice far supersedes the influence of relations or close friends, tutors, family members or celebrities as opposed to Stafford (1994). Our finding also appears to be inconsistent with some past studies on career choice decisions that have shown that parental influence and tutors have significant influence on student choice of careers (Hebert & Pagnani, 2009; Bradford, Buck, & Myers, 2001).

## 6. Recommendations and Limitations

We highly recommend that marketing educators and other individuals and entities connected to marketing education at higher education sectors need to increase their knowledge and insight of both the decisional processes and the complexity of factors influencing students' choice of the marketing major. This understanding is necessary both for strategic human, career, and curriculum planning intent and for meeting student expectations. Additionally, a few previous studies (Javier, 2007; Rapu, 2004) suggested that the marketing profession and academic major is highly dynamic and increasing in complexity and therefore constant research into these factors, interrelationships among factors, consistent factor rankings, and gender differentials across developing and advanced economic zones would need to occupy attention of researchers in the future. It would be necessary for researchers to consider further investigate into the competition for interest of other business majors and marketing and its impact on quality of enrolled marketing majors.

Our study does not cover all marketing major students in the Ghanaian public universities, and therefore our findings are limited to population studied only. Moreover, we locked the target population to the current first to final year marketing major students in the target population, which limits the scope of the study to only this group.

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