
AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON CAREER CHOICE AND SUCCESS AMONG CREEK TOWN PEOPLE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on contemporary religious atmosphere in Africa. It examines the effect religion and career choice and setting with particular reference to Creek Town Community in Nigeria. The study relies mainly on qualitative research method using Focus Group Discussion and In-depth Interview. The study revealed that Creek Town People are predominantly Christian with some people still practising Traditional African Religion (ATR). Despite the religious perspective followed by the people, they are committed to their faith, religious activities and practices. The religious commitment provides focus for selecting occupation and profession through which their career is developed. The religious commitment translates to career commitment resulting in career success. The study was a descriptive analysis, describing data obtained from FGD and IDI where 10 and 4 participants and respondents were examined respectively. The study reveals that religion influence career choice and success positively in terms of prevailing religious practices in Creek Town being Christianity and ATR. The paper recommended further study in Northern Nigeria where Islamic religion prevails and also recommended that a National Policy on Religion be introduced by Nigerian Government to promote religion with positive impact on social life and regulate religious practices that breed intolerance.

Keywords: *Religion, Career choice and Career Success*

INTRODUCTION

Career is a very important factor in the life of any individual. Career is a major determinant of socio-economic status of individuals in a given society. The choice of career and how successful individuals become in their chosen career shapes their entire life and social disposition. Career refers to a job or profession that someone has been trained for and intends to do or pursue for several years in his or her life time. Certain factors in the socio-cultural environment of individuals tend to influence the choice of career and at times the degree of success in a given career choice. It is in this light that this study was set to study religion and its impact on career choice and success. Religion according to Yinger (1957) is a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggle with the ultimate problems of human life. According to Robertson (1970), religion refers to the existence of supernatural beings that have a governing effect on life. Sociologically, religion is an element of culture, its practice varies from one cultural area to another. What constitutes religion differs among cultures. As an element of culture, the practice of religion influences other aspects of life such as occupation, career and profession. It is also likely to influence choice, object and attainment in terms of career practice.

Many people tend to go into certain career because of the correlation of such career with their religious belief, while others avoid some career because their religious belief forbid vocation in such areas. Restriction in choice of career is likely to influence the practice outcome. The personality type of an individual may favour entry into certain occupation or career, but if the religion of the person does not favour the career area the person may not venture into it. Thus, people avoid areas of natural flair and personality fitness. It is on this note that this study was designed to investigate the relationship existing between religion and career choice/success. In some cultural areas, people are very religious but the level of career success may leave a lot to desire, because commitment to religious practice, according to Weber (1958), results in success in career and calling. It is in the light of this assertion that the study was undertaken to examine the religious affiliation of Creek Town people and their level of career success. The central question that guided investigation in this study is "Does religion influence choice of career, as well as career practice which result in career success or failure?" Success in the practice of career is highly desirable. Both the individual who practice the career and the group or community that the practitioner belongs all desire or expect success. The person's social standing is measured by his or her career success and the group achievement and development is also considered in terms of the number of members of the group occupying key positions in their career areas. In view of this consideration, the study was carried out to determine the influence of religion on career choice and success in Creek Town, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sociologically, career refers to the sequence of events within a person's work history (Hobson and Sullivan, 2002). Every work has a career. Work people do refer to profession and occupation they find themselves. Occupation is a cluster of job-related activities constituting a single economic role that is usually directed towards making a living, while profession has to do with a high-status occupation marked by abstract knowledge, authority, autonomy and altruism (Hobson and Sullivan, 2002). Religion is a particular system of belief and all the ways of expressing love for object of belief, ceremonies and duties that are connected with it. Example of religion include: Christianity, Buddhism, African Traditional Religion (ATR) etc.

The idea of religion having an influence on an individual's career has been explored in a few studies. For example, Constantine (2003) explored the roles of religion and spirituality in regard to the career development process of American college students and posited that religion and spirituality were inextricably intertwined with human activities and that they have the potential to influence future work-related events and life outcomes. Mathis (2002) in his study of religion and career choice and success explained that religion helped people to cope with life and make meaning of life situations. This enables the religious persons to recognise their purpose of life or destiny, which influenced their beliefs about meaningful work experiences. In relating religion to career progress, Mathis (2002) found that religion influenced organisational behaviours and attitudes and that greater experience of meaningful work were related to higher levels of organisational commitment, intrinsic work satisfaction, job involvement and organisational based self esteem. Mathis (2002) further explained that

religion seemed to provide important opportunities for quiet reflection and connection with a higher power and corroborated Howard and Howard (1997) position that prayer is a useful strategy for dealing with career related challenges. Mathis (2002) also stated that religion helps people to "make a way out of no way", and concluded that religion provides focus in life which translates to career focus.

Arbogast (2008) examined the relationship between religion and career choice from career commitment perspective, he defined career commitment as the continuum of exploration, choice and effort that a person undergoes when choosing an occupation. Accordingly, Arbogast (2008) considered religion as a critical variable that plays a large role in the formation of value structures, social networks and application of time and money. Arbogast (2008) maintained that individuals who are religiously extrinsically-oriented, either personal extrinsic or social extrinsic, will exhibit higher level of career commitment than those individuals who are religiously intrinsically oriented. Arbogast (2008) findings corroborated Duffy (2005) findings that participation in a religion for some individuals, was a predictor of a person's tendency to move towards choosing a career. The idea of Duffy (2005) is inline with Weber (1958) position that protestant Christians attitude ginger success in chosen career and callings, thereby causing the success of adherents to protestant religion to be successful in their career choice.

The ideas of Mathis (2002), Arbogast (2008), Duffy (2005), Hoard and Howard (1997) and Weber (1958) all established a relationship of a kind between career choice/success and religion. In all, their explanations were limited to their observations in their environments. This study dwelled on cross cultural comparison establishing if the impact of religion on career choice/success as experienced in American society and Continental Europe which Weber (1958) examined is tenable in Creek Town, Nigeria, being an African society distinct from the former.

Theoretical Framework

Assignment and Reward Theory developed by Bert Hoselitz was considered appropriate theoretical guide to this investigation. Hoselitz (1961) argued that the assignment of and reward in social roles based on achievement is the *sin qua non* to development. Hoselitz derived this theory from the pattern variables of Parsons (1951). The pattern variables involve two polar extremes which include: Universalism and Particularism, achievement and ascription, specificity and diffuseness, affectivity and affective neutrality, and self-orientation and collective orientation. Universalism refers to making choice in terms of universally accepted precepts, while particularism has to do with making choice in terms of the particular situation the individual finds himself. Achievement refers to acting in relation with achievable qualities of life such as educational attainment, while ascription refers to actions in relations with ascribed qualities such as sex, age or social class. Specificity refers to choice taken cognisance of limited specific factors, while diffuseness refers to choice based on diffuse obligations such as family loyalty. Affective neutrality refers to the amount of feelings

accepted as appropriate to a relationship, while affectivity stands for emotional expressiveness. Collective orientation refers to the nature of one's commitment to collectivity, while self oriented behaviour is designed to promote one's interest.

Hoselitz (1961) used the pattern variables to illustrate that people in industrialised societies exhibit the characteristics of universalism, achievement, specificity, affective-neutrality and self-orientation which determine their choice and success in ventures and callings which include career and or profession. Hoselitz (1961) noted that the non-industrialised society exhibit the opposites, namely; particularism, ascription, diffuseness, affectivity and collective orientation, which accounted for their wrong choices and relative lack of success in their careers and callings, noted that ability to achieve success in calling translate to social and industrial development. The implication of Hoselitz (1961) is that in Africa which is non-industrialised, criteria of achievement are particularistic, meaning that people become rich or poor, successful or unsuccessful not because they desire it but because they are selected for personal reasons by their relations and friends in contrast to that of the industrialised western societies which merit determines achievement. It is in the light of this orientation that the study also attempt to see career choice and success among Africans of Creek Town extraction if it is influenced by their religion or orientation as indicated by Hoselitz (1961).

Hunters (1965) study of Ivydale community negated Hoselitz's theory on the ground that industrialised societies exhibit affectivity and collective orientation just like non industrialised societies as most influential men and successful business and career men were members of a group of college classmates who worked together from college days. In this regard, Hunter (1965) maintained that Hoselitz position shows ethnocentric bias as he considered ethnicity in Africa as a diffuse variable and friendship in America as a particular variable. Notwithstanding this weakness, Hoselitz (1961) presentation provides a theoretical guide to the understanding of career choice and success relationship with religion, and a cross cultural comparison of American and African societies. The importance of Assignment and Reward Theory is that when the grace of salvation is considered as God's or religious reward, achievement and success are cardinal assignments which believers must perform in order to gain the grace of God in Salvation.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilised In-depth interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in gathering data. The qualitative research method was considered appropriate as the investigation was a descriptive study. The Focus Group Discussion consisted of 10 participants excluding the two researchers and two research assistants. The study was conducted in Creek Town which is the home town of the researchers and being a participant observation information was not denied as the researchers were at home in the research area. The participants were purposively selected from among professionals that are native of Creek Town and visited Creek Town from time to time. In order to achieve this purpose that participants are routed in the study area, the Focus Group Discussion was carried out at Obot Nda Nkut, Creek Town. Eminent sons and daughters of Creek Town were randomly invited to participate in

order to have people from diverse professional and occupational background. Most participants belong to Esop Ndito Esit Edik being a socio-cultural group of enlightened and top professional indigenes of Creek Town. Four key persons were also interviewed from the area to ensure balance of opinion. Secondary data from text books, journals and other archival materials were also utilised to enrich the study.

Study Area – Creek Town, Western Calabar

The study area Creek Town, as known to Europeans, otherwise known as Obioko or Esit Edik by the local people. The Efik people occupation of Creek Town dates back to 15th century. Notable African historical kings like King Eyo Honesty ruled over Creek Town. The Christian Missionaries from the Church of Scotland Mission first landed in Creek Town in 1840 before their continuing journey to Calabar. Hence Creek Town boasts of one of the oldest Presbyterian Church parishes in the whole of West Africa. Another Christian church that evangelised Creek Town at the same time with Calabar is The Apostolic Church Britain in the early 1930s (Noah, 1980; Akinkusote, 1984; The Apostolic, 1995). This early religious activity in Creek Town makes the town unique for examining the relationship between career choice/success and religious practice. Creek Town as an integral part of Calabar lies on latitude 4^o57 north of the equator and longitude 8^o20 east (Creek Town Foundation, 2012). There are two indigenous ethnic groups that made up Creek Town namely: Efik and Efut. Creek Town Urban is divided into four groups namely: Mbarakom, Otung, Adakuko and Efut.

Table 1: Schedule of some Villages in Creek Town

S/N	Name of Village	Larger urban group	Tribe
1	Ikot Antigha Essien	Mbarakom	Efik
2	Ukem Ikot Nyong	Mbarakom	Efik
3	Ukem	Efut	Efut
4	Obot Nda Nkut	Mbarakom	Efik/Efut
5	Ukum Ita	Adak Uko	Efik
6	Ikot Hogan Bassey	Mbarakom	Efik
7	Ifako	Efut	Efut
8	Eseku	Otung	Efik
9	Ikot Esu	Otung	Efik
10	Odondon	Adak Uko	Efik
11	Ikot Itam (Nyomidibi)	Efut	Efut
12	Ikot Nyong (Edik Iko)	Adak Uko	Efik
13	Ibonda	Efut	Efut
14	Iyoki	Efut	Efut
15	Ikot Essien	Mbarakom	Efik
16	Ikot Efiok Eyo	Adak Uko	Efik
17	Ekot Efiok Ekpenyong	Adak Uko	Efik
18	Ikot Ibok Eyo Nsa	Adak Uko	Efik
19	Esine Ufot	Mbarakom	Efik
20	Ukpaha-atai	Mbarakom/Efut	Efik/Efut

Source: Field investigation

Table I above indicates the two major ethnic groups (Efik and Efut), their four urban centres earlier mentioned and their corresponding villages or farming settlements. Before the advent of colonialism, Creek Town was a society transiting from feudalism to mercantilism. This is revealed by massive trade between Europeans and notable Efik Nobles like King Eyo Honesty (Bassey, 2008). The traditional occupation of Creek Town people is fishing and farming. The name of the city is derived from its location as a Creek. The people are fishermen and farmers, while others engaged in trading. The early activities of Christian mission led to the establishment of Church of Scotland Mission School which trained manpower for church evangelism and colonial service. Subsequent citing of Girls Institute and later Teachers Training College in the early 20th century assisted in making the city home of some very successful personalities in Cross River State and even Akwa Ibom State (Bassey, 2008). It is in view of this background that Creek Town was chosen as appropriate study area for the investigation. The villages were owned by Nobles from the larger urban groups which constituted blocks for the election of the kings of Creek Town in ancient time. The villages were inhabited by people of diverse groups such as Ibibios, Annangs, Orons and Igbos who live on the land and pay tribute to the owners.

The people of Creek Town recognise the existence of God (Akwa Abasi Ibom) which they worshipped even before the advent of European Missionaries in the early 19th century (Noah, 1980). The subsequent evangelisation by Church of Scotland Mission and later the Pentecostal activities of The Apostolic Church increased the level of religiosity of Creek Town people. Despite the activities of Christian churches, there are still people practicing African Traditional Religion by worshipping spirit of Ancestors (Mbukpo) and sacrificing to deities such as "Mbiam Iyoki" in Iyoki village. The rich history of Creek Town revealed a highly religious society. The Church of Scotland Mission (Presbyterian) that first entered Creek Town is a protestant church and Weber (1958) study indicates that Protestants were very successful in their calling. The study was designed to examine if Creek Town people were influenced by religion in their practice of career or profession, and to determine if their religious practices influence the success in chosen profession or career. The study generally focuses on the impact of religion on occupational choice, practice and success among Creek Town people in western Calabar.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data analysed in the various tables in this section were primarily obtained from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Indepth Interview (IDI). Analysis followed responses to various questions in the Focus Group Discussion and Indepth Interview Guide. The ten (10) participants in FGD were represented with the alphabet A – J that is 1 – 10, while the four (4) participants in IDI were represented with A, B, C, D, that is 1 to 4. Names though collected in the Discussion were excluded to ensure anonymity of participants.

Demographic Analysis**Table 2 – Demographic Data for Focus Group Discussion**

Participants	Age	Highest level of education	Sex	Occupation/ career area	Marital status	Religion	Church denomination	Ethnic group	Duration of career practice
A – 1	56	BA	M	Politician	Married	Christian	The Apostolic	Efik	23yrs
B – 2	52	BA, LLB, BC	F	Lawyer	Widow	Christian	Presbyterian	Efik	15yrs
C – 3	64	PhD	M	Academia	Married	ATR	-	Efut	23yrs
D – 4	47	PhD	F	Medicine	Widow	Christian	Catholic	Efut	16yrs
E – 5	51	FSLC	M	Farming	Married	Christian	The Apostolic	Efut	21yrs
F – 6	53	P.G.D.E.	F	Public Service	Married	Christian	The Apostolic	Efut	18yrs
G – 7	54	Diploma	M	Engineering	Married	Christian	The Apostolic	Efik	26yrs
H – 8	38	M.Sc.	F	Education	Married	Christian	Presbyterian	Efik	11yrs
I – 9	42	G.C.E	F	Trading	Married	Christian	Presbyterian	Efik	21yrs
J – 10	63	G.C.E	M	Pub. Servant retired	Widower	Christian	Presbyterian	Efut	35yrs

Source: FGD Record. 2011

Table 3: Demographic Data for Indepth Interview

Respondents	Sex	Age	Level of education	Occupation / career area	Religion	Church /denomination	Ethnic group	Duration of career practice	Marital status
A	M	38	Post graduate	Teaching	Christian	The Apostolic	Efik	10yrs	Married
B	F	43	Post graduate	Civil servant	Christian	Presbyterian	Efik	12yrs	Widow
C	M	63	G.C.E.	Retired teacher	Christian	Presbyterian	Efik	35yrs	Married
D	F	66	G.C.E.	Retired principal	Christian	-	Efut	35yrs	Married

Source: IDI Record, 2011

The demographic data above shows that 10 persons participated in FGD, out of which 5 were male and 5 female. This shows equal gender representation which was also extended into the IDI with 2 male and 2 female with a total of 4 respondents for the Indepth Interview (IDI). The career area/occupation of participants and respondents include: politics, law, academia, medicine, farming, engineering, education, trading, public service, and teaching, involving educated and highly literate people who understand very well the variables of the discourse "Religion and career/profession" as all of them engaged in their various career area for 10 to 35 years. Respondents and participants were responsible married people, 10(71.42%) were married while 4 (28.57%) were widows/widowers. This indicates absence of family disorganisation by divorce and separations, creating a conducive atmosphere for

career people to practice their professions. Out of the 14 participants and respondents, 13 (92.86%) were Christians, out of which one did not attend any church denomination, but professed Christian faith. Among the 13 Christians, 6 were Presbyterians (Protestant faith), while 5 were of The Apostolic Church (Pentecostal faith) which grew out of the protestant movement in early 20th century Britain (The Apostolic Church, 2012). The religious distribution of the subjects shows their religious affiliation which is likely to exert influence on their career choice and practice, as Weber (1958) noted the influence of Protestantism on the Calvinist Ascetic Christian in Britain in terms of their success in calling and development of Europe which influenced the design of this study for a cross-cultural comparison. The participants and respondents were all natives of creek Town of Efik and Efut extraction. Inhabitants were excluded since researcher purposively restricted choice of participants and respondents to members of "Esik Edik Socio-cultural Association" which admits only natives to its fold. This was to ensure that participants are well vested with the study environment and will provide accurate information which enhance validity of findings of the investigation. As participant observers, the researchers were aware of religious atmosphere, events and dynamics in Creek Town which help in validating data obtained.

Findings, Interpretation and Discussion

The data presented in Table 2 and 3 indicates that all respondents and participants practiced one form of religion or another, 13 (92.86%) were Christians while 1 (7.14%) practiced African Traditional Religion (ATR). All respondents practice one type of occupation or profession which they did for a long time constituting a career as indicated also in Tables 2 and 3. The first substantive question in the FGD Guide was to identify the role of religion on their choice of career and or profession. The question was "were you influenced by religion in your choice of profession and career?" Participants in FGD and respondents in Indepth Interview all answered in the affirmative "Yes". Consequently, there was 100% positive responses to the question. This indicates that "participants and respondents" choice of career, profession and occupation were influenced by their religious faith and belief". Participants in Focus Group Discussion explain that there was a great deal of religious influence on their choice of occupation, as they noted that

"Anything we do is by the grace of God. As believers and Christians we are doing whatever we do because God directs us to do it. If God does not direct you, it is impossible to choose on your own. Besides, our attainment is a direct consequence of the Mission Schools established by the Christian church in our community, without which we would not have been educated to acquire a job" (FGD Christian Opinion).

This shows a direct relationship between religious faith and activities of religious organisations in terms of establishment of schools on career path and choice of adherents. The one adherent of African Traditional Religion (ATR) did not differ from the position of the Christians by explaining that

"Before a child is born the ancestors are consulted, as the child develops, the same spirits of ancestors are invoked to give the

child guidance in everything. So in the choice of profession or occupation, an individual is guided by the spirit of the ancestors to make the correct choice. Different gods controlled different occupations, and if they are duly consulted, they provide guidance” (FGD Adherent of ATR contribution).

Both from Christian and African traditional Religion perspectives, religion plays significant role in the choice of career and profession, which was attested to by data obtained in the field as presented above. Since participants and respondents responded 100% that religion influenced their choice of occupation and career, it was discovered that there is a strong influence of religion on career choice. The second set of questions in the FGD guide was to discover the impact of religion on career success. All participants in FGD were asked “Do you consider yourself successful in your chosen profession?” Eleven (11) participants answered “yes” (78.57%), while 3 answered “No” (21.43%). Further investigation into those that answered ‘No’ revealed that they were those with lower qualifications, First School Leaving Certificate, and General Certificate of Education [GCE] and were traders, farmers and lower cadre public servants. Their ‘No’ responses were in terms of their comparative low economic disposition as compared to others with higher education and income. In the whole majority 78.57% maintained that they are successful in their chosen occupation and career. In the Focus Group Discussion, most respondents maintained that Creek Town natives were highly religious which marked their ability to achieve height in their various areas of specialty. They noted that

“Eminent sons and daughters of Creek Town over the years exhibited fear of God and responsibility in their chosen profession. They progress to height of their organisations and controlled significant area of influence at local, state and federal level. Even people who are not from Creek Town but stayed in Creek Town exhibit the same degree of success like Late Dr. Clement Nyong Isong, an indigene of Akwa Ibom State who lived in Creek Town to attend school in Calabar and later become World Bank rated Economist, Central bank Governor and the first Executive Governor of Former Cross River State, and was a Christian of Church of Scotland Mission”. [FGD, Christian Opinion]

The religious influence on occupational success was not only restricted to natives of Creek Town, but extend to inhabitants of the town as indicated above. The list of positions occupied by native Creek Town Christians is presented in table 4 below as gathered during the Focus Group Discussion and Indepth Interview.

Table 4: Table of selected top Creek Town natives, career positions and religious faith

S/N	Name	Position	Religious faith	Position/ Denomination
1	Late Pastor Eyo Edet Okon	National President, The Apostolic Church Nigeria	Christian	Pastor/The Apostolic Church

2	Barr. Efiok Cobham	Deputy Governor, Cross River State	Christian	Member/Mount Zion Church
3	Late Pastor Inyang Ekpe Inyang	Acting Chairman, Akpabuyo and Bakassi LGA	Christian	Pastor/The Apostolic Church
4	Mr. Ekpenyong Ita	Director General, State Security Service	Christian	Elder/Presbyterian Church
5	Admiral Ekpenyong Okpo [Rtd]	Flag Officer, Western Naval Command, Nigerian Navy	Christian	Catholic
6	Eld. [Eng.] Eyo Itam	Director, Physical Planning, University of Calabar	Christian	Elder/Mount Zion Church
7	Late [Chief] Okpo Ene	Successful businessman	Christian	Protestant
8	Pastor Epkenyong Oku Ita	Former Vice Chairman, Odukpani Local Government Council	Christian	Pastor/The Apostolic Church
9	Eld. [Prince] Okpo Ita	Director, State Civil Service	Christian	Elder/Presbyterian Church
10	Chief [Eng.] Ekpe Essien Ita	Scholar and politician	Christian	Presbyterian
11	Late Chief [Mrs.] Margaret Ekpo	Frontline Women Activist and Politician	Christian	
12	Chief Essien Itam	Director – Cross River Agricultural Development Project	Christian	Presbyterian
13	Arch [Dr.] Ekpenyong Itam	Former Director of Physical Planning, Cross River State University of Technology	Christian	Pastor/Pentecostal
14	Chief [Magt] Fidelia Oku	Chief Magistrate	Christian	Deaconess/The Apostolic Church

Source: Extracted from FGD and IDI record

Each participant and respondent in both FGD and IDI were requested to present one name of a successful Creek Town native and their religious affiliation and career position from which Table 4 was developed. In the table of 14 successful Creek Town natives, all are Christians, and their position reflects success in their chosen area of vocation, profession and career practice. In In-depth Interview, the respondents maintained that success or failure in occupational, profession or career practice can only be explained in terms of commitment to one's religious faith and practice. The respondent confirmed in an interview saying that:

"When anybody looks unto God in his work, he will succeed, because success in any venture comes from God. We have to be committed in worshipping God, payment of tithe and other religious obligations in order to attain success".

As noted earlier in the definition of religion by Robertson (1970), religion refers to the existence of supernatural beings that have a governing effect on life. The choice and practice of occupation and profession are consequently guided by a Supreme Being. Believing and reverencing this Supreme Being (God) will invoke success to the worshipper. In this regard, the definition of religion by Robertson (1970) corroborates the finding of this study which states that there is a significant impact of religion on career success.

Participants and respondents in this study indicate that religion influenced both career choice and success. This is in line with Weber (1958) position that commitment to religious practices as occasioned by European Calvinist Protestants resulted in success in personal calling and enterprise. This findings also confirmed Constantine (2003) position that religion and spirituality are inextricably intertwined with human activities and have the potential to influence such activities like career and profession. Highly religious people are prayerful people like the people of Creek Town, and their career success may be as a result of the potent power of their prayer which (Howard and Howard, 1997) stated that, "religion can help people to make a way out of no way". The participation of Creek Town people in religious activities may aid their career success as noted by Arbogast (2008) and Duffy (2005) that participation in religious activity for some individuals is a predicator of success, as commitment to religious practice can translate to commitment in career choice leading to success. Mathis (2002) opined that religion provides quiet reflection for decision making such as making career choice. Following Mathis (2002) line of reasoning, it implies that the choice of successful career is occasioned by reflection by highly religious people. The findings of this study confirms that African people in Creek Town though a non-industrialised society are successful not based on selection by personal reasons as noted by Hoselitz (1961) but on principles of merit and hardwork guided by adherence to strict religious conduct and beliefs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study was designed to investigate and establish if there is any influence of religion on career choice and success. The study utilised qualitative research method of Focus Group Discussion and Indepth Interview. It was discovered that there is significant impact or influence of religion on career choice and success. The study conducted in Creek Town, Western Calabar indicates that Creek Town people who are mostly Christians, are highly religious and successful in their professions and occupations. Their success in career is occasioned by their deep religious involvement and commitment to religious faith and practice. In this regard, the long exposure of Creek Town community to Christian faith for over 150 years (Akinkusote, 1984) impact positively on Creek Town people commitment to work and their subsequent career success. It is recommended that similar study be conducted in other parts of Nigeria and Africa especially in the Moslem North to determine if Islamic religion presents the same impact like the Christian religion, upon which government should development a National Policy on Religion to promote religious practices and faith which encourage human development. The absence of a clear cut National Policy on Religion in Nigeria is one of the causes of religious intolerance and crises as noted by Bassey (2008). National Policy on Religion will promote evangelisation of religious practices that impact

positively on the society and contract those religious practices with negative impact. Creek Town as an ancient city presents us with unique people whose behaviour equates the pattern variables of Talcott Parsons (1951) utilised by Hoselitz (1961) to represent industrialised societies. Though Creek Town is not industrialised in terms of existence of industry, science and technology, the people of Creek Town are sophisticated as they exhibit universalism, achievement, specificity, affective-neutrality and self-orientation which is guided by Christian religious norms and value system that determine their choice and success in career path.

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