



Career Preference among Biology Education Students of Gombe State University, Nigeria

Sulai, Mary Erasmus, Ph.D, & Jacob Jeremiah

Faculty of Education, Gombe State University, Gombe State Nigeria mary.sulai@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study investigated Career preference among biology education students of Gombe State University. Descriptive survey was employed for the study. The population of the study comprised of all 200,300 and 400 levels biology education students of Gombe State University. 100 out of the 444 students were randomly selected for the study. Four research questions were posed and hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The researchers developed a 12 item questionnaire, validated by three specialists from Gombe State University. The information collected from the questionnaire were converted to numerical data and analyzed statistically using frequency count, simple percentage and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The findings of the study indicated that Biology students have positive attitude towards the course but preferred other professions because of the poor condition of service in teaching as a career. Also, socio-economic background of the students affects their career preference. It is therefore recommended that public and private sectors should improve the condition of service of practicing teachers in order to encourage teachers in training to take up teaching jobs after graduation. In addition, education students should be given counseling so that they will be proud of teaching profession rather than feeling inferior when compared to other professions.

Key words: Biology, Career preference and Education students.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of career preference has implication for national development. In every society, the quality of workers as well as their degree of job satisfaction contributes directly or indirectly to the economic stability and the smooth running of the nation. If workers are unable to derive satisfaction from their job, frustration sets in with accompanying decline in productivity and civil unrest due to the workers thwarted goals (Udoh and Sanni, 2012).

Career is job or occupation regarded as a long-term or lifelong activity, the general path or progress taken by somebody where he is trained in a particular occupation for his entire working life while preference is the selection of something rather than other choices. It is the power to choose on what one desires. Career preference can be described as a state of liking something more than others.

Graduates are the integral part of today's labour market on one hand; on the other hand, undergraduates are being prepared in the university to meet the demand of employers. The essence of who the students are will revolve around what they want to do with their choice of career. May and Lee (2002) started that job attributes are the most important factors that influence the choice of career. The job attributes they said can be broadly categorized into three groups, namely; the job itself, compensation or security and the company or work environment. Teo and Poon (2002) used 10 factors such as pay, fringe benefits, working conditions, managerial quality and relationships, long-term career prospects, responsibility given, authority involvement in decision making, marketability and job security in investigating the attributes that influence the choice of employment of first year business undergraduates. They found out that students rated long-term career prospects as the most important job attribute affecting their career choice, followed by pay,



job security, and managerial relationships. Pimpa (2007) opined that although financial remuneration or security is commonly viewed as an important determinant of career choice, graduates who choose to working in teaching profession did not view to work for professional jobs like bankers, lawyers, medical doctors, etc.

Other job attributes includes enthusiasm or commitment, the anticipated hours and working skills or aptitudes, experience of chosen course as a student, influence of a particular teacher, normative referents, that is non-family do affect students' career preference (Goldacre, Turner, Fazel & Lambert 2005). Kovereid (1996) found out that individuals who prefer to work for an organization feel such a career provides great development of knowledge and skills, job security, higher income, intellectual stimulation and the opportunity to work with people they admire and respect. The individual who preferred to work in tertiary institutions and other professional organization concurred that their continued development to earn higher income and to work with people they admire and respect. Sometimes, students choose a career just because everyone is doing it.

Another factor that influences students' career preference is the socio-economic status of parents. Parents armed with adequate education often get gainful employment. Thus, with their level of income and exposure, they are better disposed to procure educational materials for their children and discuss job opportunity with them. Without doubt, a child surrounded with good magazines, books, as well as intelligent discussions could be expected to develop different and perhaps better vocational interests than a child not expose to those things (Onyejiaku, 1987). Children of bankers, medical doctors, teachers, merchants and the like have different upbringing from that which is experienced by children of peasant farmers, domestic workers, cleaners, labourers, pretty traders, etc. Denga (1990) posited that children from low income homes fail to develop interest in and acquire vocational training because of the educational inadequacies of their parents. However, it is common today to see youths born into either high or low socio-economic status families tending to take career choice in terms of how real they are to them, what prestige is attached to such career and what satisfaction they can get from their career.

In the midst of poverty, uncertainty and deprivation, individuals especially youths may do whatever that come their way instead of insisting on a particular job. As a result of number of unemployed graduates, it is common to see them doing jobs that are not related to their educational pursuit (Onyejiaku 2001). Some individuals go into politics because of the access to power and easy money that come their ways. Udoh and Sanni (2012) stated that it is not uncommon for students to get into occupations that are not quite suitable to them. What usually are obtained in the end are jobs dissatisfaction, underperformance, frustration and inefficiency.

Biology as a subject or course of study in the university curriculum is designed to produce educated individuals who may or may not use the knowledge in their professional pursuit (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). For a proper understanding of biology in relation to its application in human activities and development, there is a need for development of proper one positive attitude towards it. Erinsho (2008) posited that a series of practical experience, in scientific activities is needed with the intension to make students learn science. He added that practical experience helps in attracting the attention of students and thus, effective teaching should be more of practical benefit.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With the public and private universities producing thousands of graduates every year, the labour market is becoming saturated, of course the employers are spoilt for choice, but this is not so. Employers do have difficult time getting the right candidates; the employees may not stay or last



long on the job because they are looking for preferred jobs. Why is this so? Although there are thousands of graduates every year and yet there are thousands of vacancies left because of today's graduates or undergraduates in the preference of career. This research sought to find out the career preference of biology students in Gombe State University.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- (i) To determine career preference of biology education students.
- (ii) To find out the reasons why students prefer other jobs than the one they are trained for.
- (iii) To determine the relationship between students socio-economic background and career preference.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- (i) What is the career preference of biology education students?
- (ii) What are the reasons for students' preference to other jobs rather than the one they are trained for?
- (iii) What is the influence of socio-economic background on students' career preference?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant relationship between socio-economic background and students' career preference.

METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out in Gombe State University, Gombe, Nigeria. The study used descriptive survey designed to determine the career preference of biology education students.

The participants of this study comprised of one hundred biology education students randomly drawn from 200, 300 and 400 levels of the Faculty of Education. 100 level students were not selected because they are not offering many courses in education.

The Instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A dealt with the bio-data of the participants such as age, gender, marital status and parents' background. Section B on the other hand consisted of twelve items that elicited answers to the research questions initially posed and hypothesis stated.

The instrument was designed by the researcher and validated by three experts in Gombe State University. Four options were given alongside the questions in section B for participants to respond appropriately. The options were Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) Strongly Disagreed (SD).

The questionnaire was administered simultaneously, one after the other, to biology education students through their class representatives of the various levels (200, 300 & 400). Ninety-six questionnaires were retrieved instead of hundred, that means four were missing (4%).

The retrieved data was analyzed through the use of frequency count, percentage (%) and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient.

RESULTS

The analyses of data obtained in the research are represented below.

Research question one: what are the career preferences of biology education students?

Table 1: Biology education students' career preferences for employment after graduation.

SN	Item	Responses/Percentage (%)				
		SA	A	D	SD	Total
1.	Biology education students prefer to take biology as a teaching profession after graduation.	20 (21%)	55 (57%)	21 (22%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)
2.	I feel teaching biology as profession is inferior compared to other jobs.	20 (21%)	50 (52%)	26 (27%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)
3.	I have interest in biology course than that of education.	50 (52%)	40 (43%)	5 (5%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)

Source: field survey 2018

Table 1 above indicated that 20 (21%) participants strongly agreed that they prefer to take teaching biology as a profession after graduation, 55 (57%) participants agreed to teaching biology as a profession, 21 (22%) disagreed to teach biology as a profession after graduation while 0 (0%) participants strongly disagreed with the statement. That means the majority of the participants are in agreement with the statement of item 1 (70, 73%).

Item 2 on Table 1 revealed that 20 (21%) participants strongly agreed that teaching biology as a profession is inferior compared to other jobs, 50 (52%) participants agreed with the statement, 26 (27%) disagreed, while 0 (0%) participants strongly disagreed that teaching biology as a profession is inferior compared to other jobs. The majority of the participants, that is, 70 (73%) are in agreement with the statement in item 2.

Item 3 indicated that 50 (52%) participants strongly agreed that they have interest in biology courses than that of education, 41 (43%) participants agreed, 5 (5%) disagreed, while 0 (0%) participants strongly disagreed with the statement above. The result indicated that 91 (95%) of the participants are in agreement with item 3.

Research question two: what are the reasons for students' preference to other jobs rather than the one they are trained for?

Table 2: Reasons for preference to other jobs than the one trained for.

SN	Item	Responses/Percentage (%)				
		SA	A	D	SD	Total
1.	I do not like teaching as a profession but I have interest only in biology as a course.	40 (42%)	35 (36%)	15 (16%)	6 (6%)	96 (100%)
2.	Poor condition of service is the only reason why I prefer other jobs to teaching profession.	56 (58.3%)	30 (31.3%)	7 (7.3%)	3 (3.1%)	96 (100%)
3	Biology education students do not have practical lessons.	28 (29%)	44 (46%)	20 (21%)	4 (4%)	96 (100%)
4	I do not pay attention to biology education courses.	48 (50%)	22 (23%)	20 (21%)	6 (6%)	96 (100%)
5	Well-to-do parent do not want their children to choose teaching biology as a profession.	30 (31%)	45 (47%)	20 (21%)	1 (1%)	96 (100%)
9	Poor parents cannot afford to sponsor their children to study biology education.	5 (5%)	10 (10.6%)	30 (31.3%)	51 (53.1%)	96 (100%)

Source: field survey, 2018

Item 1 on Table 2 indicated that 40 (42%) of the participants strongly agreed that they do not like teaching as a profession but have interest only in biology as a course, 35 (36%) participants indicated agreement to the statement, 15 (16%) disagreed, while 6 (6%) participants revealed that they strongly disagreed with the statement on the item. This showed that majority of the participants 75 (78%) indicated their agreement to item 1.

Item 2 revealed that 56 (58.3%) participants strongly agreed that poor condition of service is the only reason why they prefer other jobs to teaching profession, 30 (31.3%) participants agreed, 7 (7.3%) disagreed, while 3 (3.1%) participants strongly disagreed with the statement above. The data indicated that 86 (89.6%) of the participants are in agreement with item 2.

Item 3 indicated that 28 (29%) of the participants strongly agreed that biology education students do not have practical lessons, 44 (46%) participants agreed, 20 (21%) disagreed, while 4 (4%) participants strongly disagreed with the statement on item 3. The majority of the participants which is 72 (75%) agreed with item 3.

Item 4 indicated that 48 (50%) of the participants strongly agreed, 22 (23%) agreed, 20 (21%) disagreed, while 6 (6%) participants strongly disagreed that they do not pay attention to biology education courses. The majority of the participants 70 (73%) indicated their agreement to item 4.

Item 5 indicated that 30 (31%) of the participants strongly agreed that well-to-do parents do not usually want their children to choose teaching biology as a profession, 45 (47%) participants agreed, 20 (21%) disagreed, while 1 (1%) participants strongly disagreed with the statement on the item. This revealed that majority of the participants 75 (78%) agreed with the statement on item 5.

For item 6, only 5 (5%) of the participants strongly agreed that poor parents cannot afford to sponsor their children to study biology education, 10 (10.6%) participants agreed, 30 (31.3%) disagreed, while 51 (53.1%) participants strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicated that majority of the participants 81 (84.4%) disagreed with the statement on item 6.

Research question three: what is the relationship between socio-economic background and students' career preference?

Table 3: Relationship between socio-economic background and students' career preference.

SN	Item	Responses/Percentage (%)				
		SA	A	D	SD	Total
1.	Biology education students who have high socio-economic background prefer to go for other white collar jobs rather than teaching biology as a career.	31 (32%)	43 (45%)	22 (23%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)
2.	Only students with poor socio-economic background wish to take the teaching of biology as a profession after graduation.	30 (31.3%)	51 (53.1%)	10 (10.6%)	5 (5%)	96 (100%)
3.	Parents with high socio-economic background prefer their children taking computer sciences and other related courses to biology education.	51 (53%)	40 (42%)	5 (5%)	0 (0%)	96 (100%)

Source: field survey, 2018

Table 3 above displayed the responses of participants on socio-economic background of students and their career preference. Item 1 indicated that 31 (32%) of the participants strongly agreed that Biology education students who have high socio-economic background prefer to go for other white-collar jobs rather than teaching Biology as a career. 43 (45%) agreed, 22 (23%) disagreed, while 0 (0%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Therefore, the majority of the participants, 74 (77%) agree with the item on Table 3.

Item 2 revealed that 30 (31%) of the participants strongly agreed that students with poor socio-economic background wish to take of Biology as a profession. 51 (53%) agreed, 10 (10.6%) disagreed, while 5 (5%) strongly disagreed with the statement. This means that 81 (84.4%) consented to the statement on item 2.

Item 3 indicated that 51 (53%) of the participants strongly agreed that parents with high socio-economic background prefer their children taking computer sciences and other related courses to Biology education. 40 (42%) agreed, 5 (5%) disagreed, while 0 (0%) strongly disagreed with the statement. This therefore indicted that the majority of the participants 91 (95%) agree with the statement on item 3.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between socio-economic background and students' career preference.

Table 4: Pearson r result.

SN	Item	N	df	r-value	P-value	Decision
1	Parents of high socio-economic background	96	94	0.066	0.521	S

Level of significance = 0.05

The result of the data on Table 4 revealed that the r-value of 0.066 with a P-value of 0.521 and the df of 94, indicated greatness. P-value is greater than the stated level of significance set at $P > 0.05$, which infers that there is a significant relationship between parents of high socio-economic background and students' career preference. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicated that there is a significant relationship between parents of high socio-economic background and students' career preference. The Pearson r-value is concluded to be a positive weak relationship.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

For research question one, the result presented on Table 1 revealed that 75 (78%) Biology education students out of 96 preferred to take Biology as a teaching profession after graduation. 70 (73%) of the participants feel that teaching Biology as a profession is inferior compared to other jobs, and also, 91 (95%) of them have interest in Biology courses than that of Biology education. These findings are in line with Pimpa (2007) who stated that financial remuneration or security is commonly viewed as an important determinant of career choice. Therefore, graduates who chose to work in teaching profession did not view pay as important as those who wanted to work for professional jobs such as bankers, lawyers, doctors, businessmen/women and so forth.

For research question two, the result presented on Table 2 revealed that 75 (78%) of the participants agreed that they do not like teaching as a profession, but they are only interested in Biology as a course. Also, 86 (90%) of the participants agreed that poor condition of service is the only reason why they prefer other jobs to teaching profession. Also, lack of practical lessons in biology education is one of the reasons for preferring other jobs than the one they are trained for. 72 (75%) of the participants agreed with the statement. Other reasons included students' lack of paying attention to biology education courses and well-to-do parents do not usually want their children to choose teaching biology as a profession. 70 (73%) and 75 (78%) participants agreed to the above factors respectively. This finding shared similar concern with Udoh and Sanni (2012) where they stated that it is not common for students to get into occupations that are not quite suitable to them. What is usually obtained in the end is job dissatisfaction, under-performance, frustration and inefficiency.

In the same vein, Erinsho (2008) posited that a series of practical experience in scientific activities is needed. The intention of which is to make students learn science. He added that practical experience help in attracting the attention of the students and thus effective teaching should be more of practical benefits.

For research question three, the finding on Table 3 indicated that there is a relationship between the socio-economic background and students' career preference. Item 1 on the table revealed that 74 (77%) participants out of 96 agreed that biology education students who have high socio-economic background prefer to go for white collar jobs rather than teaching biology as a career. Also, 81 (85%) of the participants agreed that only students with poor socio-economic background wish to



take the teaching of biology as a profession after graduation. In addition, parents with high socio-economic background prefer their children taking computer sciences and other related courses to biology education. These findings support the view of Onyejiaku (1987) who stated that a child surrounded with good magazines, books as well as intelligent discussions could be expected to develop differently and perhaps better vocational interest than the one not exposed to those things.

The findings of the hypothesis showed that the p-value of 0.521 is greater than the stated level of the significance set at $p > 0.05$, which revealed that there is significant relationship between parental socio-economic background and students' career preference. In the same vein, Denga (1990) posited that children from low income homes fail to develop interest in and acquire vocational training because of the educational inadequacies of their parents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Biology Education curriculum should be designed in such a way that it meets students' and societal needs after graduation. Biology education should be based on theory and practical lessons.
- ii. Public and Private sectors should improve the condition of service of practicing teachers in order to encourage teachers in training to take up teaching jobs after graduation.
- iii. Public and private institutions of learning should ensure that career guidance is rendered to students who intend pursuing a degree in teaching profession so that they can be well-informed and think carefully before getting trained.
- iv. The Government should encourage undergraduates in education by providing scholarships and teaching-practice allowances to them.
- v. Biology Education students should love teaching as a profession.

The following conclusion was drawn based on the findings in the study, students showed positive attitude towards Biology Education as a teaching profession. This implies that they are willing to build career in Biology courses but due to the poor condition of service of the teaching job and their socio-economic status, they prefer other white collar jobs to teaching profession. Thus, these conditions have affected their career preference.

REFERENCES

- Denga, D. I. (1990). *Educational and Vocational Guidance of Secondary School Students in Nigeria*. Jos: Savanna Press Limited.
- Erinosho, S. Y. (2008). *Teaching Science in Secondary Schools: A Methodology Handbook*. Lagos: African Cultural Institute.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). *National Policy on Education, 6th Edition*. Abuja: NERDC.
- Goldacre, M. J., Turner, G., Fazel, S. & Lambert, T. (2005). Career Choices for Psychiatry National Surveys of Graduates of 2000 from UK Medical Schools. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 186:158-164.
- <https://phdessay.com/career-preference> (Retrieved 26/2/2019).
- Kolvereid, L. (1996). Organizational Employment versus Self-Employment. Reasons for Career Choice Intentions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice Spring*, 23-31.
- May, J. W. & Lee, S. M. (2002). The Career Choice for Business Graduates, SMEs or MNCs? *Career Development International* 7(6), 334-347.



- Onyejiaku, F. O. (1987). *Family Influences on Vocational Aspirations of Nigerian Secondary School Students*. Unpublished study: University of Calabar.
- Onyejiaku, F. O. (2001). *Career Guidance and Counseling Services in Schools*. Calabar: Vita-Nasco and Company Limited.
- Pimpa, N. (2007). *The Influence of Normative Referents of Thai Students' Choice of International Education*. *Monash Centre for Research in International Education*. Available from <http://www.aare.edu.au/01Pam/Pim01016.htm> (Retrieved 6th April 2017).
- Teo, H. A. & Poom, J. T. F. (2002). Career Choice of Undergraduates and SMEs in Singapore. *The International Journal of Career Management* 6(3), 20-26.
- Udoh, N. A. & Sanni, K. B. (2012). Parental Background Variables and the Career Choice of Secondary School Students in Uyo Local Government Area, Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 3(1), 1-7.