

**CORRELATES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' CHOICE OF CAREER IN
TEACHING AND TEACHING AS A PROFESSION**

BY

**DR MBUOTIDEM EKENG
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
AKWA IBOM STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION,
AFAHA NSIT**

ABSTRACT

Teaching profession has been bastardized in recent years, by 'cheaters' who claim to be teachers. Little is known about why individuals take up teaching as a profession, and this prompted the researcher to undertake this study to determine the reasons for low enrolment of JAMB (Joint Admission and Matriculation Board) candidates into the Faculty of Education and Colleges of Education. Prospective JAMB candidates Senior Secondary School 111 students) were used as the population of the study, to get their reasons for applying for admission into other Faculties, rather than the Faculty of Education, and those of them in Faculty of Education came in there because they could not secure admission into other Faculties. Four research questions were posed to guide the study. A Questionnaire was the main instrument used to elicit information from the respondents regarding their choice of teaching as a career. The results show that students who choose to make teaching their future career hoped that it will expand or broaden their horizon, sharpen their skill of communication and give them enough time to do other businesses. Those that did not want to take to teaching posited that it has low public value/status, it is a stop-gap profession, has poor working environment and is generally, women profession. A percentage frequency was used to analyze the data and recommendations were made to the government, society and the teachers.

KEY WORDS: Future Career, Teaching, Profession, Practicing Teachers

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a highly valued social service in every society of the world. Peretomode (1992) posited that, although teachers often receive large doses of criticisms from the public and government, and sometimes are often reviled, caricatured, and stereo-typed, they are indispensable in the efforts to develop the human and material resources of a nation.

Teaching is indeed a challenging profession and the teacher is the most important factor in the learning environment of the child. In the school affairs, the teacher primarily determines whether the school will be efficient or inefficient. As is the teacher, so is the school! So teachers are very important because the “most precious of our natural resources”, which is our children are entrusted in their care at an impressionistic stage in life. They can therefore, not only make or mar them but also make or mar the future prospect of a nation. Ezewu, Fasokun, Akpe, and Oludoro, (1988) summed this up when they said that the status of a teacher demands that he plays these roles; the teaching role, the guidance role and the administrative role.

Thus, before someone goes into this noble profession, there are some expectations from the person. Ikpe (2005) classifies these expectations into two broad headings: personal qualities and professional qualities. She gave personal qualities to include: appearance, personality, poise, emotional stability, health and vitality, effective speech, initiative, judgment, sense of humour and tact. The professional qualities include – knowledge of subject matter, command of English, implementation of learning experience, professional commitments, staff relations, professional suggestions, planning for instructions, management of school routines, teacher interaction, discipline and professional distance.

In contrast to these, Ekeng (2016) posited that poor or ineffective teachers lack sense of humour, use ego-reducing comments in class, are harsh, grow impatient easily, are indifferent to students’ needs or problems, are somewhat authoritative and favour some students above others. She also mentioned some good traits of teachers to include: adaptability, attractiveness, carefulness (accuracy), enthusiasm (alertness, inspiration), leadership, magnetism (approachability, optimism) scholarship (intellectual curiosity), originality (resourcefulness) etc.

Statement of the Problem

Unfortunately, we know little about why individuals take up teaching. This is important even as Ezewu (1985) opined that the knowledge of such motives is likely to be of help to the trainers of teachers in preparing the teachers for his roles. Such knowledge is also important in predicting success in teaching because all teaching should be goal-oriented.

There are three kinds of theories in the motives that drive individuals into seeking to be trained as teachers. The first is that, individuals choose career that are either popular in their own locality or conform to the social standards of the groups to which they belong. According to this theory, in a locality where there are no other job opportunities, teaching is most likely to be demanded by people. For example, before the advent of oil and gas companies, civil service was the most predominant career among people of the Niger Delta, but this has changed. Most people want to work in Oil and Gas Company because individuals strive to take up profession that is popular in his immediate environment.

The second theory is that the more rewarding a career in terms of the conditions of service, including the monetary reward and security of service, the more likely it is that individuals would be willing to take up that career. This is tied to the first theory, to some extent, but the emphasis is on the reward. In this theory, the individual has several choices and his choices are strictly governed by the anticipated reward.

The third theory is that the individuals who have certain values they want to pursue in life and that they consider satisfying, tend to take up careers that present them with the opportunity to pursue such goals. Therefore, the choices of a career in teaching based on these three kinds of theories can be classified into two categories - externally motivated choices as in the first and second theories and the internally motivated choices, as in the case of the third choice. Externally motivated choices can be defined as responses to stimuli that are external to the individual, while internally motivated choices can be defined as responses to such stimuli that are rooted in the personality of the individual.

In a recent study undertaken by the researcher, she investigated into the motives that make people take to teaching as a career, in Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Afaha Nsit. She discovered that student-teachers with intrinsic (internal) motivation are more likely to be better teachers than teachers with extrinsic (external) motivation.

According to Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) enrolment from 2010 to 2016, the number of applicants seeking admission to Faculty of Education in universities have considerably been low, compared to other Faculties. Also, admission records from most

universities reveal that students come into Faculty of Education as a second choice, or as a last resort, when they cannot gain admission to other Faculties. What could be responsible for this?

The researcher, in 2012 attended a Matriculation ceremony in the University of Calabar. When it was time for matriculating students in the Faculty of Education to stand and take their matriculation oath, none of them stood up. One wonders! Were they ashamed of being students in the “Faculty of Knowledge” that hopes to produce doctors, engineers, lawyers, professors, economists, technologists, scientists and inventors that the whole system hinges on and these are people that will likely produce the next generation of teachers. Faculty of Education is regarded as the “Mother Faculty” because it gives birth to other Faculties.

Udoh (2007) enumerated some constraints facing teachers in Nigeria and the researcher wonders whether these are some of the reasons for those matriculating students’ attitude towards the profession they are just entering into. These constraints include:

- low status/low self concept of teachers
- the bridge – occupation character of teaching
- inability to regulate entry
- the nature of the end – product of teaching
- lack of cohesion in the teachers’ organizations
- existence of a large number of untrained and non-professional teachers in teaching
- the working environment of teachers
- the low morale of a teacher.

Bassey (2014) added other reasons such as – preponderance of women, poor pay package which results in making teachers’ organization to deviate from the service objectives to vocational objectives and low public values.

Contributing to this, Okereke (2006) said that teacher education programme was originally mounted for only primary school teachers and the programme for training secondary school teachers only started in 1958, about 116 years after the arrival of Christian Missionaries and educators in 1842. Yet the aspect of teacher education that affects the demand and supply of

teachers lacked teachers that will be specialists in various subject areas. Hence, teacher education programme was generalistic in nature. She went on to say that, teaching is still regarded as dumping ground for not very intelligent students, while the average student that ended in Education took teaching as a stepping stone.

Having considered all these reasons and the low enrolment by JAMB candidates to the Faculty of Education, the researcher demanded to know from the secondary school students (SSIII) that are JAMB prospective candidates, whether they will tend to take career in teaching and why they may not want to take up career in teaching.

Definition of Terms

Teaching: According to New English Dictionary, teaching is the act of giving knowledge, skill or wisdom to a person. Markson (2014) added that, teaching involves giving instructions, guidance or training that will cause a change of behavior in the person being trained or instructed, and this is mostly done by a teacher.

A Teacher: is a person trained or recognized and employed to help learners in a classroom situation in order to achieve set educational goals. Also, Thompson (2010) said that a teacher in the professional sense, is one who attempts to help someone acquire, or change some skills, attitude, knowledge, ideal or appreciation. He creates and influences desirable changes in the behavior of his pupils.

Profession: A profession is a form of employment, especially one that is respected in the society as honourable and is possible only for educated persons and after training in some specific branch of knowledge. Ukott (2017) also defined a profession as, a vocation in which a professed knowledge of some departments of learning is used in its application to the affairs of others.

Career: it could be referred to as, a person's occupation, one's professions. What one does to earn a living; an individual's work and life roles over his lifespan.

purpose of the Study

The study aimed at investigating into the reasons why some students in secondary school may want to make a career in teaching and why some of them may not want to enter into this profession.

Research Questions

1. What are the reasons for choosing to make teaching your future career?
2. What are the reasons for your lack of interest in teaching and making it your future career?
3. What can government can do to professionalize teaching and make it attractive to secondary school students?
4. What can the practicing teachers do to encourage students to take up career in teaching?

Methodology

The research design adopted in the study was a survey design. This was used because this study is meant to present description of the variables with respect to the causes and the extent of the remedies.

The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State. The population of the study consisted of all Senior Secondary Three students, (SSIII). A systematic random sampling technique was used to get the sample size of six secondary schools in each of the three Senatorial Districts of the state. Thus, twenty students from three public and three private secondary schools were randomly selected, making a total of 360 SSIII students.

A questionnaire was the main instrument used to elicit responses from the respondents regarding their choice of making a career in teaching. The questionnaire was divided into two sections – A and B. Section A hoped to elicit information on demographic factors while section B made statements about teaching as a profession. This was structured using Strongly Agreed (4), Agreed (3), Disagreed (2), and Strongly Disagreed (1). A Percentage frequency was used to analyze the data.

Results and Discussions of Findings

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 sought to know the reasons some secondary school students will like to make teaching their future career. In order to answer the question, percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see Table 1)

Table 1

Percentage Analysis of the reasons secondary school students will like to make teaching their future career

REASONS FOR CHOOSING TO MAKE TEACHING YOUR FUTURE CAREER	FREQ	%	REMARK
Broadening of your Horizon	112	31.11	1 st **
Teaching sharpens skill of communication	76	21.11	2 nd
It creates time for other businesses	68	18.89	3 rd
It makes one become a role model and counselor to others	47	13.06	4 th
It creates time for women, especially when to nurse and breast feed their baby	34	9.44	5 th
It enhances socialization opportunity	23	6.39	6 th *
Total	360	100	

****The highest percentage frequency**

*** The lowest percentage frequency**

SOURCE: Field survey

The data on Table 1 shows that the most common reason for choosing to make teaching their future career was “Broadening of Horizon” having a frequency of 112 and percentage frequency of 31.11%. while the least reason for choosing to make teaching their future career was due to the fact that “it enhances their socialization opportunity,” having a frequency of 23 and percentage frequency of 6.39%.

The results are in line with Ekeng (2016) who posited that even though there is a drastic decline of JAMB candidates to Faculty of Education, some students still choose to make a

career out of teaching. She gave the following as reasons given by those students, in a research she conducted among students in Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt. The reasons include:

- teaching profession makes the teacher to always read and study hard in order to master his subject area and to have general knowledge.
- teaching has a way of broadening your horizon and making you look at issues critically before arriving at conclusions.
- as a teacher, your skill of communication is continuously sharpened and you can speak boldly in the public
- teaching gives you opportunity to socialize with a great number of people.
- it gives you opportunity to solve students' problem and you act as a parent, counselor, guide, and a friend to them, and it helps make you a disciplined person. They see you as their role model and this makes you to behave in an acceptable manner, both in school and in the society, at large.
- as a teacher, you have the joy, in some years to come to see your students in good positions and they will always remember your contributions to their successes.
- after the close of work, you can do some other businesses that may bring in additional income into the family.
- during holidays, you have enough time to take good care of your family and this makes for family bonding.
- the profession is very good for women, especially when they are nursing their babies. It encourages exclusive breast-feeding which is considered the best for babies.
- Lastly, you take consolation in the adage which says that "teachers" reward is in heaven. You know that God who sees your acts will reward you accordingly.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 sought to investigate into the possible reasons given for the lack of interest among secondary school students in the teaching profession, as this reflects in low

application of JAMB candidates to Faculty of Education. In order to answer the question, percentage analysis was performed on the data (see Table 2)

Table 2

Percentage Analysis of the reasons for lack of interest in teaching and making it a future career

REASONS FOR LACK OF INTEREST IN TEACHING AND MAKING IT YOUR FUTURE CAREER	FREQ	%	REMARK
Low Public value/status	122	33.89	1 ^{st**}
It is a stop-gap profession	91	25.28	2 nd
There are poor working environment	55	15.28	3 rd
It is considered as semi or aspiring profession	41	11.39	4 th
Preponderance of women (women profession)	30	8.33	5 th
It has low entry requirement	21	5.83	6 ^{th*}
Total	360	100	

****The highest percentage frequency**

*** The lowest percentage frequency**

SOURCE: Field survey

The data on Table 2 shows that the most common reasons for their lack of interest in teaching and making it a future career was “low public value/status”, having a frequency of 122 and percentage frequency of 33.89% while the least reason for their lack of interest in teaching and making it a future career was that, “it has low entry requirement” having a frequency of 21 and percentage frequency of 5.83%.

This is in line with the reasons given by Peretomode (1992) that the following constitute obstacles and indirectly discourages more people from coming into the teaching profession. This includes: public values, low status, stop-gap profession, poor working environment, low standard of entry, lack of strong organization, preponderance of women, control and the objective pursued by teachers. He maintained that these factors make teaching to be referred to as a “semi” or “aspiring” profession.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 sought to know what government can do to professionalize teaching and make it attractive to secondary school students. In order to answer the question, percentage analysis was performed on the data (See Table 3)

Table 3

Percentage Analysis of what government can do to professionalize teaching and make it attractive to secondary school students

WHAT GOVERNMENT CAN DO TO MAKE TEACHING ATTRACTIVE TO SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS	FREQ	%	REMARK
Increment of teachers pay package	78	21.67	1 st **
Standardized entry qualifications to Faculty of Education and Colleges of Education	73	20.28	2 nd
In-service training	69	19.17	3 rd
Creation of conducive working and learning environment	60	16.67	4 th
Law to make only people with relevant teaching qualifications to teach	31	8.61	5 th
Regular seminar/workshop	27	7.5	6 th
Regular supervision of schools	15	4.17	7 th
Giving support services such as learning materials to schools	7	1.94	8 th *
Total	360	100	

****The highest percentage frequency**

*** The lowest percentage frequency**

SOURCE: Field survey

The data on Table 3 shows that the most needed thing to be done by government for teaching to be professionalized and made attractive to secondary school students was “increment of

teachers pay package”, having a frequency of 78 and percentage frequency of 21.67%, while the least factor for teaching to be professionalized and made attractive to secondary school students was “giving support services such as learning materials to schools”, having a frequency of 7 and percentage frequency of 1.94%.

This finding is in line with Usen (2016) when he said that government, on its part can do certain things to encourage students to take to teaching profession. He listed these to include:

- increase in teacher’s pay package periodically and special allowances given to teachers, especially those in the rural areas.
- encourage in service training for teachers
- regularly organizing seminars, workshop and training programmes for teachers
- standardizing entry qualification to Faculty of Education and Colleges of Education
- bringing out a law that makes only people with relevant teaching qualification – Nigeria Certificate in Education being the least teaching qualification in Nigeria, to be employed as teachers, at least, in public schools
- giving support services, such as learning materials (formally called instructional materials) such as audio and video aids, projectors, etc to make teaching and learning exciting
- creating new and conducive working environment for learning to thrive
- regularly supervising schools with the aim of improving the standard of education.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 sought to know what teachers can do to attract students that they are teaching to take up career in teaching. In order to answer the question, percentage analysis was used. (See Table 4)

Table 4

Percentage Analysis of what the practicing teachers can do to encourage students to take up career in teaching

WHAT THE PRACTICING TEACHERS CAN DO TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO TAKE UP CAREER IN TEACHING	FREQ	%	Remark
Teachers should hold the profession as a noble one	116	32.22	1 st **
Teachers should have good mastery of their subject matter	101	28.06	2 nd
Teachers should improve their self image	88	24.44	3 rd
Teachers should improve their physical development and appearance	55	15.28	4 th
Total	360	100	

****The highest percentage frequency**

*** The lowest percentage frequency**

SOURCE: Field survey

The data in Table 4 shows that the highest thing the practicing teachers can do to encourage students to take up career in teaching was “teachers should hold the profession as a noble one”, having a frequency of 166 and percentage frequency of 32.22% while the least was “teachers should improve their physical development and appearance”, having a frequency of 55 and percentage frequency of 15.28%.

The result is in line with Peters (2010) who maintained that teachers, on their part, have a lot to do in order to promote teaching and make it desirable to the young ones. Ezewu (1985) posited that the poor social status of the teacher is a problem and it is necessary for the teacher to look at his self-concept, that is, to consider that he sees himself in relation to other professions. He went on to say that, experience has shown that few teachers feel that teaching profession is as noble as it has often been assumed. If teachers hold their profession to be a noble one, then they should wish that their children were teachers, however, a good majority of teachers discourage their own children from becoming teachers. Thus, the need to improve their self-image if they want teaching to be given the pride of place in our nation.

Also, Udom (2009) observed that a teacher that catches the attention of his students must strive to excel in his personal and professional qualities. He must make himself likeable by his students and this can draw some of them to wish to look like him when they grow up. But if he does not pay attention to his physical looks or does not have a good mastery of his subject matter, the students will first of all give him a nickname that qualifies who he is, and they may start hating or running away from him and the subject he is teaching, So, teachers themselves have a lot to do in order to endear these young ones into this noble profession.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research work, it was deemed necessary to conclude that there are various reasons for choosing to make teaching work a future career and there are also various reasons for people's lack of interest in teaching and making it a career. Government, the society and the practicing teachers have a lot to do in order to bring in the "future leaders" into admiring and wishing to be disposers of knowledge. With these, the future of science and technological development in the country is assured.

Recommendation

It is now evidently clear that for teaching to be accorded the status of a profession, certain measures must be put in place by the government, society and teachers themselves.

Government must make teaching attractive because teachers are the facilitators of successful implementation of government policies and programmes, which in turn will affect other social institutions like health, agriculture, economy and politics.

The society on her part can encourage teaching by seeing teachers as indispensable elements in the growth of any society. Teachers should be seen as reservoir of knowledge and problems in the society should be solved in schools through appropriate curricula activities.

Teachers on their part have lots of work to do. They should not see themselves as second class citizens in the country. Teachers have the responsibility of generating and creating knowledge and ideas in the form of teaching, researches and publications necessary for determining and

meeting the needs, goals, aspirations and values of the society. When they do this successfully, they will not need to struggle for recognition as government and the society will see them as agents of change in the system and they will be encouraged to contribute more for the growth and development of the society.

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