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Relational Factors of Senior Secondary School Students' Preference for Teaching Profession

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Abstract

This study investigated the Relational Factors of Students Preference for Teaching Profession. Six hundred Senior Secondary School II students and their parents were selected through multi stage sampling technique. Three instruments were used for data collection: Students Teaching Profession Preference Scale ($r = 0.70$), Salary and Incentive Scale ($r = 0.89$) and Parental career value scale ($r = 0.51$) validated using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Analysis. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression. Level of significance was taken to be 0.05. Students' preference for teaching profession was found to be positive. It was also discovered that teaching profession is rated 5th out of 10 positions by parents. The study also revealed that parental career value, salary and gender compositely predict students' preference for teaching profession ($R = .291$; $F_{(3,471)} = 14.503$, $p < 0.05$). Subsequently when the relative contribution of the independent variables were looked into, only salary was the significant influential variable (salary $\beta = .287$, $t = 6.498$, $p < 0.05$) while parental career value and gender were not. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that government motivate teachers with better salary and provide good working environment to improve the image of teachers. It was also recommended that Government, Policy makers, curriculum planners should set up a scheme to encourage hard working teachers by promoting them annually and sending them on training abroad.

Key words: Parental career value; Salary; Gender; Preference for teaching profession

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching still remains a stepping stone to other jobs among youths. It is still pertinent that a student must choose a career preferred above others, which must be developed to actualise life goals. Alberts, Mbalo, and Ackermann (2003) identified career preference as one of the major areas of concern for young people nearing the end of their schooling. It is important to both parents and their children because this decision will impact them throughout their lives. Every student, at one time or the other, is faced with the challenge of making a choice of career. Buttressing this position, Maisamari (1990) pointed out that dignity, honour, praise and privilege an individual enjoys in the society even within the immediate environment could depend on the type of job such individual does. It is no gainsaying that everything in life has a bearing with profession.

Parents will generally not accept a less prestigious course having paid expensive school fee, thus they do everything possible to oppose a non-prestigious career, no wonder most private university in Nigeria for the sake of big name and prestige do not offer courses in education. To buttress this saying, Chauhan (1996) posited that children from low socio-economic home, more often than others, preferred nursing, teaching and engineering, while those from high socio-economic background preferred Medicine; Business Administration and Law. In the contrary Imonikebe (2009), opined that enlightened parents are broad minded and most often support their children in their career choices and do not impose any

profession on their children since they are aware that personal aptitude affects career choice.

According to Adelabu (2005), despite the increase in salary of Nigeria teachers during Obasanjo's regime, teaching profession has not yet gained its feet based on pay package when compared to those in the health, oil, power, business sectors and so on. He further explained that the teaching profession still lag behind and most people believe that teachers' reward is not on earth but in heaven because of these common characteristics; frequent strikes due to the request for better condition of service, salary delay and salaries slashed down which is usually not refunded, hence most students may not want to identify with such career as choice profession even if they possess the ability to teach. In 1982, a survey of 1,478 Southeastern United States high school seniors determined that although most students viewed teaching as a good profession to enter, especially for women yet 82.9% of the students perceived that salary was a discouraging factor in selecting a teaching career. They also saw discipline problems and working conditions and environment in a similar light (Page & Page, 1984 in Arlene, Myrana, Gary, & George 1998).

Kareem and Ige (2010), opined that teaching profession is unable to attract the best brains into the system. Their study revealed that students admitted to read education courses are not only of low quality, some are mostly reluctant students who have no flair for teaching. The major reason adduced for this is perhaps the poor remuneration for teachers and the status of the teacher in the society (Adelabu, 2003; Ogonor & Ewendu, 2009; Ige, Toyobo & Oyegoke, 2011). On the contrary Hargreaves et al. (2006) however saw teaching as an attractive profession, probably, because of the society they found themselves, United Kingdom.

Another factor that can affect student preference for teaching profession is gender. According to World Health Organization (WHO) 2009, gender is defined as the biological and physiological characteristics that differentiate men and women. The Education, Audio Visual and Cultural Executive Agency (2010), sees teaching profession as a feminine occupation especially at the lower level. Odeleye (1985) in his study found out that gender affects students' preference for teaching profession. Majasan (1995) submitted that most female students prefer teaching because they feel that the profession affords them ample time with their families while most male students identified prestige, recognition and better working conditions as more important in career choice. Denga (1999) and Nwanchukwu (2003) opined that Parents set occupational standards for their children which favour professions that attract pay package and prestige, thereby discourage most students who naturally have the flair to teach. Stoke and Tyler (2003), Ma and

Macmillan (1999) also upheld the views of Ogonor and Ewendu that unattractive working environment also affects students preference for teaching profession.

According to Kareem and Ige (2010), at the inception of the present democratic government in 1999, the Nigeria educational sector which was in a mess, has started to regain its past glory. To buttress this point Adelabu (2005), opines that the level of motivation and incentives of Nigeria teachers have increased in the last five years. In view of this, the study sought to investigate if parental career value, salary incentive and gender influence student's preference for teaching profession significantly.

1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Four research questions were raised to direct the study.

- a. What are student's preferences for teaching profession?
- b. How valued is teaching profession among other profession?
- c. To what extent will parental career value, salary and gender predict student's preference for teaching profession?
- d. What is the relative contribution of parental career values, salary and gender on the prediction of student's preference for teaching profession?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study is a survey type that adopted a correlational approach.

2.2 Sample

The sample for the study was obtained using multi-stage sampling technique. From the twenty five Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Delta state, Nigeria, five LGAs were randomly selected. Four schools were randomly selected from each of the five LGAs. Finally thirty SS II students were randomly selected from each school. Six hundred SS II students and six hundred parents of the selected students were therefore used for the study. The distribution of the sampled students is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
The Distribution of the Study Sample by LGA in Delta State

S/N	LGA sampled	No of schools sampled	No of students sampled	No of parents sampled
1	Udu	4	120	120
2	Warri South	4	120	120
3	Isoko North	4	120	120
4	Uvwie	4	120	120
5	Patani	4	120	120
	Total	20	600	600

2.3 Instrumentation

Three instruments were used for data collection in this study namely:

- i. Students Teaching Profession Preference Scale (STPPS)
- ii. Salary and Incentive Scale (SIC)
- iii. Parental Career Value Scale (PCVS)

2.3.1 Students Teaching Profession Preference Scale (STPPS)

The instrument was constructed by the researchers using four options Likert format ranging from (Very True, True, Almost True and Not True). The instrument was divided into two sections, section A elicited information on demographic variables, and section B comprised 14 items on teaching profession preference. The instrument was pilot tested on 60 students that shared similar characteristics with the actual sample for the study. The reliability and validity indices were determined using Internal Consistency (Cronbach Alpha) which produced $r = 0.70$.

2.3.2 Salary and Incentive Scale (SIS)

Salary and Incentive Questionnaire was also developed by the researchers using Likert format ranging from (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree to Strongly Disagree). The instrument has two sections. Section A elicited information on demographic variables and section B comprised 18 items on salary and incentive for teachers. The instrument was pilot tested on 60 respondents (students) that have similar characteristics to the actual sample. The reliability and validity indices were also determined using Internal Consistency approach

(Cronbach Alpha method) for the questionnaire having coefficient $r = 0.89$.

2.3.3 Parental Career Value Scale (PCVS)

Parental Career Value Scale (PCVS) developed by the researchers has two sections. Sections A elicited information on demographic variables and section B comprised 10 major profession (teaching inclusive) out of which parents were requested to rank based on the value attached to each. The rank each parent gave to teaching profession among other professions was used to compute career value for teaching. The reliability coefficient estimated on the scale using cronbach alpha approach was 0.51.

2.4 Data Collection

The researchers administered the instruments directly with the help of research assistants on the respondents on each of the sampled schools, while the students took their parents' copies of questionnaire home which were returned the next day. Due to the challenges associated with filling of instrument by the parents and retrieving, 475 complete sets of instruments were used for the study.

2.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, mean and Standard Deviation) and multiple regression were used to analyze the data collected for this study.

3. RESULT AND FINDINGS

Research question a: What are students' preferences for teaching profession?

Table 2
Mean Rating on Students' Preferences for Teaching Profession

S/N	Item	True (%)	Not True (%)	Mean	SD
<i>I prefer Teaching because:</i>					
1	It creates an avenue to impact knowledge.	466(98.1)	9(1.9)	3.68	.530
2	It gives me an avenue to mold lives.	441(92.8)	34(7.2)	3.38	.637
3	It has prestige and social status.	297(62.5)	178(37.5)	2.68	.927
4	It gives me opportunity to utilize my natural ability.	417(88)	58(12)	3.30	.793
5	It has a high level of job security.	258(54.3)	217(45.7)	2.63	1.015
6	It has high salary prospect.	187(39.4)	288(60.6)	2.32	.954
7	It has flexible working arrangement.	331(69.7)	144(30.3)	2.83	.892
8	It has holiday incentive.	370(77.9)	105(22.1)	3.01	.847
9	My parents are proud of the profession.	272(57.3)	203(42.7)	2.65	1.059
10	My parents believe that I possess the ability to teach.	213(44.8)	262(55.2)	2.41	1.005
11	It has promotion prospect.	406(85.5)	69(14.5)	3.14	.757
12	It gives me opportunity to strike a balance between work and home.	382(80.4)	93(19.6)	3.10	.897
13	My parents are teachers and I want to be a teacher.	144(30.3)	331(69.7)	2.04	1.090
14	Teachers to me are role models in the society.	306(64.4)	169(35.6)	2.75	1.016

The study indicated a positive preference of students towards teaching profession considering the mean cut off 2.50 and above which was used as a yardstick for classifying their responses that ranges from 2.04 to 3.68 into favourable and unfavourable preference for teaching

profession over 92% and above of the respondent responded positively to 13 of the 14 items.

Research question b: How valued is teaching profession among other professions?

Table 3
Frequency Count of How Valued Is Teaching Among Other Professions

Profession		1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	4 TH	5 TH	6 TH	7 TH	8 TH	9 TH	10 TH
Law	Frequency	66	67	100	71	50	28	29	21	22	20
	Percent	13.9	41.1	21.1	14.9	10.5	5.9	6.1	4.4	4.6	4.2
Engineering	Frequency	71	115	86	73	38	34	21	18	9	10
	Percent	14.9	24.2	18.1	15.4	8	7.2	4.4	3.8	1.9	2.1
Medicine	Frequency	149	106	67	45	29	20	18	14	17	9
	Percent	31.4	22.3	14.1	9.5	6.1	4.2	3.8	2.9	3.6	1.9
Accountancy	Frequency	73	48	73	100	52	51	30	28	14	5
	Percent	15.4	10.1	15.4	21.1	10.9	10.7	6.3	5.9	2.9	1.1
Journalism	Frequency	9	20	22	31	76	83	85	64	53	28
	Percent	1.9	4.2	4.6	6.5	16.0	17.5	17.9	13.5	11.2	5.9
Teaching	Frequency	47	39	45	49	75	49	64	52	32	22
	Percent	9.9	8.2	9.5	10.3	15.8	10.3	13.5	10.9	6.7	4.6
Artistic	Frequency	7	15	15	14	38	40	56	94	94	99
	Percent	1.7	3.2	3.2	2.9	8	8.4	11.8	19.8	19.8	20.8
Business administration	Frequency	19	28	42	46	66	87	63	71	33	16
	Percent	4	5.9	8.6	9.7	13.9	18.3	13.3	14.9	6.9	3.4
Social work	Frequency	8	19	15	25	22	48	68	61	112	95
	Percent	1.7	4	3.2	5.3	4.6	10.1	14.3	12.8	23.6	20
Military	Frequency	28	18	16	26	31	32	36	46	78	161
	Percent	5.9	3.8	3.4	5.5	6.5	6.7	7.6	9.7	16.4	33.9

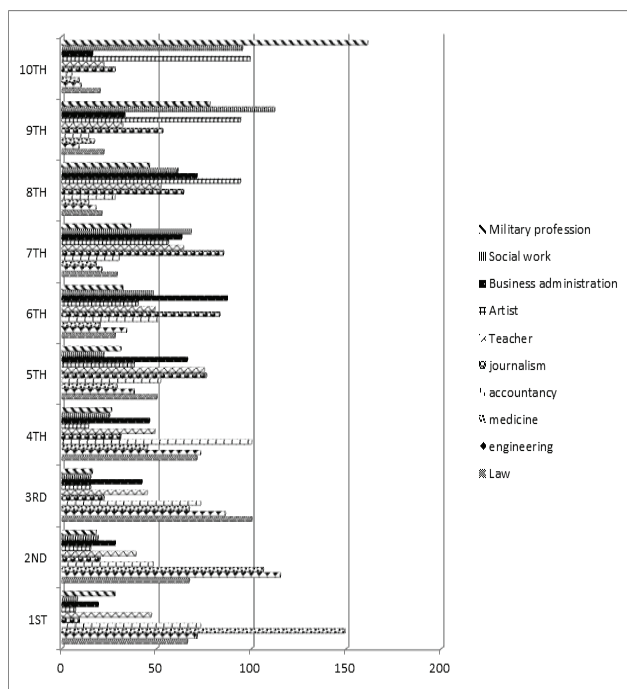


Figure 1
Frequency Counts of Value of Teaching Among Other Professions

Table 3 and Figure 1 show how teaching profession is valued among other professions. The table reveals that 149 (31.4%) respondents (parents) mostly valued medical profession, followed by Accountancy 73 (15.4%), Engineering 71 (14.9%), Law 66 (13.9%), Teaching 47 (9.9%), Military profession 28 (5.9%), Business administration 19 (4.0%), journalism 9 (1.9%), social worker 8 (1.7%) and theater art or artist 7 (1.5%). The table reveals that teaching profession is ranked 5th among the 10 professions investigated in this study. This implies that parents now value teaching profession above the following professions (military, social work and theater art or artist).

Research question c: To what extent will parental career value, salary and gender predict student's preference for teaching profession?

Table 4
Multiple Regression Summary and ANOVA of Parental Career Value, Salary and Gender on Students' Preference for Teaching Profession (R = .291; R Square = .085; Adjusted R Square = .079; Standard Error of Estimate = 5.31670)

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	1229.923	3	409.974	14.503	.000*
Residual	13313.921	471	28.267		
Total	14543.844	474			

= Significant at P ≤ 0.05

Table 4 shows that parental career value, salary and gender compositely have significant contribution to student's preference for teaching profession $F_{(3,471)} = 14.503$, $P \leq 0.05$. The magnitude of the relationship between students' preference for teaching profession and the predictors is shown by the values of coefficient of multiple regression (R) of .291, multiple regression square (R) square of .085 and adjusted R square of .079. This implies that 7.9% of the total variances in student

preference for teaching profession can be explained by the combined influence of parental career value, salary and gender that was built into the regression model. Other factors not measured were responsible for the remaining variances.

Research question d: What is the relative contribution of parental career values, salary and gender on the prediction of student's preference for teaching profession?

Table 5
Relative Contribution of Parental Career Value, Salary and Gender on Student's Preference for Teaching Profession

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	31.136	1.625		19.163	.000
Parental career value	-.082	.095	-.039	-.862	.389
Salary	.687	.106	.287	6.498	.000
Gender	.443	.494	.040	.897	.370

Table 5 shows that out of the three predictor variables, only salary had significant contribution ($\beta = .287$, $t = 6.498$, $P < 0.05$) to student's preference for teaching profession while, parental career value ($\beta = -.039$, $t = -.862$, $P > 0.05$) and gender ($\beta = .040$, $t = .897$, $P > 0.05$) had no significant contribution to the criterion variable.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings from this study indicated a positive preference of students towards teaching profession. The positive swift to teaching by students may be due to better conditions of service, increase in remuneration, the natural abilities in students to impact knowledge, molding lives, flexible working conditions, job security, stable promotion prospect, holiday leave the profession attracts. In study conducted by Hargreaves, Cunningham, Hansen, McIntyre and Oliver (2006) in England, it was discovered that majority (68%) of the general public surveyed, consider teaching profession to be a quite attractive one. In contrast to this report Ogonor and Ewendu (2009) discovered that students felt that teaching offered little chance of promotion. The study also revealed

that teaching profession is valued averagely amidst other profession, this study corroborates the findings of Hargreaves et al. (2006) that parents see teaching as an attractive profession. On the contrary, Ige, Toyobo, and Oyegoke (2011) uphold that parents do not value teaching profession. The findings of the researchers might be the products of the Educational values in the countries where the studies were carried out. It was also established in the study that when (parental career value, salary and gender), were combined, they contributed to prediction of student's preference for teaching profession, but when they are independently looked at, only salary contributed significantly. This findings corroborates the findings of Lambert, McCarthy, O'Donnel, & Wang, (2009), it was discovered that majority of the general public surveyed considered the teaching profession to be quite an attractive career due largely to an attractive salary package. It therefore means that parent's career value and gender do not affect student's preferences for teaching profession, thus what matter to the students in career choice for teaching is salary. Thus students will go into the profession irrespective of their sex and what their parents' value is.

CONCLUSION

This study made use of students and their parents from Delta state only. Attempt should be made by other researchers to replicate this study by involving students and their parents from other geo-political zones of Nigeria. In addition, parental qualification, and age should be looked into by other researchers to predict student's preference for teaching profession. However if government and relevant stakeholders in education should increase teachers welfare package and improve on school environment, teaching profession will be mostly preferred by many students like medicine, law, engineering and the like.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- a. Government should renovate the infrastructure in the Schools, and provide basic amenities for schools in order to improve the image of teachers.
- b. Government, Policy makers, curriculum planners should encourage hard working teachers by promoting them annually and sending them on training programmes and workshops abroad to boost their productivity.
- c. Finally practicing teachers need to conduct themselves in manner befitting their professional ethics and maintain highest standard so as to portray a good image of the profession both to the students and the entire society if they must attract students into the profession.

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