



# **Attitude of Science Teachers towards Teaching in Calabar Metropolis**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed at investigating science teacher's attitude towards teaching in Calabar metropolis of Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of the study, four research questions were posed and were tested at 0.05 level of significant. The study adopted a simple random sampling technique and the statistical tool for data analysis was independent t-test analysis. The result of the study revealed that there exist significant negative attitude towards teaching of science subjects in the research area. Based on that, the study concluded that low pay, difficulties in science concepts amongst others were problems in the research area. Hence, teachers' remuneration should be improved upon and emphasis be place on science subjects.

**Keywords:** Teachers, teaching, attitude and science.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching has been described as a time-honoured and respected profession; but currently the image of the profession has been battered and shattered in this age of materialism where all vital values are reckoned in monetary terms (Opoh, 2016). Teaching is an art and the quality of teaching depends on the love, dedication and devotion of the teacher towards the subject of the knowledge. The quality and development of any nation or teaching programme cannot rise above the quality of its teachers (Orim, 2016).

Despite the attributes of this great profession, mathematics and basic science education teachers in Calabar metropolis have been observed to exhibit negative attitude towards the teaching profession. This has been noticed by different researchers such as (Ekwueme 2014, Meremikwu 2009, Okang 2016) which may be as a result of incentives, their level of education and commitment towards their job in particular.

The quality of a nation's educational system can be measured by the quality of the teachers and the products. Orim, 2016 described the dwindling nature of our educational system which may be measured by the level of students' performance both in and out of school to be alarming. One of the reasons for this poor performance may be traceable to teachers' lackadaisical attitude towards their work and lack of supervision by the ministry of Education.

An attitude is a mindset that affects how a person thinks and acts. Attitude can influence a person's performance positively or negatively. For instance, negative attitude towards one's job will result in negative performance. In line with the above, attitude could also affect how well a teacher plans and prepares for his/her lessons (Okon, 2013). The attitude of a teacher, consciously or unconsciously, deeply affects students' interest and academic performance. Sequel to the above, teachers with negative attitudes may not be as approachable to students as teachers who are positively motivated (Orim & Igwe, 2017). This indicates that teachers' attitude towards their students and teaching in general is very important for students' success.

Attitudes of teachers towards teaching science subjects in secondary schools is a very challenging issue which requires only well trained and intellectual teachers for its handling. This makes it easy for teachers to give detail explanations about the required concepts. Enoh (2009), opined that teachers with good

professional competent and interpersonal skills are more effective in their classrooms in terms of students' behavior, better understanding of concept by students and disposition of positive and mental alertness by learners.

Ihebuzor and Adelaiye (2005) have shown that Science teachers have a positive attitude towards their subjects, because it provides answers to their questions about nature. However, despite this likeness, the students consider the level of Science subjects to be difficult because some science teachers tend to concentrate on the content of their subjects but they neglect the process.

Amongst other professions, teachers are easily dissatisfied and more likely to be lost to other professions. The new social order encourages every professional to seek any job that promises a life of opulence, the science teacher is more prone to the temptation of abandoning his profession to a more lucrative one. His profession does not give him the necessary leverage to short-circuit to wealth (Ojo 1995). In explaining this, Figlio (2002) believes that the usual value system is at the root of the problem. Abiola (2009) further confirms that it is the low image, social status and low prestige accorded to science teachers that force them to move to more lucrative jobs.

According to Aziredo (2006), teachers complain of low balance, poor condition of service and blind avenues for promotion, compared to people of similar training. Morgan (2006) further confirmed that teachers are lowly paid and therefore are looked down upon; and teaching is considered a second-best occupation, and a transit occupation. However in spite of this, Ezewu (2003) observes that this public perception of teachers is relative, because they are still held in very high esteem in the rural areas.

In the past, NTI, TCII, GRADE II science teachers were taken up in employment as soon as they completed their studies. This has become a mirage. According to American Education Encyclopedia (AEE, 1990) many teachers seek jobs on their own, and not finding such readily, resort to self-employment. Dryfoos (2000) outlining the functions of the Ministries of Education (State and Federal) include: coordination of teacher- training and registration, amongst others. According to the researcher, automatic placement of teachers by government does not hold anymore because it cannot cope with the teachers' conditions of service.

Most teachers do not take pride in their profession and this is certainly bound to affect their work output. Some teachers get disillusioned after graduation, while some get despair while in training. There is a need to investigate this attitude of teachers towards their profession, especially at the level of training where remediation can be applied.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Teacher's negative attitude may impact directly on the teaching profession with the likelihood that the nascent teacher may not accept teaching appointments, at the end of training or were they do, may not undertake their assigned tasks with the level of enthusiasm that yields results. There have been reoccurring failures in science subjects in WAEC/NECO which may be traceable to some certain problems. Therefore, this research seeks to investigate the attitude of science teachers towards their profession.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study is aimed at investigating science teachers' attitude towards teaching that may cause them prefer other professions. The factors that contribute to this attitude, when identified will aid the researchers to make recommendations that may be useful in alleviating the problem(s).

### **Research Questions**

Towards achieving the above objectives, the following research questions were raised.

1. To what extent is teaching an acceptable profession?
2. To what extent is teaching of Science subjects lucrative?
3. How does teachers presently engaged in the teaching of Science subjects perceived to have high esteem compared to other professionals?
4. What are the employment prospects for teachers of Science subjects on graduation?

**METHODOLOGY**

**Population/ Sample**

Stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting 50 teachers of Science Subjects from 15 secondary schools out of the 106 science teachers in the study area which constituted the sample under study.

**Instrument**

A questionnaire titled Science Teachers Attitude to Teaching Questionnaire (STATQ) was used as the instrument for the study. The instrument was to elicit responses in attitude based on a 5-point Likert scale. The instrument was examined and validity established by experts who ensured that the items were in agreement with the research questions: they also concluded that the instrument satisfied the purpose for which it was designed, since their comments were incorporated in the final instrument. The instrument showed consistency (0.74 reliability coefficient) in determining the attitude of the population so, it was considered reliable for the study. The questionnaire was distributed to Science teachers in Calabar metropolis personally by the researchers. The administration achieved 100% retrieval with full responses from the subjects.

The data obtained from the respondents based on the 5-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) were analyzed by calculating mean attitude score on each of the items and then the average mean of all the items. Items were grouped under research questions and the average of the attitude frequencies that correspond to a given question calculated. The discriminatory index of 2.50 which is a mid-point of the highest score in an item was used as cut-off point.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

For clarity, we will present the results in tables under their research questions along with the associated items.

1. *To what extent is teaching science subjects an acceptable profession?*

**Table 1. Frequency and mean response of science teachers' attitude towards teaching**

s/no	Items	Frequency					Mean $\bar{x}$	Average
		SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1		
1	I like Science subjects as a course	25	12	3	4	6	3.92	2.65
2	Science subjects are very easy to understand	2	7	3	23	15	2.16	
3	The topics in Science subjects are not complicated	4	6	6	14	20	2.20	
4	The various components of Science subjects make it easy for teaching.	11	9	3	15	12	2.82	
5	Science subjects are not difficult	4	6	4	15	21	2.14	

The results as tabulated in Table 1 indicates that item 1, a mean of 3.92, an indication of likeness for the Science subjects; except for item 4 (2.82), every other item mean is below 2.50 indicating disagreement. The average of the means is 2.65, which clearly indicates that the respondents admit that they have difficulties in teaching science subjects.

From this result, Capel (2003) opined that teachers have a positive attitude towards their subject. Item 2, 3 and 5 record means below 2.5 which alludes to the fact that the subject is difficult to study, while item 4 has a mean of 2.82 (a little above 2.5) to introduce a dichotomy- that science subjects are easy to learn. The mean of 2.82 is barely admissible ( $2.82 < 3.5$ ). In order not to be misled by this statistic, if we observe further, a study of the frequencies obtained in item 4 shows that the number of teachers who

agree with the statement that ‘the various components of science subjects makes it easy to teach the subjects, (20) is less than the number that disagree (27). This imputes that even though the mean is 2.28 (below the acceptable index - 2.50) it cannot be taken as a complete rejection; a significant percentage of teachers (48%) did not disagree. This implies that certain components of science subjects are easy to learn. This learning difficulty could have been introduced by those components that are mostly perceived to be difficult, probably agreeing with the authors (Anastasi 2003, Duckworth and Entwistle 1974 and Husen 1969) who opined that Physics, Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics are relatively difficult when compared with other subjects.

Considering the above, despite the likeness teachers may express towards science subjects, there is a perceived learning difficulty which is bound to affect their performance upon teaching; they will tend to discriminate against the components that present learning difficulty. The syllabus may not be taught completely as those errant components, will be avoided to prevent embarrassment and frustration due to lack of adequate knowledge.

2. *To what extent is teaching of Science subjects lucrative?*

**Table 2. Frequency and mean response of science teachers’ attitude of how lucrative is teaching of science subjects**

s/no	Item	Frequency					Mean $\bar{x}$	Average
		SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1		
6	I can get a good job after obtaining my certificate	12	16	9	6	7	3.42	2.91
7	I can establish my personal business with my knowledge of Sciences,	10	10	5	13	12	2.86	
8	Science subjects exposes one to different economic opportunities	10	11	1	12	16	2.74	
9	I can work in any company after obtaining my certificate.	10	10	3	12	16	2.72	
10	I shall be employed before others who studied other course as a teacher as soon as I finish my training	13	5	8	9	15	2.84	

Item 6 has a mean of 3.40 which is below the upper discriminatory index 3.5; all other means are above 2.5; the lower discriminatory index. The means tend to indicate indecision, as represented by the group average of 2.91. This indecision of accepting that being a career science teacher is lucrative is as a result of their believe that the knowledge of science can dispose them to lucrative employment outside the classroom in agreement with the view that teachers are easily lost to other professions due to the social value placed on wealth (Ojo 1995, Adeyemo 2002).

With an unsettled pre-service opinion of one’s economic future, the science teacher is not likely to give the best of his knowledge as a teacher, if found in the classroom; such a teacher would do everything possible to escape the economic misfortune such a career was likely to impose on him, often preferring to take up other menial jobs that may be more rewarding (lucrative).

3. *How does teachers presently engaged in the teaching of Science subjects perceived to have high esteem compared to other professionals?*

**Table 3. Frequency and mean response of science teachers' perception of self-esteem**

s/no	Item	Frequency					Mean $\bar{x}$	Average
		SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1		
11	Teachers are well respected in the society.	11	10	2	11	16	2.78	2.29
12	Teachers are well paid.	1	1				1.58	
13	The socio-economic status of teachers is very high.	3	7					
14	I am happy to be a teacher.	4	14					
15	My family and peers are very proud of me as a teacher.	4	7					

The results in Table 3 show the highest mean of 2.78 against item 11 that asks if teachers are well respected. A mean of 2.78 indicates indecision and as we can see 21 agreements against 27 disagreements - more or less a split. This is highlighted by Ezewu (2003) who said that public perception of teachers is relative. There is a strong indication that teachers are not well-paid (particularly at the time of this study 2017). Items 13 and 15 indicate that the esteem of a teacher in society - by peers and family, is low. The mean of item 14 (2.66 > 2.50) indicates uncertainty, regarding the pride of being a science teacher. The group average of the means show a rejection of any self-esteem on teachers, as perceived by the society. Teacher's income was considered to be inadequate (1.58), especially being that the subjects are resident in Cross River State where the companies pay higher due to the oil- in the zone as compare to the wages paid by the government to teachers, at the time of this study (2017). Income, public esteem, self-worth are the variables that contribute to a person's self-esteem; and these are perceived to be missing in the present service teachers, according to this study. These confirm the views of Anderson (2002) and Aye (2003) who had earlier indicated that the teachers' woes in terms of salaries and conditions of service make it difficult for them to attract the same esteem, status and prestige accorded to other professions. These circumstances make people to doubt the prospects of a career in teaching, doubting the possibility of self-actualization. This will lead to successive multiple depletion of a science teachers' output on his job resulting to low moral, low productivity, low achievement of teaching and national objectives as expected by the government and society at large.

4. *What are the employment prospects for teachers of Science subjects on graduation?*

**Table 4. Frequency and mean response of science teachers on the prospect of science graduates**

s/no	Item	Frequency					Mean $\bar{x}$	Average
		SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1		
16	Newly graduated teachers get into teaching jobs immediately after obtaining their certificates.	3	9				2.44	2.10
17	The government places newly graduated teachers automatically into the teaching profession.	1	8				2.36	
18	The government is ready to employ the new graduate teacher.	2	5				2.12	
19	The newly graduated teachers agree to go to rural areas than teaching even if the government places them to teach in some schools.	12	11	1	2	1	1.98	
20	Graduate teachers do not seek other jobs other than teaching even if the government places them to teach in some schools.	13	10	2	1	1	1.70	

From Table 4, every item associated with this question answer to the negative with means ranging from 2.44-1.70. The lowest means (1.70 and 1.98) are associated with questions involving posting to rural areas and the preference for alternative jobs rather than teaching. This indicates a lack of commitment to ones profession (2.12). Generally the prospect of employment by government is low (average of the means is 2.10).

Bakara (2001) view is upheld, because the foregoing indicates no prospect for science teachers, and most of them are likely to seek employment in other endeavours. The implication of this is that there will be a dearth of science teachers and those undergoing training may not take such training serious as they are not likely to apply the knowledge to its intended end. This frustrates the nations match and desire for greatness.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In summary, the above analysis indicates that science teachers detest the profession but are in it just to make earns meets. Among other reasons, which this study may not have covered, the teachers:

1. Find certain components of science subjects difficult to teach
2. Consider a career of teaching science non-lucrative.
3. Perceive the present teachers science subjects to be held in low-esteem by the public and so are discouraged from accepting to teach.
4. Do not envisage teaching science subjects as a job prospect.

From the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teacher trainers should present science subjects in the most attractive way by stating its relevance.
2. The remuneration of science teachers should be improved to a competitive level.

3. Towards an improved self-esteem, teacher training programmes should include psychology courses that will enhance teachers' self-worth.
4. Government should make budgetary provisions to accommodate the employment and posting of trained science teachers to beat the dearth of science teachers prevalent in our schools.

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