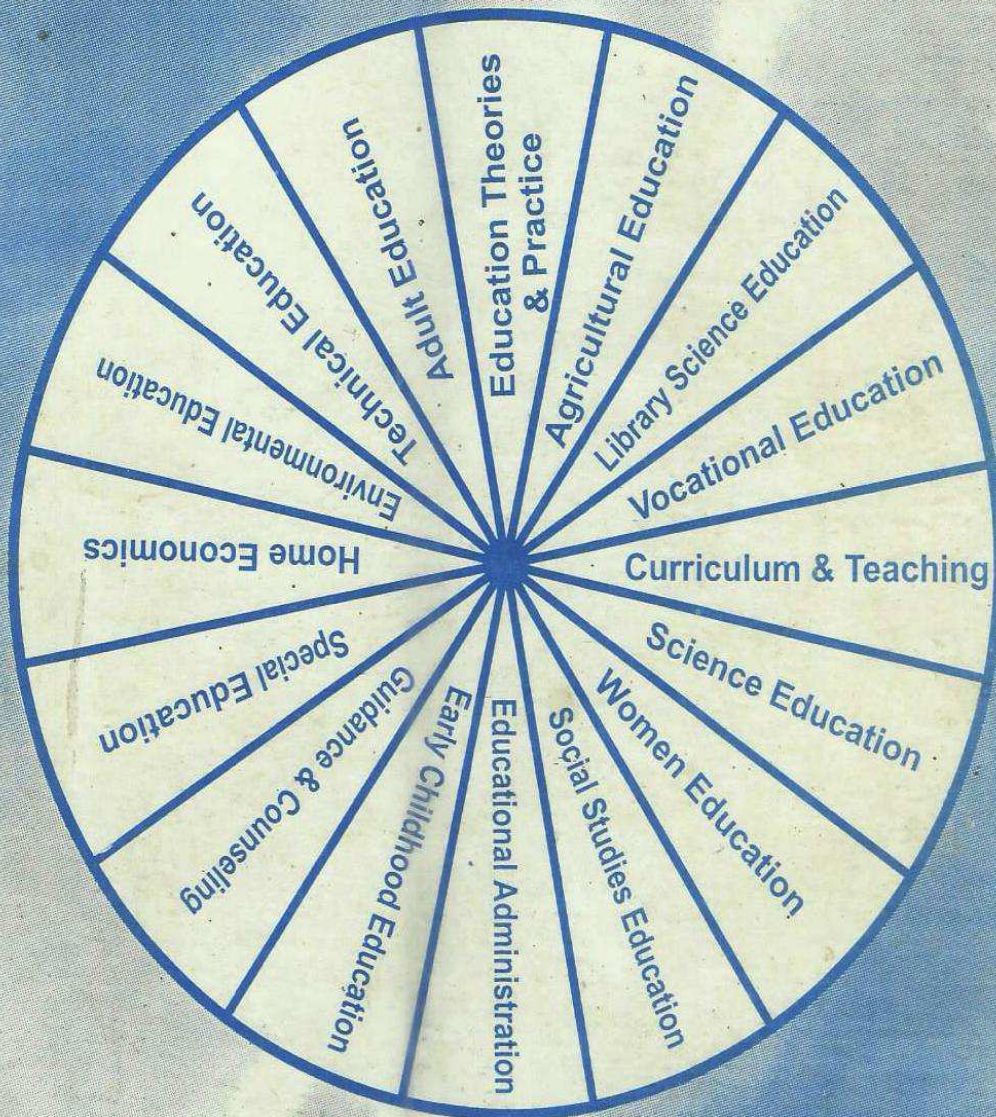


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## **STUDENTS' INTEREST AND THEIR CHOICE OF LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM STATE**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper studied parents' and teachers' influence as factors influencing students' interest and their choice of livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Two objectives and two each of research questions and research hypotheses were formulated for the study which used a survey design. Out of the 3,854 senior secondary two students in the 238 public secondary schools in the 3 senatorial districts in the state which formed the population of the study, 150 respondents were sampled for the study using stratified sampling method. A 12-item structure researcher-made instrument was used for data collection. The research questions were answered using means and standard deviation while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results from the study showed that no significant influence existed in the influence of both parental and teacher factors on students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The work therefore recommended that parents and teachers should not over bear students in their choice of career particularly livestock production.*

### **Introduction**

The need for food is not in question and this accounts for why in all countries, attention is paid by governments, non governmental agencies, organizations and individuals to ways of making food sustainably available to all. One of the ways of ensuring this is through the promotion of the study of Agriculture which livestock production forms a part.

Prior to independence, only few public schools offered Agriculture (then referred to as rural science) as a school subject (Ekong, 1999). Agriculture



as a school subject was then concentrated more in primary schools' curriculum. At post independence, and as government progressively realized the importance of agriculture in secondary schools, a great deal of prominence was given to the study of the subject by the government. Under the 6.3.3.4 and even the current 9.3.4 system of education in Nigeria, agriculture has been made a vocational elective subject in the senior secondary curriculum and a pre-vocational elective in the junior secondary curriculum (FGN, 2004). Some of the objectives of this subject at the secondary school level according to Olaitan (2001) include:

- ❖ Stimulation and sustenance of students' interest in Agriculture.
- ❖ Preparation of students and exposure to occupation and opportunities in the field of agriculture including livestock production.
- ❖ Acquisition of basic knowledge and skills in agriculture by students.

In an effort to achieve these objectives, the curriculum content of agriculture at this level was drawn to include basic concepts of crop production, animal production, agricultural ecology and systems. The need to stimulate and sustain the interest of students in Agriculture with its numerous benefits led to introducing and familiarizing students with animal agriculture as a science for food production (Eseani, 1995). It also brought to the fore, the importance of animal as a source of food, raw materials, source of employment as well as revenue and foreign exchange to the government and economic empowerment to the individual. In pursuit of the realization of these factors, and with the student as the pivot, some facilitating factors were considered in this study with regards to students' interest in the study of agriculture which animal production forms a part. Dubey (1992) observed stratification of families in terms of prestige, money



and power. It becomes clear that the socio economic status of parents may be an important factor of students' choice of a subject such as Agriculture. The occupation of the parents here again is a strong factor in generating or depressing students interest in livestock production through the study of Agriculture. Derogatory remarks or otherwise by parents concerning agriculture could engender or endanger interest of their children in the choice of Agriculture as a school subject. Parents are a great source of motivation for their children. This is because while the home is the first school of the child, parents are the first teachers. On assuming formal education in a school set up, the child again faces another set of challenges that could foster or frustrate his interest in animal production through the teaching of Agriculture. According to Anwana (2006) good teachers should be able to produce or induce a sense of industry rather than inferiority in their students. At school it becomes the responsibility of teachers to recognize special abilities in the students and guide the students carefully to fulfil such aptitudes through encouragements and career counselling. The way the teacher of agriculture goes about his work in the classroom, in the field and interactive comments with the students therefore becomes a very important factor in facilitating or hindering students' interest in livestock production. Brembark (1990) believes that students' ability to hindering the needed goals of education depend to a large extent on the interaction between teachers and students. Hence teachers should learn the principles that would help in discovering social interaction.



**Objectives of the Study:** This study sought to determine the influence of students' interest on their choice of livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the work studied

1. The influence of parents on students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
2. The influence of teachers on students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

**Research Questions:** For effective conduct of this study, the following research questions were asked:

1. How do parents influence students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?
2. In what ways do teachers influence students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?

**Research Hypotheses:** To guide this study, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

1. No significant difference exists in the influence of parents on students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.
2. No significant difference exists in the influence of teachers on students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

### **Research Methods**

**Design:** This study used a survey design where a questionnaire was used to collect data from the subjects studied.

**Population and Sample:** The population of the study was made up of 3,854 senior secondary 2 (SS 2) students in the 238 public secondary



schools in Akwa Ibom State. Out of this number, 150 respondents were sampled from 3 secondary schools in the 3 senatorial districts in Akwa Ibom State namely: Akwa Ibom South (formerly Uyo Senatorial District) Akwa Ibom North East (formerly Eket Senatorial District and Akwa Ibom North West (formerly Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District) using stratified random sampling method.

**Research Instrument:** A 12-item structured researcher-made instrument titled students' interest in livestock production questionnaire which had a 4-point rating scale of strongly agreed (4 points), agreed (3 points) disagreed (2 points) and strongly disagreed (1 point) was used.

**Administration of the Instrument:** This instrument was personally administered on 50 SS 2 students in each of the 3 secondary schools sampled for the study. All completed questionnaire were retrieved representing 100% returns.

**Data Analysis Technique:** In analyzing the data means and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while t-test analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results:** Results obtained from the study are presented on the following tables below:



**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of parental influence on students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State**

S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	SD	DECISION
1.	My father is a livestock producer, that is why I am interested in livestock production	2.60	1.05	*
2.	My parents do not agree that I should go into livestock production because of bird and swine flu. So I have lost interest in it.	1.81	1.75	**
3.	My father insists that I should go into livestock production so I am encouraged to put more effort in Agriculture.	2.68	1.15	*
4.	Agricultural products including livestock is a source of income to my parents, that is why I am interested in livestock production	2.54	0.91	*
5.	I am not interested in livestock production because my parents emphasize that livestock production is degrading and unprofitable.	2.97	1.22	*
6.	My parents say that I could establish	2.63	0.99	*



S/N	ITEMS	$\bar{X}$	SD	DECISION
	my livestock farm and make my money without waiting for white collar job. That is why I have developed so much interest in agriculture particularly livestock production.			

Cut off point for agreed: 2.5

\* Agreed    \*\*Disagreed

Results on table 1 shows that the respondents agreed on all but 1 item studied. That was because they had mean score cut off point of 2.5 and above which indicated agreement that parents exert quite some influence on their children's choice of livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. A standard deviation of 0.91 – 1.75 shows that the respondents did not deviate much from one another's opinion.

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics of Teachers' Influence on students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State**

S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
7.	My teacher of Agriculture appears to have little knowledge of livestock production that is why my interest in livestock production is dampened.	2.56	0.85	*



S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
8.	My agricultural science teacher has a livestock farm at home that fetches him a lot of money and that encourages me to be interested in livestock production.	2.52	1.08	*
9.	My agricultural science teacher encourages me to take to livestock production on graduation so my interest is stirred up.	2.13	1.08	**
10.	I am interested in livestock production because my agricultural science teacher always encourage the students to have a small livestock farm at home.	2.50	1.07	*
11.	I do not like my agricultural science teacher; may be that is why I am not interested in livestock production.	2.42	0.96	**
12.	I do not like livestock production because my agricultural science teacher teaches it theoretically only with no practicals.	2.59	0.96	*

Cut off point for agreed: 2.5

\* Agreed    \*\*Disagreed

Results on table 2 above shows that the respondents agreed generally except on two items that teachers do influence their interest in livestock production. This was because they had a cut off point of 2.5 and above for



those items agreed upon and below 2.5 for those items disagreed upon. Standard deviation values of 0.85 – 1.09 revealed that the respondents did not deviate much from one another in their opinions.

**Table 3: t-test analysis of influence of parents on students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State**

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
							(0.05)
Parents' factor	150	13.5	10.20				
				298	1.62	1.96	Not significant
Students' interest	150	12.8	22.90				

From table 3 above, results of t-calculated value is less than t-critical value at 0.05 level of significance which implies that parents' influence on students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State was not statistically significant. In that way the null hypothesis 1 was accepted.



**Table 4: t-test analysis of influence of teachers on students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State**

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision (0.05)
Teachers' factor	150	13.0	10.09				
				298	1.62	1.96	Not significant
Students' interest	150	12.8	22.90				

Results from table 4 above shows that t-calculated value is less than the t-critical value at 0.05 level of significance meaning that teachers' influence on students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State was not statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis 2 was accepted.

### Discussion

Results of the hypotheses tested showed that neither parents nor teachers had any significant influence on students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State statistically at 0.05 level of significance. This was despite the fact that students agreed on most items they responded to in the instrument that there were some influence on them based on the values of 2.5 and above recorded as the cut off point. The result with regards to parental influence is in line with Oladele (1997)



who observed that parents' socio-economic background is a minimal factor in students' interest in an occupation or career specialties. This means that the success of a student depends on his strength, ability, capability, determination and understanding of the subject of his interest. The result also agreed with Olayinka (1997) who maintained that there was no significant influence of parents on students' interest in an occupation. Also, Offiong (2007) observed that academic achievement of students in livestock production was a factor of their attitude towards the subject matter.

Results on the influence of teachers on students' interest in livestock production, in the present study is in line with an earlier study by Mkpa (1998) that teachers actually exert minimal influence on students in their subject interest which leads to subject specialty and career choice. This is because teachers only guide, direct and facilitate the effort of students in their reasoning, creativity and academic performance. This he does through a variety of pedagogical approaches personal disposition and experience which he employs in the discharge of his duties.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Factors influencing students' interest and their choice of livestock production by students in Akwa Ibom State was studied. From the results obtained it was observed that no significant difference existed in both parental and teacher factors and students' interest in livestock production in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The work recommends that further research should be carried out to determine the possible contributing factors to interest in livestock production among secondary



school students in Akwa Ibom State considering such parameters as gender, peer influence and school location. Also that parents should allow their children to fulfil their career destinies based on their interest instead of unnecessarily overbearing them. Teachers on their part should be keen observers to properly guide the students' interest aright instead of forcing their career opinion on students.

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