

ABSTRACT

This study sought to ascertain if any significant relationships existed among Jamaican pre-service secondary and primary teachers' gender, attitudes to plant biology, option (secondary: double (DO), single (SO); or primary), entry qualifications, college location (rural or urban) and their plant biology knowledge (PBK).

The sample of 479 pre-service teachers consisted of 96 males and 383 females. Two instruments developed by the researcher were used to obtain the data – the plant biology knowledge test (PBKT) and the attitudes to plant biology questionnaire (ATPBQ). The PBKT consisted of 40 multiple choice items, while the ATPBQ, adapted from one used by Ato and Wilkinson (1979), was used to investigate the attitudes of the student-teachers to plant biology.

This study's results showed that the students' knowledge of plant biology was poor. 67% displayed positive attitudes to plant biology, 32% showed neutral/moderate attitudes to plant biology, while only 1% of the sample displayed poor attitudes to plant biology. The subjects' options and entry qualifications, as it related to passing biology before entering college, were shown to be linked to performance on the PBKT while their gender, college location and attitudes to biology were not linked. There were weak but positive significant relationships among the students' gender, attitudes to plant biology, option, entry qualifications, college location and their plant biology knowledge.