

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF BELIZEAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' POSTSECONDARY  
PLANS

by

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the post secondary plans of Belizean high school students. A study of this nature had never been conducted in Belize. This study was conducted to help the Belizean Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports; The University of Belize, and secondary schools understand what Belizean high school students most want to do after graduation, what preferences they have for post secondary education, and for their careers.

The sample for the study was selected through a modified two-stage cluster sampling process, with purposeful sampling of schools so that the final sample would be as nearly as possible representative of the nation. A locally developed instrument called the *Belizean Post Graduation Planning Instrument* was administered in 3<sup>rd</sup> - and 4<sup>th</sup> - Form classes. Of the 1,000 instruments mailed to Belize for this study, I received 978 completed instruments in return (98% response rate), and 900 of these were usable. I analyzed the data using frequency distributions and chi-square analysis.

The results of the study indicated that the most common preferred destination for these students immediately after high school was 6<sup>th</sup> Form. Almost half (46.3%) of students indicated they wanted to go into the 6<sup>th</sup> Form and then attend a university. Many students' beliefs about what they will probably do after high school differed from what they want most to do. The students were more likely to say that they will probably go to work (either immediately after high school or after 6<sup>th</sup> Form) and less likely to go to university (either immediately after high school or after 6<sup>th</sup> Form, as compared to their preferred plans). About half of students whose

preferred plans differed from their probable plans indicated that financial factors were responsible for the difference.

Belizean high school students most frequently requested training or additional educational options in subjects related to business, such as accounting, economics, finance, and banking, and they want to pursue careers in business and tourism. Students reporting an intention to attend a university chose the University of Belize 66% of the time.

The findings of this study have important implications for policy and practice. These implications extend to the personnel involved in secondary school administration, 6<sup>th</sup> Form administrators, administrators at the University of Belize, and officials in the Ministry of Education. The results of this study can be used to shape secondary and tertiary curriculum and to guide national resource allocations so that the nation's scarce dollars are used where national interest and student needs meet.

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Finally, I must thank the people of Belize who assisted in this study. School administrators, government officials, and secondary students all gave time and assistance that made this study possible. I hope that in return I have given them valuable information that will help guide the Belizean education system to meet both the personal needs of students and the nation's priorities.

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