







medicine and nursing but seldom in areas of engineering, physics and mathematics. In addition, the respondents also felt that lack of well equipped laboratory facilities in most secondary schools and the females' belief that science and technology are exclusive for the males are some of the factors that deter them from getting into science career (Table 2).

With regards to the strategies to enhance female participation and retention in science and science-based careers (Table 3), the participants believe that exposing them to the benefits of venturing into science early in their life will be of much help. Secondly, women who have made it in the field of science and technology should always make themselves available to the young females and create opportunities to interact with them. By so doing, the young ones will see them as role models and aspire to be like them. This is in line with Udeani (2012) in which female scientists indicated that their choice of career was influenced by their interaction with their parents, siblings, relatives and family friends who were female scientists. Other major suggestions made by the participants (Table 4) are that girls should be made to believe in themselves and encouraged to favourably compete with their male counterparts in science areas both by their teachers and through mass media. This agrees with Nasrin and Iftekhar (2014) who stated that teachers stand as role models for their students and as such should avoid criticisms that could affect girls' self-image or perception of their capabilities to learn science. The respondents in this study are also of the opinion that for employment in science-based jobs, girls should be given priority so as to increase their participation and give them opportunity to contribute their quota in nation building.

## 7. Conclusion

There are a lot of challenges to women participation and retention in science and science-based careers. Some of these include their perceived difficult nature of science and technology courses resulting to lack of interest in science and technology careers. These challenges can be eliminated if few successful female scientists and technologists make them-selves feasible to the young girls, interact with them and serve as role models. Increase in the number of the female scientists will no doubt, help to challenge gender stereotyping and create opportunities for their talents and expertise to be tapped in the interest of national development.

Science and technology are vital tools to national development. It is therefore necessary for more women scientists to take up science careers in order to increase their chances of contributing their quota to national sustainable development. They need all possible encouragement especially from the successful women career scientists who should interact with them and pass down the good legacy of hard work and love for science to them.

## 8. Future Scope

- 1) There is need to replicate this study in other parts of the country other than South-east Nigeria.

- 2) It might be of interest to carry out a similar study using Art-based career women to find out why they were not interested in science.

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