



A Study of Motivational Factors for Pre-service Teachers' Choice of Teaching as a Career

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Abstract

This study explored 270 student-teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession in two public sector universities in Pakistan. A self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire included 5-point Likert scaled items. The results of an initial descriptive analysis showed that 'teaching as a source of lifelong learning received the highest positive response. While 'I chose a teaching career because I had no other choice' was the lowest. Exploratory factor analysis revealed that there were three major motivational factors in choosing teaching career: (1) Relatively easy availability (2) being more respected job, and (3) teaching being a relaxing job. Comparisons on demographics showed no significant difference between universities, as $t(268) = 3.476, p < .05$. Gender wise difference was statistically significant, as $t(268) = -2.589, p < .05$. The respondents' academic background had no significant effect on their motivation towards a teaching career.

Key Words: Teacher Education, Teacher Attitude, Teacher Motivation, Teaching Career.

Introduction

The Pakistan National Educational Policy ([Government of Pakistan, 2009](#)) indicated that the quality of teachers is not satisfactory in the country. The educational policymakers admitted in the policy documents that though the number of teachers in the education system is relatively better than before their quality in spite of the increase in teachers training programs is not effective. There might be many factors affecting the quality of teachers as indicated by researchers; for example, teachers do not exhibit a commitment to their profession and lack in motivation ([Ali, 2011](#); Mahmood, 2011). The Pakistan National Educational Policy, 1998-2010 ([Government of Pakistan, 1998](#)) reported that teaching had become the profession of the last resort. Mahmood (2014) indicated that there were no encouraging trends among candidates towards applying for teaching job, talented and well-qualified youth did not prefer teaching jobs. It means that all the talented students prefer other than teaching job, and only those become teachers who have no other choices or could not, by one way or the other, join other jobs.

In general, in Pakistani society teaching is considered as being relatively easily available job than any other ones, because it is a common perception about teaching that it does not demand much effort or scrutiny to ensure highly qualified and committed individuals ([Ali, 2011](#); [Mehmood, 2014](#)). Although in the national educational policy (Government of Pakistan, NEP, 1998-2010) has well underpinned the ground reality yet there have been no significant reforms in teacher education programs that could attract more qualified and talented youth towards teaching (Ahmad, 2012). To ensure the quality of teachers, it seems imperative to know what factors motivate student-teachers to choose the field of teaching as their professional career. Besides, these factors may need an updated study because their level of influence may vary with the passage of time and also from country to country. Usually, in Pakistan, a pre-service teacher training programs of universities and teachers training institutions

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provide for the demand of teachers to the education system. Thus, only those individuals are appointed as teachers in the public sector who hold a minimum qualification of B. Ed. The students, would-be teachers, who enrol in teacher education program may report having different motivational factors than those of studies cited in the literature.

Research studies on teacher education such as [UNESCO & USAID \(2006\)](#) reported that teachers in Pakistan need incentives and a better hope of career track in the teaching field. In Pakistan, teachers are reported to have been showing lack of commitment with teaching as their profession, while teacher commitment is considered an important factor for the improvement of the school environment and enhancing students' learning (Mahmood, 2011). Factors influencing teachers' choice of teaching as a profession have been widely studied ([Akyol; Garner & Harper, 2003](#); [Hennessy & Lynch \(2017\)](#)). Among the studied factors, the factor that comes on top is teachers' perception that they can contribute to society by adopting teaching careers, termed as altruistic reasons ([Kyriacou, Kunc, Stephens, & Hultgren, 1999](#); [Hennessy & Lynch, 2017](#)). The variation in findings of previous studies demands more investigation into the matter which might come up with valuable suggestions to the policymakers and education system overall. Thus, this study has attempted to explore a variety of factors that influence candidates' motivation towards teaching as a career.

Review of Related Literature

[Mehmood \(2011\)](#) found a significant positive correlation between professional attitudes of teachers and job performance ($r = .37, p = 0.001$). [Akyol \(2016\)](#) conducted a research study on a sample of 382 student teachers in five departments of faculty of education at the university level. He found a medium positive relationship between learning oriented motivation, lifelong learning tendencies and teaching-related self-efficacy perceptions of candidate teachers. The relationship was significant. [Garner and Harper \(2003\)](#) studied the motivational factors in the context of Russia and England. They got some of the important factors prioritized by the student teachers indicating why they wanted to join teaching as a profession. They found that the most frequently prioritized factor was their *desire to contribute to society*. The second most prioritized factor was their *urge to influence others*, the third factor was they wanted to teach because *it is a flexible job*, the fourth factor in order of preference was *personal development*, and finally, they believed that they would be doing a *socially useful job*. They also reported that most of their respondents believed that teaching was challenging as well as interesting ([Low, Ng, Hui, & Cai, 2017](#)).

Another way to study teacher motivation was to investigate in-service teachers' expectations from teaching and their existing perceptions after when they have spent time in a teaching career. Studies showed that from teaching career, teachers expected that it should provide them with work socially acceptable, have enough amount of holidays for leisure time, and they should have a sense of satisfaction with their pupils' achievements ([Bergmark, Lundström, Manderstedt, & Palo 2018](#)); [Kyriacou, Kunc., Stephens, & Hultgren, 2003](#)). There were also such studies which looked into this matter from the perspectives of those teachers who had left teaching after a certain period of time experiencing teaching. Among those reasons for leaving their teaching job were heavy workload, low salary, disruptive students, low status ([Wilhelm, Dewhurst-Savellis, & Parker, 2000](#)).

[Hennessy & Lynch \(2017\)](#) applied the FIT-choice (Factors Influencing Teacher choice) scale, developed by Watt and Richardson (2007) in the context of Ireland. They found that the scale was valid even in the context of teacher education in Ireland, that is, the results were similar to the original FIT scale. They found three important factors to be most influential in motivating the participants to adopt teaching as a career. These factors were: participants' prior teaching and learning experiences, participants' perceived ability in teaching. They also found that 'working with children' was a strong predictor of teacher satisfaction with teaching. The scale though covers many factors, yet it seems to lack religious-based interpretations of teaching as in many countries, education is driven on religious ideologies such as Pakistan. Besides the sample was only 143 pre-service teachers, which seems too small a sample for factor analysis. Another study conducted in the context of Turkish teacher education program which included relatively larger sample, 974 pre-service teachers and found that social and personal utility value and prior teaching experience were highly rated factors by the pre-service teachers ([Akar, 2012](#); [Bergmark, Lundström, Manderstedt, & Palo 2018](#)). The above-cited sources indicate factors that motivate teachers to become teachers was more dependent on social factors such as working with children attracted some teachers, some felt that they were contributing to society more through teaching etc.; however this factor can be

based on an understanding of the concept of teaching and views about being a teacher. The exiting study attempted to study all these factors indicated in the literature in the context of Pakistan to see whether the indicated factors influence the youth to want to become teachers.

Methodology

It was a quantitative research design in which both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The population included pre-service teacher education program (B. Ed honors) from two distinct public sector universities in Pakistan. A sample of 270 students participated in the study. Their responses to the factors influenced their choice of teaching career was obtained. The questionnaire contained 24 items, measuring responses on Likert scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree). The items were selected from various studies conducted on teacher motivation; however, the items were newly framed and rephrased for contextual factors. Two experts also added some other factors during the validation process, which were incorporated into the questions. The two factors had social orientation in nature. Furthermore, demographical information included gender, university type, and their previous educational background. The effect of each demographical variable on their choice of teaching was assessed through t statistics. The initial descriptive statistics were used to identify the most influential factors to the lowest influential factors. The statements were ranked from 1 to 15 in ascending order taking 1 as the topmost influential factor. An exploratory factor analysis using (PCA) the strength of item interrelationships were examined. This also helped in identifying the underlying factors and nature and relationship between the factors. Among the inferential tools, the Independent sample t -test and correlation (spearman) were used. The t statistics compared the mean attitudes score of the demographical variables of gender, university type and students' academic background in terms of whether they received their education from public or private schools.

Data Analysis

The data was both descriptively and statistically analyzed. Initially, based on the pre-service teachers' responses against each item (as a factor) a simple descriptive analysis was made by enlisting top 15 most favorable factors. In addition to identifying the top 15 factors, on the basis of the more favorable responses against each item, it was deemed useful to extract fewer factors for which factor analysis was conducted. The exploratory factor analysis was conducted using Varimax rotation, selecting the number of factors based on correlation above .5. The basic assumption of KMO was found to be appropriate (.910) and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < .05$). Inter-item reliability analysis was made using Cronbach's alpha. Based on inter-item reliability, three major factors were identified. The findings have been presented in tables where it was considered more appropriate; otherwise, simple descriptions have been provided for reporting findings.

The correlation between some important items related to parents' career influence on the pre-service teachers' choice to teaching career was analyzed by using correlation (spearman). Finally, the independent sample t -test was used for comparison between demographical variables. The demographical variables included university type (coded as 'old' and 'new'), respondents previous educational background (private and public), and gender.

Findings

First of all, the simple description in the form of numbers and percentages of respondents against each item of the questionnaire is presented in order to make the analysis simple and easy to understand (the items measured through Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree). The responses were reduced from 5 to only 3 levels (agree, neutral or disagree ('strongly agree' and 'agree' were condensed to agree; 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' were condensed to disagree while neutral has been left as is. Table 1 shows the number of respondents under each response level.

Table 1. Respondents' Attitudes Towards Teaching Motivating Factors

S. No	Motivating Factors	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1.	My parents motivated me to pursue teaching as a career	163 (60%)	36 (13%)	71(27%)

S. No	Motivating Factors	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
2.	My friends motivated me	134 (50%)	52 (19%)	84 (31%)
3.	I preferred teaching as our religious obligation	194 (72%)	42 (16%)	34 (13%)
4.	I have an inner inspiration for teaching	184 (68%)	54 (20%)	32 (12%)
5.	Teaching is the only profession that suits me	160 (59%)	54 (20%)	66 (24%)
6.	Teaching seems to be relatively more relaxing profession than other jobs	166 (61%)	42 (16%)	62 (23%)
7.	Teaching seems to be easily available	158 (59%)	50 (19%)	60 (22%)
8.	Teaching is a more respected profession	222 (82%)	26 (10%)	24 (08%)
9.	Teaching is a source of lifelong learning	229 (85%)	26 (10%)	14 (05%)
10.	I believe teaching causes inner satisfaction	210 (78%)	30 (11%)	40 (15%)
11.	I found no other better choices	132 (49%)	62 (23%)	76 (28%)
12.	Teaching job is easier to get as compared to other jobs	134 (50%)	66 (24%)	60 (22%)
13.	The pay packages in teaching are increasing	150 (56%)	74 (27%)	46 (17%)
14.	There are long vocations in the teaching profession	134 (50%)	56 (21%)	80 (30%)
15.	Teachers can do many jobs in part-time such as tutoring	184 (68%)	38 (14%)	48 (18%)

A quick view of Table 1 shows that the variable IX (teaching is the source of lifelong learning) has the highest response rate (85% of respondents perceive teaching is the source of lifelong learning). The variable VIII (teaching is a more respected profession than others) has the second-highest positive response (82%). The variable III (I preferred this field because it is our religious obligation) has the third-highest positive response (72%). Item IV and XV has the same response (68%). Teaching profession inspires the responses as well as attracts them because they perceive that they can do a part-time job also. These items further were ranked based on the number of respondents against each item. These questions can be considered as factors on their own for understanding the ranking.

Table 2. Ranking of Top 5 Motivating Factors for Teaching as a Career

Factors	Rank
Teaching as a source of lifelong learning	1
Teaching as a respected profession	2
Teaching as a source of inner satisfaction	3
Teaching as a religious obligation	4
Having an inner inspiration for teaching	5
Teachers can do many jobs in part-time	6
Teaching seems more relaxing profession than other jobs	7
My parents motivated toward teaching as a career	8
The teaching profession is the most suitable one	9
Teaching seemed to be relatively easier than other jobs	10
The pay packages in teaching are increasing	11
Friends as a source of motivation	12
Teaching job is easy to obtain	13
There are long vocations in the teaching profession	14
I found no other better choices	15

Table 2 indicates that ‘teaching as lifelong learning’ has received favorable response from most of the candidates (229 out of 270) and thus have been assigned first in the ranking, while the lowest number of candidates showing favorable responses (132 out of 270) has been put on the lowest of all in the 15th rank. The lowest factor receiving a positive response is ‘I found no other better choice’.

However, it was not without interest to find which of these variables correlate and can be reduced to further factors. In order to reduce these variables into factors that should represent the student- teachers’ responses

towards teaching, exploratory factor analysis was conducted. The result showed that the item V, VI, VII, XI and XII (with a correlation above .5) could be merged into one factor. These items reflect 'teaching job availability'. It should also be mentioned that there were more females in this study because by defaults female enrollment was higher in the selected classes. Teaching not only suits them but also easily available. Thus teaching being easily available is the most important source of motivation toward teaching as a career. The inter-item reliability also suggested that these items are enough closely related to be considered into a factor (Cronbach α = .74).

Similarly, item IV, VIII, X, are correlated (Cronbach's α = .75) and represented a factor of the respondent's beliefs that teaching is a more respected, inspiring and satisfying job. Item XIII, XIV and XV are correlated, indicating that they can represent another factor (Cronbach α = .722). This factor again reflects the socio-economic aspect of teaching. The remaining items had an internal consistency not much up to the mark (Cronbach α < .5) which indicates that these items are not consistent and may be regarded as separate factors on their own.

Apart from what teachers perceive about teaching and indicating the motivational factors, Parents' job influences were considered to be one of the major factors that may affect on students' motivation towards choosing teaching as a career. Thus in the questionnaire, some similar items were added concerning the pre-service teachers' parents career and their motivation and likeness towards a teaching career. Therefore, it was separately analyzed, as has been shown in table 3.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix between Parents Motivation Related Factors

S. No	Measure	1	2	3	4
1.	One or both of my parents are teachers	-			
2.	None of my parents is a teacher	-.95*			
3.	My parents motivated me to pursue teaching	-.04	.76*		
4.	I like teaching	-.02	-.08	.07	-

*indicates a significant relationship ($p < .05$).

Parents' influence was measured with three-item scale (1) *my parents motivated me to pursue teaching as a career*, and (2) *'one or both of my parents is a teacher'* and (3) *'none of my parents are teachers'*. Bivariate correlation (Pearson) was run to determine the interrelationship between three variables related to parental factor in motivating preserve teachers to peruse teaching as a career. The relationship matrix between the variables, (1) *my parents motivated me to pursue teaching as a career*, (2) *one or both of my parents is a teacher* and (3) *none of my parents is teachers* showed that the relationship between variable I and II was strong negative ($r_s = -.95$, $p < .05$, $n = 270$) while variable II had a considerable positive correlation with variable III ($r_s = .76$, $p < .05$). It means that parents—already having a teaching career did not motivate their children to pursue teaching as a career while those parents without a teaching career did motivate their children to become teachers. It was intriguing to find whether parents' motivation develops a positive attitude of the students' teachers or do they motivate for other reasons than just showing a passion for teaching. In the questionnaire was asked a question that measured the student-teachers' (pre-service) likeness toward teaching.

The analysis revealed that the variable *I like teaching* had no significant relationship with *my parents motivated me to pursue teaching as a career*, as $r = -.02$, $p > .05$). This relationship, irrespective of its magnitude and direction, was insignificant; thus, it is more appropriate to see in the simple descriptive form whether the student-teacher showed likeness towards teaching? A good majority (148 out of 270), approximately 54% said that they liked teaching. The student teachers showed a positive attitude towards teaching, but it could not be established whether this likeness was due to parents' motivation or not.

The independent sample *t*-test was run to find whether gender had any effect on responses of the student teachers on the above three variables. The test results showed that females significantly differed on only one variable, *one or both of my parents are teachers* from male students. Females have higher mean response than males ($t = -2.589$, $df = 268$, $p < .05$). It was also worth noting that the number of female students was 224 and the males were only 46. The *t*-statistics can be relied on because the assumption of *equal variance* was not violated. Regarding university comparisons, it was found that there was no significant difference between universities on

the basis of the above variables. Although the two universities had the different environment in terms of facilities, and teaching quality but still the parent's motivation toward teaching career was the same.

Comparison between Demographical Variables on Mean Perception Score

The sample of students belonged to two public sector universities. From each university 135 students were selected on the whole class basis. In order to compare between universities on the basis of mean score on the perceptions of student teachers on teaching as a career, the independent sample *t*-test was run on SPSS. The mean score was based on 24 items of the questionnaire. The result showed that there was a significant difference between the universities ($t = 3.476$, $df = 268$, $p < .05$).

The old university had higher mean value than the new university. Likewise, the student's perceptions were also compared on the basis of their schooling background (private and public); the results showed that there was no significant difference between the students having schooling as private and those who had public schooling ($t (268) = -.928$, $p > .05$). However, students with private schooling had a higher mean value that is they had a more positive attitude about the motivational factors for teaching. Their college education (private or public) also showed no significant difference. These findings were on the basis of the overall mean value of all the factors mentioned in table 1 and 2. The mean value for private college education (3.67) was again higher than those having public college education (3.47). The comparison was also made between males and females. The result showed there was a significant difference in the responses between male and female ($t (90) = -3.468$, $p < .05$). Females had a higher mean value than males. This result between genders was expected as females tend to be more positive towards teaching than their male counterparts

Discussion

It needs to be understood before making any generalization on the findings that any perception-based study has its own limitations for example what motivates teachers does not only depend on the perceptions of teaching but also depends on different other factors such as easy availability of jobs. The perceptibility is also influenced by many hidden factors such as local cultural traditions, values and beliefs and personal experiences of respondents about teaching as a career. Variation in study context is obstacles in establishing any generalization that would be universally true. Thus, in this study although, according to the student-teachers' responses, the top two major factors motivated them towards teaching as a professional career are: (1) teaching as a source of lifelong learning, and (2) teaching as a respected profession-- relate the value-oriented factors; however, there is a general perception that suggests teaching is not the way the respondents purported here, for example, [UNESCO & ITA \(2013\)](#) indicates the low status of teaching in the country.

The factors at the lowest in rank were: (1) I found no other choice; (2) there are long vocations in teaching. It was observed that the first factor was a learning-oriented factor of motivation which was also found to be the topmost rated factor ([Akyol, 2016](#)). However, the claim of the Pakistan National Educational Policy's (1998-2010) was, in a way, challenged in terms of the perceptions of teachers according to which it was not the case that teaching was the 'last resort'. The second on the topmost rated factors was teaching is the most respected profession. However, this finding seemed to contradict with the perceptions about teaching profession, for example, there are reports indicating the low social status of teachers in Pakistani society ([Akayol, 2016](#); [UNESCO & ITA, 2013](#)). Besides, other research studies revealed that teachers already in service were found lacking in commitment. In addition, there were reports that also indicated that the application for a teaching career in Pakistan does not show encouraging (Mahmood, 2011). [Ali \(2011\)](#) even stated that teachers' quality is unsatisfactory.

As the study has found that life learning was the motivational factor that came on the top. There were other studies which also indicated such motivational factor, e.g., [Akyol \(2016, p.20\)](#) who even suggested that 'learning-oriented' motivation should be the life philosophy of teachers. He further defined 'lifelong learning' as 'lifelong learning means encouraging the acquisition of knowledge and skills expanding flexible and innovative learning opportunities'.

It was deemed appropriate to separately analyze the parental factor that parents' own career may be the highest motivational factor, but the rank of factors revealed it was not the case. Furthermore, it was revealed that

those parents with teaching as their professional career did not motivate their children to viz-a-viz those parents who had no teaching jobs. Besides, the parents who motivated the student-teachers towards teaching had no significant effect on developing a positive attitude or likeness in students toward a teaching career. This indicates that parents motivate their children toward teaching due to many other factors such as on the basis of cultural, social and economic factors. It is worth noticing that the study sample included most of the female students as a teaching field seemed to be more attractive towards females than their male counterparts. [Rehman and Dawood \(2016\)](#) also found that teaching in the Pakistani context has more attraction for female candidates.

Exploratory factor analysis revealed 'teaching being easily available' was the most important source of motivation toward teaching as a career. The second most important factor was 'teaching being a more respected job. The third most important factor was 'teaching job having socio-economic benefits. These three factors were chosen based on the relationship matrix (correlation above .5).

On the basis of mean perceptions score on the factors influencing teachers choice, comparison between the demographical variables were made, which revealed that the mean perception response from respondents of the old university was statistically significantly different from those of the new university. Those students who had private schooling or college-level education had a slightly higher level of positive responses towards teaching than those who had public schooling or college education (however, this difference is not significant). Male and female significantly differed on their mean perceptions towards the motivating factors towards a teaching career. It was expected that in Pakistan, females' prefer teaching jobs more than any other jobs due to many cultural and social barriers ([Rehman, & Dawood, 2016](#)).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings from the simple descriptive analysis of the data, it can be concluded that there are two important factors that receive the most favourable response from the respondents. These two factors are: *teaching as a source of lifelong learning* and *teaching is the most 'respected' profession*. And the two factors which receive the lowest favourable response are *teaching is the only available choice* and *teaching has long vocations*.

The findings from the exploratory factor analysis revealed that there are three major factors (1) 'teaching job being easily available'; (2) teaching is a more respected job, and (3) 'teaching job having socio-economic benefits. These three factors explained 61% of the variation in responses. Rest of the items may be considered as factors on their own because their poor inter-item reliability they were not merged into any other factor. The two sets of factors—extracted from both on the basis of highest favorable responses and the factor analysis revealed that the factor II above is common in both the sets of factor which showed its importance as a motivating factor according to the respondents' perceptions and responses.

Although parents had a great influence in the not only academic career of their children but also influence their professional career, however, their motivation was not based on a learning-oriented approach but on other factors. It was obviously found that those parents with teaching as their professional career did not motivate their children as compared to those parents who had no teaching jobs. Between the universities, a comparison was made on the basis of teachers perceptions about teaching, according to which it was found the teacher's perceptions and motivation about teaching was significantly influenced by the university environment. The two universities represented two different cultures as one university is located in a well-developed province of Pakistan and have a different environment in terms of teaching resources.

Although students' academic background also influenced for example student with private education had different views about teaching than those who got their education from public sector schools and colleges; however, their difference was not statistically significant; thus, it can be suggested for future research to conduct a study with a focus on whether the academic background has any significant influence in teachers' perceptions towards teaching. Gender wise comparison revealed that female students had higher favorable perceptions towards teaching than male students. It is recommended that such a measure can be taken to promote learning-oriented motivational factors, but it is unavoidable to see the economic factors that motivate well-qualified candidates towards teaching. This may help in improving the quality of teaching.

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