

Choosing the Teaching Profession: Teachers' Perceptions and Factors Influencing their Choice to Join Teaching as Profession

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Abstract

The study discovered why teachers around the world choose the Teaching profession and the factors affecting their choices. The study is meaningful to teacher education curriculum developers and teacher recruiters, for revealing the effects of teachers' perceptions on their career planning and professional growth. The findings from inferential statistical analysis suggest the need for further in depth research, on the various perspectives of teachers according to their teaching experiences, their efficacy; whether their choice of the profession is just luck, low merit for hiring teachers or having no-other choice and the factors that can increase or retain their passion.

Keywords: Teacher Profession, Perceptions on the teaching profession, inferential statistics

1. Introduction

The ideology for someone to select teaching profession as a career, is based on working lighthouse image, their previous knowledge, how self-perception in different areas related to the profession, but also the aspirations of the profession.

Hellsten M. & Prytula, M.P. (2013) attempted to explore why beginning teachers in Saskatchewan chose to enter the profession and the importance of these motivations in their first year as teachers, using surveys and interviews. She found out that demographic characteristics along with time did play an important role in changing their motivation. The importance of "having my own classroom", "salary and benefits", and "professional quality of life" increased from entry motivation to first year teaching motivation. Monica Brown (1992), surveyed first-year teachers from Jamaica and Caribbean countries to determine their reasons for choosing the teaching profession. A study conducted in Cyprus by Papanastasiou & Papanastasiou (1998) reported the major factor that motivated the teachers to choose this field was that they can have Immediate job settlements or quick employment after their graduation. Chong, S. & Low, F.L (2009) investigated the formation of student teachers' identity from pre-service to the end of their initial year in teaching. This study lists the interpretation of different researchers for professional identity, where a general definition is based on the core beliefs one has about teaching and being a teacher; beliefs that are continuously formed and reformed through experience. However, Bastick, T. (2000) proposed that the teacher's choice of the teaching profession fell under the following categories: extrinsic, intrinsic and altruistic factors that differ according to regions and countries. In metropolitan countries, teacher salaries tend not to keep up with the salaries of comparable middle managers in the commercial sector. There are also more competitive opportunities for employment in the commercial sector than is the case in developing countries. Therefore, the salary and the security could be less attractive for metropolitan teachers. In developing countries there are comparatively fewer job opportunities in the competing commercial sectors.

Betty J. Young (1995) found out that gifted students who practice to become teachers are entering the profession as a provisional work until other projects occur subsequently for another career such as law or business. Virginia, B. S. (2000) examined why ten African American teachers selected teaching and remained in the profession. The two basic sources of data for her study design were the environmental influences and institutional influences.

According to Willcox, I. & Beigel, H.G. (2013) refers to the motivation in the choice of teacher which has a lot of common information of the motivational factors affecting in the teacher profession. Also, the article of Bastick, T. (2000) refers to the teacher trainees that choose the teaching profession comparing trainees in metropolitan and developing countries which have a lot of common information to the facts of choosing such profession. On the other hand, the specific source is very close to this study for it is discussing about the reasons

for selecting a teaching career and remaining in the profession with the difference that this study focuses on 10 African Roanoke City Teachers. A large part of this work coincides with this research to the point where reasons for selecting a teaching career and remaining in the profession.

1.1 Choosing the teaching profession

For conducting this study, questionnaires aiming at quantitative study, and, in an attempt to get deeper insights, interviews were carried out. This makes this study a mixed method study. Teachers' characteristics are presented in terms of demographic information, which are categorized into subdivisions as shown in table 1. The questionnaire consists of four parts, of which the first part consists of seven subsections for personal information, the second part consists of two ranking questions, the third part consists of two Likert scaling technique. The first table (perception on teaching profession) given thirteen options and in the second table (factors influencing decisions to be a teacher) twelve options, and the last part consists of two open-ended questions. With regards to this research having been conducted under reliable and authoritative sources, this is shown as: participants were authentic by some source, but also because of the anonymity of the questionnaires. A pilot study was conducted involving 11 students. Some of the questions were removed and the final design of the questionnaire was decided with the reliability coefficient of the instrument .806 (Cronbach's alpha). This showed that the questionnaire's reliability was satisfactory. After the pilot-study, the questionnaires were given to freshmen and second year students of Master in Education, doctoral (PHD) students in education and English language teachers studying Chinese to a total number of 150 students (81-female, 69-male). However, 24 questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete information or have not been returned. The final number of students who participated in this study was 126 (57-male and 69-male). All participants have previous experience in the field of education. The questionnaires were given to all participants in person; providing further information on how to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed over two days and returned within one week.

2. Section I: Quantitative Data analysis

This section presents the findings/results of the quantitative data analysis

2.1 Teachers Perceptions on the teaching profession

The participants were provided with thirteen items of Likert scale types ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The findings show that the participants had a generally positive perception towards their teaching profession. They perceive teaching as a multipurpose profession ($M=3.64$, $SD=1.14$). Also, teaching is perceived as a passion and a calling ($M=3.38$, $SD=0.85$) and teaching as most respected profession ($M=3.33$, $SD=1.24$). However, the participants regard teaching like other professions ($M=3.29$, $SD=1.31$) and they are very satisfied with their teaching job ($M=3.29$, $SD=1.0$), plus the fact that they view teaching as taking care of children ($M=3.02$, $SD=1.32$). Moreover, respondents indicated that teaching is a mass employment job ($M=2.9$, $SD=0.88$) and they would like their children to become teachers ($M=2.71$, $SD=0.89$). They indicate that teaching requires low qualifications ($M=2.61$, $SD=0.96$) and they perceived the salary and working conditions for teachers as not good, as the response on this item indicates ($M=2.14$, $SD=0.93$). The findings further show that participants mainly disagreed that, anybody can be a teacher ($M=1.98$, $SD=1.0$), that teaching is one of the easiest jobs ($M=1.74$, $SD=0.77$) and on perceiving teaching as a women's job ($M=1.57$, $SD=0.83$) as shown in table 2.

Additionally, participants were divided according to their demographic details. In order to find the significant differences Independent t-test (Gender & Marital status) and one-way Anova (age, region, level of teaching, teaching experience, and teaching subjects) were performed. Both tests showed no significant differences in each category within the groups. However, individually we can see some exceptions e.g. the results from primary level teachers are slightly different to those of university level teachers. For example, primary school teachers were highly influenced by others- especially their parents- to follow the teaching profession, as opposed to university professors. In addition, the passion for teaching and love for kids, decrease as the teaching experience increases. The opposite can be observed when considering teaching like any other profession. Further details are shown in Table 8 as appendix.

2.2 Factors influencing the decision to be Teachers

The participants were provided with twelve items of Likert scale types ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Also, table3 above has been sorted ranging from the largest to the smallest mean for better understanding. My results also coincide with the findings of Dutton, W. H. & Keislar, E.R. (2013) who proposed that teachers at the high-school level can exert direct influence upon those factors motivating students to enter the teaching profession. The findings show that “I have more time to do other things (M=3.12, SD=0.80), influence of former teacher (M=2.95, SD=1.01) and love for kids (M=2.86, SD=1.18) had more influence on selecting the teaching profession among the participants; whereas other factors had little influence on their decision to be teachers. Also Jackie Manuel & John Hughes (2006) found that the three reasons which led teachers to join this field were: to play an influential role in the lives of young minds; the pursuit of self-contentment; and the prospecting a substantial commitment with the subject of their choice. Moreover, in my study, the lifetime dream of being a teacher (M=2.83, SD=0.88), joined teaching profession because it is easy to get employment (M=2.81, SD=1.11) and joined teaching on a temporary basis, which had similar results (M=2.81, SD=1.06) are being prevailed in terms of agreement.

The findings further show that most participants agreed that: government policies influenced their decision to join the teaching profession (M=2.79, SD=1.09), one of their parents is a teacher (M=2.52, SD=1.74) and that their parents like them to be a teacher (M=2.5, SD=1.15). The least influential factors were the accidental part of being a teacher (M=2.38, SD=0.96), poor family background (M=2.24, SD=0.76) and low credentials (M=2.19, SD=1.11).

Furthermore, when the data is further classified according to their demographic details, no significant difference of motivational factors on joining the teaching profession has been found by either statistical test i.e. Independent t-test (gender & marital status) and one-way Anova (age, level of teaching, teaching experience, and teaching subjects) (see table:7 in appendix for details). Here, we can see that there was a significant effect on regional differences on the motivational factors for joining the teaching profession at the $p < .05$ level for the three conditions [$F(2, 36) = 7.082, p = 0.003$]. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni's test indicated that the mean score for Europe (M =3.00, SD = 0.387) was significantly different from that of the African region (M = 2.45, SD = 0.377). However, Asian/Aus condition (M = 2.79, SD = 0.361) coincide between both regions as shown in tables: 4a & 4b.

2.3 Perceived Advantages of the teaching profession

The participants were provided with four advantages of the teaching profession and asked to rank them in the order of importance. The result shows that a favorable status in the society was ranked highly, followed by job security, the most holidays and “It allows one to be a manager” was ranked the lowest. The table 5 presents the perceived advantages in order of importance. The lesser the mean value the higher the importance will be.

2.4 Main reason for choosing the teaching profession

According to the results, it can be seen that the participants considered “interest in teaching” the most influential factor for joining the teaching profession. Moreover “Inspired by role models, love for kids and financial reasons” hold little influence. The lesser the mean value the higher the influential factor will be, as shown in the table: 6.

3. Section II: Qualitative data analysis

Apart from the questionnaire, some interviews were conducted. 12 students and teachers from different nationalities were interviewed. 6 questions were used to retrieve further information about teachers' perceptions on the teaching profession and factors that influenced their decisions to be teachers in more detail. The interviews were conducted using a sound recording device, then digitized using a word processing computer program. Below are the questions which were asked during the interviews:

- What are your views regarding the teaching profession?
- What is the status of the teaching profession in your country?
- What is your dream profession?
- How did you join the teaching profession?
- What factors influenced your decision to join the teaching profession?

- What are your general views about being a teacher?

3.1 Interviews

The participants were chosen for interviews purposefully due to their willingness. All of them were either international students from different nationalities pursuing a Master's Degree in Education or native English language teachers who are studying Chinese or teaching English at the Northeast Normal University. The countries that were involved are: Greece, Russia, Papua New Guinea, Tanzania, Cambodia, Pakistan, Thailand, Australia and England. Also, personal information from each participant relating to their age, gender, name and surname, and their current educational level has been omitted. For reference purposes, their name has been codified as: two students from Greece will be referred to as Gre1 and Gre2, a student from Pakistan is referred to as Pak1, 2 English students as Eng1 and Eng2, Cypriot as Cyp1, Australian as Aus1, Cambodian student as Com1, Thai student as Thai1, Russian as Rus1, Tanzanian as Taz1 and the student from Papua New Guinea is referred to as PNG1.

The participant from England, who will be referred to as Eng1, holds a 3 years bachelor in Applied Linguistics, 1 years master degree in Psychology and has been teaching English as a Foreign Language in NENU (Northeast Normal University, China). She is a 32-year-old female, single with 3 years of teaching experience. According to her, teachers have the obligation to transfer knowledge properly. The teaching profession is the ideal profession because of the amount of holidays one receives, as well as the good salary.

The participant from Australia who will be referred to as Aus1, has a 4 year bachelor degree in Education, majoring in Mathematics, 2 years master in Statistics, 12 years of teaching experience including his current job as English Language teacher in Northeast Normal University China. He is married and 38 years old. According to him, the Teaching Profession is a valuable profession and it requires passion. Teachers are well paid and are highly respected in the society. Love for helping others and teaching becomes the reason to join the profession. Every teacher plays a very significant role in the society.

Cyprus student (Cyp1) holds a 4 year bachelor degree in Primary Education, majored in Mathematics, a 2 year master degree in Higher Education, 1 year of teaching experience in his own country and he is 26 years old. He also completed 2 years of compulsory military service. Currently, he is enrolled in a 1 year mandarin course for Chinese Education at the Northeast Normal University China. According to him, Teachers are dedicated people in education, aiming to transfer their knowledge to the students under a pedagogical, educated and proper environment. Furthermore, teachers' education never ends once they choose the path of education. This makes them more vigilant towards new methods, knowledge and alternative ways of teaching. It is definitely a difficult profession that requires one to have strong nerves and forbearance. The status of the teaching profession is really high, since they spend the highest amounts of the country's GDP in the education sector in contrast with Europe. Moreover teachers are getting high salaries for their duties and it's a highly respected profession in our society. He joined the teaching profession because the system of enrolling teachers in his country was very easy and weak. Anyone who wanted to become a teacher could easily do so, because of very low merit or no merit required. The advantages of being a teacher in his view are based on the salary, work hours and the vacations that a teacher has. The general view about being a teacher is that, one has prestige; people respect you but also rely on you in order to teach the right principles under pedagogical and educational methods. It's a respectable and a beneficial profession.

The first student from Greece, who will be known as Gre1, holds a 4 year of Bachelor of Arts in education. He is completing his master in History in the Northeast Normal University China. He is 26 years old, has completed 2 years of compulsory military service and 1 year teaching experience. The Teaching profession for him means that one teaches subjects, in simple words. But teaching has something more. It means sharing knowledge with the world, and that is what matters nowadays. Those who are seeking this profession in Greece are the people who are actually seeking this for the financial rewards, hence, the teaching profession, nowadays, is underestimated and undermined. He joined the teaching profession for financial reasons. Being a teacher means a lot. Like it is all about sharing knowledge. But when that sharing procedure is successful, the word "teacher" gains a greater meaning. Helping people understand and preparing them for the future and challenging societies, are parts of a teacher's responsibilities. When he carries them out, it is amazing for him to witness his feat. That's what matters most for a teacher

The second student from Greece (Gre2) has a 4 years bachelor's degree in education, majored in Elementary Education, 1 year's master degree in Education Practitioner, 8 years of teaching experience. He is 33 years old and he also completed 2 years of compulsory military service. Currently, he is studying Chinese language for 1

year. His views about teaching include: To prepare students in such way that they realize the value of being educated in general, and in parallel to receive all the necessary knowledge that will prepare them to build strong foundations for their future. His dream is to see all children of the world receiving a proper education. True love for children and for education, the need to share his knowledge with people and the joy he receives from seeing how his input could help someone take a single step forward are his reasons to join the teaching profession. Being a teacher is not just a job. It's a responsibility, and it's a duty that has to be followed with discipline and devotion. If all teachers or those who want to join the teaching profession, were to keep all of this in mind, then the results would be reflected in future societies; building a future of high moral values.

The second participant from England, who will be referred to as Eng2, is a female. She holds a 4 year bachelor degree in Education, a 2 year master degree in Foreign Language Education, 7 years of education experience-including her current job as English teacher in NENU -and she is 31 years old. She believes that Teaching is a profession with lots of duties and demands since a teacher works with young children who have different needs and demands every year. Being a teacher in England used to be an important role, especially in the past, because it was difficult to pass the exams and gain a university admission. It was also seen as an important profession in the society; since teachers were considered to be educated persons who were able to contribute in many ways in each community. Nowadays, things have changed because most people can be educated to university level and parents have different opportunities to enrich their children's education. Quick and certain job settlement, good salary, good working hours and conditions are the benefits a teacher can enjoy. Being a good teacher is not easy because you have to be informed about new methods of teaching and new materials and strategies; you need to act based on your student's needs and abilities and you have to deal with young children and parents who most of the times cannot understand that all you are doing is for their children's benefit.

A male student from Pakistan holds a 4 years bachelor degree in engineering. He has switched his major to education and currently completing his 2 years of master degree in Comparative Education in NENU. He is 27 years old, single and with less than a year's experience. The information that we have gained from his interview was that the teaching profession to him, is one of the most sacred, important and significant professions of all times; despite the fact that the salary and income opportunities are too low in his country. The participant wanted to become a philanthropist, and this was the reason that inspired him to choose teaching as his career.

A male student from Cambodia (Com1) holds a 4 years bachelor degree in primary education majored in English language, currently enrolled in 2 years of master degree in Applied Linguistics at NENU. He has 2 years of teaching experience in his country. He is 25 years old and he is single. For him the teaching profession is a good career. Besides the salary, which is too low in Cambodia, people appreciate teachers and consider teachers as someone magnificent. His dream was to be an English teacher, thus he became a teacher however he believes that the teaching profession is a very tough and painful profession.

Thai (Thai1) is a female student who has completed her 4 years Bachelor in Information and Communication Technology for Management in her country. She is currently enrolled in a 2 year master program in Applied Psychology. She has 4 years of teaching experience in her country. She has switched into education major through her master. She is 30 years old and she is single. The participant told us that the status in Thailand is at medium level and the salary is quiet low. Also, her dream was to become a teacher that she has already accomplished and she is willing to share her knowledge, experience and ideas with her students in the community.

The student from Russia (Rus1) is a female, holds a 4 year bachelor in foreign languages (French) and she has completed a master in comparative education at NENU. She is currently enrolled as PhD candidate in NENU. She has 3 years of teaching experience in high schools and primary schools in her country. She is single and 27 years old. According to what she has stated, the teaching profession is a very important and highly recognized profession beyond the salary, which is too low in Russia. Moreover, the participant believes that being a teacher is good, except that the salary is low, which she wishes it would increase in the near future.

Tanzanian student (Taz1) is a female, holds a 4 years bachelor degree in primary education, and currently enrolled on a 2 year master program in educational management and leadership at NENU. She has 9 years teaching experience in her country. She is married and has 5 children. The information that I gained from her interview is that the teaching profession is very important and in order to follow this profession, one has to be very committed and devoted. Beyond that, the salary is too low in Tanzania. The participant admitted that teachers in her country are considered to be knowledgeable people with great prestige. Moreover, the participant didn't want to choose this career, but in order to enter into higher education, she had to attend a teaching college in her country. Also, she didn't have any dream profession.

Participant from Papua New Guinea (PNG1) is a male, used to be a teacher in his country with an educational background of 4 years Bachelor of Arts in education and currently studying a 2 years master degree program in applied psychology at NENU. He has about 12 years of teaching experience; he is single and 35 years old. According to him, the teaching profession is a good profession that demands patience. The participant admitted that the salary of teaching professionals in Papua New Guinea is too low compared to other professions. His dream profession was education, and he finds the teaching profession enjoyable. He was influenced by his parents who were both teachers. Moreover his belief is that teaching is a way of life.

3.2 Broad Findings from Interviews

3.2.1 Views regarding the teaching profession

Most of the students agree that teaching is the most respected and valuable profession that requires passion and demands full commitment and devotion. “Valuable profession.... You must have a passion for it.” A student from Australia Aus1 was sharing his views about the teaching profession. The Cypriot student Cyp1 believes that Teachers are dedicated people in education, aiming to pass on their knowledge to the students under a pedagogical, educated and proper environment. Beyond that teachers’ education never ends from when they choose the path of education, something that makes them to be vigilant and prepared to adopt new methods, knowledge and ways of teaching. It’s definitely a difficult profession for those with strong nerves and forbearance. However, a Greek student Gre1 believes that the teaching profession means that you teach things, in simple words. But teaching has something more. It means sharing knowledge with the world, and that is what matters nowadays. Another Greek student Gre2 shares his words in this way, “To prepare students in such a way so they realize the value of being educated in general, while they acquire all the necessary knowledge that will prepare them to build strong foundations for their future.”

According to the English student ENG1, “Teachers have the obligation to teach children in such a way so that they can learn all the teaching modules properly.” However, another English student Eng2 believes that, “Teaching is a profession with lots of duties and demands, since a teacher works with young children who have different needs and demands every year.” Similar thoughts have been shared by Tanzanian Student Taz1. She thinks that the Teaching profession demands the teacher to be very committed, since he/she has to deal with students, and those students have come from different backgrounds and have different levels of understanding. So, is like one must be very committed to what he/she is intended to do.

Some students regard the teaching profession as sacred and very respectful. A student from Pakistan Pak1 thinks “Is one of the most sacred, important and significant professions of all times.” The Thai students shared the same thoughts. Moreover a student from Papua New Guinea says, “I think the teaching profession is a good profession. Actually, people of faith, like Christians and Muslims, regard teaching as a good deed to please their God because it helps in spreading light among the masses. It is actually a profession that requires patience; if you are patient, it would be a good job, but a teacher who is interested in the financial rewards will not enjoy the job at all.”

3.2.2 Country-wise status of teaching

Eng1 responded the question favorably. She thinks the profession of the teacher in England is one of the most ideal professions because of the good salary they receive and the holidays that they have (e.g. Christmas, Easter, and summer vacations). However Eng2 believes that being a teacher in England used to be an important role, especially in the past, because it was difficult to pass the exams and gain entry to a university. Also, it was an important profession for the society since teachers were considered to be educated persons who were able to contribute in many ways in each community. Nowadays, things have changed because most people have graduated from universities and parents have different opportunities to enrich their children’s education.

Aus1 stated that Teachers in Australia are well paid, and highly respected but it also depends on the level of institution they are connected to/with. According to Cyp1, “The status of the teaching profession in my country is really high since they spend the highest amounts of the country’s GDP in the education sector; in sharp contrast to other European Countries. Moreover, teachers in my country are getting high salaries for their duties and it’s a respectable profession in our society.” Gre1 has shared an unhealthy status of teaching. He thinks that those who are seeking this profession in Greece are people who actually seek the job for the money, so the teaching profession nowadays is underestimated and undermined. In addition to that, Gre2 believes, “we can do even better since education is an endless and priceless value of our existence! Many things can be done in order

to improve the existing infrastructure.”

According to Rus1, “The status of the teaching profession in Russia is in the middle. I would say, is not so high, but also is not so low, so it’s in the middle. It is not as popular as before, and maybe the main reason is the salary; because the salary is not so high. Tan1 believes, “honestly, teachers are regarded as low class, the government does not give them priority, though, people still believe in teachers. They listen to them; they believe that when a teacher is telling you something, it’s something you should consider.” Pak1 thinks that the status is not so good due to low salary and income opportunities; hence the high achieving students do not adopt this profession. But for higher-level teaching like in universities or institutes the case is quite the opposite. According to Com1, “In Cambodia, people appreciate teachers because they think that, they offer knowledge and all education, but they don’t get paid better. The Thai student and the student from Papua New Guinea have shared the same views.

3.2.3 Dream profession

This Question has its own significance and a direct link to previous questions. The answer to this question raises further questions that require true considerations. Among 12 students being interviewed, only two of them find the teaching profession as their dream job. Most of the pre-service teachers do not consider their own field as a dream job. And when they think that this profession needs them to have passion for it, not considering the profession as their dream job, makes it difficult for teachers to have it. Another concern is that most of the teachers who have already entered this field while they wish to do something else, makes their commitment, dedication and sense of responsibility questionable because their interest is somewhere else and there might be a chance that they will not give their best as what they are destined to do. Choosing a different profession or having a desire to choose a different career path indicates that the teaching profession is not fulfilling the basic needs of teachers quite like what they can get from other jobs. Another aspect is that teachers might not have any other option but to join this field no matter their caliber or how effective their teaching is.

3.2.4 Joining the teaching profession

When students were asked how did they join the teaching profession, most of the responses were found to be the same as: they just got admission in a Normal University but some students have a new story to be told for example Cyp1 mentioned that because of the circumstances in his country and low merit for the admissions in university for teaching/education department, this allowed him to gain admission and hence he joined the profession. The case is the same as discussed by Taz1. According to her, if one cannot join a higher education institute for some reason, the only option he/she is left with is to become a teacher. However, some students adopted the field after getting inspiration from their parents who were teachers like the case of PNG1.

Parker J. Palmer argued that seeking connectedness, identity and integrity are the core of teaching; the call to teach comes out from the ‘core’ of the self, or the ‘heart’, where spirit, emotion and intellect come together (Palmer, 2010) like what Pak1 said, “Due to my desire to do social work and my philanthropic nature, at first, I have joined this profession Voluntarily/honorary teaching with the aim that the knowledge I’ve gained so far should be transferred to the young generation. Gradually, with the passage of time I realized that this is a very noble profession so I started to adopt it.” And some one wants to follow their dream as a teacher as their dream job. Like Thai expressed her feelings, “My dream profession is to be a teacher, so I’m glad to be a teacher, because my dreams came true”.

3.2.5 Influencing Factors for joining the teaching profession

When it comes to finding out the factors that lead many teachers to join this profession, previous studies have shown that these were: to become prominent, expecting superior job satisfaction, the urge to working with kids and to make a difference to their lives and society, and a desire to maintain engagement with a subject area are regarded as motivations for choosing the teaching profession (see Huberman, 1989; Reid & Caudwell, 1997; Boser, 2000; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Spear et al., 2000; Hammond, 2002; Hunt & Carroll, 2003). Through this study it shows that childhood dreams could be one of the factors that can lead teachers to join this field like what Eng1 mentioned, “From my early years it was a big dream of mine to become a teacher. I was playing in the neighborhood with the other children and I held the position of the head teacher.” Some social and financial factors also play a very important role that can influence the decisions such as “Love for others” (Aus1), “helping others” (Gre2), “to have a feeling of doing something good” (Pak1), “good salary, vacations and

convenient working hours” (Cyp1), “Quick settlements” (Eng2), “Financial reasons” (Gre1), “Have no other choice” (Taz1), “love to make fun with kids” (PNG1), “Sharing knowledge with others to make an influential step towards the progress of the country” (Com1 & Thai1) are also the factors that motivated teachers to join this profession.

3.2.6 Views about being a teacher

Many students believe that teaching, being a valuable and respected profession, is a lifetime learning process. According to Eng1, “the teacher’s profession is one where you can teach and be taught simultaneously.” Aus1 thinks that teachers play a valuable role in society. Like what Cyp1 shared his ideas as, “My general views about being a teacher is that, being a teacher you have prestige, people respect you but also rely on you in order to teach the right principles through pedagogical and educational methods. It’s a respectable and highly beneficial profession.” Also, if we take Pak1’s point of view, we can understand that a real teacher is one who knows the difference between indoctrination and education, who really knows what he is teaching and what teaching materials he is dealing with.

Some students believe that the teaching profession is not a job but a responsibility. Gre2 thinks, “Being a teacher is not just a job. It’s a responsibility, and it’s a duty that has to be followed with discipline and devotion. If all the teachers or those that want to become a teacher, have all these characteristics in their mind then the results will be reflected in the future society in a very positive way; building a future with high human values.” Similar views are shared by Gre1 who thinks, “Being a teacher means a lot. Like I said it is all about sharing knowledge. But when that sharing procedure is successful, the word teacher gains greater meaning. Helping people understand and preparing them for the future challenging societies is a teacher’s responsibility. When he carries them out, it is amazing for him to witness his feat. That’s what matters most for a teacher”.

According to Eng2, Being a good teacher is not easy because one has to be informed about new methods of teaching and new materials and strategies. He/she needs to act based on students’ needs and abilities and has to deal with young children and parents who most of the times cannot understand that all you are doing is for their children’s benefit. Taz1, who thinks that teachers should be very committed and devoted to their job; since they have to deal with so many problems, has backed up similar thoughts. People such as students; look at them as a judge, who has to solve their problem. It becomes very difficult, if they are not committed. However, this view can be contrasted by the view that PNG1 express; who believes that teaching is a profession just like any other profession; so a teacher has to just give his best, work for the best and try to make his teaching fun and enjoy it. He need not take it as a very serious thing; just take it as something that he enjoys doing.

A teacher can bear a lot of stresses which make the profession very hard. The stresses could be due to low income (Rus1), staying up to date and delivering effective education (Thai1) and some psychological and physical factors like what Com1 has stated, “ Being a teacher is good but it’s hard, they work many hours, they don’t get a lot of money, and sometime they get stressed because they have to plan the lessons and they have to keep up with ever changing methods and ways; to develop their teaching skills and methodologies, and they have to harness their ability of psychology in order to master classroom management, and to train the students”.

4. Discussion & Implication for Future Research

The findings show that generally, all the participants supported the teaching profession and had positive perception towards their profession; beyond the fact that the salary of this profession is low. All of them believe that the teaching profession is magnificent, but at the same time, it is a highly responsible position. Also, they support that knowledge is acquired through teachers, and that’s why this profession in each country is a highly respected and a well-known profession.

Based on these findings, it can be argued that the participants’ factors for joining the teaching profession were much influenced by being interested in teaching, and that the teaching profession is a well-known profession. The inferential results show that age, gender, region and teaching experience, had no significance on the participant’s perceptions on the teaching profession. But it can be found that some factors that attract teachers in one country are being missed in another like salary and quick job settlements. This may be due to the limited sample of the study, since the study only involved 126 participants.

From the findings above, most participants were of the view that a range of factors influenced them to choose the teaching profession. The main findings of the study include teachers’ perceptions on the teaching profession and factors that influenced their decisions to be teachers. The inferential statistics results show that age, gender,

teaching experience, teaching subject, level of teaching had no significance on the participant's perceptions about the teaching profession. But regional, social and financial factors can influence their decisions to become teachers. Moreover, through a range-choice answers as to the causes and reasons for the choice of the profession, the results showed that most of the participants consider that: The teaching profession is a profession of prestige and recognition in all countries; The profession is recognized throughout society for its extent to which it commands a high level of responsibility and involves extreme professionalism and dedication at all times.

An important finding in this study is that though teachers are willing to join this profession, they don't actually consider this profession to be their dream job. Some teachers have joined this profession because they don't have any other choice. Another important point which is worth considering, is that many normal universities have decreased their merit requirements, and students who don't get admission in any other field, can now join the teaching profession. Due to these reasons, for new teachers their teaching ability becomes questionable when they enter into the real classrooms and especially when they have to cope with up to date knowledge and advanced studies. It is also worth researching, for future studies, to find out the efficacy of such teachers and whether they possess the required skills or not.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined the teachers' perception about teaching profession and factors influencing their choice to join teaching profession. It was found that regarding teacher's perception on teaching; teaching is a multi-purpose job and teaching is passion calling job were highly ranked, however teaching is not a women's job is ranked the least. Regarding advantages of being teachers good status in the society was ranked highly followed by job security and more others reasons. Through many options, presented several reasons influencing the choice of the teaching profession, the data showed that the love for kids and the influence of former teacher were the most important reasons for choosing teaching profession. Though salary and income might hamper teacher's decision in some countries but many teachers adopt this career because of easy job settlements and vacations that a teacher can avail in other countries. Also consider that the teaching profession is a profession with a serious responsibility, and also a profession with wide acclaim. Furthermore consider that this occupation is mostly on the low pay, but that does not hinder the choice of profession since through this profession believe they have much to offer and more generally through the education sector, as this is their main role.

6. Limitation

The result of the study solely depends on the integrity of the students who have taken participation and also on their perception what they believed to have rather what they really possess. The study cannot be generalized because the sample size was very small. Though the study provides some empirical evidences, yet it is not enough to explore fully the pedagogical implications for teachers to adopt profession which may effect on teaching and learning process. Further empirical research is suggested in this direction.

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Notes

Table: 1 Demographic characteristic of participants

	Freq.	%
Gender		
Female	69	54.8
Male	57	45.2
Age		
Below 25	36	28.57
26-30	66	52.38
31-40	24	19.05
Marital Status		
Married	42	33.3
Single	84	66.7
Teaching Since (Years)		
1-5 years	90	71.4
6-10 years	30	23.8
10 & above	6	4.8
Continent		
Africa	51	40.5
Asia/Aus	57	45.2
Europe/US	18	14.3
Level Of Teaching		
Primary School	6	4.8
Secondary School	33	26.2
High School	33	26.2
University	36	28.6
Technical School	12	9.5
Other	6	4.8
Teaching Subject		
Science and Mathematics	30	23.8
Language (s)	39	31
Social Studies	33	26.2
Others	24	19

Table 2: Teachers' perception on teaching profession

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teaching is multipurpose profession; you can work in many places.	126	1	5	3.64	1.14
Teaching is a passion calling job	126	2	5	3.38	0.85
Teaching is the most respected profession in my society	126	1	5	3.33	1.24
Teaching is a profession like other profession	126	1	5	3.28	1.31
I am very satisfied with my teaching job	126	2	5	3.28	0.99
Teaching is all about taking care of children	126	1	5	3.02	1.31
Teaching is a mass employment job	126	1	4	2.90	0.87
I would like my children to be teachers	126	1	4	2.71	0.89
Teaching requires low qualification	126	1	5	2.61	0.96
The salary and working conditions are very good	126	1	4	2.14	0.92
Anybody can be a teacher	126	1	4	1.97	0.99
Teaching is one of the easiest job	126	1	4	1.73	0.76
Teaching is a women's job	126	1	4	1.57	0.83

Table 3: Factors influencing teachers to join teaching profession

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Being a teacher, I have more time to do other things	126	2.00	5.00	3.11	0.80
My former teachers influenced me to like teaching	126	1.00	4.00	2.95	1.01
I joined teaching profession because I like children	126	1.00	5.00	2.85	1.18
It was my long time dream to be a teacher	126	1.00	4.00	2.83	0.88
I joined teaching profession because it is easy to get employment	126	1.00	5.00	2.81	1.10
I joined teaching for temporary basis	126	1.00	5.00	2.81	1.06
Government policies influenced my decision to join teaching profession	126	1.00	5.00	2.78	1.09
One of my parents is a teacher	126	1.00	5.00	2.52	1.74
My parents like me to be a teacher	126	1.00	5.00	2.50	1.15
It happened accidentally to be a teacher	126	1.00	4.00	2.38	0.96
I joined teaching because my family background is not good	126	1.00	4.00	2.23	0.75
My credentials could not allow me to join other professions	126	1.00	5.00	2.19	1.10

Table: 4a Descriptive statistics of region wise distribution

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					Asia/Aus	13		
Africa	13	2.45231	.377252	.104631	2.22434	2.68028	1.820	3.000
Europe	13	3.00000	.385032	.106789	2.76733	3.23267	2.170	3.670
Total	39	2.74872	.430619	.068954	2.60913	2.88831	1.820	3.670

Table: 4b ANOVA region wise distribution

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.989	2	.995	7.082	.003
Within Groups	5.057	36	.140		
Total	7.046	38			

Table: 5 Perceived Advantages of teaching profession

	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.
Teachers good status	126	1.00	4.00	1.85	1.02
Job security	126	1.00	4.00	2.35	1.14
Most holidays	126	1.00	4.00	2.76	1.07
Allows to be a manager	126	1.00	4.00	3.12	0.88

Table: 6 Main reasons for choosing teaching profession

	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D
Interest in teaching	126	1.00	4.00	1.7619	1.14358
Love for kids	126	1.00	4.00	2.5952	.93859
Financial reasons	126	1.00	4.00	2.7381	.98920
Inspired by role models	126	1.00	4.00	2.9048	1.07770

Table 7: Factors influencing teachers to join teaching profession according to demographic distribution

	Gender		Age			Marital status		Region			Teaching Experience			Level of teaching					Teaching subjects				
	Male	Female	Below 25	21-30	31-40	Single	Married	Asia	Africa	Europe	Less than 5 years	5 to 10 years	More than 10 years	Primary School	Secondary School	High School	University	Other	Language (s)	Social Studies	Mathematics	Science and	Others
Teaching is a profession like other profession	3.17	3.42	3.55	2.65	4.75	3.00	3.86	3.11	3.53	3.17	3.12	4.25	4.12	4.71	3.91	2.45	3.33	3.00	3.46	3.00	3.00	3.00	3
Teaching is one of the easiest job	1.83	1.63	1.82	1.78	1.50	1.75	1.71	1.95	1.29	2.33	1.90	1.20	2.25	2.28	2.36	1.73	1.17	2.00	1.31	2.18	2.00	2.00	1
Teaching is all about taking care of children	2.91	3.16	3.09	2.74	3.75	2.89	3.29	3.21	2.71	3.33	2.97	3.40	2.08	4.75	2.82	3.27	3.00	4.00	2.92	2.82	3.00	3.00	3
Teaching is a women's job	1.43	1.74	2.27	1.43	1.14	1.71	1.29	1.84	1.00	2.33	1.80	1.71	1.71	1.14	2.09	1.55	1.17	3.00	1.46	1.91	1.40	1.40	1
Anybody can be a teacher	2.09	1.84	2.09	2.09	1.50	2.11	1.71	2.58	1.24	2.17	2.23	1.40	1.03	1.71	2.18	1.91	2.00	4.00	1.77	2.18	2.20	2.20	1
Teaching is a mass employment job	2.83	3.00	3.09	2.78	3.25	2.93	2.86	3.26	2.47	3.00	3.13	2.40	2.42	3.26	3.36	2.82	2.83	4.00	3.00	3.00	2.80	2.80	2
Teaching requires low qualification	2.78	2.42	2.55	2.70	2.50	2.64	2.57	2.68	2.35	3.17	2.67	2.60	2.14	3.12	2.73	2.36	2.67	4.00	2.31	3.64	2.40	2.40	2
The salary and working conditions are very good	2.22	2.05	2.55	1.91	2.25	2.07	2.29	2.47	1.88	1.83	2.20	2.27	2.14	2.54	2.45	1.73	2.17	4.00	2.23	2.27	2.00	2.00	2
I would like my children to be teachers	2.83	2.58	2.91	2.70	2.50	2.93	2.29	2.63	2.65	3.17	2.67	2.80	3.44	1.45	3.00	2.45	2.50	4.00	2.85	3.36	2.00	2.00	2
I am very satisfied with my teaching job	3.43	3.11	2.91	3.57	3.00	3.54	2.79	3.58	3.12	2.83	3.30	3.10	4.26	2.22	2.91	3.18	3.58	4.00	3.46	3.55	2.60	2.60	3
Teaching is multipurpose profession; you can work in many places.	3.70	3.58	3.91	3.48	3.75	3.93	3.07	3.68	3.65	3.50	3.60	3.90	3.21	3.46	4.00	3.27	3.75	4.00	4.15	3.91	2.80	2.80	3
Teaching is the most respected profession in my society	3.52	3.11	3.73	3.00	3.75	3.43	3.14	3.68	3.00	3.17	3.47	3.33	3.11	4.15	3.73	2.82	3.50	5.00	3.92	3.55	2.80	2.80	2
Teaching is a passion calling job	3.35	3.42	3.73	3.17	3.50	3.43	3.29	3.32	3.35	3.67	3.47	3.40	2.12	3.46	3.73	3.18	3.83	3.00	3.85	3.36	2.60	2.60	3

Table 8: Factors influencing teachers to join teaching profession according to demographic distribution

	Gender		Age			Marital status		Region			Teaching Experience			Level of teaching					Teaching subjects				Courses
	Male	Female	Below 25	21-30	31-40	Single	Married	Asia	Africa	Europe	Less than 5 years	5 to 10 years	More than 10 years	Primary School	Secondary School	High School	University	Other	Language (s)	Mathematical	Social Studies	Science and	
My parents like me to be a teacher	2.30	2.74	2.36	2.48	2.75	2.46	2.57	2.63	2.53	2.00	2.40	2.90	2.12	4.11	2.27	2.36	2.25	4.50	2.08	2.55	3.00	2.	
My former teachers influenced me to like teaching	2.96	2.95	3.11	2.78	3.38	2.93	3.00	3.16	2.71	3.00	3.00	2.90	2.50	3.12	3.18	2.55	3.25	3.50	3.38	2.64	2.80	2.	
I joined teaching profession because it is easy to get employment	2.91	2.68	2.64	2.78	3.13	2.75	2.93	2.89	2.53	3.33	2.83	2.80	2.58	3.50	2.82	2.73	3.08	2.50	3.15	2.73	2.60	2.	
My credentials could not allow me to join other professions	2.09	2.32	2.27	2.17	2.13	2.18	2.21	2.32	1.82	2.83	2.27	1.80	3.24	1.75	2.36	2.00	2.25	2.00	2.15	1.82	2.30	2.	
I joined teaching because my family background is not good	2.22	2.26	2.09	2.17	2.63	2.21	2.29	2.32	2.18	2.17	2.20	2.40	2.46	2.50	2.18	2.09	2.33	3.00	2.46	2.09	2.10	2.	
I joined teaching for temporary basis	2.91	2.68	2.73	2.83	2.88	2.75	2.93	3.05	2.41	3.17	2.90	2.50	3.04	2.98	3.18	2.64	2.92	2.00	3.00	2.73	2.70	2.	
Being a teacher, I have more time to do other things	2.83	2.84	2.82	2.83	2.88	2.93	2.64	3.11	2.53	2.83	2.97	2.50	2.50	2.52	3.27	2.64	2.83	3.00	3.08	2.73	2.60	2.	
It was my long time dream to be a teacher	3.13	3.11	3.36	3.12	3.13	3.18	3.00	3.37	2.88	3.00	3.20	2.90	3.14	2.50	3.27	2.91	3.25	3.50	3.46	2.73	3.10	3.	
It happened accidentally to be a teacher	2.35	2.42	2.36	2.43	2.25	2.39	2.36	2.21	2.41	2.83	2.40	2.40	2.17	2.52	2.64	2.36	2.42	1.50	2.54	2.73	2.10	2.	
One of my parent is a teacher	2.61	2.42	3.02	2.30	2.50	2.57	2.43	2.89	1.94	3.00	2.63	2.50	1.12	1.12	2.91	1.91	3.25	2.50	3.00	2.36	2.10	2.	
Government policies influenced my decision to join teaching profession	2.65	2.95	2.91	2.87	2.38	2.93	2.50	2.95	2.59	2.83	2.93	2.30	3.25	2.50	3.27	2.45	2.75	2.50	2.92	2.64	2.60	3.	
I joined teaching profession because I like children	2.65	3.11	3.27	2.61	3.12	2.93	2.71	2.89	2.88	2.67	2.77	3.40	1.50	3.50	3.21	2.36	3.17	4.13	2.98	2.91	2.70	2.	