
PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' MOTIVATION RELATED TO CAREER CHOICE: THE CASE OF PNU BECED AND BEED STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Qualitative in nature, the study explores the perception towards teaching profession as well as the motivation related to career choice among PNU BECED and BEED students. The findings of the study revealed the timeless perception of teaching as a noble profession. The nobility of the teaching profession lies on the fact that would-be teachers embrace the job wholeheartedly and thus they are likely to demonstrate selflessness and hard work along with great skills and high standards. The study also showed the interplay of the three broad classifications of motives. The respondents appeared mostly intrinsically motivated in their career choice, exhibiting keen interest in teaching, sheer love for knowledge and passion to impart what they know, especially to children. Extrinsic factors like pressure from significant others as well as good opportunities for jobs here and abroad further motivated the pre-service teachers. Indeed, the role of the family, relatives and teachers is crucial in the adolescents' and young adults' career choice. Altruistic factors that could go beyond any influences from others or perceived tangible benefits from job further determined career moves among the respondents.

Keywords: motivation, career choice, teaching as a profession

BACKGROUND

The multiplicity of motives behind each behavior cannot be underestimated more so when it comes to the choice of a lifelong career; a young adult has to make a crucial decision in a snap of time. Career choice, as elucidated by Ibrahim (1998), implies that individuals go through a decision making process, survey the work field, assess their competencies, understand what brings a sense of fulfillment and examine alternatives and the likely effects of these alternatives on their self-concept. Thus, the motives behind such crucial choice vary and overlap.

Considerable amount of researches have investigated the motivational factors behind young people's option for teaching as a career. Yet, this area of research remains topical because previous research like those of China's Wang and Fwu (2001) report that the type of motivation a student teacher has as

he/she enters the profession has a close association with the degree of commitment he/she displays toward teaching in the future. The same study found out that those decisive about their choice for entering the profession had a great deal of enthusiasm ultimately outlasted their peers in the profession. In Singapore, the study of Khoh *et al* (2005) stresses that the ability to predict retention rates backed by some empirical findings is important in helping the country's Ministry of Education plan for possible shortages in the teaching workforce. Hence, studying motivation for entering teaching is very important to predict retention rates in the profession for specific cohorts of students.

According to Moran *et al* (2001), previous research on motives for entering the teaching profession revealed three categories of motives: extrinsic, intrinsic and altruistic factors (Same study further explained these three factors.). Extrinsic motivation includes the benefits and perks offered such as good salary and holidays simultaneous with one's own children's, etc. Extrinsic motivation also includes pressure from people – pressure from parents and comparison with peers are the most common examples in the context of career choice. Intrinsic factors may be understood as job-related factors like the nature of the job, for example, which provides an avenue for lifelong learning; the perceived good job fit; the many opportunities that the job may seem to offer; and so on. Finally, the third category of motives, termed altruistic factors, goes beyond any tangible benefits that the teaching profession offers.

Moran *et al* (2001) classification was found to be in consonance with Wang's and Fwu's (2001) suggestion of having two general attractions to the teaching profession: those closely associated with the nature and conditions surrounding the job (intrinsic factors) and the external forces that push one to choose teaching as a career (extrinsic factors).

Aside from these research in Asian countries, Goh and Atputhasamy's (2001) research on the most popular motives for entering the teaching profession in Singapore, has a direct bearing on the current study. Student teachers were asked to rate the 22 statements of motives for choosing teaching as a career. The study found out that the five most influential motives are: love for working with children; love for teaching; the opportunity to influence the young lives for the better; and the intellectual stimulation provided by the job and the perception that teaching is a noble profession.

In the local setting, some scholarly pursuits on career choices centered on high school students' career preferences are endeavored mostly by those in the Guidance and Counseling specialization. One example is the thesis done by Tanega (1988) that explored, among others, the factors that influence career choices of junior high school students. She found out that childhood ambition and parents' advice influence the choice of occupation more than other

variables like family income, intellectual capacity, and advice from teachers or counselors. This result way back in the 1980s is echoed in the study of Rosayaga in 2000. Rosayaga's descriptive-correlational study yielded that the variable with the highest positive significant relationship with the students' career choice is parents' supervision. Another study done by Paquinto (2000) which assessed the course preference of senior high school and factors related to such decision, revealed that the key person in students' decision is their father. These studies solidify the strong influence of the parents over career decision in life among Filipino adolescents.

The PNU Center for Research and Development in Education (CREDE) conducted parallel surveys (in 2001, 2004 and 2009) to determine if the graduating students of the teacher education program would teach after graduation. The results of these surveys showed a relatively deepening commitment to teach after completion of the program among the PNU graduating students. In 2001, about 61% of the respondents said they would teach. In the 2004 survey, the percentage of those who agreed increased to 69%. In the last survey in 2009, about 74% of the graduating respondents affirmed "yes" (Mancao, 2009). Imperative to this is the goal of the current research geared toward exploring what motivates the PNU students to pursue teaching as a career. The Philippine Normal University as the National Center for Teacher Education envisions every graduate to really go into the field of teaching. More basically, the current research focuses on the students of the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECED) and of the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED), since they are at the frontier of honing the minds of young learners.

Significantly, this research aimed to understand many motivational forces by which students could develop commitment to teaching as a career. Ibrahim (2005) emphasized that the quality of school teachers, especially in the elementary level, affects how children learn in the later stage of life. The study further cited that the training of the teachers and the attractiveness of the teaching profession largely affect students' success. Better incentives such as extrinsic rewards may also further enhance teacher job satisfaction.

The study has the following specific objectives:

1. To determine the general perception of the respondents on teaching as a profession.
2. To explore the respondents' reasons for choosing teaching as future career.
3. To identify the people or events that could have influenced the respondents' choice for teaching as future career.
4. To survey the respondents' perception of the qualities a teacher should possess and the respondents' own

characteristics, which they think, would suit them to the teaching profession.

METHODOLOGY

Using a qualitative research design via the questionnaire method, the research systematically sampled seventy (70) BECED and BEED sophomore students in SY 2008-2009. A questionnaire with open-ended questions that embodied the objectives of the study was completed by the 70 respondents. They were also asked to indicate relevant personal data such as gender, place of residence and type of high school graduated from.

As regards data analysis, questionnaire responses were subjected to thematic analysis, wherein the underlying themes and ideas were identified. To this effect, questionnaire responses were content analyzed and coded individually by the researcher. Two graduate students from the University of the Philippines - Psychology Department who have had sufficient training/background in qualitative research validated the results of the content analysis. The resulting coded responses were then categorized into themes and frequency count of the responses under each thematic category was undertaken.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Perception of Teaching as a Profession

From the data presented in Table 1, it can be surmised that the current generation of would-be teachers still believe that teaching is a noble profession. One respondent specified that *"Teaching is the noblest among all professions. It is sacrificing and giving yourself to students even at your own expense – low income, less privileges."*

Table 1. Most Common Themes among the Respondents' Perception of Teaching as Profession

Theme	f*	rank
A noble profession	27	1
An opportunity for sharing knowledge and experiences	12	2
A job that has a lot of hard work and sacrifices; big duty and responsibility	11	3
An opportunity for touching lives of others and molding children's lives	10	4
A vocation, a mission in life	8	5
The mother of all courses; The foundation of all professions	6	6
A continuous learning process	5	7

* Multiple responses

Ranked second in the survey is the perception of teaching as an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences to students. One notable response along this aspect is: *"Teaching is a job that you have to engage*

yourself fully in. Something like attaching your own personality as well as your own knowledge to your students.” Akin to this belief is the students’ perception of teaching as an opportunity to mold children’s lives which ranked fourth. One respondent said that *“Teaching is high calling where you are expected to mold the future of your students.”* Other noteworthy responses are: *“Teaching is a life-long service to others”*; and *“Teaching is a profession where we can give our own heart for sharing wisdom with learners.”*

Hard work and a lot of sacrifices, as expected of the teaching profession, were expressed by 11 respondents. One respondent stressed that *“teaching is a very hard profession accompanied by a lot of responsibilities.”* Another response worthy to mention along this facet is *“teaching is a very hard profession, but rewarding because after all the hardships being experienced, it feels good to see the children apply what they have learned.”*

Summing up these perceptions, it can be inferred that the respondents are very much aware of the nature and responsibilities of their future job as teachers. Such awareness can facilitate deeper commitment to teaching. The wisdom of Field (1963), as cited in Ibrahim (1998), supports the discussion above. To Field, *“individuals choose actions which fit their current notion of (1) what they are like, (2) what they can be like and (3) what they want to be like, (4) what their situation is like, (5) what their situation might become and finally, (6) the way they see these aspects of self and situation as being related.”*

Respondents’ Main Reasons for Choosing Teaching as Future Career

Table 2 presents the top seven themes that explain the respondents’ main reasons for taking up teacher education as a preparation for their lifetime career.

Table 2. Most Common Themes among the Respondents’ Main Reasons for Choosing Teaching as Future Career

Theme	f*	rank
Interest in teaching	19	1
A dream, a passion to teach	18	2
Inspired by role models	16	3
Love of sharing knowledge to others	15	4
Provides better job opportunities	13	5
Love for children	12	6
Opportunity to inspire and mold the young	10	7

*Multiple responses

Segmenting the data in Table 5 through the classification provided by Moran (2001), it can be noted that the majority of the respondents were **intrinsically** motivated when they decided to take up teacher education course. The theme *“interest in teaching”* ranks No. 1. Ranked No. 2 is the theme that focuses on teaching as “a dream” and as “a passion.” The following statements from the respondents stress these themes:

1. *"I love teaching and I dreamed to become a teacher."*
2. *"It was part of my dream, so it is for self-fulfillment."*
3. *"Because I really love it. I love to impart knowledge and I want the concept of being called Ma'am."*
4. *"Because it is my passion to teach. Since elementary, I have already envisioned myself facing students and teaching!"*
5. *"Because I am interested in teaching. I want to share the knowledge that I gain from so many years."*
6. *"It has been my ambition since I was a kid."*
7. *"I love discussion, reporting and sharing what I know."*

This major finding could propel future teachers toward commitment and satisfaction. Cross and Markus (1999) cite that western theories of motivation tend to view personal choice as the ultimate good. Decisions based on personal choice, rather than influenced by others, are most potent in directing behavior and in providing satisfaction.

About 16 responses that ranked second centered on the theme that represents the respondents' decision as *"influenced or inspired by other family members and former teachers."* Ranked No. 5 with around 13 responses is the theme that focuses on choosing teaching as it *"provides better job opportunities."* The reasons under these themes are considered **extrinsically** motivated behaviors. Examples of the statements expressed along these two themes are the following:

1. *"It's my parents' decision because they believe that I can easily look for a job after graduation."*
2. *"My first reason is that my family influenced me and I have lot of opportunities in terms of getting a job."*
3. *"Teachers are always in demand. As long as there are schools, there are teachers."*
4. *"I was influenced by my Auntie and a teacher during high school."*
5. *"I was influenced by the people around me."*
6. *"Because I want to be like my mother."*
7. *"One of the reasons is my mother who is a teacher. I want to follow her footsteps."*
8. *"Because it will be in demand abroad."*

Ranked Nos. 4, 6 and 7 are reasons considered **altruistically** motivated. Love of sharing knowledge to others, love for children, opportunity to inspire and to mold the minds of young people are representatives of altruistic behavior. Respondents choose teaching as a career in life beyond any influence from others and any tangible benefits that the teaching profession has to offer. Examples of the actual responses along these three themes are the following:

1. *"I love kids and I love to impart knowledge to them."*
2. *"I want to influence the quality of education that future generation will receive and I want to share my experience with my students."*
3. *"I want to make change in the lives of the children and in our educational system."*
4. *"I love touching lives of other people."*
5. *"I want to touch lives and contribute to progress through educating the young."*
6. *"I love children!"*
7. *"I believe that teaching is the only profession which made all professions possible an I want to be a teacher that molds future doctors, lawyers etc."*
8. *"I have the passion to influence the young ones."*
9. *"I want to touch and inspire the students someday."*
10. *"I want to make change in other's lives."*

Significant People That Influence the Respondents' Career Choice

When asked if there were people who influenced them to choose teaching as their future career, 66% of the respondents said "yes", while 30% answered "no" (Table 3). Three (3) respondents did not answer the question.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Responses on Significant People Who May Have Influenced Their Choice of Teaching as Future Career

Response	f	%
Yes	46	66
No	21	30
No Answer	3	4
Total	70	100

Based on the data in Table 4, *family* ranked first among the significant people who have influenced the respondents' decision, while *relatives* ranked third in the survey. Indeed, the Filipinos' being "family-centered" plays a big role in the adolescents career choice. *Former teachers* ranked second as influencing people in the respondents' career choice. Only two (2) respondents said that their friends influenced them to take up teacher education.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution and Ranking of People That Influenced the Respondents' Decision

Significant People	f	%	rank
Family	21	46	1
Teacher	15	33	2
Relatives	8	17	3
Friends	2	4	4
Total	46	100	

The findings reflected in Tables 3 and 4 can be related to the data presented in Table 2. What ranked third in the survey of main reasons for the

respondents' decision to go into teaching reveals that they were influenced by significant people around them. Looking back at the actual responses, we see the statements that exemplify these influences.

That the respondents' decision in going into teaching is influenced by significant people around them is supported by the findings of Tanega (1988), Rosayaga (2000) and Paquinto (2000). Truly, the influence of the family has been found out to be very significant among Filipinos, to imply that culture largely affects decision making like the career choice. Cross and Markus (1999) elucidate the importance of culture in one's decision making by citing that Asian cultures (which include the Filipino culture) carry interdependent selves wherein the person cannot be separated from others and the surrounding social context. In decision making, the Asian people are strongly inclined to consider others.

Event/s That Influenced the Respondents' Choice for Teaching as Future Career

More than half (37) or 53% of the respondents answered "no", when asked of an event that could have influenced their career choice (Table 5). This is indicative of a strong intrinsic motivation that occurred among the majority of the respondents when they decided to pursue teacher education course at the Philippine Normal University. This particular result is significant to note, as it somehow contradicts the findings of Rosayaga (2000) and Paquinto (2000) who both found out that career decisions among Filipino high school students were highly influenced by familial situations such as parents' supervision.

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Responses on Event/s That Influenced Their Career Choice

Response	f	%
Yes	29	41
No	37	53
No Answer	4	6
Total	70	100

Twenty-nine (29) or 41% of the respondents, on the other hand, said "yes" (Table 5). Sample statements made by the respondents relative to these events follow:

1. *When we visited Baseco during first year, it made me decide to pursue teaching as a course.*
2. *When I was younger, I used to teach my siblings.*
3. *When I met children working to earn money for their education.*
4. *Teaching in our church.*
5. *A TV episode viewed in "Magpakailanman."*
6. *When I entered PNU, I knew I would become a teacher.*
7. *I used to imitate my English teacher in high school.*

8. *It's the time when I graduated from high school.*
9. *Every situation in my life, God called me to be a teacher.*
10. *My friends and I used to play "teacher teacheran" and I was the teacher as always.*
11. *My ministry in the church.*
12. *When I entered and saw PNU.*
13. *When I was a CAT officer.*
14. *When I was involved in teaching activities in high school.*
15. *During my grade school, I was inspired already.*
16. *When I met my Math teacher in Grade 6.*
17. *When I was a child I used to play or act as a teacher.*
18. *I joined an organization in our church.*
19. *The inspiration of teachers in high school.*
20. *During one of our Christmas parties in high school.*

Analyzing further these statements, it can be noted that significant events during the formative years of life, that is during elementary or high school, could influence the adolescents' career choice. Worthy to note are the statements made by three respondents to the effect that it was only during the initial part of their college days that affirmation to become teachers occurred (statement Nos. 1, 6 and 12).

Comparing the data from Tables 3 to 5, it appears that significant people seem to have stronger influence on the respondents's career choice.

Characteristics according to Respondents

The respondents' perception of the attributes the teachers should possess is presented in Table 6. The most common responses are those of being *patient*, followed by being *loving*. Possessing *adequate knowledge* ranked third, while having *good reputation* ranked fourth. Being *caring* and *responsible* tied at rank No. 5.5. Commitment to the profession and having flexible and open-minded attitude followed at ranked seventh, eighth, and ninth respectively. Last in the top 10 characteristics is that of being *creative*.

Table 6. Frequency Distribution and Ranking of the Characteristics That the Respondents Thought Teachers Should Possess

Characteristics	f*	rank
Patient	45	1
Loving	13	2
Knowledgeable	12	3
Reputable	11	4
Caring	10	5.5
Responsible	10	5.5
Committed	9	7
Flexible	8	8
Open minded	7	9
Creative	6	10

*Multiple responses

Respondents' Perception of Their Own Characteristics That Suit Them to Become Teachers

When the respondents were asked of their own characteristics that they thought would suit them to become teachers, multiple responses were gathered. As seen in Table 7, being *patient* ranked first, while being *loving* ranked second. *Dedication to whatever endeavor* they are into ranked third, while being *knowledgeable* on the subject matter taught ranked fourth. Being *intelligent* as they perceived themselves to be, ranked fifth among the characteristics. Being *creative*, *understanding* and *responsible* tied at rank No. 6.5. Having *good reputation* ranked seventh while being *caring* and *cheerful* ranked ninth and tenth respectively.

Table 7. Frequency Distribution and Ranking on the Respondents Characteristics That Would Suit Them to Become Teachers

Characteristics	f*	rank
Patient	30	1
Loving	18	2
Dedicated	14	3
Knowledgeable	10	4
Intelligent	9	5
Creative	8	6.5
Understanding	8	6.5
Responsible	8	6.5
Good reputation	7	8
Caring	6	9
Cheerful	5	10

*Multiple Responses

Comparing what the respondents perceived of the traits the teachers should possess and their own characteristics that they thought would suit them to become teachers, we see an apparent resemblance. As shown in Table 6 and 7, patience appears to be common in both instances.

These top ten characteristics, as presented in Tables 6 and 7, somehow resemble those found out in previous research on the characteristics associated with teacher effectiveness. A notable local research is that of Nava conducted in 1990, as cited in Nava (2009). She did a factor analysis to cluster 20 traits found to be correlated with teacher effectiveness. Results showed that only one factor emerged—that of being “caring.” Characteristics subsumed under this trait are: sense of understanding, approachability, the ability to teach well, teacher’s sense of humor, fairness, perseverance, critical mindedness, among others.

The results revealed in Tables 6 and 7 support the theory postulated by Hollan (1973), as cited in Ibrahim (1998). Holland theorizes that individuals select occupations through which they can express their personalities and

provide them with experiences appropriate to their personalities. Holland further believes that later job satisfaction is greater when individuals are able to blend their personalities with their work environments. Inability to understand their personality characteristics and match them carefully to the characteristics of their work environment accounts for some dissatisfaction that people experience in their career.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Theories of motivation all support the complexity of motivation itself. Thus, an individual in his choice of career is influenced by a host of motives. The current study showed the interplay of the three broad classifications of motives. The pre-service teachers were mostly intrinsically motivated in their career choice, that is, they exhibited keen interest in teaching, sheer love of knowledge and passion to impart what they know, especially to the children. Extrinsic factors like pressure from significant others as well as good opportunities for jobs here and abroad further motivated the pre-service teachers. Altruistic factors that go beyond any influences from others or perceived tangible benefits from the job further determined career moves among the sampled pre-service teachers at PNU.

The role of the family, relatives and teachers is crucial in the career choice of the adolescents and young adults. Inspiration from role models or pressures from significant others are part and parcel of Filipino culture of having interdependent selves. Moreover, early life experiences are strong motivational factors in choosing a career in life. Childhood dreams and inspiring experiences during elementary and high school years are equally potent sources of inspiration for career choice.

The present-day generation of would-be teachers still perceives teaching as a noble profession. The nobility of the teaching profession lies on the fact that would-be teachers give in to the call for teaching that is, they embrace the teaching profession wholeheartedly and thus they are likely to demonstrate selflessness and hard work along with great skills and high standards. Awareness of the nature of the job also positively indicates the pre-service teachers' future commitment to the teaching profession.

The resemblance between pre-service teachers' perceptions of the characteristics the teachers should possess and their own characteristics they perceived to suit them to teaching profession were notable findings that could help prepare them psychologically for teaching.

The results of the study have important implications at two levels. At the recruitment level in the first place, the applicants's motives for choosing teacher education should be identified and explored during the interview of would-be teachers. In using the university interview guide, it is evident that

the interview questions should emphasize more the applicants's career motives. Thus, further strengthening the recruitment standards could later help the institution avoid producing graduates that will not teach after graduation.

Second, at the teacher training level, the intrinsic and altruistic reasons of students for taking up the course need to be nurtured during the four-year pre-service training. The university's relentless efforts to preserve the nobility of teacherhood and of the teaching profession in general will surely make a difference in the commitment of would-be teachers to teaching as their lifetime career.

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