

Status Perceptions and Motivational Factors in Teaching Profession: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

Status perceptions of teachers and motivational factors for prospective teachers in teaching profession would reflect the future of teaching profession in Pakistan. Therefore, the study was designed to explore these factors and describe the future perspectives of teaching profession. Sequential triangulation research design was adopted to conduct the study and explore the phenomenon. Teacher educators and prospective teachers were selected from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through systematic random sampling techniques. Data were collected through open ended interviews and questionnaires and were analyzed through Mean, standard deviation and independent sample t-test. Results revealed that teaching is a prestigious challenging and missionary profession. Furthermore, the results showed that political interference, improper training and low salaries have put the future of teaching profession in vulnerable situation. Meaningful incentives for teaching profession, reformation of teacher education and training, and merit-based recruitment could be the catalyst for the revival of teaching profession in Pakistan.

Key Words: Prospective Teachers, Perceptions, Teaching, Incentives, Profession

Previous Studies

Individuals are attracted to a profession for specific motives and incentives. Researchers' investigated these incentives for teaching profession that are more influential and attracts the people to teaching profession (Richardson & Watt, 2006; Alger, 2014). These incentives vary across place, time and culture. For example, the incentives for teaching in developed countries are different from that of under-developed countries. However, the most important and well known incentives for any profession are rewards in the form of salaries, social prestige, duty hours, and intensity of mental and physical efforts, chances of promotion, training, and demand in the social and commercial market (Alger, 2014).

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Like other professions teaching has its own motives and incentives that motivate the people towards teaching profession (OECD, 2011). Furthermore, in the comity of professions, teaching assumes a significance place as a provider of human resource for all other professions. In this sense, this profession has been given high prestige in various societies across the world. The motives of teaching Ornstein and Levine (2006) are a love to work with children, interest in imparting the knowledge, the transmission of social norms, work for moral and ethical development and the development of life skills among students. These factors make teaching profession the most prestigious among all other professions. Other important reasons for selecting teaching profession are job security and pension (in the case of government teachers) and relatively shorter duty hours as compared to other professions. Moreover, unlike other professions such as banking, industries, electricians, executives, garment workers, secretaries, and farming, preparation for teaching profession has been found to be easier (Alger, 2014). Satisfaction with job is an important determinant of success. For teachers like other professional, the state of satisfaction leads to improve professional practices while, dissatisfaction leads to otherwise.

In relation to career selection, two types of individuals may be identified who enter into teaching profession. First, those who join teaching by their own choice; they love to teach as they considered it as their fashion, desire and dream. These teachers consider their preparation stage as significant in relation to their future success as teachers in classrooms. Therefore, they utilize their energies in the preparation stage. While, on the contrary those who join teaching profession by chance. These are the teachers who are more likely to leave the profession at their first chance. They seem less inclined and motivated in the teaching process. Their top most priority remains finding an alternate career and switching at the first available chance. Resultantly, they take their teacher preparation stage as a heavy burden (Dee & Wyckoff, 2013).

Individual made different decisions throughout his life and decision of career is one of them, where special care is required. It needs proper guidance, knowledge and sometimes training as well. The reasons for selecting professions can be divided into two parts, the extrinsic motives that a particular profession offers, and the intrinsic motives that an individual carries to join a particular profession. The extrinsic motives includes income, work environment, social prestige, pension and other relevant incentives offered in a particular profession whereas, as intrinsic motives may include a person's interest, dream, vision, beliefs and satisfaction that may become the reasons of joining a profession (Alger, 2014). Similarly, extrinsic motivating factors may include money (salary), social prestige, bonus,

comfort ability, career opportunity and time opportunity for family and side business (Dee & Wyckoff, 2013). On the contrary, specific intrinsic motives in teaching may include a love to work with children and youth, a genuine interest in teaching, a personal religious and/or social calling or a mission, job factors (job security, promotion opportunities and dynamics of the job), inspiration from the role models, interest in a particular field of study and subject (Watt, Richardson, Kunter, Beyer, Trautwein, & Baumert, 2012).

Moreover, Topkaya and Uztosun (2012) divided motives for teaching profession into three main groups, that is intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic. The intrinsic group of motives contains interest, personal experience and intellectual fulfillment while, the extrinsic and altruistic groups comprise of salaries, length of holidays and wish to throw in for the growth and development of others.

Apart from it, teaching is considered the most difficult and stressful professions. The stress and rigorous nature of profession has significant effects on overall life of professionals. Furthermore, the lifestyle and health care of different professionals were studied and compared to the profession of teaching, it was concluded that teaching profession is more stressful than the garment worker, farmers, secretaries and labour. The reason behind this is that teaching involves rigorous thinking and different activities (Watt, Richardson, Kunter, Beyer, Trautwein, & Baumert, 2012).

From international perspectives, teachers in United States are paid according to their performances and innovative teaching methodologies. They are regularly rewarded on experiences and credentials and practice of performance-based rewards at secondary and primary level seems on the rise. Teachers with high performances are rewarded likewise in terms of grades, salaries and bonuses (Dee & Wyckoff, 2013). Teachers' professional development and preparation are ensured through a rigorous training and activity-based four years full degree where Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and Content Knowledge (CK) (subject) is inculcating in prospective teachers through modern and effective methodologies. Teachers have high social prestige, good financial reward and active membership of high profile welfare associations in-collaboration with government and non-government organization. Teachers are provided regular in-service trainings and free access for educational resources at every public library, they have direct accesses to different resource sites on Internet as those sites have been paid by the department. These incentives ensure teacher's interest in his/her profession as well as have strong and positive co-relation to teachers' teaching performances. On gender perspectives, female are more involved in

teaching to lower grades as compared to male counterparts whose' ratio is higher in higher education (Vegas & Umansky, 2005).

United Kingdom is one of those countries where teaching is the most respected profession and where they are given highest incentives. In UK 14.93% students prefer to be teacher as compared to other professions (Dolan, Metcalfe, & Navarro-Martinez, 2012). Teacher training is rigorous and it aims to develop teachers who are competent for the job in true sense. According to Adelabu (2005), teachers training is ensured through pre-service teacher education followed by an induction phase. Other incentives for teachers include remuneration, career advancement, and vocational aspects. Teachers mostly come from middle class with a relatively lower representation of females in the profession. Apart from these countries other countries of the world are offering different incentives for teachers to retain them in teaching. Financial, logestic, social, and status que incentive are applied to the teaching profession at varying level (Patricia, 2013).

Furthermore, a study conducted by Mac Beath (2012) on the future of teaching profession, where the discussion of ninth meeting of High-Level groups on education for all, was mentioned. The participants were informed that to achieve universal primary education globally there is need of 18 million new teachers. Similarly, short and long term plans were recommended where the national governments were recommended to cater for the short term needs of primary education and to frame new policies along with proper incentives to achieve the universal primary education. The incentive attract the individuals to a profession apart from financial incentives are the saftey, security, working conditions and recources need to perform the tasks properly.

Moreover, as a challenging and less paid profession the number entrants into teaching profession is lesser than other professions, particularly in underdeveloped countries. The changing role of teachers in the society had further increased teachers' stress and strains. People accept teaching as a challenge but the increasing demands, stress and unattractive working enviornment make it difficult to retain in teaching profession. Similarly, from the perspectives of gender, Richardson and Watt (2006) viewed that females are more inclined towards teaching profession than males. It is because of their family education, their feminine nature and their own interest in children at elementary level are the factors due to which they like teaching. They love to teach, as teaching is the most suitbale profession for them in their social and cultural backgrounds, particularly from the perspectives of Pakistan. Furthermore, From Pakistan's perspectives there is steady rise in the development of education sector. Apart from other dimensions, students-teacher ratios in recent years reflects an average 1:43

ratio of student teacher (<http://www.kpese.gov.pk/SchoolStatistics.html>). With many of the teaching positions lying vacant within the jurisdictions of various education departments across the country, shortage of teachers seems to increase in the coming years.

Keeping in view all the perspectives and literature of teaching profession the researchers intend to investigate the incentives and motives which attract prospective teachers for teaching profession and the status perceptions of teachers. The study is significant with regard to the discovery of motivational levels of the individuals entering into teaching profession and devising plans to attract and retain a strong teaching workforce. From a futuristic perspective, the study may ascertain the nature of new generations of teachers who may be willing to enter into teaching profession.

Study Targets

To investigate the research problem following research objectives were framed;

1. To explore the status perceptions of teaching profession from the perspectives of teacher educators.
2. To explore the motives and incentives for teaching profession for prospective teachers in pakistan.
3. Identify gender wise inclination towards teaching profession in these prospective teachers.

Research Methods

Sequential triangulation research design was selected from mixed method research designs. First qualitative data were collected from teacher educators through interview. The collected data were coded and major themes were drawn from the study.

Based on the results of interviews a questionnaire was developed for prospective teachers. Through this questionnaire the prospective teachers were investigated that why they want be a teacher why not something else. The population of the study were comprised all 119 teacher educators of public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 294 prospective teachers studying in public sector university's education departments. This study was demerited to B. Ed hons (4 years program) students only. First through simple random sampling techniques 7 university's education departments were selected and then 169 students enrolled in the program of B.Ed. were selected for the sample group of the study.

Data were collected in two phases, first the data were collected from ten teacher educators of the selected departments through open ended interviews. Three interviews were

conducted through telephone and the remaining seven interviews were conducted face-to-face interactions. There were seven questions in the interview, all the necessary protocols of interview were followed properly. The interviewees were assured that their responses would be kept confidential, and would only be used for research purposes. All of them were granted permission for interview and they were provided enough time to respond to the questions of interview. The interviews were narrated and different similar codes were drawn from the answers of the respondents. Based on the codes, major themes were framed.

In the second phase of data collection data were collected from the prospective teachers enrolled in B.Ed. Hons program. The data collected from the interviews of teacher educators were used in the development of questionnaire for prospective teachers. There were fifteen statements in the questionnaire where the respondents were given five options which includes 1-Strongly Disagreed, 2-Disagreed, 3-Undecided, 4- Agreed and 5-Strongly Agreed.

The questionnaire were discussed with three PhD doctors of education department for content validity of the instrument. The changes recommended by the experts were considered, changes were made in the questionnaire. After the validity, to measure the reliability of the questionnaire, it was administered to 32 students of B.Ed. in Center for education and staff training, University of Swat. The collected data were placed into SPSS version 17 and cronbach alpha value was calculated, the overall cronbach Alpha value for the questionnaire was .837, which reflected that questionnaire has the capacity of providing consistent and reliable data. After estimating the reliability and validity of the questionnaire finally it was administered to the sample group of the study. The respondents of pilot study were not included in the sample group of the study. The data were collected and were placed into SPSS version for analysis. Mean, standard deviation, frequency and independent sample t-test were used in the analysis of data. The results were presented in the following lines;

Data Analysis and Findings

The interview data revealed that majority (07) of teacher educators believe that teaching profession is the most prestigious profession among all other professions and that you learn through out your life in it. One of the respondent was of the view that *teaching is a prophetic profession, all the prophets of Al-mighty Allah were the teachers for their nations.* Furthermore, he was of the view that *it is teaching which make the human being how to being a human. A sources of providing stuff to all walks of life, including, medical, engineering, architecture, busniss etc.*

On the question of “*why most of the brilliant students are not attracted by this profession?*” the respondents were desperse in their responses. They considered different factors responsible for this question, that includes, *current world is all about charming and protocols, teaching in our society is devaluing from the last two three decades i.e. people respects those who have money, own car, house, say and all physical appliences that they think so important for a better life, but on the contrary people in teaching profession are not that so much. They are in financial crisis, have no apprent say in the matters of the society and so on.* Some (3 respondents) viewed that no its not like that, *a huge proportion is still believing that teaching profession without all the apprent charm and style is the most adopting profession.* But the problem is greedness of people, it is the political interfarence, hiring on political grounds, uncertainty of jobs and low salaries which are affecting the status of this profession.

Similarly, on the question of news innovations in teacher education and its prospective, the respondents were of the view that yes B. Ed. four years, Assocaited Degrees in Education and National professional standards for teachers are highly valuable in uplifting the nature of the teaching profession. But still there are problems of enactment, there is no clear employment procedures for the graduates of B.Ed. four years, still there is need of building concensus on the curriculum of these programs. The government will is also not reflective, for example, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa till now has not counted B.Ed. Hons for any teaching job eligibity criteria, similarly, the teacher education departments are dealing teacher education on economical perspectives. On the contrary, *education and health are the welfare dimension of the state where the state has to invest on the aim of future generation building and welfare of the state not on revenue bases.* Therefore, the government has to invest in education sector in general and in teacher education in particular, because the future of nation is in the hands of teachers and they can make the real difference. The data collected through structured questionnaire from the prospective teachers of teacher education departments were analyzed through mean scores and standard deviations. Results of the collected data were presented in the following table which are followed by the explanation of the inferential statistics.

Table 1: Incentives for prospective teachers

<i>Motives for Teaching Profession</i>	<i>Mean score</i>	<i>Std deviation</i>
<i>Performing religious duty</i>	4.6333	.48459
<i>Social prestige</i>	4.0335	1.0213
<i>Financial reward</i>	3.9333	1.2434
<i>Satisfying inner feelings</i>	4.1000	1.0172

<i>Transmission of cultural values</i>	4.3333	1.0167
<i>Comfort and holidays</i>	4.1333	1.2000

Respondents were asked to share the reasons that they wished to join teaching as a their profession. Table 1 shows that among all the motives, joining teaching as a religious duty was the predominant reason (MS = 4.63, SD = .485) followed by social prestige (MS = 4.034, SD = 1.021), inner satisfaction (MS = 4.100, SD = 1.072), financial reward (MS = 3.933, SD = 1.243), cultural transmission (MS = 4.333, SD = 1.017), and comfort of teaching profession (MS = 4.133, SD = 1.200).

All of the respondents were Muslims who considered teaching as a sacred trust and duty. The result is a reflection of the general societal status of teaching where it is regarded as prophetic profession and hence, a higher religious and moral value attached to it. The religious duty as as motive and is naturally and closely followed by cultral transmission as the second prime motive for joining this profession. In eastern and specifically Pakistani contexts, religious and cultural values often intersect and supplment one antoher as reflected in the findings on these motives of joining teaching as a profession. The most intriguing finding was the lowest score for financial rewards as motive. Teaching in Pakistan is usually one of the lowest paid professions and prospective teachers know this and hence a low score as a motivator to join teaching profession. Concomitantly, a higher mean score for comfort and holidays shows that prospective Pakistani teachers are favoring a cultural trait in Pakistan where teachers are known to have the highest number of holidays and vacations compared to other professions. This facet allows teachers to either enjoy their holidays or engage in other businesses that teachers usually are associated with.

To conclude, all the above six motives for teaching profession are significant motives which stimulate prospective candidates for opting teaching profession.

Table 2: Perceptions regarding the nature of Teaching Profession

<i>People Views Regarding Teaching Profession</i>	<i>Mean score</i>	<i>Std deviation</i>
<i>Teaching as the first choice</i>	4.0000	1.1015
<i>Rigorous teacher training</i>	4.8000	.40224
<i>Teaching is a competitive Job</i>	4.3222	.98103
<i>People have Positive attitude to Teaching</i>	3.8333	1.1073

The quality of the profession can be assessed by the quality and relevance of the people who join that profession. According to the respondents, their training as teachers was

rigorous (MS = 4.800, SD = .402). They also thought that teaching was a competitive job (MS= 4.322, SD = .981 and that competent people joined this profession. Respondents strongly agreed (MS = 4.000, SD = 1.102) that teaching was their first choice. Respondents also somewhat strongly agreed (MS = 3.833, SD = 1.107) that general public had a positive view of teaching. This apparently showed, in respondents’ opinion, that people had great respect for the profession. However, the common observation shows that a traffic constable in Pakistani societies may hold a higher prestige and status compared to a primary or secondary school teacher. However, this general observation may have a lot of local variation.

Table 3: Gender-wise Comparison

<i>Gender Inclination towards Teaching Profession</i>	<i>Mean score</i>	<i>Std deviation</i>
<i>Males’ interest in teaching profession</i>	3.6111	1.0352
<i>Females’ interest in teaching profession</i>	4.6333	.48459

Respondents were asked about their overall interest towards teaching as a profession. A gender effect seemed to function in this variable. Table 3 illustrates that females (MS = 4.633, SD = .485) were more interested in teaching as compared to males (MS = 3.611, SD = 1.035). This tendency has been found to vary across different levels of education. It is generally perceived that females show a greater interest in teaching at Elementary and Secondary levels, whereas, males are more interested in teaching at college and university levels.

Discussions

Many societies across the globe view teaching as a highly prestigious profession. Historically as well, prophets, sages, and philosophers have remained great teachers (Stearns, 2007). In contemporary world, societies that have accorded prestige and respect to teachers have been able to sustain a high quality education system. Finland, Singapore, South Korea, Canada are examples in case. As the findings of this study show, prospective teachers in (give number of TTIs) considered teaching a profession of prestige. On the contrary, majority showed low to no interest in teaching since salaries and rewards in teaching profession were not at par with other professions. According to the findings of the study teaching is a prestigious profession but on the contrary our majority have no interest in teaching as the salaries and rewards of teaching are not upto the level. That is why when our students could not qualify medical, engineering, comerce and even to other clericl profession,

they join teaching. The report of (OECD, 2011) also pointed out the importance of teaching profession and its prestige among other professions.

The incentives for teaching profession such as salaries, residential facilities, job security, social reputation, pre-service and in-service trainings, promotion opportunities and retirement packages appear compromising compared to other professions like medical, engineering, commerce and even clerical professions. Dee and Wyckoff (2013) and Umansky (2005) studied a very high co-relation with teacher's motivation and their performances, which is responsible for the sustainable future of teaching profession. The incentives offered for teaching in Pakistan are not as attractive. This leads to entry of individuals with low motivation and capacity to teaching profession which otherwise is a challenging and tiring profession.

Findings also show that prospective teachers think that teaching is a relatively "easygoing" profession for its shorter duty hours at school, longer holidays and vacations. Thus, it may be inferred the intrinsic motivators seem to work less in the case of respondents of this study. Results of the study reveal that teaching is a comfortable profession, does not need inflexible efforts, tough training and the present duration of teaching trainings are enough which is not confrontation to Ornstein and Levine (2006) study findings who was of the view that teaching is the most complex and hard working profession.

The findings also showed a gender effect wherein female respondents showed a greater interest in teaching as compared to male respondents. These results match with what Richardson and Watt's (2006) found in their study. According to Richardson and Watt (2006) the number of female teachers are increasing day by day while, male teachers are moving to other professions. They like to work with children and are more enthusiastic in teaching compared to male counterparts. In summary, the most striking reasons for adopting teaching profession are: it has social reverence, relatives in teaching profession, short duration of duty time for family and side business attract the people towards teaching profession.

Recommendations

Study results reflect the current scenarios and future of teaching profession which is alarming and need sound steps with regard to uplifting of the status of teaching profession. Incentives which attract relevant and committed individuals to as demanding a profession as teaching would need to be put in place.

A nationwide effort to raise awareness among general public through print and electron media with regard to importance of this profession for the future of the country

would be a step in the right direction. Teacher success stories may be disseminated through similar means. While proposing school reforms with regard to raising status of teachers and teaching, care must be taken, while, choosing the right set of reforms. A blindfolded copying of success stories in other countries should be avoided. Wherever necessary, selection of success stories from abroad should be based on rigorous research and sustainability of the story itself.

One of the key ingredient in world's top performing countries is the autonomy alongwith a very rigorous teacher training and induction mechanism. While, it would be naive to pass on autonomy to teachers without proper and sound training, efforts should be made with regard to teacher training to make it relevant and meaningful. Studies show that monetary incentives are not the primary and the strongest of the factors, a reasonable yet competitive salary package would be inevitable to sustain a competent teaching work force. This obviously has financial implications for the country and it would be a very relevant long term strategy to enhance allocation of financial provisions for education in the country. For example, Finland, one the top performing country in the world, has not made any cuts in education expenditure even amid financial crunch. The curriculum for teacher training should be rigorous both in content and pedagogy and strong connection will need to be developed between teacher training and field realities.

Teaching profession should be used properly for the preservation and promotion of our cultural heritage. Both males and females should be equally encouraged towards teaching profession to satisfy the needs and demands of the system.

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