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Motivations of pre-service teachers in the colleges of education in Ghana for choosing teaching as a career

Usman Kojo Abonyi^{1*}, Doreen Awhireng² and Austin Wontepaga Lugutera²

Abstract: This study investigated the motives of pre-service teachers for choosing teaching as a career from one college of education in Ghana. Employing descriptive survey design, the study randomly invited 300 pre-service teachers to participate in the study. Findings from the study showed that pre-service teachers chose teaching as a profession due to their desire to shape the future of children and adolescents, prior teaching and learning experiences, to enhance social equity and perceived teaching ability. The study further showed that female preservice teachers rated job security, time for family, shape future of children and adolescents, and work with children and adolescents significantly higher than males. Also, pre-service teachers who reside in rural areas rated perceived teaching ability and intrinsic career value significantly higher than those who reside in urban areas. It is recommended that authorities at the colleges of education need to attend to excellence in teacher education and optimize support structures to promote and sustain preservice teachers' positive teaching motivations and behaviours.

Subjects: Educational Research; Education Studies; Teachers & Teacher Education

Keywords: preservice teachers; teacher motives; teaching; career choice; motivation



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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

While there is the evidence of high attrition rate among Ghanaian teachers, research on preservice teachers in Ghana however suggests that they appear to think positively of their choice of teaching as a career. Nonetheless, the preservice teachers are not ignorant of the poor conditions of service and other challenges associated with the teaching profession in Ghana. Against the backdrop that preservice teachers in Ghana appear to think positively of their choice of teaching as a career coupled with their knowledge of the poor working and living conditions, this study sought to investigate the motives of pre-service teachers for choosing teaching as a career. This study is imperative since the motivations and attitudes that pre-service teachers bring with them upon entering their teacher education programmes have now been widely recognized as substantially influential in the subsequent development of students and, eventually, when they become teachers.

1. Introduction

The Government of Ghana has over the years demonstrated strong commitment to enhancing teacher motivation for subsequent improvement in the quality of teacher professional practice (Salifu, 2014). One major policy initiative has been the payment of allowances to teacher trainees to motivate more people to enrol in teacher training institutions. There has also been the institution of the National Best Teacher Award Scheme (NBTAS) to acknowledge hard work and dedicated stewardship of teachers in pre-tertiary institutions (Aheto-Tsegah, 2011). In addition, the government has created special teacher motivation packages for teachers working in hard-to-reach and deprived areas, and for teachers of mathematics and science, as well as those in technical and vocational education. Moreover, under the Civil Service Law 1993, PNDC Law 327, the Government of Ghana in 2010 replaced the Ghana Universal Salary Structure (GUSS) with the Single Spine Salary Structure (SSSS) where the Ministry of Education, the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the leadership of the various teacher unions agreed on a 15% salary increment as teachers' retention premium as a motivation package for teachers (Kingful & Nusenu, 2015).

Despite these laudable interventions to improve the working conditions of teachers, a number of studies (Akuoko et al., 2012; Cobbold, 2015) have shown that many Ghanaian teachers remain unmotivated in their professional practice. Many teachers in Ghana have been leaving their job to seek employment in jobs they perceive to hold promises of better pay and prestige for them while others remain in service but lower their level of commitment with regard to teaching (Adjei & Amofa, 2014; Sam et al., 2014). A study conducted by the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and the Teachers and Educational Workers Union (TEWU), for example, suggested that about 10,000 teachers in public pre-tertiary schools in Ghana leave the classroom every year (GNAT/TEWU, 2010). Similarly, about 70% of teachers who take advantage of the study leave with pay facility by the GES to upgrade their certificate A qualifications to diploma and degree levels in the universities do not return to the classroom after their studies (Cobbold, 2015; Sam et al., 2014). These are clear indications that practicing teachers in Ghanaian basic schools are still not motivated despite the numerous government interventions to motivate them.

While there is the evidence of high attrition rate among Ghanaian teachers (Abotsi et al., 2020), research on preservice teachers in Ghana however suggests that they appear to think positively of their choice of teaching as a career. A study by Akyeampong (2003), for example, found that majority (89%) of pre-service teachers in Ghana disagree that they would have preferred to go to a Polytechnic rather than go to teacher training college to become teachers. Also, Abotsi et al. (2020) found that 92% of pre-service teachers in the colleges of education in Ghana report preference for the teaching profession. Nonetheless, the preservice teachers are not ignorant of the poor conditions of service and other challenges associated with the teaching profession in Ghana (Akyeampong, 2003).

Against the backdrop that preservice teachers in Ghana appear to think positively of their choice of teaching as a career coupled with their knowledge of the poor working and living conditions and other challenges associated with teaching in Ghana, this study sought to investigate the motives of pre-service teachers for choosing teaching as a career. Indeed, while there are some reported studies on the motives of practicing teachers for choosing teaching in Ghana (Salifu et al., 2018), these studies did not include the views of preservice teachers generally and more specifically the views of preservice teachers in the colleges of education. Thus, there is currently no reported study on the motivations of preservice teachers in the colleges of education in Ghana. Accordingly, this study sought to address the following research questions:

- (1) What motivational factors influence preservice teachers in the colleges of education to choose teaching as a career?
- (2) Are there differences in the motives for choosing teaching as a career based on the demographic characteristics (gender, age, place of residence, and marital status) of pre-service teachers?

A study of this nature would offer policy makers and leaders at the colleges of education an insight into the key motives influencing preservice teachers' choice of teaching as a career and thus design interventions to sustain their interest during their period studies. Furthermore, it would offer concrete suggestions and recommendations on how the retention of practicing teachers can be made more effective in order to address the high attrition rate among basic school teachers in Ghana.

2. Literature review

Over the last three decades, a number of studies have been conducted to explore the motivations of pre-service teachers for deciding on choosing teaching as a career (Watt & Richardson, 2007). Findings from these studies generally reveal that student teachers' motives for choosing teaching fall into three categories: altruistic, intrinsic, and extrinsic. An altruistic motive entails perception of teaching as a valuable and socially worthwhile profession and the desires to support children's development and to make a difference in society. Intrinsic motives encompass inherent aspects, relating to the meaning of teaching and the passion for teaching, subject knowledge, and expertise. On the other hand, an extrinsic motive covers aspects of the job that are not inherent in the work itself, such as long holidays, level of pay, and status (Bergmark et al., 2018; Goller et al., 2019).

Despite these three broad categorizations, Watt and Richardson (2007) contend that contemporary theories of motivation have not been applied in a systematic way to build a cohesive model for understanding the motivation of beginning teachers entering the teaching profession. To provide a valid and reliable framework for investigating motivations for choosing teaching as a career, Watt and Richardson (2007) therefore developed the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) scale which goes beyond the classical triad of extrinsic, intrinsic, and altruistic motivations. Founded on expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), the FIT-Choice model introduces three main value classes (intrinsic value, personal utility value, and social utility value) and self- and task-perceptions that are related to the choice of teaching (Nesje et al., 2018).

While intrinsic value refers to the enjoyment of and interest in teaching, personal utility value refers to extrinsic motivations such as job security, job transferability, and time for family. Social utility value on the other hand refers to altruistic motivations like shaping the future of children and adolescents, enhancing social equity, and making a social contribution. The model also contains the maladaptive motivation to select teaching as a fallback career, socialisation influences on career choices such as an individual's prior teaching and learning experiences and the influences of significant others as well as individuals' perception of their teaching abilities.

Employing the FIT-Choice Scale for the first time as part of a large-scale study, Watt and Richardson (2007) conducted a study across three Australian universities to explore, amongst other factors, teaching motivations and perceptions about the teaching profession. The study identified the highest-rated motivations for choosing teaching as perceived teaching abilities, the intrinsic value of teaching, the desire to make a social contribution, shape the future of children and adolescent, and work with children/adolescents. The lowest-rated motivation was noted as choosing teaching as a "fallback" career, followed by the social influences of others. Within the Dutch context, the primacy of self-perception of teaching-related ability was also noted amongst teachers in a study employing the use of the FIT-Choice scale (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012). Similarly, Bilim (2014) investigated 341 pre-service elementary teachers' motives to become a teacher using FIT-Choice scale in Turkey. The study result revealed that the highest-rated motivations of pre-service elementary teachers for choosing teaching as a profession included make social contribution, shape future of children and enhance social equity followed by prior teaching and learning experiences, work with children/adolescents, and job security. Also, the lowest rated motivation was choosing teaching as a "fallback" career, followed by social influences of others recommending them to choose teaching as a career.

Nesje et al. (2018) validated a Norwegian translation of the FIT-Choice scale and found that factors that Norwegian future teachers agreed most strongly were intrinsic value, shape future of children/adolescents, perceived teaching abilities, make social contribution, and job security. Lin et al. (2012) examined similar and differing initial motivations to teach between 257 U.S and 542 Chinese preservice teachers using the FIT-Choice scale. The highest-rated motivations common to both U.S and China samples were within social utility values (“make social contribution” and “shape the future of children/adolescents”). Similarly, the lowest mean rating for both groups was choosing teaching as a “fallback” career, followed by socialisation influences such as people who had encouraged them to embark upon a teaching career.

Goller et al. (2019) used the FIT-Choice scale to explore Finnish undergraduate students’ motivations for choosing teaching as a career in comparison to German student teachers. In comparison to the Finnish students, German students tended to choose their career in more cases because they perceived their teaching abilities as high, judged the job as having a high personal utility value including strong job security and time for family, and were convinced by other people that the teaching career choice would be a good idea. Although most students in both samples indicated that they did not choose teaching as a fallback career, the German students scored significantly higher on this factor than their Finnish counterparts.

With regards to gender, while some studies have found no significant differences between male and female student teachers thereby suggesting that both male and female student teachers are attracted to teaching as a profession for the same reasons (Azman, 2013), Watt et al. (2013) found that women demonstrated stronger motivations than men for the desire to work with children/adolescents, time for family, intrinsic career value, and positive prior teaching and learning experiences. Conversely, men reported significantly stronger motivations from the negative fallback career motivation and were also more motivated by social influences to choose teaching. Categorizing the motivations to teaching into altruistic-intrinsic and extrinsic reasons, Balyer and özcan (2014) found that female student teachers choose their teaching careers with altruistic-intrinsic reasons compared with their male counterparts.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

Informed by quantitative research paradigm, this study employed descriptive survey design. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), surveys are used to learn about people’s attitudes, beliefs, opinions, values, behaviours, motivations, desires, and other types of information. In other words, descriptive surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determining the relationships that exist between specific events (Cohen et al., 2007). The researcher considered descriptive survey design as appropriate to study the different motives for choosing teaching as a career by pre-service teachers in the Ghanaian context since the phenomenon under study is pre-existing and hopes not to manipulate any variable.

3.2. Sample & sampling technique

The target population consisted of all first- and second-year teacher trainees enrolled in Ada college of education in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. Ada College of Education, founded in 1965, is one of the 46 Public Colleges of Education in Ghana and located in the Ada East District of the Greater Accra Region responsible for training professional teachers for the basic education level in Ghana. Its vision is to be a centre of excellence in the production of disciplined, resourceful and self-motivated teachers always ready to offer services anywhere in Ghana (Agency Ghana News, 2010). Moreover, it seeks to train teachers imbued with professional and academic competences and skills in general and technical education.

In total, there were 655 pre-service teachers in both first and second year thus constituting the accessible population for the study. Third years were excluded from the study because at the time of the data collection they were doing their off-campus teaching practice and it was therefore difficult to locate them and include them as respondents in the study.

To achieve a representative sample of the total population, simple random sampling technique was utilized in determining the sample size for the study. The researchers obtained a sampling frame which constituted the entire list of first- and second-year students from the management of the college. It should be noted that the study was not limited to any department but drew respondents randomly from the sampling frame as one unit. This offered each member on the sampling frame an equal chance of being selected to participate in the study. Using Krejcie and Morgan's criteria for selecting sample size, 300 preservice teachers were invited for the study (Cohen et al., 2007). Out of 300 distributed questionnaires, 248 were fully completed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 82.7%.

4. Research instrument and data collection procedure

The FIT-Choice instrument was utilized in this study since it provides a theory-based and validated scale for exploring the motivations for choosing teaching as a career and the perceptions about teaching (Watt et al., 2012). The model taps on both the altruistic-type motivations, personally utilitarian motivations, intrinsic motivations as well as ability-related beliefs. The framework consists of 12 constructs which include preservice teachers' views about: teaching abilities, intrinsic career value, fallback career, job security, time for family, job transferability, shape the future of children/adolescents, enhance social equity, make social contributions, work with children/adolescents, prior teaching and learning experiences, and social influences. All the motivation factors contain 3 items each, except the time for family factor, which contains 5 items. Seven-point Likert type response format is used i.e. 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important). "I chose to become a teacher because" is the preface to all motivation items. Additionally, background information section comprised questions related to the respondents' gender, age, place of residence, and marital status.

The reliability of the instrument was assessed by its internal consistency and the test yielded the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of .870, indicating a very high level of reliability for the instrument (Cohen et al., 2007).

Data collection process began with a formal letter written to seek permission from the

Management of Ada College of Education. Upon receiving approval from the College Management, the researchers made a personal visit to the college to distribute the questionnaire to respondents. Respondents were given 2 weeks to fill the questionnaire after which it was retrieved by a staff member appointed for that purpose.

5. Ethical considerations

Key ethical considerations in human subject research were addressed before embarking on data collection. Prior to the commencement of the data collection process, permission was sought from the Management of the College to conduct the study in their school and consequently permission was granted. Also, respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussion. They were further assured that the information provided would be used solely for the purpose of the research and that their identity would remain anonymous throughout the writing and publication of the results.

6. Data analysis

Data was analysed utilizing both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviations were employed to find out the most popular motives of student

teachers for choosing to become teachers. Also, inferential statistics such as t-test analyses were performed to examine the differences in the mean scores of teacher trainees in terms of their demographic characteristics such as gender, marital status, age, and place of residence.

7. Results

7.1. Demographic characteristics

The demographic characteristics showed that of the 248 respondents, 58.5% were males while females constitute 41.5%. Concerning their marital status, 17 (6.7%) reported that they were married while 231(93.1%) reported that they were single. 93 (37.5) selected urban as their place of residence while 155 (62.5%) selected rural as their place of residence. The result further showed that while 40 (16.1%) teacher trainees had one or both parents as teachers, 208 (83.9%) reported that none of their parents was a teacher. Finally, teacher trainees who considered themselves as students with any form of disability were 16 (6.5%) while students with no disability were 232 (93.5%).

7.2. Motivational factors that influence preservice teachers to choose teaching as a career

Table 1 presents the ratings on the factors influencing preservice teachers' motivations for choosing teaching as a profession at Ada college of education. The results showed that the highest-rated motivation that influenced preservice teachers for choosing teaching as a profession was their desire to shape the future of children and adolescents ($M = 6.42, SD = 0.80$). This was followed by other factors such as to make social contribution ($M = 6.40, SD = 0.80$), prior teaching and learning experiences ($M = 6.12, SD = 0.98$), enhance social equity ($M = 5.78, SD = 0.87$), and perceived teaching ability ($M = 5.61, SD = 1.22$). Moreover, means scores yielded by the FIT-Choice scale suggests that job security, intrinsic career value, and work with children were also deemed important by the pre-service teachers in the study since these factors also received a rating of greater than 5 on a 7-point scale. In contrast, the lowest-rated motivation for choosing teaching among the preservice teachers was fallback career ($M = 3.42, SD = 1.61$). Other factors that received low rating were social influences ($M = 3.63, SD = 1.71$); job transferability ($M = 4.81, SD = 1.37$) and time for family ($M = 4.96, SD = 1.35$).

7.3. Differences in preservice teachers' motivations for choosing teaching across demographic characteristics

This section presents findings relating to the differences among the preservice teachers' motivations for choosing teaching as a profession across demographic characteristics. An independent-

Table 1. Descriptive statistics on preservice teachers' motivation to become teachers

Factor	M	SD
Shape future of children and adolescents	6.42	0.80
Make social contribution	6.40	0.80
Prior teaching and learning	6.12	0.97
Enhance social equity	5.79	0.87
Perceived teaching ability	5.61	1.22
Job security	5.23	1.29
Intrinsic career value	5.22	1.55
Work with children	5.14	1.55
Time for family	4.96	1.35
Job transferability	4.81	1.37
Social influences	4.81	1.37
Fallback career	3.42	1.61

Notes: M = Means SD = Standard deviation

samples t-test was conducted to explore the effects of demographic characteristics such as gender, place of residence, age, and marital status on preservice teachers' motivation for choosing teaching as a profession.

7.4. Gender

The researchers first conducted Levene's Test for Equality of Variances to ascertain whether the assumption of equal variances between the two groups hold in the data. The result showed that of the 12 motivation factors for choosing teaching as a profession, job security ($F = 11.708, p = 0.001$), time for family ($F = 16.314, p = 0.000$), job transferability ($F = 4.004, p = 0.046$), shape future of children ($F = 12.432, p = 0.001$), work with children ($F = 14.854, p = 0.000$), and prior teaching and learning experiences ($F = 5.882, p = 0.016$) violated the assumption of equal variance. The results of the independent samples t-test is shown in [Table 2](#).

The independent samples t-test conducted showed that of the 12 FIT choice factors, four showed mean differences that were statistically significant between males and females. First, females ($M = 5.53, SD = 1.01$) rated "job security" significantly higher than males ($M = 5.02, SD = 1.43$); ($t = -3.128, df = 246, p = 0.001$). Second, females ($M = 5.52, SD = 0.96$) rated "time for family" significantly higher than males ($M = 4.56, SD = 1.44$); ($t = -5.843, df = 246, p = 0.000$). Third, females ($M = 6.54, SD = 0.67$) rated "shape future of children and adolescent" significantly higher than males ($M = 6.34, SD = 0.88$); ($t = -1.98, df = 245, p = 0.041$). Fourth, females ($M = 5.59, SD = 1.23$) rated work with children and adolescent significantly higher than males ($M = 4.82, SD = 1.68$); ($t = -4.206, df = 245.823, p = 0.000$).

7.5. Place of residence

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether preservice teachers' motivations for choosing teaching as a profession differed significantly in terms of their place of residence

Table 2. Mean ratings of preservice teachers' motivations for choosing teaching based on gender

Factor	Mean (SD)			P-value
	Overall	Males	Females	
Perceived teaching ability	5.61 (1.22)	5.64 (1.22)	5.57 (1.21)	0.684
Intrinsic career value	5.22 (1.55)	5.27 (1.62)	5.15 (1.44)	0.543
Fallback career	3.42 (1.61)	3.31 (1.58)	3.58 (1.66)	0.184
Job security	5.23 (1.29)	5.02 (1.43)	5.53 (1.01)	0.001*
Time for family	4.96 (1.35)	4.56 (1.44)	5.52 (0.96)	0.000*
Job transferability	4.81 (1.37)	4.82 (1.44)	4.79 (1.27)	0.858
Shape future of children and adolescent	6.42 (0.80)	6.34 (0.88)	6.54 (0.67)	0.041*
Work with children and adolescent	5.13 (1.55)	4.82 (1.68)	5.59 (1.23)	0.000*
Social influences	3.63 (1.71)	3.66 (1.79)	3.58 (1.60)	0.723
Enhance social equity	5.79 (0.87)	5.70 (0.88)	5.91 (0.83)	0.060
Prior teaching and learning experiences	6.12 (0.98)	6.06 (1.07)	6.21 (0.83)	0.190
Make social contribution	6.40 (0.80)	6.34 (0.88)	6.48 (0.66)	0.163

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, two-tailed

(urban versus rural). First, Levene’s Test for Equality of Variance was conducted to ascertain whether the assumption of equal variances between the two groups hold in the data. The test showed that the homogeneity of variance assumption was satisfied for all the 12 motivation factors for choosing teaching as a profession. The results of the independent samples t-test is shown in [Table 3](#).

The independent samples t-test conducted showed that of the 12 FIT choice factors, two showed mean differences that were statistically significant between preservice teachers residing in urban and rural areas. First, the result showed that preservice teachers who reside in rural areas ($M = 5.74, SD = 1.20$) rated “perceived teaching ability” significantly higher than preservice teachers who reside in urban areas ($M = 5.40, SD = 1.22$); ($t = -2.143, df = 246, p = 0.033$). Second, preservice teachers who reside in rural areas ($M = 5.40, SD = 1.41$) rated “intrinsic career value” significantly higher than preservice teachers who reside in urban areas ($M = 4.94, SD = 1.72$); ($t = -2.148, df = 246, p = 0.025$).

7.6. Age

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether preservice teachers’ motivations for choosing teaching as a profession differed significantly in terms of their age. Levene’s Test for Equality of Variance was conducted to ascertain whether the assumption of equal variances between the two groups hold in the data. The test showed that the homogeneity of variance assumption was satisfied for all the 12 motivation factors for choosing teaching as a profession. The result of the independent samples t-test is shown in [Table 4](#).

The independent samples t-test conducted showed that of the 12 FIT choice factors, preservice teachers who are above 20 years ($M = 5.34, SD = 1.56$) rated intrinsic career value significantly higher than preservice teachers who are 20 or less years ($M = 4.81, SD = 1.46$); ($t = -0.239, df = 246, p = 0.023$).

Table 3. Mean ratings of preservice teachers’ motivations for choosing teaching based on place of residence

Factor	Mean (SD)			P-value
	Overall	Urban	Rural	
Perceived teaching ability	5.61 (1.22)	5.40 (1.22)	5.74 (1.20)	0.033*
Intrinsic career value	5.22 (1.55)	4.94 (1.72)	5.40 (1.41)	0.025*
Fallback career	3.42 (1.61)	3.46 (1.74)	3.40 (1.54)	0.774
Job security	5.23 (1.29)	5.03 (1.42)	5.35 (1.20)	0.056
Time for family	4.96 (1.35)	4.82 (1.42)	5.04 (1.31)	0.219
Job transferability	4.81 (1.37)	4.61 (1.41)	4.93 (1.33)	0.077
Shape future of children and adolescent	6.42 (0.80)	6.43 (0.73)	6.42 (0.73)	0.962
Work with children and adolescent	5.13 (1.55)	5.03 (1.62)	5.20 (1.51)	0.390
Social influences	3.63 (1.71)	3.54 (1.73)	3.67 (1.70)	0.568
Enhance social equity	5.79 (0.87)	5.78 (0.84)	5.79 (0.88)	0.940
Prior teaching and learning experiences	6.12 (0.98)	6.00 (1.00)	6.19 (0.96)	0.143
Make social contribution	6.40 (0.80)	6.46 (0.74)	6.36 (0.83)	0.355

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, two-tailed

Table 4. Mean ratings of preservice teachers' motivations for choosing teaching based on age

Factor	Mean (SD)			P-value
	Overall	20 or Less years	More than 20 years	
Perceived teaching ability	5.61 (1.22)	5.41 (1.30)	5.67 (1.19)	0.159
Intrinsic career value	5.22 (1.55)	4.81 (1.46)	5.34 (1.56)	0.023*
Fallback career	3.42 (1.61)	3.46 (1.61)	3.41 (1.62)	0.811
Job security	5.23 (1.29)	5.24 (1.35)	5.23 (1.28)	0.942
Time for family	4.96 (1.35)	5.09 (1.54)	4.92 (1.30)	0.432
Job transferability	4.81 (1.37)	4.64 (1.43)	4.85 (1.35)	0.311
Shape future of children and adolescent	6.42 (0.80)	6.48 (0.70)	6.41 (0.83)	0.563
Work with children and adolescent	5.13 (1.55)	5.22 (1.65)	5.12 (1.53)	0.667
Social influences	3.63 (1.71)	3.70 (1.74)	3.60 (1.70)	0.702
Enhance social equity	5.79 (0.87)	5.84 (0.83)	5.78 (0.88)	0.614
Prior teaching and learning experiences	6.12 (0.98)	6.01 (1.01)	6.15 (0.97)	0.324
Make social contribution	6.40 (0.80)	6.40 (0.86)	6.40 (0.79)	0.982

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, two-tailed

7.7. Marital status

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether preservice teachers' motivations for choosing teaching as a profession differed significantly in terms of their marital status. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was conducted to ascertain whether the assumption of equal variances between the two groups hold in the data. The result showed that perceived teaching ability ($F = 4.251$, $p = 0.040$) and fallback career ($F = 4.277$, $p = 0.040$) violated the assumption of equal variance. The result of the independent samples t-test is shown in Table 5.

The independent samples t-test conducted showed that married preservice teachers ($M = 5.62$, $SD = 1.09$) rated time for family significantly higher than preservice teachers who are single ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 1.36$); ($t = 2.106$, $df = 246$, $p = 0.036$).

8. Discussion

This study sought to investigate the motives of pre-service teachers in the colleges of education in Ghana for choosing teaching as a career. Available literature show that several countries are experiencing difficulty in recruiting teachers and suffering from a low retention rate (Cobbold, 2015). Thus, understanding factors that influence the choice of teaching as a career provides an important empirical basis for attracting teachers, developing teacher education policies and programmes, and improving the overall quality of teaching (Flores & Niklasson, 2014; Fray & Gore, 2018).

Findings from the study suggest that the highest-rated motivation that influences preservice teachers for choosing teaching as a profession is their desire to shape the future of children and adolescent and making social contribution. This finding is consistent with earlier studies in Turkey (Akar, 2012; Bilim, 2014; Kiliç et al., 2012) and US and China (Lin et al., 2012) that found social

Table 5. Mean ratings of preservice teachers' motivations for choosing teaching based on marital status

Factor	Mean (SD)			P-value
	Overall	Married	Single	
Perceived teaching ability	5.61 (1.22)	5.27 (1.58)	5.63 (1.19)	0.370
Intrinsic career value	5.22 (1.55)	5.18 (1.95)	5.22 (1.52)	0.898
Fallback career	3.42 (1.61)	3.90 (2.06)	3.39 (1.58)	0.326
Job security	5.23 (1.29)	5.25 (1.13)	5.23 (1.31)	0.938
Time for family	4.96 (1.35)	5.62 (1.09)	4.91 (1.36)	0.036*
Job transferability	4.81 (1.37)	4.80 (1.75)	4.81 (1.34)	0.990
Shape future of children and adolescent	6.42 (0.80)	6.24 (0.89)	6.44 (0.80)	0.318
Work with children and adolescent	5.13 (1.55)	5.47 (1.62)	5.11 (1.55)	0.362
Social influences	3.63 (1.71)	4.14 (1.79)	3.59 (1.70)	0.200
Enhance social equity	5.79 (0.87)	5.76 (0.85)	5.79 (0.87)	0.900
Prior teaching and learning experiences	6.12 (0.98)	6.29 (0.68)	6.11 (1.00)	0.450
Make social contribution	6.40 (0.80)	6.20 (1.29)	6.41 (0.75)	0.283

*Notes: *p < 0.05, two-tailed

utility values such as shaping future of children/adolescent and making social contribution as the most important motives driving pre-service elementary teachers for choosing teaching as a profession. It however differs from other studies that have found prior teaching and learning experiences and perceived teaching abilities as the most important motivators for their choice to become teachers (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012; Hennessy & Lynch, 2017; Watt et al., 2012).

In contrast, the study found that the lowest mean rating motivation for choosing teaching among the preservice teachers was fallback career which indicates that the teaching profession was the primary profession choice among the preservice teachers in the sample. This finding corroborates studies in the US and China (Lin et al., 2012), Australia (Glutsch & König, 2019; Richardson & Watt, 2006), Norway (Nesje et al., 2018) that found the lowest-rated motivation for choosing teaching as “fallback” career. It rather contradicts studies that have found social influences as being the least important motivation for becoming a teacher (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012). The fact that teachers in the selected college of education rated “fallback career” as the least motive for choosing to teach is a positive news taking into account the widely held view in Ghana that people choose the teaching profession only as a stepping stone to finding better jobs (Abotsi et al., 2020). Another factor which received low rating was social influences which meant that the preservice teachers in the study made autonomous career choices and were less influenced by peers and relatives in choosing teaching as a future profession.

Findings from the study further showed that men and females differed significantly across four of the motivational factors for choosing teaching as a career. Specifically, female preservice teachers rated shape future of children and adolescents, work with children and adolescent, time for family, and job security significantly higher than the male preservice teachers. This result is consistent with other studies that found that preservice female teachers demonstrate stronger

motivations for the desire to work with children/adolescents (Finkler, 2016; Watt et al., 2013; Wyatt-Smith et al., 2017) and time for family (Watt et al., 2013) compared to their male counterparts.

A tentative explanation of this finding in the Ghanaian context could be due to the traditional gender roles which require women to take care of children while men are expected to be the breadwinners (Baidoo, 2018). While it is recognised globally that women should not be excluded from education based on the benefits educated women bring to their family and the nation as a whole (Suen, 2013), their contribution comes in providing primary care for children and maintaining an inhabitable environment for all members of the family. Thus, even when females find themselves in formal professions, they are expected to play such domestic roles and would therefore be more generally inclined in caring and nurturing for children as part of their household roles. Female preservice teachers would therefore opt for teaching as a profession which they hope would afford them much time to play their domestic roles and would naturally develop interest in caring and shaping the future of children than their male counterparts.

The study also found that preservice teachers who reside in rural areas rated perceived teaching ability and intrinsic career value significantly higher than preservice teachers who reside in urban areas. This result is consistent with Wyatt-Smith et al. (2017) who found that indigenous Australians who live in rural settings were more likely to give higher scores for intrinsic career value than non-indigenous respondents. This result could be explained by the fact that formal employment opportunities where people can be gainfully employed in rural areas in Ghana are limited and that teaching remains as one of the few formal professions in such rural contexts. Consequently, preservice teachers from rural areas will perceive teaching as an enviable profession and demonstrate strong desire to remain in teaching than their counterpart from urban areas where different formal job opportunities exist.

Moreover, the study found that preservice teachers who are above 20 years rated intrinsic career value significantly higher than the preservice teachers who are less than 20 years suggesting that older teacher trainees demonstrate higher intrinsic value for choosing teaching. This result is consistent with that of Wyatt-Smith et al. (2017) who found that older age brackets were more likely to have higher scores for intrinsic career value than lower age groups. It also emerged from the study that preservice teachers who are married rated time for family significantly higher than the preservice teachers who are single. Indeed, this could be explained by the fact that married preservice teachers are likely to have established families and will prefer to have a profession that will afford them enough time to play their family roles which will be less of a concern with those that are not married.

9. Conclusion and recommendations

This study has shown that preservice teachers from the selected college of education chose teaching as a career mainly for altruistic and intrinsic motives. This is evident by the fact that the highly-rated motives for choosing teaching were to shape future of children and adolescents, make social contribution prior teaching and learning, enhance social equity and perceived teaching ability. This implies that the preservice teachers in the study were much enthusiastic to choose teaching as a career and are likely to demonstrate a high-level commitment to teaching. Research has shown that high rating of altruistic and intrinsic motives as the motivational factors can be associated with positive influences such as preservice teachers' tendency to develop their knowledge and skills and to promote intellectual stimulation and personal development (Low et al., 2017). Moreover, teachers who are highly motivated by altruistic and intrinsic reasons express enthusiasm towards teaching (Fray & Gore, 2018; Thomson & Palermo, 2012).

It can further be concluded from the study that female preservice teachers perceive teaching hours to fit with the responsibilities of having a family and fit their family commitment significantly higher than their male counterparts. Again, female preservice teachers chose teaching because they believed that it would allow them to shape child/adolescent values, have impact on children/adolescents, work in a child-centred environment, and work with children/adolescents than male preservice teachers. Moreover, with

the finding that preservice teachers who reside in rural areas rated perceived teaching ability and intrinsic career value significantly higher than preservice teachers who reside in urban areas, it can be concluded that preservice teachers residing in rural areas perceive themselves to possess qualities of a good a teacher, have good teaching skills, interested in teaching, and always wanted to be teachers than their counterparts residing in urban areas.

Based on the conclusions from the study, some recommendations were formulated for policy makers and teacher training institutions. Since the motives that were highly rated by the preservice teachers were altruistic and intrinsic in nature, teacher training institutions should try to train teachers in altruism and self-devotion. It is equally prudent for authorities at the colleges of education to attend to excellence in teacher education and optimise support structures at the college level to promote preservice teachers' positive teaching motivations and behaviours. Moreover, to sustain such altruistic and intrinsic principles in the teachers following teacher training, policymakers and employing authorities should offer early career induction and support programmes and provide attractive school working conditions.

Also, educational authorities need to institute programmes that could challenge gender stereotypes with respect to caring and nurturing for children especially at the lower level of schooling and design programmes to provide male preservice teachers with enough knowledge and skills on how to handle and nurture children in classroom settings and also shaping their future. Finally, educational programmes can be organized for preservice teachers residing in urban areas to stimulate their perceived teaching abilities and intrinsic career values to enable them to develop internal passion and interest for teaching.

10. Limitations and directions for future research

While the study has provided deep insights into the motives of preservice teachers in the colleges of education in Ghana, findings should be interpreted with some limitations in mind. The first limitation has to do with the use of FIT choice model which was developed in a context that significantly differ from the study context. Secondly, findings from this study were generated from preservice teachers from only one college of education out of the 46 colleges of education in Ghana and cannot therefore be generalized to all colleges of education in Ghana. Thus, future studies on motivation to choose teaching as a career can draw upon large sample that would warrant the generalization of the study findings to all colleges in Ghana. Also, future studies can be extended to other samples of preservice teachers in Ghana especially those trained in the universities to teach secondary schools. A comparative study between preservice teachers in the colleges of education who are trained to teach at basic schools and preservice teachers trained at the universities to teach at senior high schools will be worthwhile. Finally, further studies should include department as a factor to determine whether differences exist in the motives of preservice teachers for choosing teaching as a career based on the department they belong to.

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