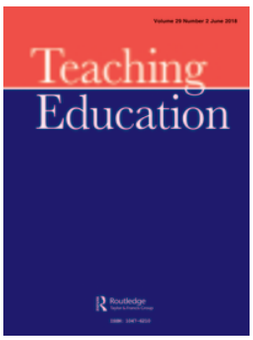

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Factors influencing teaching as a career choice (FIT-Choice) in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to examine the structural validity of the FIT-Choice (Factors Influencing Teaching Choice) scale in the Ghanaian context using teachers in pre-tertiary schools. A cohort of 354 teachers were selected to take part in a quantitative survey, and data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research found that the participants were influenced by social utility value and personal utility value to choose a teaching career rather than extrinsic utility value. The research further showed that, while in teaching, the teachers mainly believed in their expertise, and were satisfied with their choice of a teaching career devoid of dissuasion. The research recommended giving a better opportunity to teachers to enjoy job security, time for family, transfers and social equity.

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KEYWORDS
Teacher motivation; Greater Accra Region of Ghana; FIT-Choice conceptual framework; teaching as a career; quantitative approach

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Teachers are indispensable stakeholders in education without whom no country can achieve its educational goals (Salifu, 2013). Because of this important role, attention needs to be given to teacher motivation as one of the important measures of possibly ensuring that highly qualified personnel are attracted to and retained in the teaching profession to provide quality teaching in Ghanaian schools. This is particularly important given that there are many reported cases of teachers leaving the profession lately for other jobs in the country. For instance, it has been estimated that about 10,000 teachers in pre-tertiary schools (i.e. pre-school, primary school, junior high and senior high schools), representing 5% in the country, leave the classroom every year (Salifu, 2013). Our motivations to conduct this research stemmed from this information in the literature, and also our long-time personal teaching experiences and interactions with many of the teachers indicated that some of them, still staying in the profession, were experiencing burnout, and yet, what was compelling them to hold onto a profession they were not happy in was unclear. The focus of this research was,

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therefore, on these pre-tertiary school teachers, made up of both early career teachers with only zero to five years experience, as well as experienced teachers with six years experience and beyond (see details of classification in Section 2.2).

Apart from Ghana, studies in other countries have also indicated that there are several factors influencing teaching choice and why teachers leave or stay in the profession. For example, in New Zealand, the US and Nigeria, Anthony and Ord (2008), Claeys (2011) and Ipidapo-Obe (2007), respectively, have identified attractive salaries and job recognition as both influential and decision factors affecting a teaching choice. These findings apparently contrast with findings in other countries, such as Singapore and Australia, where Mathew (2005), and Watt and Richardson (2007, 2012), respectively, have found, rather, that job security, time for family and desire to make social contributions are influential and decision factors. Altogether these factors have been noted to be external and internal to teachers (den Brok et al., 2013). The multifaceted nature of these factors gives an indication that would-be teachers and practising teachers in different countries might be influenced by different factors, both in making teaching a career choice and in deciding to stay in teaching.

1.2. The educational context in Ghana

The formal education system in Ghana has two broad levels, namely, pre-tertiary and tertiary. The pre-tertiary level consists of 11 years of basic education (first cycle): beginning from two years kindergarten and continuing to six years primary, up to three years junior high school, summing up to 11 years. Students write an external examination called Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) at the end of the 11th year. It is currently being considered as a terminal level. This means that, depending on a student's performance at the BECE and/or willingness to continue, the student may end schooling at this stage or pursue another three-year senior high or technical education (second cycle) which is also terminal level. Another external examination known as the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSSCE) is written at the end of the third year. Again, depending on the performance of a candidate and/or other factors, such as financial capability, the student may choose to continue to the next and final level, which is tertiary.

The tertiary level is the second broad level. However, climbing up the academic ladder, it is the third level. It is offered in three modes as: university, college of education and college of nursing. University education in the country has three terminal stages. Stage one is a four-year bachelor's degree, stage two is a one-year or two-year master's degree and stage three is a three-year or four-year doctoral degree. The colleges of education and the colleges of nursing take three years to complete and diploma certificates are offered in basic education and in nursing, respectively.

Career paths for prospective teachers in the country start at the tertiary level where a person either enrols into a college of education to pursue a three-year diploma programme in basic education or enters into a bachelor of education programme in any of the universities offering teacher training programmes. Currently, learning at the tertiary level takes the blended approach, which allows instructional delivery via both distance and traditional face-to-face modes. All pre-service teachers in the country are registered and given special identification numbers upon successful graduation.

1.3. Prior research on teacher motivation

Previous studies have pointed to the existence of extensive research on teacher motivation all over the world. In Ghana, for instance, some studies by Tawia-Armah (2010) and Mensah (2011) have shown that working in rural schools is considerably more difficult and thus more de-motivating than working in urban schools. This is mainly due to unbearable living and working conditions in remote areas. Other studies by Agezo (2010) and Asadullah (2006) have established that teachers who work in Ghanaian schools as natives tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction than their colleagues who are non-natives. This is because locally based teachers are more likely to have supportive extended family and social networks, be known to the community and have higher levels of commitment to promoting education and development activities in the area (Agezo, 2010; Asadullah, 2006).

Turning our attention to other developing African countries, in the Gambia, Cowen (2007), in a research report on teachers' motivations and perceptions of their profession, has revealed that 28% of teachers interviewed had the desire to leave the profession in the following five years to seek perceived better working conditions in other professions. It is interesting to note that most teachers who are demotivated but choose to stay in the profession often engage in substandard professional practices such as absenteeism, lateness and misuse of instructional times (Salifu, 2013). For example, it is on record that in Malawi, Kenya and Uganda, absentee rates among primary school teachers are high and stand at 18, 20 and 27%, respectively (Tanaka, 2010). These rates compare to an equally 27% high rate among teachers at the same level in Ghana (Ghana Centre for Democratic Development, 2008). In Nigeria, Ipidapo-Obe (2007) and Ololube (2006) have revealed that teacher-related sources of job dissatisfaction seem to have a greater impact on teacher performance. The dissatisfaction has largely been attributed to unattractive pay and the lack of recognition for the teaching profession.

Elsewhere in the developed World, the UNESCO and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have reported that contemporary teacher attrition rates even in the developed countries are high and vary between 5 and 30% (Salifu, 2013). In Germany, for example, it is reported that less than 10% of teachers stay in the teaching profession until retirement (Watt et al., 2012). In the United Kingdom, the number of teachers leaving the profession through premature retirement far exceeds the number staying until retirement (Barmby & Coe, 2004). In the Czech Republic, it is estimated that about 25% of the young, newly trained teachers do not join the teaching profession (Smithers & Robinson, 2003). Similarly, in Australia, estimations are that about 25% of teachers leave the profession within their initial five years of professional practice (Fourie, 2010). However, in Hong Kong, teacher attrition appears minimal with a wastage rate of only between 3.9 and 9.3% in the primary sector and between 3.9 and 6.6% in the secondary sector from 2001 to 2009 (Choi & Tang, 2011). This minimal rate in Hong Kong has been attributed to factors such as payment of competitive wages and better recognition for the teachers.

Despite the seemingly gloomy picture regarding the teaching profession painted above, Watt and Richardson's (2012) international comparative research has presented a rather more positive picture about the profession. According to them, in Australia, it is not uncommon to find many people (young men and women) from diverse career backgrounds including engineering, medicine, veterinary surgery, solicitors, accountants, psychologists and company executives leaving their more prestigious and lucrative professions to pursue

teaching as a career. And it might be interesting to explore what motivates other professionals to choose teaching. Our analysis and synthesis of the literature have so far revealed that previous research has mostly focused on teacher attrition and its underlying causes. The FIT-Choice scale, in particular, has been used mainly with pre-service teachers (e.g. den Brok et al., 2013; Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2007, 2012; William & Forgasz, 2009) to the apparent neglect of practising teachers, and this is a major gap this research intends to fill.

1.4. The problem

As evidenced in the section above, a number of studies have been conducted over a long period of time on teachers across continents such as Asia, America, Australia and Europe to examine and find the reasons why some people choose teaching as a career and often leave, especially within the first five years of their professional practice. Prominent among these studies are those conducted by Anthony and Ord (2008) in New Zealand, and Claeys (2011) in the US which have found that attractive salaries and job recognition are both influential and decision factors affecting a teaching choice. The studies differ from those conducted by Mathew (2005) in Singapore, and Watt and Richardson (2007, 2012) in Australia, which have found, rather, that job security, time for family and desire to make social contributions are the influential and decision factors in a teaching choice.

A growing body of literature (e.g. Javaid, 2009; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Lawver & Torres, 2011; William & Forgasz, 2009) has posited that teacher motivation is not a phenomenon unique to only the continents enumerated above; it is a global issue and the challenge of attracting and retaining well-qualified teachers has become a common difficulty across the globe. Despite this development, previous research has focused mainly on pre-service teachers outside Africa. Consequently, it appears not much has been done in Africa, particularly in Ghana (Agezo, 2010), to conduct a study that would unravel the motivational factors influencing a teaching choice among practising teachers, and why some of the teachers choose to stay in the profession until retirement. Given that there is high teacher attrition (Salifu, 2013; Tawia-Armah, 2010) in the country, a study that investigates the motivation for becoming a teacher, as well as the factors that sustain the motivations of teacher-stayers, is worthwhile.

1.5. Aim of the research

Watt and Richardson (2007) developed the FIT-Choice (Factors Influencing Teaching as a career choice) scale based on Expectancy-Value work of Eccles and colleagues (Eccles (Parsons) et al., 1983). The scale had been utilised in many countries, and in varied cultural contexts indicating that '… teacher motivation is an issue of concern which represents a common problem for researchers from many different countries (Watt & Richardson, 2012, p. 186)'. Our aim in conducting the research was to validate the scale in the Ghanaian context, among teachers in pre-tertiary schools, so as to ascertain whether what pertained elsewhere on the global scene was applicable or otherwise to the local context. In doing this, we hoped to contribute to the global debate on factors influencing teaching as a career choice.

1.6. Objectives and research questions

Grounded in the FIT-Choice model, our research objectives were threefold. The first was to examine the motivational factors influencing teaching as a career choice among teachers at the pre-tertiary level of education in Ghana. It was also to examine the teachers' perceptions about their teaching profession, and finally to examine the reasons why the teachers decided to stay in the profession. In view of these objectives, we posed the following research questions:

(1) What factors influence teaching as a career choice among teachers at the pre-tertiary level of education in Ghana?
(2) What are the teachers' perceptions about their teaching career?
(3) What reasons account for the teachers' decision to stay in the teaching profession?

1.7. Theoretical framework: choice of teaching career

The theoretical framework in Figure 1, known as the FIT-Choice model, was first developed and used by Watt and Richardson (2007). Since then, many researchers interested in teacher motivation have adopted and (re)used the framework in different sociocultual contexts all over the world in order to compare and contrast findings to extend the frontiers of knowledge. For instance, in the Netherlands (den Brok et al., 2013; Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012), Turkey (Eren & Tezel, 2010), the USA (Lawver & Torres, 2011; Smith & Pantana, 2010), Germany and Norway (Watt et al., 2012).

In research, the choice of a theoretical framework is essentially informed by contextual, methodological approach as well as the nature of the problem that is being investigated.

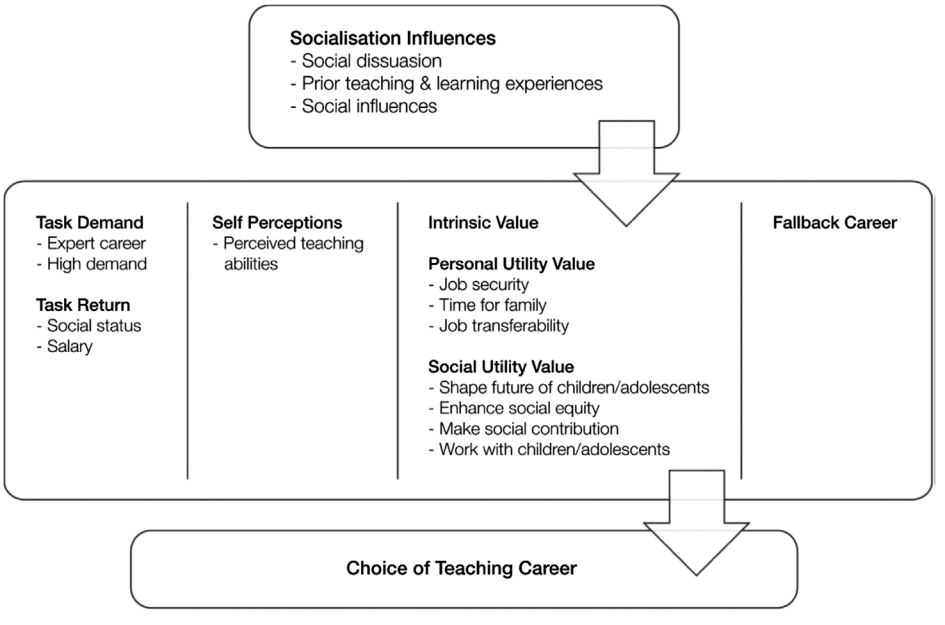

Figure 1. Theoretical framework. Source: Watt and Richardson (2007).

Our research used the quantitative approach to investigate the motivational factors influencing teaching as a career choice at the pre-tertiary level of education in Ghana. We settled on the FIT-Choice model as a theoretical framework because it aligns with the positivist paradigm which underpinned our research. The positive paradigm adheres to universal truth and objectivity in research, and has an ontological view of the world as an external entity constituting discrete and quantifiable observable facts (Collins, 2010; Crowther & Lancaster, 2008).

Another reason was our belief that the motivational factors explicated in it were quite relevant to the teaching context in Ghana, given that many qualified young people might be motivated by some or all of the factors to embrace teaching due to their own backgrounds and ambitions to succeed in life.

The FIT-Choice framework is based on the Expectancy-Value work of Eccles and colleagues (Eccles (Parsons) et al., 1983) which has argued that '…values and ability beliefs are crucial motivations in predicting career choices' (den Brok et al., 2013, p. 4). Drawing on the theoretical framework in Figure 1, it is clear that socialisation influences, such as social dissuasion, prior teaching and learning experiences as well as social influences, play a major role in determining intrinsic motivation rooted in two sets of intrinsic values – personal utility value and social utility value. Personal utility values are the extent to which people see tasks to relate to their personal goals (den Brok et al., 2013).What constitutes a personal utility value, in the sense of this framework, is job security, time for family and job transferability. On the other hand, what constitutes a social utility value includes shaping the future of children or adolescents, enhancing social equity, making a social contribution and working with children or adolescents. In den Brok et al.'s (2013) view, the two intrinsic values are 'the enjoyment an individual experiences when carrying out a certain task' (p. 4). These intrinsic values do not alone influence the choice of a teaching career but other extrinsic values are equally important. Examples of extrinsic values are task demand (expert career, high demand) versus task return (social status, salary) on the one hand, and self-perceptions (perceived teaching abilities) versus fallback career factors, on the other. Extrinsic values have been explained as the extent to which a task has a probability of being useful in the future (den Brok et al., 2013).

2. Method

2.1. Design of the research

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to establish the profiles of motivations, perceptions and reasons for a teaching choice at the pre-tertiary level of education in Ghana. The design was chosen because of the intention of the study to make a generalisation based on a representative sample of the population (Creswell, 2009) of teachers in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

2.2. Sample and sampling techniques

Two sampling techniques (purposive and simple random sampling) were used to select the participants for the research. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, relying on the assumption that it was the most cosmopolitan region in the country and was likely to have teachers with varied cultural experiences which

Table 1. Details of participants' biographic data.

Age range	No.	%
21–30	56	15.8
31–40	118	33.3
41–50	128	36.2
51–60	52	14.7
Sex		
Male	118	33.3
Female	236	66.7
Marital status		
Married	234	66.1
Single	84	23.7
Divorced	14	4.0
Separated	8	2.3
Widowed	2	.6
Not specified	12	3.4
Academic/professional qualifications		
Initial teaching cert	18	5.1
Diploma	90	25.4
Bachelor's degree	134	37.9
Master's degree	106	29.9
Not specified	6	1.7
No. of years in teaching		
1–5	48	13.6
6–10	62	17.5
11–15	50	14.1
16–20	86	24.3
21–25	48	13.6
26–30	46	13.0
31+	14	4.0

may be relevant to the outcome of the research. The simple random sampling technique was also used because of our intention to arrive at a representative sample despite the large size of the target population (i.e. about 4500 pre-tertiary level of education teachers). Using the technique, therefore, 500 teachers were selected based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) standard procedure for determining sample size. The selection was done using the 'blind draw' method suggested by Burns and Bush (1995). The technique enabled us to blindly choose the participants from an alphabetical list of teachers in the region obtained from the Greater Accra Regional Directorate of Education. Although 500 participants were selected, 354 actually participated in the research giving us a response rate of about 71%. As shown in Table 1, the participants differed in terms of the following biographic data: age, sex, marital status, academic/professional qualifications and number of years in teaching.

2.3. Ethics

In line with ethical standards, the participants were briefed on the nature of the research and their written consent was sought and achieved prior to the commencement of the research. Participation in the research was therefore voluntary and the participants had the choice to withdraw at any stage of the research. The participants were also assured of anonymity. In place of institutional ethical clearance, written permissions were applied for and obtained from the Greater Accra Regional Directorate of Education.

2.4. The FIT-Choice scale

The research adopted the FIT-Choice (Factors Influencing Teaching Choice) scale which was developed and used in an Australian context among pre-service teachers by Watt and Richardson (2007).

The scale had four parts ('A', 'B', 'C' & 'D'). Part 'A' elicited demographic data from participants. Part 'B' sought to find participants' views on influential factors affecting teacher motivation, whereas part 'C' examined beliefs about the teaching profession in Ghana. The last part ('D') focused on factors influencing the teachers' decisions to stay in teaching. Responses to the various categories of questions in the four parts were rated according to a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important).

2.5. Procedure

Data collection process began with a formal letter written to seek permission from the Greater Accra Regional Director of Education. Personal visits were then made to as many pre-tertiary schools in the Region as possible to find volunteers, after which the questionnaires were personally distributed, face-to-face, to interested teachers. This was done because of our belief that the administration of the instrument in person would bring about the anticipated co-operation, at least, better than commissioning others to assist in that direction. We gave two weeks to participants to complete the questionnaire. However, we allowed a one week extension for participants who could not complete the task on schedule.

2.6. Analyses

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data via the SPSS version 22.0.0.0. The SPSS was chosen because of its efficacy in analysing complex data (Pallant, 2007). Also, it has proven to be a reliable tool for running all data meant for descriptive and inferential statistics (Field, 2009).

The descriptive analysis involved first, putting the data into frequencies and percentages, and subsequently following that with a calculation of the means and the standard deviations of the total responses per each item in parts 'B', 'C' and 'D' of the survey questionnaire. Before proceeding with the analyses, the items in each part of the questionnaire were grouped to reflect their implications for the 20 key theorised influential factors as well as beliefs and decision factors as delineated in the FIT-Choice Conceptual Framework in Figure 1.

Table 2 presents the theorised influential factors as follows: ability, intrinsic career value, fallback career, job security, time for family, job transferability, bludging, shaping future of children and adolescents, enhancing social equity, making social contribution, working with children or adolescents, prior teaching and learning experience and social influence. Table 3 also presents the theorised beliefs about teaching and reasons for staying in the teaching profession in the study area as follows: expert career, high demand, social status, teacher morale, good salary, social dissuasion and satisfaction factors with choice. The letters 'B', 'C' and 'D' affixed to various adjoining items on the tables represent parts 'B', 'C' and 'D', respectively, of the questionnaire where the items were sourced, and the corresponding numbers also represent the numbering order of the instrument.

Table 2. Theorised influential factors affecting teaching as a career choice.

Factor	Factor (where applicable)	Higher order Item 'I chose to become a teacher because …'
Ability		B5 I have the qualities of a good teacher
		B19 I have good teaching skills
		B43 Teaching is a career suited to my abilities
Intrinsic career value		B12 I like teaching
		B1 I am interested in teaching
		B7 I've always wanted to be a teacher
Fallback career		B48 I chose teaching as a last resort career
		B11 I was unsure of what career I wanted
		B35 I was not accepted into my first choice career
Job security	Personal utility value	B14 Teaching will offer a steady career path
		B38 Teaching will be a secure job
		B27 Teaching will provide a reliable income
Job transferability		B22 A teaching qualification is recognised everywhere
		B45 A teaching job will allow me to choose where I wish to live
		B8 Teaching may give me the chance to work abroad
Bludging		B4 As a teacher I will have lengthy holidays
		B18 As a teacher I will have a short working day
Shape future of children/adolescents		B23 Teaching will allow me to influence the next generation
		B9 Teaching will allow me to shape child/adolescent values
Enhance social equity		B36 Teaching will allow me to raise the ambitions of the underprivileged youth
		B49 Teaching will allow me to benefit the socially disadvantaged
Make social contribution		B6 Teaching allows me to provide a service to society
		B20 Teachers make a worthwhile social contribution.
		B31 Teaching enables me to 'give back' to society
		B54 Teaching will allow me to work against social disadvantage
Work with children/ adolescents		B53 Teaching will allow me to have an impact on children/adolescents
		B37 I like working with children/adolescents
		B13 I want a job that involves working with children/adolescents
		B26 I want to work in a child/adolescent-centred environment
Prior teaching and learning experiences		B17 I have had inspirational teachers
		B39 I have had positive learning experiences
		B30 I have had good teachers as role models
Social influences		B40 People I've worked with think I should become a teacher
		B24 My family think I should become a teacher
		B3 My friends think I should become a teacher

To determine the suitability of the various FIT-Choice subscales for use among practising teachers at the pre-tertiary level of education in Ghana, they were subjected to Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFAs). This was done using the Partial Least Squares (PLS)-based Structural Equations Modeling (SEM). Within the PLS framework, validity was assessed in both convergent validity and discriminant validity tests.

The convergent validity test measured the internal consistency of the various indicators within the subscales thereby ensuring that the indicators reflected the properties of their respective subscales. It also ensured that the indicators explained more than half of the total variation for each subscale that was measured using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) score of 0.5 and above (Nunnally & Berstein, 1994).

The discriminant validity test enabled us to ensure that each subscale was measured by only its indicators. The test was guided by the Fornel Larcker criterion that compared the square root of the AVE scores of each subscale with its correlation with other subscales (Nunnally & Berstein, 1994). Our aim for conducting the test was achieved because the square

Table 3. Theorised beliefs about teaching and reasons for staying in teaching.

Factor	Factor (where applicable)	Higher order factor Item
Expert career	Task demand	C10 Do you think teaching requires high levels of expert knowledge?
		C15 Do you think teachers need highly specialised knowledge?
		C14 Do you think teachers need high levels of technical knowledge?
High demand		C11 Do you think teaching is hard work?
		C2 Do you think teachers have a heavy work load?
		C7 Do you think teaching is emotionally demanding?
Social status	Task return	C4 Do you believe teachers are perceived as professionals?
		C12 Do you believe teaching is a well- respected career?
		C8 Do you believe teaching is perceived as a high-status occupation?
Teacher morale		C5 Do you think teachers have a high morale?
		C13 Do you think teachers feel their occupation has high social status?
		C9 Do you think teachers feel valued by society?
Good salary		C3 Do you think teachers earn a good salary?
		C1 Do you think teaching is well paid?
Social dissuasion		D2 Were you encouraged to pursue careers other than teaching?
		D6 Did others influence you to consider careers other than teaching?
		D4 Did others tell you teaching was not a good career choice?
Satisfaction with choice		D5 How happy are you with your decision to become a teacher?
		D1 How carefully have you thought about becoming a teacher?
		D3 How satisfied are you with your choice of becoming a teacher?

root of the AVE scores of each subscale showed a value greater than its correlation with other subscales.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive results

3.1.1. Motivational factors

Table 4 presents the descriptive field data on the factors influencing teaching as a career choice in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The table is based on the 13 key theorised motivational or influential factors that have been explicated in Figure 1. From the table, it is clear that the most rated influential factor affecting teaching as a career choice in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana is the quest to shape the future of children and adolescents in schools. The factor has given a mean (*M*) of 5.64 and standard deviation (SD) of 1.674. In a successive order, the next factor with a higher ranking is the desire to make social contribution ($M = 5.39$; $SD = 1.674$) followed by the ability to teach ($M = 5.17$; $SD = 1.689$), the desire to work with children/adolescents ($M = 5.06$; $SD = 1.849$) and prior teaching and learning experiences ($M = 5.02$; $SD = 1.754$). In contrast, the last five least rated important factors were: bludging ($M = 3.45$; $SD = 2.608$), social influence ($M = 3.04$; $SD = 1.987$) and fallback career considerations ($M = 3.02$; $SD = 2.078$).

3.1.2. Perception and decision factors

Table 5 presents details of the descriptive data on the outcome of our inquiry into the participants' beliefs or perceptions about teaching as well as the reasons informing their decision to stay in the teaching profession in Ghana. This table is also generated based on the seven key theorised beliefs and decision factors which we have explained in Figure 1.

The first five factors on the table show the teachers' perception that teaching required expert knowledge to perform received the highest rating ($M = 5.71$; $SD = 1.399$). It is followed

Table 4. Descriptive data on FIT-Choice influential subscales.

Factor	Number of items	Mean	Standard deviation
Ability	3	5.17	1.689
Intrinsic career value	3	4.88	1.891
Fallback career	3	3.02	2.078
Job security	3	4.27	1.908
Time for family	3	4.1	1.96
Job transferability	3	3.47	1.891
Bludging	2	3.45	2.608
Shape future of children and adolescents	2	5.64	1.674
Enhance social equity	2	4.71	1.867
Make social contribution	4	5.39	1.674
Work with children/adolescents	4	5.06	1.849
Prior teaching and learning experiences	3	5.02	1.754
Social influence	3	3.04	1.987

Table 5. Descriptive data on FIT-Choice beliefs and decision subscales.

Factor	Number of items	Mean	Standard deviation
Expert career	3	5.71	1.399
High demand	3	5.58	1.536
Social status	3	4.04	1.882
Teacher morale	3	4.12	1.818
Good salary	2	2.23	1.613
Social dissuasion	3	4.2	2.167
Satisfaction with choice	3	4.34	1.965

by the perception that teachers were in high demand ($M = 5.78$; SD = 1.536), had high social status ($M = 4.04$; SD = 1.882) and high morale ($M = 4.12$; SD = 1.818). The lowest ranking went to the perception that they had a good salary ($M = 2.23$; SD = 1.613).

The last two factors on the table capture the decision scale that was used to find the reasons for the teachers' preference to stay in teaching. Of the two, satisfaction with choice of career accounted for the positive reason why the teachers had remained in teaching ($M = 4.34$; SD = 1.965) while social dissuasion contributed to the negative reason they had decided to do so ($M = 4.2$; SD = 2.167).

3.2. Inferential results

With the aim of examining the structural validity of Watt and Richardson's (2007) FIT-Choice scale among teachers in pre-tertiary schools in Ghana, three CFAs were performed on the motivational, belief and decision constructs. Each of these is explained as follows.

3.2.1. CFA of motivational/influential constructs

The motivators consisted of 13 factors with 38 indicators. The results showed all the indicators loaded well for their respective subscales except for the indicator 'Teaching will allow me to work against social disadvantage' under the subscale 'make social contribution' which was deleted because of poor loading (see Table 6). Furthermore, the AVE scores for all the subscales were also within the acceptable threshold of 0.5 and above (Nunnaly & Berstein, 1994). This has shown that the indicators have explained over 50% of the total variation in each subscale. Similarly, the composite reliability scores across the board were also above the 0.7 acceptable minimum (see Table 7 for the AVE and composite reliability scores).

Table 6. Factor loadings on FIT-Choice subscales.

Factor / Indicators	Loadings
Influential Factors	
Ability	
I have good teaching skills	.80
I have the qualities of a good teacher	.77
Teaching is a career suited to my abilities	.75
Bludging	
As a teacher I will have a short working day	.89
As a teacher I will have lengthy holidays	.81
Enhance social equity	
Teaching will allow me to raise the ambitions of underprivileged youth	.83
Teaching will allow me to benefit the socially disadvantaged	.81
Fallback career	
I was not accepted into my first choice career	.79
I chose teaching as a last resort career	.76
I was unsure of what career I wanted	.75
Intrinsic career value	
I 've always wanted to be a teacher	.91
I am interested in teaching	.85
I like teaching	.83
Make social contribution	
Teaching allows me to provide a service to society	.85
Teachers make a worthwhile social contribution	.81
Teaching enables me to give back to society	.74
Prior teaching and learning experiences	
I have had inspirational teachers	.85
I have had good teachers as role-models	.83
I have had positive learning experiences	.73
Job security	
Teaching will offer a steady career path	.79
Teaching will be a secure job	.74
Teaching will provide a reliable income	.63
Shape future of children/adolescents	
Teaching will allow me to influence the next generation	.91
Teaching will allow me to shape child/adolescent values	.89
Social influences	
People I've worked with think I should become a teacher	.93
My friends think I should become a teacher	.71
My family think I should become a teacher	.61
Time for family	
Teaching hours will fit with the responsibilities of having a family	.88
School holidays will fit in with family commitment	.77
Part-time teaching could allow more family time	.44
Job transferability	
A teaching qualification is recognised everywhere	.88
A teaching job will allow me to choose where I wish to live	.63
Teaching may give me the chance to work abroad	.58
Work with children/adolescents	
I want a job that involves working with children/adolescents	.88
I want to work in a child-/adolescent-centred environment	.86
I like working with children/adolescents	.86
Teaching will allow me to have an impact on children/adolescents	.65
Belief Factors	
Expert career	
Do you think teaching requires high levels of expert knowledge?	.93
Do you think teachers need highly specialised knowledge?	.82
Do you think teachers need high levels of technical knowledge?	.80
Good salary	
Do you think teaching is well paid?	.89
Do you think teachers earn a good salary?	.84
High demand	
Do you think teaching is hard work?	.88
Do you think teachers have a heavy workload?	.80
Social status	

(*Continued*)

Table 6. (*Continued*)

Factor / Indicators	Loadings
Do you believe teaching is a well-respected career?	.87
Do you believe teaching is perceived as a high-status occupation?	.81
Teacher morale	
Do you think teachers feel valued by society?	.96
Do you think teachers feel their occupation has high social status?	.79
Decision Factors	
Satisfaction with choice	
How happy are you with your decision to become a teacher?	.96
How satisfied are you with your choice of becoming a teacher?	.88
Social dissuasion	
Did others influence you to consider careers other than teaching?	.91
Were you encouraged to pursue careers other than teaching?	.81

Table 7. AVE and composite reliability scores for FIT-Choice factors.

Factors	AVE	Composite reliability
Influential factors		
Ability	.60	.82
Bludging	.72	.84
Equity	.67	.80
Fallback career	.59	.81
Intrinsic value	.75	.90
Make contribution	.53	.81
Prior teaching	.65	.85
Security	.52	.76
Shape future	.81	.89
Social	.58	.80
Time for family	.52	.75
Transferability	.50	.75
Work with children	.66	.89
Belief factors		
Expert career	.73	.89
Good salary	.75	.85
High demand	.71	.83
Social status	.70	.82
Teacher morale	.77	.87
Decision factors		
Satisfaction with choice	.65	.84
Social dissuasion	.54	.76

Table 8 presents the results of the discriminant validity test for the influential factors. From the table, it is clear that the square root of the AVE scores of each subscale is greater than its correlations with other subscales. In identifying the true factors that make up the influential (Table 9) factors, second-order path analysis was also done and yielded significant results for all the subscales except for the fallback career subscale (see Table 11).

3.2.2. CFA of belief/perception constructs

The belief factors were made up of five factors with 14 indicators. Due to poor loadings, three items, namely, 'Do you think teaching is emotionally demanding?', 'Do you believe teachers are perceived as professionals?' and 'Do you think teachers have a high morale?', were deleted from 'high demand', 'social status' and 'teacher morale' constructs of the original scale, respectively. Tables 7 and 8 provide further results of the convergent and discriminant validity tests which were also done. A second-order path analysis also revealed the constructs

Table 8. Discriminant validity for influential factors.

Factor	Ability	Bludging	Enhance social equity	Fallback career	Intrinsic value	Make contribution	Prior teaching	Job security	Shape future	Social influences	Time for family	Transferability	Work with children
Ability	.77[a]												
Bludging	.16	.85											
Equity	.62	.10	.82										
Fallback career	−.13	.38	.01	.77									
Intrinsic value	.66	.08	.52	−.24	.86								
Make contribution	.71	.01	.52	−.29	.49	.73							
Prior teaching	.72	.07	.54	−.20	.63	.64	.81						
Security	.37	.33	.33	.17	.37	.35	.32	.72					
Shape future	.60	.04	.47	−.21	.45	.71	.44	.20	.90				
Social	.31	.43	.23	.34	.18	.08	.15	.29	.05	.76			
Time for family	.40	.55	.24	.14	.30	.32	.39	.56	.23	.34	.72		
Transferability	.40	.38	.39	.21	.27	.33	.36	.46	.19	.31	.42	.71	
Work with children	.69	.13	.67	−.21	.73	.58	.68	.40	.53	.18	.41	.35	.81

[a]Diagonal elements are AVE scores.

Table 9. Discriminant validity for belief factors.

Factors	Expert career	Good Salary	High demand	Social Status	Teacher morale
Expert career	.85				
Good salary	−.05	.86			
High demand	.52	−.13	.84		
Social status	.06	.39	−.11	.84	
Teacher morale	.08	.31	−.11	.65	.88

Table 10. Discriminant validity for decision factors.

Factors	Satisfaction with choice	Social dissuasion
Satisfaction with choice	.80	.00
Social dissuasion	−.15	.74

as being significantly explained with the exception of 'expert career' and 'high demand' constructs (see Table 11).

3.2.3. CFA of decision constructs

The decision factors comprised two factors with six indicators (see Table 6). All the indicators loaded well on their various factors except two indicators that were deleted as follows: 'How carefully have you thought about becoming a teacher?' and 'Did others tell you teaching was not a good career choice?' The indicators appeared under the constructs 'satisfaction with choice' and 'social dissuasion', respectively. The AVE and composite reliability scores for all the indicators were, however, within the acceptable thresholds, thus ensuring convergent validity (see Table 7). Their discriminant validity was also achieved as the various AVE scores for each construct were greater than their respective correlations with other constructs (see Table 10). The second-order constructs for the decision factors also yielded significant results for the satisfaction with choice factor but showed insignificant relationship with the social dissuasion factor (see Table 11).

4. Discussion

In this research, we have investigated the motivational factors influencing teaching as a career choice among teachers at the pre-tertiary level of education in Ghana, but with a specific focus on the Greater Accra Region purposively selected. We have also examined the teachers' beliefs or perceptions about the teaching profession, and have tried to find out the reasons behind the teachers' choice to stay in the teaching career despite perceived unattractive working conditions in the country.

Research question 1 asks: What factors influence teaching as a career choice among teachers at the pre-tertiary level of education in Ghana?

Table 3 provides the basis of our discussion of the descriptive results on the factors influencing teaching as a career choice among teachers at the pre-tertiary level of education in Ghana. The results indicate that most of the highly rated influential factors for the choice of a teaching career among the participants emanated from social utility and personal utility values. For the inferential results, the CFA has shown high loadings on their respective factors. The AVE scores, composite reliability scores and discriminant validity tests have also generally given positive outcomes (see Section 3.2.1), suggesting that most of the items that make

Table 11. Path coefficients for FIT-Choice factors.

Factors	Path coefficient	Standard error	*T* statistic	*P* value
Influential factors				
Ability	.87	.03	31.53	.00
Bludging	.24	.12	1.98	.05
Equity	.75	.05	14.85	.00
Fallback career	.32	.36	.89	.38
Intrinsic value	.80	.04	19.73	.00
Make contribution	.80	.06	13.20	.00
Prior teaching	.81	.04	20.80	.00
Security	.55	.10	5.28	.00
Shape future	.68	.09	7.55	.00
Social	.30	.10	2.97	.00
Time for family	.55	.10	5.42	.00
Transferability	.51	.09	5.37	.00
Work with children	.87	.03	31.20	.00
Belief factors				
Expert career	.18	.37	.49	.63
Good salary	.62	.25	2.45	.01
High demand	.23	.32	.70	.49
Social status	.88	.19	4.70	.00
Teacher morale	.86	.18	4.78	.00
Decision factors				
Satisfaction with choice	.8424	.0817	10.3098	.00
Social dissuasion	−.6532	.6451	1.0126	.31

up the influential factors of the FIT-Choice scale were also relevant to the Ghanaian context.

In summary, the findings appear to corroborate with those of previous studies conducted in several countries including Australia (Watt & Richardson, 2007), the Netherlands (den Brok et al., 2013; Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012), Turkey (Eren & Tezel, 2010) and the USA (Lawver & Torres, 2011; Smith & Pantana, 2010). An exception, however, is that whereas in previous research (e.g. Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012) the ability to teach was considered the most influential factor in the choice of teaching in the Netherlands, in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, shaping the future of children or adolescents was, rather, the most important influential factor in that regard. This difference might have to do with the fact that most Ghanaians have a strong sense of responsibility in terms of raising children in line with traditional values. The difference, perhaps, also confirms why most young people still go into teaching in Ghana despite the widely held notion that the occupation is not financially attractive in the country. The fact that fallback career had the lowest rating descriptively, and also yielded an insignificant result in the inferential order path analysis (see Table 10) among the motivations for choosing the teaching profession, buttresses and bolsters the above argument.

Research questions 2 and 3 ask: What are the teachers' perceptions about the teaching profession? What reasons account for the teachers' decision to stay in the teaching profession?

Our discussion of the descriptive results in this section is with reference to Table 4. While the first five factors on the table show the teachers' perceptions or beliefs about the expertise required to do a teaching job, the last two indicate the teachers' decision to stay in the teaching profession. On the belief scale, the results show that the belief that teaching required high levels of expertise in order to perform received the highest ranking, making

it the most important factor of the scale. This finding appears to be inconsistent with the literature (e.g. de Jesus & Lens, 2005; Yamagata-Lynch & Haudenschild, 2009) which has, rather, suggested that most teachers, especially in the developing world, have negative self-schemas, low morale and motivation and experience burnout in their career. Interestingly, salary consideration contrasts with the above finding because it was the least ranked and not at all important to the teacher participants. This may mean that the teachers have attached a social utility value to their choice of a teaching career already discussed. The finding affirms the finding of research with a similar focus, conducted by Salifu (2013) in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, which found that many people were attracted to enter teaching as a result of selfless and internal motivation.

On the decision scale, the descriptive results indicate that satisfaction with the choice of teaching as a career was of utmost importance to the teachers and contributed significantly in their decision to stay in teaching. This contrasts with social dissuasion which was, rather, not important at all in the teachers' decision. The implication of these contrasting findings is that the region is likely to experience an eventual decline in teacher attrition but a sharp increase in teacher population in the near future. This healthy development also seems to negate and invalidate the popular opinion that most teachers in Ghana go into teaching as a last resort. It further appears to suggest that many teachers' continuous stay in the teaching career in Ghana is due to voluntary decision or volition rather than dissuasions or external influences. Despite the above assertions, an obvious implication that equally cannot be overlooked is that the Ghana Education Service (GES) may gradually lose those teachers who are, rather, attracted to the extrinsic values (task demand and task return factors) of their profession.

Having found that our teacher participants were satisfied and had decided to stay in teaching is an important contribution to knowledge in the field given that it apparently contradicts the findings of many similar studies conducted in other African countries. For example, Cowen's (2007) finding in the Gambia revealed that 28% of teachers interviewed had the desire to leave the profession in the following five years to seek perceived better paying jobs. The situation in Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda was not different. Tanaka (2010), Ipidapo-Obe (2007) and Ololube (2006) have reported that teachers in those countries generally had low professional morale and were dissatisfied with their career, and at the slightest opportunity wanted to leave teaching for other careers. In the case of those who chose to stay in teaching, engagement in substandard professional practice (e.g. absenteeism and lateness to school) was very rife among them, partly contributing to falling standards of education in those countries.

Shifting the focus of the discussion now to the CFA performed to determine the appropriateness of the belief/perception and decision factors of the FIT-Choice scale in the Ghanaian context, the results reveal generally positive factor loadings. The AVE scores, composite reliability scores and discriminant validity tests also yielded satisfactory outcomes making the belief and decision subscales of the FIT-Choice scale also applicable to Ghana. Despite these results, a few of the indicators loaded poorly under 'high demand', 'social status', 'teacher morale (see Section 3.2.2) and 'satisfaction with choice' and 'social dissuasion' (see Section 3.2.3). Poor loadings of the affected subscales may imply that, in the Ghanaian context, our teacher participants did not perceive teaching to be emotionally demanding, nor did they believe teachers were professionals with a high morale. Similarly, the teachers did not show any evidence of thoughtfulness to become teachers, neither were they dissuaded

that teaching was not a good career choice. We find the inferential result on dissuasion in particular interesting because part of the descriptive results similarly reveal that the construct was not important at all in the teachers' decision to stay in teaching.

5. Limitations and future research direction

This research was occasioned by our intention to replicate previous research that has used the FIT-Choice scale developed by Watt and Richardson (2007) to find the factors influencing teaching as a career choice in many parts of the world. We acknowledge that because a purposive sampling procedure was used in choosing only one of the 10 regions of Ghana, our research has a limitation in terms of capacity to generalise for the entire teacher population of the country. Also, the use of the PLS-based SEM in analysing the field data, instead of the co-variance method which was the original analytical procedure used by Watt and Richardson (2007), may constrain efforts at comparing the findings with those of earlier research. Furthermore, only practising teachers were used in the research, excluding pre-service teachers whose motivations for choosing a teaching career were equally important. Future research may, therefore, consider including pre-service teachers and covering a larger part of the country.

6. Conclusion and recommendation

Despite the limitations, this research has found that the motivational factors influencing teaching choice in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana are not very different from those prevailing in other parts of the world. By this revelation, the research arguably contributes significantly to the body of literature on the motivational factors affecting teaching as a career. Specifically, it makes a strong claim that teachers' motives represent a significant aspect of the driving force for their choice of a teaching profession, perceptions about the profession and decisions to stay in the profession.

In line with what is in previous research, this current research posits that most teachers in the region chose to stay in the teaching profession because of intrinsic factors, theorised as personal utility and social utility values, rather than extrinsic values such as task demand and task return factors. It is, therefore, recommended that the Ghana Education Service (GES), which is responsible for policy-making in education, should ensure that teachers are given a better opportunity to enjoy job security, time for their families, transfers and social equity, which are crucial for the sustenance of their personal and social utility values (Appendix 1).

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Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire for teachers in pre-tertiary schools

This research is being carried out as part of a longitudinal study on teachers in Ghana. Your participation in this research is voluntary and you could choose to withdraw at any stage of the research. You are assured of absolute confidentiality as the information you provide will be used only for research purposes.

PART A –Demographic Data

For each of the items below, please tick the box which corresponds with your choice

Age…. 21-30 [ ] 31-40[ ] 41-50[ ] 51-60[ ]

Sex….Male [ ] Female [ ]

Marital Status…. [Married] [Single]… [Divorce]… [Separated]

Academic/Professional Qualifications…. [Cert. 'A'] [Diploma] [Bachelor's Degree] [Master's Degree] Others, please specify…...

Number of Years in Service [1-5]… [6-10]… [11-15]… [11-20]… [21-25]… [26-30]… [31+]

Please briefly state your main reason(s) for choosing to become a teacher:
……
……
……
……

PART B – INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

For each statement below, please rate how important it was in **YOUR** decision to become a teacher, from **1** (not at all important in your decision) to **7** (extremely important in your decision).

Please **CIRCLE** the number that best describes the importance of each.

"I chose to become a teacher because…"

		not at all important						extremely important	
B1.	I am interested in teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B1.
B2.	Part-time teaching could allow more family time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B2.
B3.	My friends think I should become a teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B3.
B4.	As a teacher I will have lengthy holidays	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B4.
B5.	I have the qualities of a good teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B5.
B6.	Teaching allows me to provide a service to society	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B6.
B7.	I've always wanted to be a teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B7.
B8.	Teaching may give me the chance to work abroad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B8.
B9.	Teaching will allow me to shape child/adolescent values	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B9.
B11.	I was unsure of what career I wanted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B11.
B12.	I like teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B12.
B13.	I want a job that involves working with children/adolescents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B13.
B14.	Teaching will offer a steady career path	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B14.
B16.	Teaching hours will fit with the responsibilities of having a family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B16.
B17.	I have had inspirational teachers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B17.
B18.	As a teacher I will have a short working day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B18.
B19.	I have good teaching skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B19.
B20.	Teachers make a worthwhile social contribution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B20.
B22.	A teaching qualification is recognised everywhere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B22.
B23.	Teaching will allow me to influence the next generation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B23.
B24.	My family think I should become a teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	B24.

B26.	I want to work in a child/adolescent-centred environment	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	B26.
B27.	Teaching will provide a reliable income	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	B27.
B29.	School holidays will fit in with family commitments	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	B29.
B30.	I have had good teachers as role-models	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	B30.

"I chose to become a teacher because…"

		not at all important	extremely important	
B31.	Teaching enables me to 'give back' to society	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		B31.
B35.	I was not accepted into my first-choice career	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		B35.
B36.	Teaching will allow me to raise the ambitions of underprivileged youth	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		B36.
B37.	I like working with children/adolescents	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		B37.
B38.	Teaching will be a secure job	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		B38.
B39.	I have had positive learning experiences	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		B39.
B40.	People I've worked with think I should become a teacher	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		B40.
B43.	Teaching is a career suited to my abilities	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		B43.
B45.	A teaching job will allow me to choose where I wish to live	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		B45.
B48.	I chose teaching as a last-resort career	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		B48.
B49.	Teaching will allow me to benefit the socially disadvantaged	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		B49.
B53.	Teaching will allow me to have an impact on children/adolescents	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		B53.
B54.	Teaching will allow me to work against social disadvantage	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		B54.

PART C – BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING

For each question below, please rate the extent to which **YOU** agree it is true about teaching, from
1 (not at all) to **7** (extremely). Please **CIRCLE** the number that best describes your agreement for each

		not at all	extremely	
C1.	Do you think teaching is well paid?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		C1.
C2.	Do you think teachers have a heavy workload?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		C2.
C3.	Do you think teachers earn a good salary?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		C3.
C4.	Do you believe teachers are perceived as professionals?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		C4.
C5.	Do you think teachers have high morale?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		C5.
C7.	Do you think teaching is emotionally demanding?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		C6.

C8.	Do you believe teaching is perceived as a high-status occupation?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	C7.
C9.	Do you think teachers feel valued by society?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	C8.
C10.	Do you think teaching requires high levels of expert knowledge?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	C9.
C11.	Do you think teaching is hard work?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	C10.
C12.	Do you believe teaching is a well-respected career?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	C11.
C13.	Do you think teachers feel their occupation has high social status?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	C12.
C14.	Do you think teachers need high levels of technical knowledge?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	C13.
C15	Do you think teachers need highly specialised knowledge?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	C15.

PART D – YOUR DECISION TO BECOME A TEACHER

For each question below, please rate the extent to which it is true for **YOU**, from **1** (not at all) to **7** (extremely). Please **CIRCLE** the number that best describes your agreement for each.

		not at all	extremely	
D1.	How carefully have you thought about becoming a teacher?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		D1.
D2.	Were you encouraged to pursue careers other than teaching?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		D2.
D3.	How satisfied are you with your choice of becoming a teacher?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		D3.
D4.	Did others tell you teaching was not a good career choice?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		D4.
D5.	How happy are you with your decision to become a teacher?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		D5.
D6.	Did others influence you to consider careers other than teaching?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		D6.

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