



Choosing Teaching as a Career: Perspective of Pre-Service Teachers in Cameroon

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. The first author came up with the idea and topic, designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. The second and third authors managed the analyses of the study. The fourth author managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The Higher Teachers' Training Colleges (HTTCs) and Higher Teachers' Technical Training Colleges (HTTTCs) in Cameroon prepare all teachers seeking to be employed within the education service in Cameroon. In the last decade, Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) and Ecole Normale Supérieure d'Enseignement Technique (ENSET)'s enrolments for initial teacher preparation programs have grown significantly, with peaks in numbers during the recession years. There is also some evidence of attrition when beginning teachers complete their 3-year courses with the Ministry of Higher Education, which sponsors their teacher education program. This research sought to investigate the principal determining factors that are extrinsic, intrinsic and altruistic to choosing teaching as a career in Cameroon. It also investigated the expectations and the plans of pre-service teachers in Cameroon. The study was carried out within a duration of 6 months with a total of 210 (125 females and 85 males) teacher trainees in their first year, involved in the study.

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The types of motivation when choosing teaching as a career were studied using 'Teaching Career Choice Scale'. The model of motivation types was supplemented by subscales: Influenced by others, Career growth, motivation and alternative choice. The findings of the study revealed that male and female student teachers have similar motives in selecting teaching as a career. The mean scores for both genders were closely related. For altruistic factors, the mean ranges respectively for males and females were 32.41 and 32.26. Extrinsic factors stood at 40.18 and 37.06 respectively. Intrinsic and altruistic factors motivated teachers the less, scoring a mean range of 26.07 and 26.14. This paper also discussed the findings in relation to wider issues concerning gender, and drew conclusions which may be helpful to policy-makers and institutions in the recruitment of students into pre-service teacher training.

Keywords: Career choice; teaching profession; motivation; pre-service teachers; expectation; plans; Cameroon.

ABBREVIATIONS

*ENS: Ecolé Normale Supérieur (In French)
i.e. Higher Teachers' Training Colleges (HTTC)
ENSET: Ecolé Normale Supérieur Enseignement
Technique (In French)
i.e. Higher Teachers' Technical Training Colleges
(HTTTC)
NWR: North West Region
SWR: South West Region
CNE: National Centre for Education
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific,
and Cultural Organization*

1. INTRODUCTION

This work is aimed at investigating the reasons for choosing teaching as a career by student teachers of Higher Teacher Training Colleges/schools in Cameroon. The choice of choosing teaching as a profession in Cameroon has called for great concern over the past years. It is a great area of research for researchers and scholars who seek answers to the reasons why recruitment into the different teacher training colleges are launched yearly, but the number of teachers, quality of service provided by the graduate teachers and the quality of knowledge passed onto learners has persistently remained low. There are many professions in the country and beyond but more than half of high school and university graduates in Cameroon prefer to pass through the teacher training colleges at least for the start in their career. Understandably, after graduation they are not satisfied with the career path chosen as some are even seen dropping out of the profession or staying away from work they have committed themselves to. The problem this study seeks to investigate is the reason behind the high influx into the teacher training colleges and the motivating/demotivating factors in keeping and improving on the quality of

services offered by the teachers after graduation. The persistent drop in the quality of education and the relatively low number of teachers in classrooms especially with regards to the teacher/students ratio is a call for concern. There is therefore need for an investigation to be done so as to provide solutions to these problems and of course bring the problem to the limelight. This therefore is the objective of this paper.

1.1 Background

Teaching is considered a noble profession, and the building force of all nations, the builder of all other occupations worldwide. According to Watt et al. [1], "teaching appears to be an occupation considered central to a country's development and well-being". There is therefore, need for all to prepare the future generation by producing quality teachers who can passionately handle classroom activities, provide the knowledge needed for growth and development of other professions. However, teaching in Cameroon is seen as a profession for the unserious minds, an underachieved and an abusive profession. In Cameroon, teaching comes only second to the military as the most desired occupation. The desire to live above the standards provided by individual backgrounds in comparison with counterparts of the developed world, are great determinants to their choice of teaching as a career. Evidence from previous studies suggest that people's choice of a career is to a large extent influenced, by their socio-economic and cultural background and by a relatively permanent view of what is appropriate for them [2].

Choosing a career in Cameroon is a personal decision influenced by many factors. According to Kyriacou et al. [3], the decision to go into teaching or not is also believed to be influenced

by what they value in a job and their perception of the teaching. There are however underlying factors that influence career choices. As Koniq and Rothland [4] propose, there are two underlying factors to be investigated concerning teaching as a career; motivation and teacher shortages. However, the need for teachers, unemployment and the need to lay a foundation for a better life and career development, financial incentives and the desire to cash-out the accumulated salary for a number of months at work, in the case of Cameroon are among the top reasons why youths chose teaching for a career. According to Lortie [5], the most important attractors to teaching as indicated by practicing teachers were; the desire to work with young people which he labeled "the interpersonal theme" and the opportunity for rendering important service which he categorized as the "service theme". Every year students are admitted into the different teacher training colleges in the country but Cameroon still suffers a shortage of teachers due to drop out after a short time of practice. Rots et al. [6]; Thomson et al. [7]; watt and Richardson [8], suggest that in recent years, worldwide teacher shortages have given rise to studies of the motivation for choosing teaching as a career, which are particularly important when explaining why teacher education graduates do not enter the profession or drop out after a short period of time. This therefore indicates that dissatisfaction and abandonment of the teaching profession is not just a national problem but a worldwide issue.

Despite all efforts at recruiting teachers by the government of Cameroon, it has been difficult retaining these teachers. The graduate teachers most often work for a couple of months pending their accumulated salary which can be used to set up their lives while they drop and drive into actual/self-desired professions. These difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers are linked to teacher workload, salary, disruptive pupils and the low status of the profession [9].

Due to the reduction in the salaries of the public service servants since 1994, the teaching profession has lost its nobleness when compared to the days of the former president of Cameroon, Ahmadou Ahidjo. The decline of teachers' incomes, the rising cost of living, an abundant increase in the number of teachers and the appointment of unqualified teachers have all reduced the quality of teaching and the prestige of teachers in the eyes of the public [10]. The teaching profession is being associated with the

least desired professions in Cameroon but then the majority of its graduates struggle to get into the training program year in year out. Within the Cameroonian context, it is been considered as a profession for the "unfit" but ironically the big brains from secondary schools are found slotting their way to the teacher training colleges.

Choosing teaching as a career has been a great area of research worldwide. Literature suggests that, the motivating factors for choosing teaching as a career vary individually. The motivation model of choosing teaching as a career suggests existence of various social factors in personality that is subsequently a decisive factor in career choice [11]. This construct, shows different psychological mechanisms that are involved when choosing teaching as a career. All parts of the model affect an individual's decision. Some motivational factors have been proposed for choosing teaching as a career: (1) extrinsic motives: Job guarantee, money, long period of holidays, social security, appointment, and ease. (2) Intrinsic motives: interest, personal satisfaction, desire and love of profession. Intrinsic motivation impulse comes from the inner personality structures. Intrinsic motives are the most frequent when choosing teaching as a career. They are considered the most important because they are directly related to the content of career [12] and they are predominantly a good professional engagement in this field [11]. Therefore, intrinsic motives represent "the key to success" in teaching career [13]. Intrinsic personality motives include motives of competence, enthusiasm and interest [14]. (3) Altruistic motives: being in the service of the people, society and country [15]. Research from multi-sociocultural contexts, such as Brunei, Zimbabwe, Cameroon and Jamaica reveal that job seekers get into the teaching profession for salary, job security, and career status entitled with extrinsic motives [16,17,18,19].

Theories supporting motivation in choosing a career have been proposed by many authors prominent among is Super's 1953 [20] self-concept theory. His theory investigates "who am I". According to Zehir-Topkaya and Uztosun, [21], the self-perception of the person plays a crucial role in career choice. Gottfredson's 1981 [22] theory is another theory which explains decision on a career as depending on sex-type rating and prestige level of occupation. The theory suggests therefore that, while choosing an occupation, people consider its appropriateness to their

gender as well as the prestige level of the occupation in the eyes of the public [21]. In support of Gottfredson's theory, it has been observed in Cameroon that more women pursue the teaching profession than men. This is confirmed from the statistics obtained by The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics published in 2015. According to this institution, the percentage of male to female population in the teaching profession in 2015 stands at 47.81% and 63.21% respectively. This therefore throws on the table the need to investigate the motives for choosing teaching as a career in Cameroon which this study seeks to investigate.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Career development in Cameroon is faced with numerous challenges in recent times. More than half of the students who graduate from the universities and other institutions, see their future in public higher institutions, particularly, the Higher Teachers' Training Colleges; (in French as) *Ecolé Normale Supérieur*(ENS), *Ecolé Normale Supérieur Enseignement Technique* (ENSET). They spend a lot of time, energy and resources to sit in for the public examinations, into the Public Service Institutions and eventually go through the studies. The government also spends a lot of resources to aid the training of these aspirant teachers as they are seen as aids to the development and growth of the country. Surprisingly, upon graduation, the teachers don't seem to be motivated to work, are unsatisfied with their jobs and selves, and subsequently, some abandon their duties for other professions. This leads to a waste of state's resources, time and a step backwards in the achievement of development for the country and self-actualization for the individual. After the training and posting, the government does not pay the newly recruits on time but rather post them to remote areas as well as to distant places where access to basic needs such as food, shelter, potable water, electricity etc are difficult. Some teach and wait for about 3 to 5 years or more before receiving their first salary. As the adage goes "*a hungry man is an angry man*", this demotivates the teachers, who in turn abandon their teaching duties for other professions. In contrast, in other professions such as the military in Cameroon, soldiers receive their financial allowances while still undergoing training in their various colleges. This work seeks to investigate

reasons why most graduates (either from High School or University) abandon the pursuance of their dreams and aspiring professions to the attendance of teacher training colleges in Cameroon.

1.3 Objectives

The main objective of this study is to investigate the principal determining factors for choosing teaching as a profession in Cameroon. The specific objectives included:

- To investigate the expectations of teacher trainees while in the training schools.
- To find out the plans of pre-service teachers in Cameroon.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey approach was used in the study. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate in collecting data involving a large population. Data was collected from large groups of persons with the aid of questionnaires.

Teacher Training Colleges for secondary and High School teachers are found in five out of the ten regions of Cameroon. However this study was limited to three regions of the country, namely; Kumba (South West Region), Douala (Littoral Region) and Bamenda (North West Region). The population of the study was made up of all the six (6) Higher Teacher Training Colleges in Cameroon (ENS Yaounde, ENS Maroua, ENS & ENSET Bamenda, ENSET Kumba & ENSET Douala).

2.1 Research Sample

Research sample consisted of student teachers from ENS Bamenda (N = 80) of the North West Region, ENSET Douala of the Littoral Region (N =110) and ENSET kumba of the South West Region (N = 70). There were 210 student teachers in total from the first year of studies. Out of the total number, 85 were males and 125 were females. The average age was 21.53. Because motivation is a dynamic trait, research sample consisted inclusively of first year pre-service teachers. Primary motivation of students of higher grades might be modified due to other factors. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the schools. This was because the research questions addressed teacher trainees and the schools chosen harboured these trainees.

2.2 Instrumentation and Analysis

The questionnaire comprised of open-ended questions, semi-closed questions, and interview guides. These instruments were chosen and designed in order to get opinions of the respondents and avoid limited answers. The teacher trainees were asked to complete a questionnaire consisting of 25 statements. These statements dwelled on the motives for choosing teaching as a career. Ten questions about their perceptions, six questions about their backgrounds and three questions about their expectations. The statements were presented on a five-point Likert scale of agreement ranging from '5' (strongly agree) to '1' (strongly disagree). Thus, the reliability of this study is based to a great extent on the student teachers' self-reporting and perception. There may have been a tendency for respondents to be defensive or to produce responses they felt to be appropriate and there is certainly no guarantee that they would have told the truth or accurately described their thoughts. To avoid the 'halo effect', which is the potential desire to please or impress, the names of the respondents were not required on the questionnaires.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics were employed to present the survey findings of the most popular moves, expectations, and plans of student teachers for choosing to become teachers. The paper also discussed the differences between cohorts of different programmes. The implications of the study are discussed in terms of informing future policy and practice in the areas of teacher recruitment, retention and professional development.

Results on Table 1 show that, most candidates (N = 141; 67%) contacted in the field had the bachelor's degree as entry qualification into the teacher's training colleges while (N = 69; 33%) had the Advanced Level certificate. This therefore showed that most of the teacher trainees were graduates and so had other opportunities but teaching to them was prioritized over other professions. One of the respondents said *"there are many other professions better than teaching and which I would have liked to pursue but I need this teaching job first of all to secure my future and be sure of my daily bread"*.

Table 2 indicates that, of the 210 teacher trainees who were involved in the study, 125

were females giving a percentage of 59.52 while 85 were males giving a percentage of 40.48. This is clearly in line with the study done by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics published in 2015. According to this institution, the percentage of male to female population in the teaching profession in 2015 stands at 47.81% and 63.21% respectively. This finding therefore corroborates that of UNESCO in 2015.

Table 1. Student teachers' qualification before entry into teacher training college

Qualification	Number (N)	Percentages (%)
Bachelor's degree	141	67
Advanced levels	69	33
Total	210	100

Table 2. Sex of student teachers

Sex of student teachers	Number	Percentages (%)
Male	85	40.48
Female	125	59.52
Total	210	100

Table 3 shows that, more males were above the ages of 35 as the percentage was seen at 38.0 second by 25.3% of the male teachers below the ages of 25 and 32.1 between the ages of 25-35. For the females, 74.7% were below the ages of 25 and this constituted the greater population of women. This was followed by 67.9% between the ages of 25-35 and 62.0% above the ages of 35. The findings revealed that, more women get into the teacher training colleges younger than men. It was further realized that a majority of men who go to the teacher training colleges do so because they need to have a public service matriculation number which to them is a guarantee and assurance of a monthly income. To the females it is a source of assurance of a source of living. This is strongly supported by what one of the teachers said *"I went into the teacher training college not because I really want to be a teacher but because I will be sure of having a salary at the end of the month no matter how little that can sustain me"*.

Table 4 shows the different motives for which these student teachers chose teaching as a profession. For the altruistic reasons, the factor 'contributes to society' saw both male and female

trainees agreeing with the statement that teaching helps to mould the young generation and will help the government achieve its goal of emergence by 2035(M = 71.6%, F = 70.2%). However, while female trainees agreed strongly with the statement (F = 86.6%) that teaching is a respected job, male trainees' perception of the status of teaching is not particularly high as only 58.3% agreed with the statement.

Table 3. Percentage of teachers by gender and age group in teachers' training colleges in Cameroon

Gender	Age groups		
	<25	25-35	35+
Male %	25.3	32.1	38.0
Female %	74.7	67.9	62.0
Total	100%	100%	100%

Table 4. Motives for choosing teaching as a career: Percentages, mean and rank order

Factor	Item	Motives	Percentages				
			Gender	Agree	Disagree	Mean	Rank
Altruistic	9	Love of children	M	52.5	18.4	3.49	20
			F	53.1	14.8	3.52	20
	13	Contribute to society	M	91.7	0	4.51	1
			F	95.7	0.6	4.50	1
	14	Perform a service of moral value to society	M	88.3	5.8	4.35	2
			F	96.3	2.3	4.50	2
	19	Love for teaching	M	73.3	6.7	3.86	9
			F	64.2	7.6	3.72	16
	26	Teaching allows us to share academic knowledge	M	71.6	7.5	3.83	10
			F	70.2	8.2	3.81	12
32	Help government achieve her vision 2035	M	86.7	4.2	4.29	5	
		F	87.5	3.3	4.23	5	
28	A respected job/profession with high status	M	58.3	4.2	4.25	6	
		F	86.6	2.9	4.17	6	
29	Teach and mould the young generation	M	71.6	7.5	3.83	10	
		F	70.2	8.2	3.81	12	
Intrinsic	7	It has always been my ambition	M	55.8	14.2	3.65	17
			F	52.8	15.4	3.55	19
	8	Intellectual stimulation /Suits to my potential and ability	M	56.7	7.9	3.60	18
			F	53.5	6.8	3.57	18
	10	Approximate to my academic qualification	M	73.3	5.9	3.83	12
			F	73.5	6.2	3.88	11
	18	Job Satisfaction / A job that I find enjoyable	M	60.0	10.9	3.60	19
			F	68.9	5.9	3.71	17
	20	Chance to continue interest in own subject (A career that provides intellectual challenge (not boring)	M	70.8	8.3	3.78	15
			F	64.6	4.9	3.77	14
21	I can learn a lot more about children	M	65.9	8.3	3.81	13	
		F	65.2	10.5	3.72	15	
31	I want to become a professional teacher	M	73.3	20.9	3.80	14	
		F	75.1	18.7	3.94	9	
Extrinsic	1	Influenced by parents	M	63.3	27.5	3.74	16
			F	77.0	14.7	3.91	10
	2	Influenced by husband/wife	M	13.3	70.0	1.88	25
			F	5.9	80.3	1.56	25
	4	Inspired by former teacher	M	40.1	35.0	2.81	23
			F	36.1	40.7	2.67	23
	6	Influenced by friend	M	35.8	40.0	2.98	22
			F	31.8	50.4	2.84	22
	11	Teaching offers greater job security /A secure job/job security /matriculation number	M	60.1	3.30	4.35	3
			F	92.1	3.9	4.40	4

Factor	Item	Motives	Percentages				
			Gender	Agree	Disagree	Mean Rank	
	12	Teaching has good career prospects	M	45.5	28.1	2.55	24
			F	65.9	15.1	2.59	24
	22	Reasonable workload	M	83.7	10.8	3.96	8
			F	87.1	17.2	3.98	8
	24	A job that is easily compatible with parenthood	M	37.5	30.8	4.31	4
			F	58.2	28.0	4.49	3
	25	No other choice	M	45.5	28.1	2.55	24
			F	65.9	15.1	2.59	24
	27	Teaching gives opportunities to pursue other desired jobs / A lot of free time/ long vacation	M	66.6	7.50	3.85	11
			F	68.2	6.6	3.99	13
	30	Opportunity to further study / Promotion opportunities	M	84.2	2.5	4.21	7
			F	80.6	5.0	4.04	7
	30	Good salary	M	31.7	57.3	2.99	21
			F	27.3	50.1	2.86	21

For extrinsic motives, more female students (58.2% as compared to 37.5% of male students) agreed that teaching is a job that is compatible with parenthood. Another important reason ranked third by male and fourth by females is job security. It is interesting that 92.1% of the female trainees consider job security as an important motive as compared to 86.6% of males who agreed that teaching is a decent job. Both groups (males, 85.2%, females, 80.6%) also indicated that opportunity for further studies is one of the main motives for choosing teaching as a career. Work load (Item 25), was also a motive strongly responsible for their choice. The female student teachers' main motives for choosing teaching as a career are: 'a lot of free time/long vacation' (Item 31), 'influenced by parents' (Item 1). More female trainees 87% said they were influenced by their parents than their male counterparts were only 63% were influenced in comparison. 'Reasonable workload' is rated highly by both groups (males, 83.7%, Females, 87.1%) and similar percentages are found for 'Long vacation' (66.6%, 68.2%). Teaching gives opportunities to pursue other desired jobs (Item 25) registered a mean score above 3.5 on a scale of 5 (3.85 for males and 3.99 for females).

The trainees (both males and females) seem to have been attracted by the service conditions of the teaching profession such as 'Long vacation' and 'Reasonable workload'. The motives that have means between 2.99 and 2.00 for both male and female student teachers are: 'Good salaries' (Item 30), 'influenced by a friend' (Item 6) and 'Influenced by a former teacher' (item). This group of motives is related to external influences. Interestingly, only 31% of males and

27% of females agreed that, teaching offers good salaries, which are relatively low figures by comparison with other factors in this group. Of all extrinsic motives presented to the student teachers, the last significant was 'Influenced by husband/wife' (Item 2) with mean score below 2.00.

For intrinsic motives, high percentages were registered for the items 'I want to become a professional teacher' (M = 73.3%, F = 75.1%) and 'teaching matches my academic qualification' (M = 73.3, F = 73.5). These results indicate that there is a closer match between the two factors which the student teachers regard as important in choosing teaching as a career and the extent to which they view these factors as being met by teaching. It may be said that the respondents are expressing congruence between their self-efficiency and their own personal identity. At the same time, they express undertaking teaching as a career. Lower percentages are given by both male and female student teachers for the item 'Suitable with potential and ability' (M = 56.7%, F = 53.5%).

Student teachers reported that they enter the teaching profession with clear motives such as to have a public service matriculation number (matriculation number syndrome) and this choice is because of high rates of unemployment. This accounts for the high rates of abandonment after training by the trainees. This is seen in the teaching profession in Cameroon as many teachers are often called to report at their duty posts after abandoning their schools where they have to exercise their duties. According to the statistics of the 2017 census carried out by the

Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms, of Cameroon, there exist over 54,000 ghost workers, 17,000 were teachers who had public service matriculation numbers and had abandoned their jobs to other jobs in or out of the country. It was also realized that teaching is not a well-paid job, and requires dedication and efforts.

Table 5 indicates that, both male and female student-teachers have similar motives in selecting teaching as a career. Generally, both groups emphasized extrinsic factors (0.84) as their main motives for choosing teaching as a career while intrinsic and altruistic factors were less emphasized (0.77). This accounts for the reason why a large number of in-service teachers in Cameroon, often abandon their duties to other professions within or out of the country in search of greener pastures since teaching is not their dream job or passion.

Intrinsic and altruistic motives were found as the principal determining factors which explain why graduates of High Schools and Universities in Cameroon choose the teaching profession as a career. Extrinsic reasons described aspects of the job which are not inherent in the work itself, such as the status of the profession, levels of pay, holidays as well as job security, transferability and flexibility. In his sociological study of the school teacher, Lortie (1975/2002) identified 'material benefits' and 'time compatibility' as the two main extrinsic attractors to teaching. This was in line with the findings of Abangma 1981; Bastick 1999; Chivore 1988; Yong 1995 in research from multi-sociocultural contexts, such as Brunei, Zimbabwe, Cameroon and Jamaica revealed that job seekers get into the teaching profession for salary, job security, and career status entitled with extrinsic motives. However, service-oriented goals and other intrinsic sources of motivations were found to be the primary reasons for entering into the teacher career by teachers. In the same context, Lortie (1975/2002) in his report maintained that the most important attractors to teaching as indicated by practicing teachers were the "desire to work

with young people" which he labeled "the interpersonal theme" and the "opportunity for rendering important service" categorized as "the service theme" (pp. 27 28).

3.1 Student Teachers' Plans for the Future and Expectations in the Teaching Profession

Teachers' plans for the future with respect to building a career was sought after. The following paragraphs explain their responses and plans for the future as far as building a career is concerned.

A few of the pre-service teachers reported that, their expectation in the profession after graduation is to become effective model teachers in the teaching-learning process. Ninety four point twelve percent (94.12%) of the teacher trainees said they would not be contented to remain as secondary school teachers because the teaching career is a stepping stone to other professions. This is as a result of very low salaries, poor working conditions, and delay in the payment of salaries. Moreover, they have better and higher ambitions, among others. It was found that 95.12% of the student teachers confirmed that they have plans to take on part-time jobs or businesses while teaching, in search of more money to meet up with their needs. The student teachers also said that, they would like to change their career path or move to other professions (e.g. business, banking, telecommunications), or travel to other countries.

Teachers who stated passion as their main motivation insisted that; salary increase, increased free time, high students' performance, good working conditions and job security could continue to motivate them to stay on their job. In addition, deployment to semi urban or urban areas was found to be other pull factors to motivate them to like their job. This was further influenced by; family bond, business and the availability of other job opportunities. On the other hand, factors such as low salary, poor

Table 5. Student teachers' motives with cronbach's alpha

Scale/construct	Item	No. of item	Cronbach's alpha
Intrinsic	7, 8, 10, 18, 20, 21,30*	7	0.77
Extrinsic	1, 2, 4, 6, 11, 12, 22, 24*, 25, 27, 30	11	0.84
Altruistic	9, 13, 14, 19, 26, 28, 29,	7	0.77
Whole scale		25	0.81

Table 6. Motivating factors and gender

Motive factors	Gender	Mean	Standard deviation	t	P
Altruistic	Male	4.10	0.55	-.003	0.99
	Female	4.12	0.48		
Intrinsic	Male	3.74	0.56	0.11	0.91
	Female	3.73	0.59		
Extrinsic	Male	3.17	0.47	-.380	0.70
	Female	3.19	0.43		

treatment, and teaching not as a passion accounted for the unhappiness of some novice teachers being government teachers. Results from the research also showed that, the choice of choosing teaching as a career were influenced by others with the expectation of having other alternative jobs alongside teaching which are in line with their skills/experiences and passion.

T-test analyses were performed to examine the differences in the mean scores of student teachers. The mean scores, standard deviation and the t-values are shown in Table 6. The analyses indicate that there is no significant difference between male and female students with respect to all the three motivating factors ($t = -.003$, $p = <0.05$; $t = 0.11$, $p = 0.05$, $t = -3.88$, $p <0.05$). This suggests that both male and female student teachers are attracted to teaching for the same reasons.

4. CONCLUSION

The shortage of trained teachers in the Cameroon school system has been a major problem for decades. There is a problem in attracting competent teachers into the teaching profession. Trained and recruited teachers end up dropping for other professions in or out of the country. There is evidence that, the decision to take up teaching as a career is an interplay between altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The trainees seem to have predominantly positive views about teaching as a profession but are however, discouraged by some limiting factors such as; increasing salary gaps between teaching and other professions. The social status and positive image previously accorded to the profession is gradually fading off and this demotivates the student teachers. The perceived low image of the teaching profession in Cameroon may have effectively discouraged many people from joining the profession. This brings to limelight, teachers' challenges and serves as a springboard through which teachers' statuses and image can be promoted and competent people, attracted into the profession.

A majority of student teachers are attracted to teaching as a career because it brings some sense of job security and provides opportunities for other jobs to be carried out since the teaching profession gives room for free time. This free time can enable the teachers to further their education.

In order to train and maintain the graduate student teachers, it is strongly advised that the Ministry of Secondary Education in Cameroon could devise a scheme to make the teaching profession more attractive to teachers and those aspiring to be teachers. In this regard, teachers who excel in the classroom with consistent excellent results should be promoted to higher-level posts. These "super/master teachers" who are experts in their subject areas as well as strong teaching skills can expect to earn as much as school principals. More funded scholarships can be provided to teachers and school principals to further their education. Also, the Ministries of Education in partnership with other Ministries, can make teachers to enjoy full package of benefits including low interest rate for housing and car loans, free health care as is done with the military in Cameroon, subsidies for children's education, and a government funded pension scheme.

While examining the above findings and conclusion, the few inevitable limitations of the study must be recognised. First of all, this study has been confined to a small sample size from two out of six main public training institutions in Cameroon, hence the limit to the generalisability of these findings to a wider population. Larger scale studies replicating this study could be carried out with a more widely-representative sample so that the results may be more easily generalised. It would also be of interest to correlate results of the survey with the results of a Meyers-briggs personality indicator to see if there are significant differences between males choosing education as a career and males choosing other fields. Secondly, longitudinal studies are necessary for gathering the views of

student teachers over time, rather than retrospectively. There is a need to follow up on the respondents to check whether they acted upon their views and intentions, for example, if they have voluntarily chosen teaching as first choice in their career or if they merely joined the profession because it is easy to join due to high demand of teachers by the Cameroon government, which they will later abandon and use as a stepping stone to other professions.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, participant's written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The authors are researchers for a Research Institution, National Centre for Education (CNE, in its French acronym). As such, permission was sought for, from the institution to work under its tutelage. This gave the respondents some confidence and trust. The administrators of the respective colleges gave their support and opened their doors for the researchers to carry on with the study. Respondents responded at their will as none was forced to participate in the study. The identities of the respondents were kept private.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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