

Research On The Factors Affecting The Teaching Profession As A Career Choice

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Abstract

This study investigated the factors influencing the career choices of high school students in Mongolia, focusing on the teaching profession. The factors were classified into intrinsic, extrinsic, and influence of others on the decision to pursue a teaching career. The study was conducted using a questionnaire. The findings indicated that students are deterred from pursuing a teaching career due to heavy workloads, inadequate pay, limited opportunities for career advancement, and unfavorable working conditions.

Keywords: Teacher, teaching profession, factors affecting the teaching career

INTRODUCTION

These days, career choice has become a significant area of focus due to its importance. The teaching profession, particularly, plays a crucial role in equipping adolescents with the knowledge, skills, and competencies essential for life. It also contributes to their development as responsible members of society and promotes their social growth through a scientific approach. According to Jamia Millia Islamia, “A ‘teacher’ is a person who delivers an educational program, assesses student participation in an educational program, and/or administers or provides consistent and substantial leadership to an educational program. A teacher is the second parent who thinks good for our future and the teacher is the only person who helps us to make decisions that are right for us” (Islamia, 2016). Teachers' knowledge and competencies are essential in delivering high-quality education to students. Recognizing this, many developed countries prioritize teacher empowerment as one of the key elements of national development. For instance, Singapore has tripled the value and appeal of the teaching profession. As a result, Singapore has attracted top talent to the profession, fostering a strong desire among potential teachers to enter the field. According to Mongolia's long-term development policy, Vision 2050, it is stated that “Creative and competent teachers and human resources that meet the needs and requirements of students' development will be provided,” highlighting the importance of teachers. (Parliament of Mongolia, 2020). As part of efforts to achieve this goal, the government has approved teaching as a high-demand profession within higher education (Government of Mongolia, 2023). Therefore, in 2024, the Government of Mongolia has approved and is implementing “State scholarship regulations to support students majoring in teaching professions and the children of teachers in pursuing high-demand professions.” (Government of Mongolia, 2024) However, factors such as low pay, excessive workloads, and limited classroom space often cause teachers to quit their jobs and discourage potential candidates from pursuing a career in teaching. For example, as part of the development of the Law on Teacher Development and Social Security, a survey was conducted among secondary school students. Out of the 1,852 students surveyed, only 2.9 percent expressed interest in becoming teachers (Uchral, N., 2017) Thus, it is essential to study the views of high school students who are about to choose their future profession, particularly regarding the teaching profession, as well as the factors that influence their decision to pursue a career in teaching.

Purpose and Objectives

We aimed to clarify high school students' views on the teaching profession and identify factors that influence their decision to pursue a career in teaching.

To achieve the research goals, the following objectives were set:

1. To clarify the current state of high school students' career choices regarding the teaching profession;
2. To identify the factors influencing high school students' decision to pursue a teaching career.

Research Scope

The study was conducted among high school students attending state-owned secondary schools (SSEs) in Ulaanbaatar. The research questionnaire did not include questions about pursuing a career as a preschool or university teacher.

Significance of the Research

The significance of this research lies in identifying the factors that influence high school students' career decisions, particularly in the teaching profession. The findings can help develop recommendations to enhance the professional value of teaching and provide valuable data for future research in this field.

Research Framework

The research framework is based on Bastick's classification of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic factors, as well as the career choice model by Aydin Balyer and Kenan Özcan. The dependent variable is high school students' views on the teaching profession, while irrelevant variables include 23 sub-variables related to intrinsic, extrinsic factors, and the influence of others.

A 4-point scale was used in the study.

Research Sample

In the 2023–2024 academic year, a total of 360,675 students are studying in Ulaanbaatar, out of 771,722 children enrolled in secondary schools. Of these, 17 percent, or 62,355 students, are attending high school (Ministry of Education and Science, 2024). A total of 3,120 high school students in Ulaanbaatar were randomly selected for the study. The sample size is shown in Table 1, and the research methods are outlined in Table 2.

Table 1. Research sample

Schools	State schools		Private schools	
Indicators	Number of students	Percentage	Number of students	Percentage
Grade 10	782	33.8	346	43.0
Grade 11	898	38.8	193	24.0
Grade 12	635	27.4	266	33.0
Total sample	2315	74.2	805	25.8

Table 2. Methods

Indicators	Description
Purposive sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2,315 high school students from state schools in Ulaanbaatar• 805 high school students from private schools in Ulaanbaatar
Method used	A structured, non-discussion, computer-based online questionnaire
Number of samples	3120 students
Software used	IBM SPSS 21

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability of the subscales within the study's variables. The coefficient exceeded 0.81, indicating that the subscales used in the study are reliable.

Considering the nature and accessibility of the research, both quantitative methods (questionnaires) and qualitative methods (interviews) were employed. Additionally, statistical data, background information, and regulatory comparisons—sources of secondary data—were analyzed using comparative and analytical techniques.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers have examined the impact of intrinsic factors (such as behavior, talent, personal interests, education, and family status) and external factors (such as market demand, job prospects, potential earnings, and advancement opportunities) on career choices from various perspectives (Felton, 1994), (Paolillo.G. P. J., 1992). These studies confirmed that earnings, job autonomy, parental support, academic achievement, gender, prestige, status, physical and intellectual effort, and job security all influence students' career choices. Carpenter et al.'s three-dimensional model is considered the most effective in studying the factors that affect career choice. They categorized the factors influencing career choice into three types: intrinsic (personal interest in work, job satisfaction), extrinsic (work environment, high earnings), and interpersonal (influences from parents, peers, and teachers) (Beyon.J., 1998).

Additionally, numerous studies have been conducted on the influence of various relationships (parents, siblings, peers, guardians, teachers, friends, etc.) on career choice. For example, Jones. W.A (2001) studied how parents' education affects their children's career choices and found that parents with higher education have a stronger influence on their children's career decisions. Similarly, many researchers have confirmed that parents, guardians, teachers, and friends strongly influence career choices (Esters.T. L., 2005). Furthermore, several studies have been conducted on the factors influencing high school students' choice of profession. In the study "Factors Affecting the Student Career Decision-Making of Junior High School Students in Central Taiwan Area" (Ming-Shang Su, 2016), the factors affecting students' career choices were categorized into personal variables (gender, career of choice), family-related variables (parents' education, profession, social status), and school-related variables (school size, location).

Researchers Yaseen, and Wafaa Al-S. investigated the factors influencing Kuwaiti student-teachers' choice of teaching as a profession and found that they were primarily influenced by intrinsic factors such as their beliefs and a sense of empathy for others. (Yaseen, Wafaa Al- S., 2011) Several studies have been conducted on the topic 'Research on the Factors Affecting the Teaching Profession as a Career Choice.' For instance, Turkish researcher Helan and his colleagues concluded that the most important factors influencing the choice of a teaching career are, first, the 'benefit of social values,' and second, 'the desire for job security.' Batik, an American researcher, analyzed the reasons why students choose teaching as a profession and categorized them into three main types: extrinsic, intrinsic, and altruistic. Moreover, a study conducted by Turkish researchers Aydin Baler and Kenan Ozkan found that while most students choose the teaching profession due to its generosity, and intrinsic and extrinsic reasons, some choose it because of the influence of others. Many other researchers, including C. I. Obi (2009), Marjon Fokkens-Bruinsma and Esther T. Canrinus, (2012), Altay Eren and Kadir Vefa Tezel (October 2010), Helen M.G. Watt et al. (2012), Avgousti Charalambos (2017), Katrine Nesje, Christian Brandmo, and Jean-Louis Berger (2018), Ahmad, Haruna & Bashir (2019), Anselm Komla Abotsi et al. (2019), Gulnaz Akbar Munaza, Nausheen Munaza Nausheen (2022) have studied various core factors that can influence teaching profession from different perspectives. However, there is limited research on this topic by Mongolian scholars. Researcher Oyuntungalag conducted a survey among 990 students who are majoring in the teaching profession at the Teacher Training College, investigating the main factors that influenced their decisions or choices and interests as future teachers. She was also interested in how well these students are performing at college and whether they intend to work as teachers in the future. (Oyuntungalag.A, 2013) Bayanmukh, M also studied the effects of regulatory factors (official laws, rules, and regulations that are required to follow), normative factors (human nature, behavior, ethics, morality, and social indicators), and cultural and cognitive factors (major ideas, concepts, and beliefs in society) on students' career choices (Bayanmunkh, M, 2018). Then he advised students to be knowledgeable about their future profession, to consider their natural interests and whether they possess the aptitude or talent required for the profession, and to seek guidance from parents, instructors, close friends, and

professionals. (Bayanmunkh, M., Tserenbat.N., 2013). Aside from these studies, there has been no other significant research conducted on this topic in Mongolia.

RESEARCH ON FACTORS AFFECTING THE TEACHING PROFESSION AS A CAREER CHOICE AND ITS RESULTS

A total of 3,120 high school students participated in the questionnaire; 74.2 percent were from state schools, and 25.8 percent attended private schools. Also, 55.7 percent were female and 44.3 percent were male students, indicating a balanced gender ratio in the sample questionnaire. We believe that the questionnaire could include representatives from all grades, and 42.1 percent of the students studied in 10th grade, 40.8 percent were from 11th grade, and 17.1 percent were from 12th grade. According to the high school students' responses, 21.4 percent of them have a GPA of 90-100, 44.2 percent have a GPA of 80-89, and 26.5 percent of students' GPA is 70-79. So, it means 92.1 percent of the students who took part in our survey, study with a grade of 70 or higher. More detailed explanation is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Basic information about the students who participated in the survey by school types.

Students' information		Number of students					
		School type				Total	
		State		Private			
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Gender	Male	1026	44.3	354	44.0	1382	44.3
	Female	1289	55.7	451	56.0	1738	55.7
Total		2315	100.0	805	100.0	3120	100.0
Grade	10	975	42.1	338	42.0	1313	42.1
	11	937	40.5	335	41.6	1272	40.8
	12	403	17.4	132	16.4	535	17.1
Total		2315	100.0	805	100.0	3120	100.0
GPA	90-100	390	16.8	277	34.4	667	21.4
	80-89	1011	43.7	369	45.8	1380	44.2
	70-79	711	30.7	117	14.5	828	26.5
	60-69	185	8.0	25	3.1	210	6.7
	below 60	18	0.8	17	2.1	35	1.1
Total		2315	100	805	100.0	3120	100.0

Source: Researchers' calculations

Table 4. Views of high school students about the teaching profession, based on key indicators

Views about the teaching profession		Strongly dislike	Strongly dislike	Strongly dislike	Strongly dislike	Strongly dislike	Total
Gender	Male	5,7	5,1	42,4	43,0	3,8	100
	Female	1,5	6,5	41,2	44,7	6,0	100
	Total	3,4	5,9	41,7	44,0	5,0	100
School type	State	3,1	4,6	43,7	43,7	5,0	100
	Private	4,2	9,4	36,5	44,8	5,2	100
	Total	3,4	5,9	41,7	44,0	5,0	100
Grade	10	2,0	4,0	45,3	43,3	5,3	100
	11	4,8	5,5	38,6	46,2	4,8	100
	12	3,2	11,3	40,3	40,3	4,8	100
	Total	3,4	5,9	41,7	44,0	5,0	100
GPA	90-100	3,9	6,5	29,9	53,2	6,5	100
	80-89	2,5	6,3	39,2	46,2	5,7	100
	70-79	3,2	3,2	48,9	40,4	4,3	100

	60-69	0,0	8,3	75,0	16,7	0,0	100
	-60	50,0	25,0	0,0	25,0	0,0	100
	Total	3,4	5,9	41,7	44,0	5,0	100

Source: Researchers' calculations

As shown in Table 4, a study of high school students' opinions about the teaching profession found little correlation between students' gender, level of learning, and school ownership. However, students with higher academic achievement rated teaching as a good profession, while those with a grade below 60 percent expressed a strong dislike for the teaching profession. In other words, grade point average influences the choice of a teaching career.

Table 5. High school students' views on the teaching profession

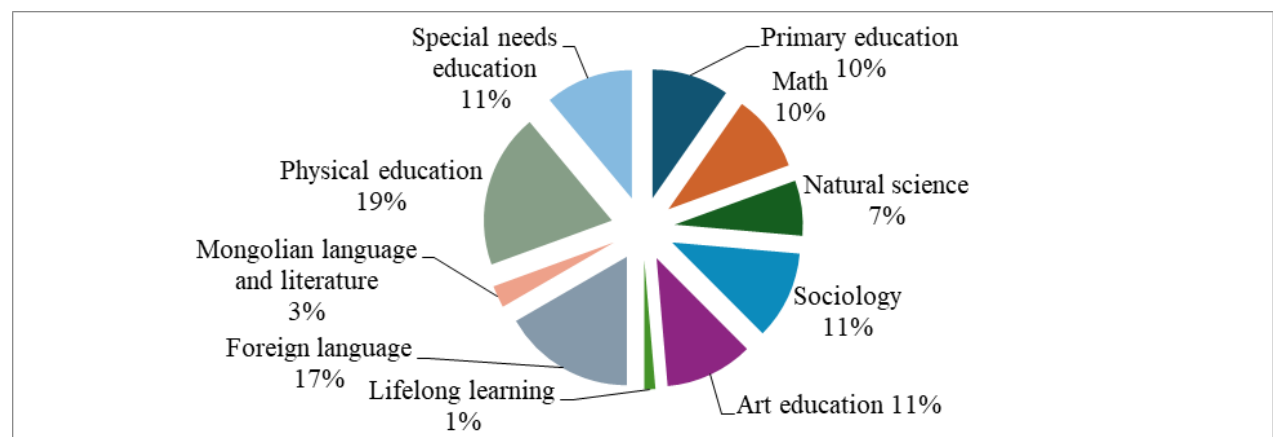
Questions	I completely disagree.	I agree a little.	I moderately agree	I totally agree
Intrinsic factors	23%	31%	30%	16%
Teaching is the profession I have always desired	58%	26%	13%	3%
I love children	10%	31%	34%	25%
I can make a valuable contribution to people's social development	11%	38%	35%	16%
I can make a valuable contribution to people's intellectual development.	14%	41%	31%	13%
I love to be with adolescents and children	8%	25%	41%	26%
I enjoy the school area and environment	8%	30%	41%	21%
The teaching profession suits my personality.	51%	30%	14%	4%
I want to teach my favorite subjects.	33%	26%	25%	16%
Teachers have many opportunities to get a persistent education	16%	32%	34%	18%
Extrinsic factors	32%	35%	25%	8%
The teacher's salary will meet my needs.	56%	26%	12%	6%
Teacher's working hours are reasonable, so there will be enough time to earn extra money.	48%	33%	13%	6%
The tuition fee for studying and teaching is reasonable.	22%	43%	29%	7%
The teacher has the longest vacation.	47%	30%	17%	6%
Teachers have safe working conditions.	18%	38%	35%	8%
Teachers have a high position and status in society.	15%	34%	40%	11%
Teaching will allow me to become a leader.	31%	37%	25%	6%
The government supports education and the teaching profession.	33%	38%	22%	7%
A teacher has enough workplace	16%	32%	34%	18%
Please share your opinion on whether the teaching profession appeals to representatives of the following groups.	They do not like it at all	They like it a little bit	They like it at a moderate level	Like it
Influence of others	13%	30%	35%	23%
Peer influence	15%	38%	36%	11%
Family members influence	11%	32%	31%	26%
The influence of social media	9%	28%	42%	21%

The influence of instructors	7%	22%	34%	36%
My own belief	20%	30%	29%	20%

Source: Researchers' calculations

When investigating the influence of intrinsic factors, such as generosity and emotional well-being on high school students' views of the teaching profession through nine subscales, 58 percent stated that teaching is not the profession they have always wanted, 51 percent said the teaching profession does not suit their personality, and 33 percent indicated they do not wish to teach their favorite subject. In contrast, 26 percent of the students who participated in the survey said it is enjoyable to be with children, 25 percent said that they love children, and 21 percent said that they enjoy being in the school environment. However, as children, they may fully agree with these statements. Their answers to this question might change as they reach adulthood. From this, it can be concluded that for students who choose the teaching profession, the desire to be in a school environment with children, contribute to the social development of others, and benefit from continuous education are key factors influencing their decision to become teachers. When investigating the influence of extrinsic factors on high school students' views of the teaching profession through nine subscales, 56 percent said that the teacher's earnings are not sufficient to meet their needs, 48 percent said that teachers have no time to earn extra money, 47 percent said that the teacher's vacation period is not long enough, and 33 percent believed that the government does not support education and the teaching profession. However, 18 percent stated that finding a job as a teacher is easy, 11 percent believed teachers have good status in society, and 8 percent said that teachers enjoy good job security. Hence, it can be concluded that high school students believe that teachers hold a respected position in society, teachers' jobs are secure, the tuition to study in this profession is affordable, and it is easy to find a teaching job, but the salary and time available for teachers are insufficient. In order to investigate the influence of others on the views of high school students about the teaching profession, a questionnaire was conducted through five subscales. According to the response, 20 percent of the respondents answered that they do not like their profession, 15 percent stated that their peers do not support their decision, and 11 percent mentioned that their family does not like their job at all. However, 36 percent of teachers, 26 percent of family members, 21 percent of the general public, and 20 percent of respondents expressed a favorable view of the teaching profession.

Figure 1. Choice of Teaching Career by Subject Area



Source: Researchers' calculations

Of the students who expressed an interest in becoming teachers, 19 percent aspired to be physical education teachers, 17 percent wanted to be foreign language teachers, 11 percent desired to become art education teachers, and 11 percent aimed to teach special needs education. Thus, it can be concluded that high school students have a strong desire to pursue careers as physical education and foreign language teachers.

According to high school students, the reasons for not choosing a teaching career include the workload, salary, job prospects, and working conditions associated with the profession. On the other hand, students from private schools said that their parents' opinions regarding a teaching career have a great influence, while students from state schools believe that it would not be affected at all. Also, a teacher's reputation, social status, and the views of friends and parents on the teaching career have little influence on choosing the profession. Forty-nine percent of the respondents believed that a teacher's salary is between 700,000 and 1,000,000 MNT, and that this factor has the greatest influence on the choice of the teaching profession. High school students primarily prioritized careers in engineering, medicine, and economics. Fifty-eight percent chose their profession based on personal beliefs, 23 percent were influenced by family members, and 10 percent by an influential individual. Therefore, it can be concluded that their choice of profession is primarily based on their personal beliefs and desires.

CONCLUSION

Cronbach's alpha coefficient was above 0.81 for all variables, including altruism, intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and the influence of others. This indicates that the variables used in the study are reliable. 9.5 percent of the students who took part in the survey want to become teachers, which is higher than the 2.9 percent who expressed the same intention in a survey conducted among secondary school children as part of the work on developing the Law on Teacher Development and Social Security. The classification of Bastick's intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic factors, used as the framework for our research, was compared to the findings of a study by Ayadin Baler and Kenan Özkan on career choice. Their research indicated that teaching was chosen primarily due to extrinsic factors and altruistic motives, whereas our study reveals that the decision to pursue a teaching career is primarily influenced by social impact and altruism. While female students chose this profession for intrinsic reasons such as generosity, students from poor and large families, as well as male students, selected it for extrinsic reasons. However, no significant gender effect was observed in our study. High school students identified workload, salary, job prospects, and working conditions as reasons for not pursuing a teaching career. In contrast, students from private schools indicated that their parents' opinions significantly influence their career decisions, whereas students from state schools believed that parental opinions have no impact. Also, a teacher's reputation, social status, and the views of friends and parents on the teaching career have little influence on choosing the profession. Additionally, factors such as a teacher's reputation, social status, and the opinions of friends and parents were reported to have minimal influence on the decision to choose teaching as a profession.

Therefore, it is recommended that future policies be implemented to increase the availability of teachers by enhancing the value of the teaching profession, boosting students' confidence in pursuing teaching careers, raising teachers' salaries, and improving public perceptions of the profession.

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