



Establishing Factors Leading to the Pre-service Education Students' Choice of Teaching as a Career

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Abstract: This paper established factors leading to the pre-service education student's choice of teaching as a career. The third and fourth year pre-service education students from six public and private universities in Kenya were the respondents. Concurrent mixed method approach was employed in this study. Purposive, cluster and convenience sampling methods were used. Data were gathered using questionnaires and interviews. In data analysis, frequencies, means and standard deviation were used. The study established that the following factors affected pre-service education student's decision to become teachers. (i) Fallback, (ii) External factors, (iii) Self-concept (iv) Altruistic reasons (v) Extrinsic reasons and (vi) Intrinsic motivation. The findings established that all the influential factors were important to the pre-service education students to join the teaching profession. None of the influential factors was very important to their decision to choose teaching as a career. The pre-service education students pointed out that their high school grade is what really determines their career path. Fallback as one of the influential factors was found to have been slightly important in their decision to enter the teaching profession.

Keywords: Preservice, Education, Teachers, Fallback, Intrinsic motivation, Self-concept

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1. Introduction

Many young people today do not want to pursue teaching as a career, and among those who do, a good number leave the profession within the first five years; a sign that they are not committed to the profession, (Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). As such there is a growing body of research to establish factors affecting the choices people make to pursue teaching as a career and how those who choose the profession are committed to the service. Worldwide, the issue is gaining importance because it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract and retain the young people in the teaching profession as well as keep the trained force committed to the profession (Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). Promising pre-service education students with characteristics that would make effective teachers, meaning teachers who are caring, enthusiastic, competent and committed are often sought after by other

professions, which would also benefit from such characteristics. There is no doubt that the teaching profession competes against other important professions for the most talented people and qualified teachers seem to secure employment outside of the classroom at very competitive salaries (Miller & Miller as cited in Harms & Knobloch, 2005).

The same view of how important career choice is seems to be upheld by BeduAddo as cited in Bossman, (2014), Plessman, (1985) when he expressed that indeed career choice is as important as choosing a life partner since it is also a lifetime process. Just like becoming miserable when the wrong marriage partner is chosen, one can also become very unhappy if one's career is not well planned (Bossman, 2014, p 40). Unfortunately, many students lack career guidance and this makes it difficult to make informed choices because they lack adequate information. In past studies students have indicated lack

of career guidance and counseling in schools and majority have indicated that their parents are the only ones who help in career guidance. A study by Maree (2009) found that many learners passed grade 12 without having received career counseling in any form and as a result they were denied the opportunity to apply for sought out fields of study in universities and colleges. As observed by Maree and Beck (2004), counseling programs were being underutilized because they were viewed as very costly. In another study Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa (2006) found that career counseling services were unsatisfactory and students lacked career information. Kenya is not any better when it comes to career guidance and counseling in schools. The issue with the counselors in Kenyan schools is that some career counselors are full time teachers who are either overloaded or not quite clear of what is expected of them. It is also evident that the number of career masters in schools is very small. A study by Mugambi (2013), showed that there was an insufficient number of career counselors in Meru North District, inadequate counseling facilities and majority of teacher counselors were not trained in guidance and counseling. Another study by Gitonga (2013), indicated that 87% of teachers were found insufficiently prepared to run career guidance programs in schools. These findings seem to concur with earlier findings by Kithyo and Petrina (2002) that guidance counselors or career masters in Kenya did not have the time or facilities to provide any career or psychological guidance to students and that, the lack of time could be attributed to the fact that the career masters are teachers with a full teaching load. They further articulated that many students in secondary schools in Kenya had no knowledge beyond what they might have heard other people talk about. One of the respondents clearly declared that they did not have career and guidance in secondary school and that he was not guided. Another respondent in the study also confirmed this by articulating that they did not have career guidance in their school, they were given career booklets to read (Kithyo & Petrina, 2002).

To justify the student's statements Ojenge and Muchemi (n. d.) confirmed with officers from the Ministry of Education (Kenya) through an interview, that career guidance teachers simply give students the career booklets with university courses, their prerequisites subjects and cut-off points, instead of guiding and counseling them. It was also pointed out in the same study that about ninety percent of students in public schools in Kenya are not provided any reasonable career guidance. On the same note, Muola and Mwanja (2013), contend that academic advising tends to rank among the lowest areas of higher education satisfaction for college students. There is poor morale in the teaching profession in Kenya and the service is characterized by poor levels of commitment and high turnover (Kamwilu, 2011). This can be supported by a report from the Kenya Secondary School Heads' Association (KSSHA) which stated that a record of six hundred teachers left the classroom

between March and June 2008 for lucrative jobs at a time when fifteen thousand teachers were needed (Agutu, 2010). A study by Kasau (2014) in Mbooni East District, established that one hundred and two teachers left teaching in the district between 2007 and 2012. The researcher also pointed out that the National statistics indicate that ten thousand teachers are lost annually due to various reasons ranging from resignations, assignment of non-teaching jobs in other ministries and others quit to join the private sector. Others left after undertaking further studies and either took up non-teaching jobs at the ministry of education as quality assurance standards officers where remunerations are more lucrative than what TSC offers or to teach in tertiary institutions (Oyaro, 2008; Kasau, 2014). A survey by Kamwilu, (2011) noted that seventy-five teachers and seventy head teachers strongly agreed that they would not teach anymore if there was a better paying job. This study therefore sought to investigate the factors which motivate pre-service education students' choice of teaching as a career.

The following research question was answered in this study to address the above stated problem.

What factors lead to the pre-service education students to choose teaching as a career?

2. Literature Review

People's job decisions are heavily influenced by outside variables (Gordon, 1993; Duffy & Dik, 2009). Many people acknowledged that their parents or their friends' parents had an impact on them. One of the respondents, for instance, stated that he was left an orphan at a young age. Due to a lack of parental direction. He was unsure of what job path to choose, but the parents of his classmates who were teachers gave him advice and pushed him to become a teacher Gordon (1993).

Either a favourable or negative influence was felt by those who were impacted by their teachers. Those who were negatively influenced by teachers claimed to have had teachers who discriminated against them, neglected their students or their responsibilities, or discouraged the students from continuing with their education. On the other hand, those who were positively influenced by teachers mentioned that they had a special teacher who encouraged them to become teachers. More than half of the teachers were motivated by one of their favourite teachers (Stichert, 2005). However, one responder claimed that her teachers were uncaring and that she never received support from them when she needed it. As a result, she wants to become a teacher to assist kids who find themselves in similar circumstances.

2.1 Fallback Career Choice

In the teaching profession, "Fallback Career" describes how much pre-service education students were forced to select teaching because they were unclear of their desired career path or could not be accepted into their first choice of university degree (Watt & Richardson, 2007; Suryani, 2013). According to Gordon (1993), pre-service education students who choose to become teachers as a last resort are those who would have rather pursued other professions than teaching but whose aspirations were dashed by inadequate training.

According to popular view expressed in the media, "most teachers found themselves in the teaching profession not as a first choice but as a last resort," young adults in Nigeria only choose to become teachers as a last resort (Korb, 2010, p. 2). Nevertheless, the study discovered that the majority of instructors chose to become teachers because they want to influence children's futures and contribute to society, while just 18% of pre-service education students opt to become teachers as a last resort. This prejudice needs to be addressed since it runs counter to the widespread perception that students chose to become teachers as a last resort. One of the teachers who entered the teaching field as a fallback career shared that, as a farm girl, she was torn between wanting to major in agriculture and become a veterinarian and choosing not to pursue that lifestyle. Ultimately, she decided to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher because it would allow her to stay at home with her children.

2.2 External Factors

Motivation originating from sources external to the individual is referred to as an external factor influencing career choice. It is believed that the external effects on a career are those that come from or transcend the self. The categories of spiritual and religious influences, life circumstances, family expectations and requirements, and social service motivation describe external variables that either influence or limit an individual's choice (Duffy & Dik, 2009). The majority of participants in a Gordon (1993) survey admitted that they become teachers as a result of outside pressure. One of their friends, teachers, or families had an influence. Gordon goes on to say that the family was the most influential group, particularly for people from educational backgrounds. Additionally, it was shown that the decision to become a teacher was greatly influenced by the impact of others, including parents, spouses, and previous educators (Joseph & Green as reported in Daniel & Ferrell, 1991). A person's ability to make career decisions may be hampered or enhanced by outside factors.

Family and parental influence. A significant portion of the workforce labours to support the demands and expectations of their families. The development of an individual's personal values, interests, and talents, as

well as their stability in the workforce, can be influenced by their family, according to Whiston & Keller (quoted in Duffy & Dik, 2009). According to a study of 77 studies, family of origin traits have a considerable impact on people's goals, interests, sense of support, self-efficacy, and choice in the professional development process (Duffy & Dik, 2009, p. 32). Family expectations and needs influence job decisions at every level, from school dropouts to seasoned professionals who might be seeking new work. Even though choosing a career should be a personal choice, family influence appears to be very important. Research indicates that teachers' influence comes in second, after that of parents (Kniveton, 2004). Because they serve as role models for their children and as examples of workers, parents have a tremendous impact. It has also been observed that many parents, who are only thinking about their own interests and aspirations, dictate the career path their daughters or sons should take, disregarding the child's aptitude and interests (Furo, 2014). Adolescents and young adults are not as proactive about their careers as a result of their imposition of their thoughts on career and occupational inspiration (Kumar, 2016). Many teachers come from a family of educators since research has also shown that parental influence is quite strong and that over 60% of children typically follow their father's career path while roughly 23% follow their mother's (Okeke, as cited in Furo, 2014). Kumar appears to agree with Furo (2014) when she says that a father's expectations and occupation have the biggest impact on the career decisions of his children. When raising children of the same sex, a mother's career may also be important (Kumar, 2016). When it comes to birth order, the first born children are influenced by their fathers, and the last born children are influenced by their mothers, despite data indicating that boys are more impacted by their fathers and girls by their mothers. Additionally, it has been noted that firstborn children, who in turn were impacted by their parents, have a big impact on lastborn children (Kniveton, 2004).

2.3 Self-Concept

Self-concept, in the words of Nasir and Lin (2013), is the image that people hold of themselves. An individual's self-concept or self-image is how they see themselves. A summary of their behaviour, skills, limitations, physical health, and looks is included in this self-portrait. They nevertheless maintain that a person's self-evaluation or self-perception is a component of their self-concept.

A person's overall perception of themselves is their self-concept, according to Hamacheck, who was referenced by Mishra & Yadav (2012). They explain that a person's thoughts or perceptions about his or her own attributes—physical, psychological, social, and emotional—as well as his or her goals and accomplishments, make up their self-concept. They go on to say that a person's assessment of themselves,

which takes into account all of their traits, virtues, and faults, is their self-concept. This observation bears significant implications for an individual's self-perception, past successes and failures, and future outlook (Nasir & Lin, 2013). For instance, if a student is asked to characterise himself or herself as correctly as possible, terms like clever, industrious, considerate, accountable, perceptive, etc. would best capture the student's perception of themselves (Mishra & Yadav, 2012). Characteristics like bravery, integrity, independence, self-assurance, aspiration, and a variety of skills make up one's self-concept (Mishra & Yadav, 2012, p. 4). The following are some specific traits of self-concept that the researchers outlined:

1. An organised self-concept entails the collection and arrangement of data by an individual to arrive at a conclusion or acuity of self-concept.
2. A person's self-concept is complex since it takes into account their academic, social, and physical identities.
3. Self-concept is hierarchical on a generality dimension, which means that it develops and gets bigger as people get older.
4. Self-concept is stable in that an individual's fundamental self-concept remains constant, even though it can be enhanced by constructive thought (Mishra & Yadav, 2012).
5. People who experience continual criticism, lack of affection, and/or lack of appreciation are more likely to have low self-esteem or a negative self-concept. These people have emotions of inadequacy and lack confidence due to their poor self-esteem. The study's findings indicated that pre-service teachers' self-concept and interest in teaching were significantly correlated. It was discovered that instructors who made teaching their career choice in accordance with their self-concept were psychologically ready to take on the obstacles they encountered at work. Additionally, it was discovered that they had a good self-perception and thought they could manage their obligations and deal with setbacks (Nasir & Lin, 2013).

Motivation: At different points in a person's life, motivation is one of the elements that most strongly influences their choice of career. According to Brown (1994), the word "motivation" is used to characterise whether a complex task is successful or unsuccessful. Steers and Porter (1991) note that when people talk about motivation, they typically focus on the inner drive that causes people to act in certain ways and what makes those behaviours persistent. In accord, Dornyei, as referenced in Suslu (2006), asserts that motivation is responsible for people's actions, including the reasons behind their decisions, the length of time they are willing to commit to an activity, and the intensity of their pursuit. In other places, Ryan and Deci (2000)

seem to agree when they state that the definition of motivation is the ability to be inspired to work on a goal. They go on to explain that individuals who are driven are energised and engaged to finish any work they embark on. Their results appear to corroborate those of Williams and Burden, as reported by Suslu (2006), who notes that the main characteristics of motivated individuals include concern, interest, curiosity, or a desire to succeed. They still maintain that maintaining interest is necessary for motivation to occur; simply raising curiosity is insufficient.

Three motives have been identified from the studied literature for selecting a career in teaching: extrinsic, intrinsic, and altruistic (Stichert, 2005; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000). According to how much they encourage consistent and productive participation in a task, motives can be categorised (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010). They contend that motivation can be maladaptive, encouraging disengagement or surface-level involvement in an activity, or adaptive, encouraging deep and sustained engagement in a task. Teacher candidates are primarily driven by altruistic motives, such as a desire to serve the community, impart knowledge, and improve the lives of children, according to a study by Sumison (2000) on the reasons behind pre-service teachers' career choices in Ontario, Canada, and New South Wales, Australia. Extrinsic motivation, which encompasses tangible advantages like job security and convenient work hours, has been observed to have some influence at times. The researcher maintains that the primary motivation of aspiring teachers is presumed to be altruistic; however, she claims that this assumption appears at odds with market responsive theories, which hold that decisions about one's career are driven by financial gain and are determined by the labour market's economic dictates (Sumison, 2000).

2.4 Altruistic Reasons

Altruistic teachers consider teaching as a noble and significant profession, driven by the desire to help students succeed and make a positive contribution to society (Stichert, 2005). These allude to the selfless care for or devotion to the well-being of others. Lortie (1975) defined teaching as a useful service with unique moral significance in one of his important works. Altruistic motivations are those in which pre-service teachers have a desire to help others and the community at large. The instructor is driven by a sincere desire to support students' academic and personal achievement as well as to advance society as a whole (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000). Making sure that learning occurs and assisting students in realising their potential are the two most important goals of teaching. Teachers possess an altruistic motivation and believe they have a leadership role to play in advancing civilization and society and having a positive impact on the globe (Mwamwenda, 2010). The author goes on to say that selfless commitment to the welfare of students and the

community is seen as an altruistic motivation for entering the teaching profession. According to Mwamwenda (2010), many teachers believe that their job benefits society more than all others because of their service to the community.

Based on the literature analysis, the majority of pre-service teachers report that their motivation to enter the teaching profession came from either intrinsic or altruistic sources. The two main altruistic motivations they have identified are the "desire to work with children and adolescents" and the "desire to be of service or to contribute to society/country" (Stichert, 2005).

2.5 Intrinsic Motivation

The act of performing a task for its own intrinsic fulfilment as opposed to seeking external rewards is known as intrinsic motivation, according to Ryan and Deci (2000). Deci, Valler, Pelletier, and Ryan (1991) noted that people who are intrinsically motivated participate in activities that pique their interest and do so freely, fully of their own decision, and not always in exchange for financial gain. They go on to say that individuals who are driven by intrinsic motivation believe they are engaging in a given activity because they have made the decision to do so. Since the only factor driving an individual's motivation to complete a task is their own good emotions while doing so, intrinsic motivation is thought to be highly self-determined (Demir, 2011). The grounds for intrinsic motivation in conformance, according to Stichert (2005) and Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000), include the job activity itself, such as the activity of educating children, an interest in the subject matter knowledge, expertise, and a feeling of calling. Mwamwenda (2010) defines intrinsic motivation as the gratification one feels from within, whether it is from a sense of personal achievement or the sheer joy of working. In the teaching profession, it is felt when educators are motivated by the satisfaction of watching students learn, the chance to positively influence the lives of the young people they instruct, the love of the subject matter they teach, the camaraderie of their peers and colleagues, and the chance to make a difference in the lives of their students. Because external rewards have been shown to decrease internal drive, research has shown that intrinsic motivation is more effective than those from outside sources (Demir, 2011). The work is always presented as engaging, entertaining, and psychologically gratifying when it comes from intrinsic motivating sources. Extensive research has demonstrated a strong relationship between instructional efficiency and intrinsic motivation (Suslu, 2006).

2.6 Extrinsic Motivation

Tangible employment rewards like pay, perks, job security, and the like are examples of extrinsic

motivation (Lathan, as mentioned in Suslu, 2006; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000). The term "extrinsic reasons" refers to elements of the employment that are not intrinsic to the work itself, such as long vacations, competitive pay, favourable social standing, job security, flexibility in scheduling, and other outside benefits (Stichert, 2005 & Lortie, 1975). Mwamwenda (2005) confirms this further, stating that extrinsic motivations include those related to money, status, authority, and advantages associated with being a teacher. Extrinsic incentive also includes things like time spent with the family and opportunities for advancement (Mwamwenda, 2010). Extrinsic motivations include things like the physical environment, the quantity of effort required, and the facilities available to complete the task (Herzeberg et al., as cited in Suslu, 2006). In stark contrast to inner drive, extrinsic motives focus on completing an action in order to achieve distinct results (Ryan & Deci, 2000; & Lortie, 1975).

Pre-service teachers who decide to become teachers in order to obtain external recognition, incentives, or because it is advised by others are operating with extrinsic motivations, according to the reviewed literature (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Research design is a detailed plan on how research was conducted or the procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data (Creswell, 2008). This study employed a Correlational research design and a concurrent mixed methods approach. In a concurrent mixed method, the research uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches without prioritizing one over the other for a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. Concurrent mixed method was used in this study because it is an efficient design in that, data is collected at the same time and the exercise takes less time compared to other mixed method designs. Mixed method was also used because many of the studies conducted on the factors influencing individuals to join the teaching profession have been mainly quantitative. A study by Gore, Smith, Holmes and Fray (2015) investigating the factors that influence the choice of teaching as a first career between 2005 and 2015 found that 40 studies had used quantitative approach while 18 had used qualitative approach and only 17 had used mixed methods. The quantitative data was collected using a researcher developed questionnaire which adapted some statements from the FIT- choice scale, while qualitative data was collected by use of interviews to source for in-depth information from the pre- service education students, especially those who had passed so well and could have qualified for any career but they chose teaching as a career. The researcher used the concurrent mixed method design because the use of this type of mixed methods

strengthens and counteracts the weaknesses of one method. In addition to making up for the weaknesses of one method, mixed methods usually provide a more complete and comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2008). The results from the studies which used quantitative methods have not shown much emphasis on deeper expressions and motivational orientations of respondents and how these motivations relate to their commitment to the profession, something this study intended to pursue.

3.2 Population and Sampling Technique

The population of the study comprised of pre-service education students from selected chartered universities in Kenya. Six public and private universities which had been in existence for at least twenty years, and had been offering teacher education were selected in this study. Choice of both public and private universities was because teachers graduating from both public and private universities seem not to be committed to teaching as their career choice. By the year 2013 there were three fully chartered public universities and three fully chartered private universities in Kenya which were offering teacher education and had been in existence for twenty years. Third and fourth year pre-service education students were purposively sampled with the assumption that if they had not changed their minds during their first and second years of training, they were interested and committed to the teaching profession. This assumption was, however, found not to be true because some third and fourth year students clearly indicated that they were not committed to the teaching profession but some unavoidable circumstances kept them in the training. Purposive, cluster and convenience sampling were employed in this study because it can be used in both quantitative and qualitative research. The purposive sampling was used to select the six universities in Kenya offering teacher education by the time of the study and which had been in existence and also had offered teacher training for at least twenty years. Cluster sampling was used to select the third and fourth year pre-service education students in teacher education who were sampled because of their experience and level of training. The sample was taken from the third and fourth year education students who were currently registered for the semester beginning August to December 2016. Because of the large number of students in the public universities, not all the third and fourth year education students were registered for that semester. Convenience sampling was used to select those who participated in the interview. In some universities, it was either both third and fourth year students doing their second semester or third year students doing their first semester and fourth year students doing their second semester. As a result, not all the third and fourth year students were registered during the period of data collection for this research.

3.3 Research Instruments

This study used a researcher prepared questionnaire which adapted some statements from the FIT-Choice Scale by Watt & Richardson, (2007). The research could not use the FIT-Choice scale as it is because it does not cater for the commitment aspect which is the dependent variable in this study and the researcher also wanted to establish the demographic description of the respondents which was not provided in the FIT-Choice scale. The research also used a structured interview schedule which the researcher developed to collect qualitative data on the influential and motivational factors which led to the choice of teaching as a career and the desire to remain committed to the teaching profession.

3.3.1 Validity of the Instruments

To establish validity in this study, content and construct validity of the questionnaire was established by proper conceptualization and operationalization through review of literature. The questions on the interview schedule were also subjected to expert validation by the supervisors of the study and faculty in the school of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences University of Eastern Africa, Baraton.

3.3.2 Reliability of the Instruments

The reliability in this study was calculated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and the following was established; commitment to the teaching profession .790, status of the teaching profession .726, socio-cultural beliefs about the teaching profession .621, choosing teaching as a fallback .636, external influence to the choice of teaching as a career .743, self-concept as a motivation to choose teaching as a career .769, altruistic reasons as motivating factors to choose a career in teaching .776, extrinsic factors as a motivation to join teaching .868 and intrinsic motivation.754. The instrument was thus found to be reliable to collect data for the study.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Following the research proposal approval, the researcher, through the Director of Graduate Studies proceeded to seek clearance from the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton Research and Ethics committee. After the approval from the ethics committee, the researcher further sought an introductory letter from the Director of Graduate Studies and Research to facilitate the application to the National Commission for Science, Technology, and innovation (NACOSTI) for a research permit. On receiving the research permit from NACOSTI the researcher reported to the county commissioner Nairobi County and the County Director of Education of Nairobi County. The researcher further sought an introductory letter from the Director of

Graduate Studies and Research University of Eastern Africa, Baraton to the selected universities which participated in the study. With the introductory letter and the research permit, the researcher personally visited the sampled universities and sought permission to collect data. After presenting her request to the Deputy Vice Chancellors in charge of research from the selected universities, the researcher waited for communication because in these universities there were bodies to approve such requests. After some time, the researcher received communication from the selected universities either through phone calls alerting her to go and collect the letters of authorization or others were directly sent to her through the email. Subsequent to receiving the permission, the researcher personally visited these universities and introduced herself to the deans of schools/faculty of education who later sent her to the chairpersons of departments. At the department level the researcher once more introduced herself and clarified the purpose of the study. She also tried to establish the number of third and fourth year students pursuing teaching as a career who had registered during that period (August to December 2016), for they were the respondents in this study. The researcher also tried to find out when the students were available and how she could get to them.

At this time the head of departments introduced some of the lecturers who were teaching the third and fourth year education students. It was then agreed upon with the lecturers and the researcher when she could avail herself to collect the data. On the specified dates and time, the researcher went to the different universities where she accompanied the lecturers to class. Some of the lecturers gave her the first part of the lesson, while other lectures preferred teaching first and then giving the researcher the last part of their lecture time. Whatever the case, the researcher used that time to introduce herself to the students, clarified to them the purpose of the study and the kind of information which was required from them, and sought for their informed consent. The respondents were assured that the information gathered would be used solely for the purpose of this study and further assured that confidentiality will be observed when handling the gathered information. The researcher then distributed the questionnaires with the help of some lecturers and class representatives. The respondents were informed not to write their names on the questionnaire and to be as honest as possible in giving their answers and also to complete the questionnaire without leaving any blanks or an unanswered question. The researcher then collected the filled questionnaires and thanked both the lecturer and the students for their time and

information. The researcher was present when the questionnaires were being filled to answer any questions or give any needed clarification. The return rate of the questionnaires was good 1001 (87.96%) out of the 1138 which were distributed.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data collected for this study was subjected to descriptive statistics.

4. Results and Discussion

Influential Factors

This paper set out to address this research question: *“What factors influence pre-service education students’ choice of teaching as a career?”* The different influential and motivational factors which include fallback, external factors, self-concept, altruistic reasons, extrinsic reasons and intrinsic motivation were rated using the following five-point scale: Not important at all in your decision =1.00- 1.49, slightly important in your decision =1.50-2.49, moderately important in your decision =2.50- 3.49, important in your decision =3.50-4.49 and very important in your decision = 4.50- 5.00.

Fallback

Almost a quarter 235 (23.5%) of the total number of respondents indicated that teaching was not their first career choice. Some actually said that they chose teaching as a last resort and others have categorically pointed out that they are not going to teach, following are some of their reasons.

The majority of the pre-service education students who choose teaching as a fallback career cited having not qualified for their first career choice as the main reason. This agrees with what others have also established in their studies, as articulated by Watt and Richardson, (2007, p. 174), pre-service teachers choose teaching because they could not be accepted into their university degree of choice or being unsure what career, they wanted.

The first influential factor was fallback. The respondents were presented with five items to rate according to how important they were in their choice, which would show whether their choice of teaching as a career was a fallback.

Table 1: Fallback

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| I did not qualify into my first-choice career | 2.48 | 1.65 |
| I chose teaching as a last-resort career | 2.48 | 1.63 |
| I was unsure of what career I wanted | 2.03 | 1.44 |
| My parents cannot afford to support me in my first-choice career | 2.40 | 1.64 |
| The duration of education training is shorter than my first-choice career | 1.92 | 1.46 |
| Fallback | 2.29 | 1.08 |

Note: Mean categories: *Not important at all in your decision* =1.00- 1.49, *slightly important in your decision* =1.50-2.49, *moderately important in your decision* =2.50- 3.49, *important in your decision* =3.50-4.49 and *very important in your decision* = 4.50- 5.00.

The statements were rated as follows; “*I did not qualify into my first choice career*” ($x = 2.48$; $SD = 1.64$), “*I choose teaching as a last resort career*” ($x = 2.48$; $SD = 1.62$), “*I was unsure of what career I wanted*” ($x = 2.03$; $SD = 1.44$), “*my parents cannot support me in my first choice career*” ($x = 2.40$; $SD = 1.64$), “*the duration of education training is shorter than my first choice career*” ($x = 1.92$; $SD = 1.45$). It is clearly revealed that majority of the respondents 761(76%), did not select teaching career as a fallback. The big standard deviation indicates that majority of the preservice education students did not choose teaching as a fallback. There are however some pre-service education students who chose teaching as a fallback. These preservice students could be among the 235(23.5%) who did not have teaching as their first career of choice. The findings from the current research reveal that fallback was slightly important in their decision of selecting teaching as their career of choice. Fallback as one of the influential factors to the choice of teaching as career was rated ($x = 2.28$; $SD = 1.07$). The findings clearly point out that majority of the pre-service education students chose teaching as a career because they were interested and had qualified for it but a few chose teaching as a fallback, (Siringi, 2014)

Teaching profession is seen as an option of last resort because of the easy entry as compared to other

professions which in turn lead to little commitment. It is also a stereotype that may need correcting because not many teachers choose teaching as a last resort according to literature (Hellsten & Prytula, 2011). The reasons given by the pre-service education students concur with what Mugambi and Ochieng, (2012), established that “teaching has become a dumping ground for those who cannot make it elsewhere, those who use it as a stepping stone to better occupations ...can find time to do other things” (p. 5).

Teaching Profession Considered Last Resort

It was mentioned by some respondents that they found themselves in teaching not because they wanted to be teachers but as a result of poor career guidance. Research agrees that poor career choice is as a result of lack of or inadequate career guidance in schools, which leads to a mismatch between occupations most professionals have and the professions they would have felt most comfortable in (Ministry of Education Kenya, 2007). The argument continues to point out that the impact of this mismatch does not only impact on the student but on all education stakeholders, including the employers and the government. It cannot be over emphasized that there is a need to guide students joining universities to choose careers guided by their abilities,

interests, availability of employment opportunities among others. The current career switch among young people has been attributed to lack of career guidance which lands them in occupations which do not match with their personalities, interests and abilities.

The findings of this study support earlier findings that teachers choose teaching as a career and it is not a fallback as many seem to perceive. For example, in Nigeria the general belief is that young adults only choose teaching profession as a last resort, this is a common belief in the media with statements such as “most teachers found themselves in the teaching profession not as a first choice but as a last resort” (Korb, 2010, p.2). However, the same research carried out in Nigeria found that only 18% of pre-service teachers chose teaching as a last resort and that majority of the teachers chose teaching because they wanted to shape the future of children and make social contributions.

The current study portrays that the pre-service education students choose teaching as a career and did

not find themselves in the teaching profession as a fallback. Majority of the respondents 761(76.0%), choose teaching as their first career choice, while only 235(23.5%), had teaching as either their second, third or fourth choice.

External Factors

External factors which influence individuals to join the teaching profession were the second factor the respondents used to rate how important it was in their decision making to become teachers. External factors in this study refer to significant others in the lives of the respondents, for example, family members which includes, parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, grandparents etc. Teachers and friends also fall under this category of external factors because this kind of influence is a motivation that originates from someone or something outside the individual, whereby the satisfaction of some external factor or criteria represents the primary motivation.

Table 2: External Influence

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| I have had positive learning experiences | 3.61 | 1.57 |
| I have had good teachers as role-models | 3.76 | 1.45 |
| My family think I should become a teacher | 2.76 | 1.64 |
| I have had inspirational teachers | 3.57 | 1.51 |
| People I've worked with think I should become a teacher | 2.69 | 1.60 |
| My friends think I should become a teacher | 2.52 | 1.56 |
| I want to answer a call from God | 2.98 | 1.70 |
| External factors | 3.10 | 1.09 |

Note: Mean categories: *Not important at all in your decision* =1.00- 1.49, *slightly important in your decision* =1.50-2.49, *moderately important in your decision* =2.50- 3.49, *important in your decision* =3.50-4.49 and *very important in your decision* = 4.50- 5.00.

For this factor, the pre-service education students were presented with seven items to rate their importance in

influencing them to choose teaching as a career. The external influence was overall rated (\bar{x} =3.10; SD =

1.09), indicating that the external influence was moderately important in their decision making of becoming teachers. There was a big standard deviation to indicate that there were other factors which were more important to the pre-service education student's decision to become teachers than the external factors. Some items were however more important than others, but all items were rated as moderately important in influencing the pre-service education students to become teachers. None of the items was rated as not important at all or slightly important showing that significant others in the lives of the respondents played a role in their decision making to become teachers. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics on external factors.

The statements *"I have had positive learning experiences"* ($x = 3.61$; $SD = 1.56$), *"I have had good teachers as role models"* ($x = 3.76$; $SD = 1.44$), and *"I had inspirational teachers"* ($x = 3.57$; $SD = 1.50$) were rated as important by the preservice education students, indicating that teachers have a great influence on the careers their students choose, especially those who choose teaching as a career. There was however a big standard deviation to imply that not all the pre-service education students had good learning experiences and inspirational teachers. These findings agree with the sayings "Teachers are the architects of the society we live in. They mold generations and their culture. A teacher affects eternity!

Parental Influence

It has been established through research that parental influence ranks highest followed by that of teachers, (Kniveton, 2004). Parents have a very strong influence because they provide examples of workers or role models to their children.

According to Gore, *et al.*, (2015), family members and close relatives, especially those who are or have been teachers play a significant role in influencing the choice of preservice education student's choice of teaching as a career. In the same study parental influence was found to be an influence on pre-service teachers in Nigeria, Taiwan, Sweden, Portugal, Turkey, Australia and Germany. It should however be noted that parental influence is not the same in countries mentioned, in some of the countries the influence was noted to be high while in others it was not. Parental influence could either be positive or negative. Parental positive influence is where parents give personal and emotional

support to their children while the negative influence is the lack of that support and negative comments about the decision to become a teacher, (Gore *et al.*, 2015).

Another statement pointed to family as an external influence, *"my family thinks I should become a teacher"* ($x = 2.76$; $SD = 1.64$), this was moderately important in making the decision to become a teacher. When we speak of family, this includes parents, siblings and other extended members e.g. grandfathers, grandmothers, aunts, uncles and cousins.

The findings of the current study confirm what was reviewed in literature that, majority of those who are in teaching were influenced by their family, a friend or a teacher, (Gordon, 1993). Gordon continues to outline that the family had the most influence especially among those who came from a family of educators. The findings of this study also concur with what Kniveton (2004) established that; parental influence ranks highest followed by that of teachers.

The rest of the statements in the external influence were also moderately rated as follows; *"people I have worked with think I should become a teacher"* ($x = 2.69$; $SD = 1.60$), *"my friends think I should become a teacher"* ($x = 2.52$; $SD = 1.56$), and *"I want to answer a call from God"* ($x = 2.98$; $SD = 1.70$). The statements had a big standard deviation which could be implying that the pre-service education students had a role to play in the deciding on whether or not to become teachers and that their decision were not solely based on others view or perception. The external factor with most influence after parents and teacher was revealed as friends and those who were answering a call from God.

Self- Concept

Self-concept is what an individual thinks about him/herself and also what significant others in their lives think of them. If individuals believe that these significant people think favorably of them, it mirrors what they think of themselves. Encouragement, love, praise, reassurance, positive comments, sincere caring and interest on the part of teachers, parents and others whom they consider of some significance have been found to aid the development of positive self-concept or high self-esteem in individuals (Mishra & Yadiv, 2012). Following are some of the reasons the pre-service education students gave for choosing teaching as their career which fall under self-concept.

Table 3: Self-Concept

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| I have the qualities of a good teacher | 3.74 | 1.48 |
| I have good teaching skills | 3.86 | 1.33 |
| Teaching is a career suited to my abilities | 3.65 | 1.44 |
| I feel I will be a great teacher | 3.91 | 1.43 |
| Self-concept | 3.76 | 1.25 |

Note: Mean categories: *Not important at all in your decision* =1.00- 1.49, *slightly important in your decision* =1.50-2.49, *moderately important in your decision* =2.50- 3.49, *important in your decision* =3.50-4.49 and *very important in your decision* = 4.50- 5.00.

Self-concept is defined as an individual's self-assessment or how one thinks of themselves (Nasir & Lin, 2013). Self-concept is important when students are deciding which career paths to pursue. To ascertain how important self-concept was in their decision to become teachers, the pre-service education students were presented with four items to rate. The findings from the current study reveal that self-concept was important in deciding to choose teaching as a career. The overall mean for self-concept was ($x=3.75$; $SD=1.24$), confirming that self-concept is important in decision making. There is however a big standard deviation which could mean that some of the pre-service education students were still developing their self-concept while others already felt very confident. All the statements under this factor were rated as important in the decision making to join the teaching profession as follows.

"I have the qualities of a good teacher" ($x=3.74$; $SD=1.47$), *"I have good teaching skills"* ($x=3.86$; $SD=1.33$), *"Teaching is a career suited to my abilities"* ($x=3.65$; $SD=1.44$) and *"I feel I will be a great teacher"* ($x=3.91$; $SD=1.42$) The findings concur with the reviewed literature that self-concept of preservice education students influence their choice of teaching as a career and later their effectiveness in the teaching profession. It has also been established that self-concept influences the teacher's behavior, quality of relationship with learners, their teaching style and their expectancy of their performance as teachers and also the outcome they expect of their students, (Awanbor,1996). It further agrees with what Super, (1990), outlined as a lifespan, life space approach to career development which is relationship between self-

concept and career choice, which motivates individuals to choose professions they believe are consistent with their self-picture.

The findings agree with literature that those teachers who chose teaching as a career in conformity with their self-concept were found to be mentally prepared to face the challenges they faced at work. Such teachers were found to assess themselves positively and believed they were able to handle responsibilities and even face disappointments, (Nasir & Lin, 2013).

Altruistic Reasons

Altruistic motivation or reasons have been identified in literature as the key factors influencing the choice of teaching as a career (Pop & Turner, as cited in Gore, *et al.*, 2015). This type of motivation views teaching as a job that is socially valuable and important. The desires to help children and adolescents and contribute to the improvement of society are cited as the major motivating factors. The pre-service education students were motivated by a desire to want to make a worthwhile contribution to the lives of children, the desire to teach and help others, a moral obligation to their community and the want to work with young people (Struyven *et al.*, as cited in Gore, *et al.*, 2015).

The respondents rated nine items under altruistic reasons as an influential factor in the decision making of entering the teaching profession as their career path (Table 4). The items were rated as important, in fact almost very important ($x=3.99$; $SD=1.06$). The standard deviation shows a lack of homogeneity in responses.

Table 4: Altruistic Reasons

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-------------|----------------|
| Teaching will allow me to benefit the socially disadvantaged | 3.70 | 1.52 |
| Teaching will allow me to have an impact on children/adolescents | 3.94 | 1.31 |
| Teaching will allow me to work against social disadvantage | 3.77 | 1.37 |
| Teaching will allow me to raise the ambitions of underprivileged youth | 3.97 | 1.28 |
| Teaching enables me to ‘give back’ to society | 4.10 | 1.29 |
| Teaching will allow me to influence the next generation | 4.13 | 1.22 |
| Teachers make a worthwhile social contribution | 4.13 | 1.17 |
| Teaching will allow me to shape child/adolescent values | 4.16 | 1.19 |
| Teaching allows me to provide a service to society | 4.22 | 1.18 |
| Altruistic reasons | 3.99 | 1.06 |

Note: Mean categories: *Not important at all in your decision* =1.00- 1.49, *slightly important in your decision* =1.50-2.49, *moderately important in your decision* =2.50- 3.49, *important in your decision* =3.50-4.49 and *very important in your decision* = 4.50- 5.00.

example, “teaching allows me to provide service to the society” (x =4.22; SD=1.19),

“teaching allows me to shape child/adolescent values” (x =4.16; SD=

1.18),” teachers make a worthwhile social contribution” (x=4.13; SD=

1.17),” teaching will allow me to influence the next generation” (x=4.13; SD= 1.17), “teaching enables me to give back to the society” (x =4.10; SD= 1.29). The

standard deviation shows that there is a consensus from the respondents that teaching will allow them give back to the society. All the statements were rated by the respondents as being important in their decision to become teachers. From the reviewed literature most teachers join the teaching profession because of altruistic reasons, with the desire to help others, especially children to succeed and improve the society (Stchert, 2005). The findings of this study confirm majority of the pre-service education students

761(76%) who chose teaching as a career were influenced by altruistic reasons.

These reasons are in agreement with the reasons given by other preservice teachers in other studies (Kyriacou & Coulthard, as cited in Mwamwenda, 2010; Stichert, 2005; Gore et al., 2015).

The reasons given by the respondents agree with the reviewed literature. A study in Hong Kong found that students were attracted to teaching so that they provide meaningful and worthwhile service to others (Gore, *et al.*, 2015). Another study in Turkey established that students want to be teachers because they want to be of service to others (Yüce *et al.*, 2013). Another altruistic reason given by students for wanting to be teachers was the provision of moral service (Stichert, 2005).

Altruism as a motivational factor is argued to be related to the commitment of teachers to serve both students and society, (De Cooman et al.; Jungert et al. as cited in Gore et al., 2015).

Extrinsic Reasons

Extrinsic reasons or motivation to career choice is linked with tangible benefits related to the job such as tuition waivers/lower fees, promotion prospects, multiple job opportunities, job security, balance between work and family status, working conditions including long holidays etc. (Gore, *et al.*, 2015).

The descriptive statistics on table 5 illustrate how important extrinsic reasons were in career decision making to join the teaching profession.

Table 5: Extrinsic Reasons

| | Mean | SD |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| A teaching job will allow me to choose where I wish to live | 2.77 | 1.56 |
| Teaching will be a secure job | 3.30 | 1.51 |
| School holidays will fit in with family commitments | 3.43 | 1.49 |
| Teaching will provide a reliable income | 2.84 | 1.53 |
| As a teacher I will have a short working day | 2.66 | 1.58 |
| Teaching hours will fit with the responsibilities of having a family | 3.17 | 1.57 |
| Teaching will offer a steady career path | 3.49 | 1.47 |
| Teaching may give me the chance to work abroad | 2.74 | 1.64 |
| As a teacher I will have lengthy holidays | 2.82 | 1.58 |
| A teaching qualification is recognized everywhere | 3.41 | 1.53 |
| Extrinsic reasons | 3.07 | 1.06 |

Note: Mean categories: *Not important at all in your decision* =1.00- 1.49, *slightly important in your decision* =1.50-2.49, *moderately important in your decision* =2.50- 3.49, *important in your decision* =3.50-4.49 and *very important in your decision* = 4.50- 5.00.

This influential factor had ten items to be rated. The means give evidence that extrinsic reasons were considered important when the pre-service education students were making their career choice (\bar{x} =3.07; SD = 1.05). The standard deviation indicates that extrinsic reasons were somehow important to the respondents' decisions to become teachers.

Extrinsic reasons refer to motivation that has to do with tangible benefits related to the job like remuneration, fringe benefits, job security and many others (Suslu, 2006; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000).

Research asserts that students from developing countries tend to join the teaching profession mainly for extrinsic reasons while those from developed countries do so for the love of teaching (Sumison, 2000). Majority of students who select teaching as a career influenced by the extrinsic reasons are said to be guided by the economic factor, working conditions and also the status of the profession. They are interested in the good

salaries, working conditions, attractive working hours, job security and long holidays (Balyer & Ozcan, 2014).

Extrinsic reasons were affirmed to have had moderate importance in the decision making of the pre-service education students to pursue teaching as a career.

This is clearly portrayed in table 5.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation are those reasons that are related to personal satisfaction, interest in teaching and love of the profession, (Gore, *et al.*, 2015). As articulated by Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation is the performance of an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separate consequences.

To ascertain how important intrinsic motivation was, in their decision to choose teaching as their career path, the pre-service education students were presented with seven items which they rated on a Likert scale as being

not at all important in your decision to very important in your decision, 1-5. Table 6 shows intrinsic motivation as one of the influential factors was moderately important in considering the choice of teaching as a career.

The main reasons given by the pre-service education students as reasons for choosing teaching are life-long dream or passion for teaching and teaching as an enjoyable career.

Table 6: Intrinsic Motivation

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| I am interested in teaching | 3.57 | 1.52 |
| I like teaching | 3.64 | 1.46 |
| I have always wanted to be a teacher | 3.11 | 1.58 |
| I want to work in a child/adolescent centered environment | 3.26 | 1.53 |
| I would like to start my own school | 3.38 | 1.59 |
| I like working with children/adolescents | 3.49 | 1.49 |
| I want a job that involves working with children/adolescents | 3.33 | 1.59 |
| Motivation | 3.40 | 1.19 |

Note: Mean categories: *Not important at all in your decision* =1.00- 1.49, *slightly important in your decision* =1.50-2.49, *moderately important in your decision* =2.50- 3.49, *important in your decision* =3.50-4.49 and *very important in your decision* = 4.50- 5.00.

The findings from this study concur with earlier findings that intrinsic motivation is more effective than external rewards, because external rewards have been found to reduce internal motivation. It was further established that intrinsic motivational factors always present the task as enjoyable, interesting and psychologically rewarding which enhances commitment, (Demir, 2011).

The findings support what Gore, *et al.*, (2015) established that teachers motivated by altruistic and intrinsic reasons are committed and invest in teaching which denotes a sense of calling to the profession and ensures that such teachers persist even when working conditions depreciate.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The influential factors which include (i) Fallback, (ii) External factors, (iii) Self-concept (iv) Altruistic reasons (v) Extrinsic reasons and (vi) Intrinsic motivation, were found to influence the pre-service education students' decision to join the teaching profession, although fallback was found to be slightly important and also had teachers who were motivated by fallback were less likely to be committed.

5.2 Recommendations

From this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) needs to have an understanding of the factors which influence pre-service education students' choice of teaching as a career. This is because there is a difference between those who are intrinsically motivated and those who choose it as a last resort.
2. If need be/possible an interview should be carried out before placing students to train as teachers who may not be interested in becoming teachers.

Meeting of the Mid- South Educational Research Association, Lexington, KY.

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