# Concealed Reality: A Reservoir for Teaching Profession in a Zambian Context

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Abstract: This manuscript is a study which focused on unveiling the concealed reality of why some individuals chose to be teachers or educators instead of choosing other forms of careers in a Zambian context. The study objectives were: to determine the rationale for choosing teaching profession to other jobs by trainee teachers and to establish what the trainee teachers wanted to fix for becoming teachers under teaching professional. The researchers used qualitative method and employed a semistructured interview schedule to collect data from 30 trainee teachers at Kwame Nkrumah University in Zambia as participants. The key findings were that it was their wish from childhood, a calling, they love it, for wanting to teach modern technology and entrepreneur skills, as a way they want to contribute to society, want to overcome poverty, to offer meaningful education, because of being inspired by other teachers, it's their responsibility, they want to continue learning, and to help the disabled. The study also brought to light the issues trainee teachers intended to address or fix upon becoming educators. Furthermore, the study established that the trainee teachers were either pulled or pushed towards their career choice. From the findings, this research recommends that the reservoir which need be taken on bold in the teaching professional in order to enrich teaching profession should be considered to help in meeting the current and future demands of the education system in Zambia.

*Key words*: challenges, trainee teachers, reservoir, teaching profession, concealed reality

# I. INTRODUCTION

Peaching is a process of transmission of relevant knowledge and skills into learners so that they become meaningful citizens (Magasu, Muleya and Mweemba, 2021). According to Nilsen and Albertalli (2002), teaching in its broadest sense is the process whereby a teacher guides a learner or a group of learners to a higher level of knowledge or skills. Further, Ababio (2013) stated that, the major goal of teaching is for the teacher to ensure that students/pupils learn what has been taught. The definition for teaching highlighted the need to teach so that learners can learn and benefit from education. However, the intention of teachers before joining teaching profession was not revealed and this study is focusing on it and referred to as concealed reality. This concealed reality is the reasons of choosing teaching and the motive of doing something which is only known by the individual making the decision for lifetime career. The researchers believed that, it takes individual intention driven from being pushed or a pull from their deepest core of their being to decide on a life carrier for their life time. Hence the need to get concerned about why people choose to join teaching profession and become teachers and not other jobs for their life time carrier.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

It was necessary for the study

- i. To determine the rationale for choosing teaching profession to other jobs by trainee teachers.
- ii. To establish what trainee teachers wanted to fix for becoming educators.

## **III. RESEARCH QUESTION**

The study answered the following questions

- i. Why did trainee teachers choose teaching profession to other jobs?
- ii. What trainee teachers wanted to fix for becoming educators?

# IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There has been a lot of research conducted on teaching profession and most of them are based on what teaching is all about or pedagogy and this is very important. For example the study Manchishi and Mwanza (2013) was based on teaching practice and its effectiveness. However, there has been no much attention given to the reasons why individuals chose to be teachers and the motive behind it. The individual's reasons and intentions for becoming educators are not known. Therefore, this study aims at revealing the concealed reality or reasons and motives behind joining teaching profession as its reservoir.

# V. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to establish the reasons and motives of individuals for joining teaching profession.

## VI. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

# Push-pull theory

People in the teaching profession have various reasons and motives for their career choices (Watt and Richardson, 2007). Studies on career motivation across different professions have classified the motives into 'push' and 'pull' factors (Kirkwood, 2009). Push factors represent external circumstances that cause people to react in a given situation (Richter, Ritcheter and Lazarides, 2021). In the workplace

context, they tend to be associated with negative feelings (Richter et al 2021). In contrast, internal factors 'pull' make someone to make a decision for instance, to proactively start something new tend to be associated with positive feelings (Hakim, 1989; Kirkwood, 2009). While push-pull theory has been used widely in studies on economic behavior (Kirkwood, 2009; Segal, Borgia, and Schoenfeld, 2005), only a few studies have attempted to apply this theory to research on teachers or teacher educators. Anthony and Ord (2008), for example, used this approach to investigate reasons and motives of career teachers, defining push factors as 'those factors coming from external or outside the individuals such as being inspired by the teacher which are likely to individuals 'being dissatisfied with aspects of one's job, or losing one's job (Anthony and Ord, 2008).' They considered pull factors to be 'those that seemed to draw people to teaching,' which includes internal factors such as loving the career 'task demand factors such as looking for a challenge, antecedent factors such as always wanting to be a teacher and perceiving a career fit both on a personal ability level and a prior experiential level (Anthony and Ord, 2008). In addition, pushpull theory was also used in this qualitative study in order to understand whether trainee teacher were 'pushed' towards their career move or 'pulled' towards being educators or their career (Holme, Robb and Berry, 2016).

# VII. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Alberts, Mbalo and Ackermann (2003), career choice is considered as one of the major areas of concern for young people nearing the end of their schooling. As teaching plays vital role in preparing future generations of any society, it is essential to employ qualified and dedicated teachers in the profession (Balyer, Aydin and Ozcan, 2014). Therefore, choosing teaching as a career becomes more crucial. Many factors have been linked with career choices in teaching profession. This study aims to determine for what reasons student teachers choose teaching profession as a career. The factors taken into consideration in this review are the definition of teaching, reasons and the intention of becoming educators. Some individual choose teaching carrier for their life time. Schlechty (2004) defines teaching as an art of inducing students to behave in ways that are assumed to lead to learning, including an attempt to induce learners to so behave. What Schlechty meant by teaching being 'an art' is that the teacher must create situations to facilitate learning and then motivate learners to have interest in what is being transmitted to them.

# Reasons trainee teachers choose teaching

There are various reasons for choosing to be a teacher. For instance, Marsh (2015) contends that some trainee teachers choose teaching because they have noticed the variations in terms of the field of specialization or subject areas. Within the teaching fraternity, some become teachers for English subjects, others for Science subjects or Mathematics, Geography, Religious education, History, Civic education and other subjects. Manno (2021) argues that some of those who choose to become teachers think that every teacher devotes his or her life to education as individual and as part of their identity. Another reason trainee teachers choose teaching was because of intangible rewards of helping learners as one of the greatest rewards of teaching for example helping learners especially those who have been struggling in life (Lawrence, 2021).

A study conducted by Manno (2012) revealed that it was not money or the term breaks or vacation that made people join the teaching profession but becoming a teacher was deeper and it had to do with impacting the lives of people. Furthermore, Lawrence, (2021) echoed that, some chose teaching because teaching is much more than just a way to get a paycheck, becoming a teacher means making a difference in the lives of children, and shaping them into the adults they will become with lessons that will last a lifetime because they help learners develop academic and life skills.

However, in another study by Balyer and Ozcan (2014), it was discovered that while some candidates liked teaching others, some others chose it because they believed that the profession was respectable. They also liked longer holidays, employment opportunities, working hours and conditions as well as job security (Haciomeroglu & Taskin, 2010).

The other reason trainee teachers choose teaching could be that there is a demand for teachers in the country, and a person is called to become a teacher in response to that need (Manno, 2021). Additionally, another study by Lawrence (2021) revealed that the reason for some trainee teachers choosing teaching was security of the job because some jobs may have been replaced by modern technology, but there will always be a need for teachers one can rest easy knowing that they will have a job that they can count on for years to come.

The other reason trainee teachers choose teaching was that, some became teachers to improve the quality of education. If one recognize the need to improve the quality of education in the country, then the reason for choosing to become a teacher was to affect change (Manno, 2021). According to Lawrence (2021), some trainee teachers chose to become teachers for the reason being that teaching was a skill that could transfer skills nearly anywhere. He further explained that, if only one trained and became a certified teacher, he/she can work almost anywhere in the world and could theoretically teach the subject and explore the globe at the same time and because international schools and education programs are expanding globally and look for instructors who have trained and are certified.

Another reason trainee teachers choose teaching could be that school administrators and government officials have an impact at the legislative level, but it is teachers who directly affect students in the classroom that is, after all, where learning takes place. The reason some trainees become teachers was because they were inspired by former teachers (Marsh, 2015). This reason was further discovered by Manno (2021) that, people wanted to become teachers and it could be that, may be an amazing teacher changed their life when they were younger and they want to share that with a new generation of learners or many people cite a favorite teacher as a source of inspiration\_ in their decision to pursue a career in education. Some choose to join teaching because it was also a highly social job with a team of colleagues who one can lean on in hard times and laugh with during the good moments also because they become a key member of the community (Lawrence, 2021).

The most popular reasons (75%) for joining teaching was a desire to make a difference according to research conducted by (Marsh, 2015). Other trainees choose to be teachers because there was also a high level of mobility within this field, for example one could be promoted within the education system or move to areas where the need for teachers is greater, or leave education and go on to become an administrator, counselor or even a social worker (Lawrence, 2021).

## Motives/intentions of choosing teaching profession

There are varying motives or intentions of wanting to be a teacher. According to Manno (2021), the intention is to improve the quality of education for every learner in the country. Another intention can be to help learners, but not just one or few, but to help thousands of learners. The other intention could be that, some essentially, become teachers to take part in shaping the next generation (Manno, 2021). It was also reported by Mali (2021) that, teachers have the potential to interact with learners at all stages of development and from all walks of life, a great teacher may want to help learners along this path and to play a part in shaping the person they will ultimately become.

The other intention is where some become teachers in order to give back to their community. This was noted by Manno (2021) who stated that, one of the intentions for becoming a teacher is to make invaluable contribution to one's community in a meaningful way, because teaching is one of the most direct ways to make an impact, and if driven by the desire to help those around. The other motive trainee teachers choose teaching could be to help the vulnerable. The findings of Manno (2021) was that, perhaps one may have grown up in a high-needs area and is personally connected to the struggle of learners who come from low-income neighborhoods and go to schools with little funding; this sort of perspective allows one to recognize how much of a difference a devoted teacher can make. In addition if one would want to help a child struggling with low self-esteem and problems at home, then they intend to become a teacher in order to encourage them and help them realize their potential (Mali, 2021).

Others want to become teachers in order to change the lives of learners. Manno (2021) narrated that, teachers do more than teach, and their impact extends far beyond the classroom. For instance Mali (2021) discovered that, a teacher, is more than just an educator but a mentor, a confidant and a friend, as one of the most common intentions to become a teacher in order to make a difference in the lives of as many learners as one.

# VIII. RESULTS

# Rationale or reasons for choosing teaching profession

The study revealed that there were limitless ways of entering into the carrier of being educators: as individual visions in a Zambian context. When the question was posed by the researchers in order to find out why the pre-service trainee teachers wanted to be educators, their responses are reflected in the following answers. One of the response from trainee teacher 'A' was;

I want to be an educator because education is a key to success. I want many people to be educated in Zambia and succeed in life.

Figure 1: Education is akey to success



Source: Google, com (2021)

Trainee teacher 'B' stated;

I wanted it since my childhood and I like it

Another response from trainee teacher 'C' was;

I want to inspire and encourage learners to work hard

Another trainee teacher 'D';

I want to mold learners into future leaders

The other trainee teacher 'E' echoed;

I want to use knowledge imparted in me to help others or learners

The response from trainee teacher 'F' was;

*I will become an educator in order to help learners identify and develop their potentials* 

It was also reported by trainee teacher 'G';

I love teaching and explaining things to people. I love being listened to by others and being a teacher will fulfill my dream

Then another trainee teacher 'H' said;

I want to teach learners modern technology and entrepreneur skills to society

The other response from trainee teacher 'I' was that;

I want to empower learners with knowledge and skills

It was also echoed by trainee teacher 'K' who said;

I want to contribute to the welfare of society through educating learners

The other response from trainee teacher 'L' was;

It's my calling I love helping people and I will do that by being a teacher

Then another response from trainee teacher 'M' was;

I want to be an educator because I want to educate learners because education is an important service that *liberate people from poverty, ignorance and any form of vice* 

Another respondent trainee teacher 'N' had this to say;

I want to be an educator because by being an educator I will contribute to economic growth of my nation

Another trainee teacher 'P' stated;

I love helping people and I want to provide quality education to learners which will be meaningful in their lives and make then live independently

Trainee teacher 'Q' said;

I want to be an educator in order to impart my knowledge to learners in society that will change their lives positively. I always wanted to be a teacher ever since I saw one of my teachers who inspired me

The other participant, a trainee teacher 'S' had this to say;

I want to be a teacher after noticing that some children are left out in terms of being educated such as those who dropout out of school, street kids and girls and I want to help all children be educated.

Trainee teacher 'T' had this to say;

I want to give back to society the knowledge, skills and cultural as well as others values I have been imparted with

The other participant trainee teacher 'U' had this to say;

I want to pass on knowledge to others and I feel it is my responsibility to teach learners. I want to continue learning throughout my life that is why I want to be a teacher

The other respondent trainee teacher 'W' echoed;

Becoming a teacher to me is as a result of my home experience, I want to help visually impaired because when my mother became blind I noticed how she struggled

# Another response from trainee teacher 'X' was;

It is because my child is deaf I want to know how to handle and communicate to her

Motives for choosing teaching profession

The researcher administered a question in order to establish the challenges respondents wanted to fix or address upon becoming educators, the responses were as follows;

Trainee teacher 'A' stated;

I want to fix the poverty in my family because most of my family members are not educated and are poor, education is the only means to me to eradicate poverty permanently because it is a key to success.

Trainee teacher 'B' narrated the following;

I want to fix the cycle of poverty or brake the chain of poverty, hunger, in my family, because when I had a reflection on my family tree, no one is educated except myself, thus I want to earn a living and make a difference in my family's lives through my guidance otherwise being poor in my family will be perpetuated

Trainee teacher 'C' added;

I want to help my relatives get educated, those of my extended and nuclear family because of not having anyone to help them

The other response from trainee teacher 'D' was;

To reduce poverty by helping poor learners overcome poverty through education

Figure 2: Helping poor learners overcome poverty



Source: Google.com (2021)

Trainee teacher 'BB' stated that;

I want to fix immorality and teach good morals to children by being a leading example, for example most people such as girls fall pregnant while at school due to their immoral behavior and lack of having a mentor in their life

Trainee teacher 'Z' had this to say;

*I* want to fix my financial challenge

Figure 3: I want to fix my financial challenge



Source: Google.com (2021)

Trainee teacher 'G' explained the following;

I want to fix my sufferings I am going through now, I don't want to suffer much in the similar way in my coming future life

The other trainee teacher 'H' mentioned the following;

I want to fix the life struggle am going through, I want to be successful and have a better life than the way I have struggled in my childhood

The other response from trainee teacher 'I' was;

By becoming an educator I will fix the problem of dependency syndrome and live an independent life because currently I depend solely on help of others such as my family members and bursaries or well-wishers

#### The other response from trainee teacher 'J' was;

I want to address the problem of Africans depending on western countries to provide most of goods and services by being economically free through giving the required adaptive skills to learners such as academic and entrepreneurship skills so that they can be industrious and come up with their own either small or large scale industries which

will be beneficial to them and the nation as well as the continent

Trainee teacher 'K' stated;

I want to address my failure of meeting my different needs such as getting married, basic needs such as academic needs, medicinal needs, need for clothes, food as explained by one respondent

# Trainee teacher 'M' narrated;

I want fix the problem of lack of self-development among the youth by teaching them on how to be successful in life through such as setting their goals and achieve them because and this is my passion of giving knowledge, wisdom and skills to learners

## The narration from trainee teacher 'O' was;

I want to reduce illiteracy and ignorance because I have noticed illiteracy among many people, many people remaining uneducated and ignorant and most educated people due to imparted knowledge in them are not taken advantage of'. The respondent went on to say that, 'eradicating ignorance or curbing illiteracy will only be successively done through teaching which will transform their lives and mind set in the community and country at large

## Trainee teacher 'P' echoed;

I want to fix the problem of the dependency on white choler jobs through changing the curriculum; I want a change the curriculum to be both of practical and less with academics and remove especially things not needed through intensifying curriculum review in order to respond to the needs of the current time and future challenges

Figure 4: White choler jobs.



.Source: Google.com (2021)

Figure 5: Practical Curriculum with such as cookery skills



Source: Google.com (2021)

Trainee teacher 'Q' said the following;

I want to fix the problem of technical skills such as computer skill, engineering, industrial skills in the early grades because many people in Zambia lack technology skills needed for development

Figure 6: Technical skills such as computer skills during early grades



Source: Google.com (2021)

Trainee teacher 'R' narrated the following;

I want to reduce the challenges that of stigmatization faced learners with disabilities through education

Another trainee teacher 'T' had the following to say;

I want to fix the problem of leadership by helping children become better future leaders because poor leadership do cost lives of many people

Trainee teacher 'U' response was as follows;

I want to fix the problem of being looked down upon because of being poor by the rich people and that of using me in any way that they want because I will be in a position of making informed decisions over my life

Trainee teacher 'V' said;

I want to fix the problem of negative attitude by some teachers towards learners by being helpful to them and make them learn Figure 7: Teacher being helpful to learners



IX. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The discussion of the findings takes into account the theory of push and pull while discussing the reasons and motives by trainee teachers for choosing teaching profession.

## Rationale or reasons for choosing teaching profession

A study focused on unveiling the concealed reality of why some individuals chose to be teachers or educators instead of choosing other forms of careers in a Zambian context. The study objectives were: to determine the rationale for choosing teaching profession to other jobs by trainee teachers and to establish what the trainee teachers wanted to fix for becoming teachers under teaching professional.

The study discovered or determined the reason as to why trainee teachers choose teaching. Push-pull theory was also used in this qualitative study in order to understand whether trainee teachers were 'pushed' towards their career move or 'pulled' towards being educators or their career (Holme et al., 2016).

Basing on push and pull theory, their reasons for choosing to be educators fall into two categories of push and pull factors. Because some of these reasons have revealed that some trainee teachers had chosen teaching because they were either externally influenced by the situation or internally influenced. For instance, some of their reasons reflected that they were pushed for choosing to be educators. For example, the answers in which they said, for choosing teaching they wanted to teach modern technology and entrepreneur skills, it was their way they wanted to contribute to society, they wanted to overcome poverty, they wanted to offer meaningful education, they were being inspired by other teachers and they wanted to help the disabled. This is because push factors are 'those factors coming from external or outside the individuals such as being inspired by the teacher' (Anthony and Ord, 2008). Under the theory of push and pull only one reason is given as compared to the current study which had several reasons for choosing the career of teaching. Apart from the theory of push and pull most of these findings of this study were not similar to other research findings. For example, a study conducted by Marsh (2015) revealed that, some trainee teachers choose teaching because they have noticed the variations in terms of the field of specialization or subject areas. Another study revealed that the reason trainee teachers choose teaching is security of the job because some jobs may have been replaced by modern technology, but there will always be a need for teachers one can rest easy knowing that I will get a job that I can count on for years to come. (Lawrence, 2021). Then the other study discovered that the reason some become teachers according to Lawrence (2021) for the reason being that teaching is a skill that can transfer nearly anywhere. The researchers argued that, the reasons for choosing to become an educator is contextual or depended on the circumstance or situation an individual was found.

Those who were internally or pulled into teaching had these reasons such as education being a key to their success, it was their wish from childhood, it was their calling, they loved it, they wanted to offer meaningful education, it was their responsibility, and they wanted to continue learning. In addition, push-pull theory was also used in this qualitative study in order to understand whether trainee teachers were 'pushed' towards their career move or 'pulled' towards being educators or their career (Holme et al., 2016). The responses fitted well with pull factors because pull factors were factors ' that seemed to draw people to teaching', which includes internal factors such as loving the career 'antecedent factors such as always wanting to be a teacher and perceiving a career fit both on a personal ability level ' (Anthony and Ord, 2008). This was similar to what the current study discovered though the current study discovered more reasons as compared to the theory such as wanting to offer meaningful education, teaching being their responsibility, they wanted to continue learning. The other reason trainee teachers choose teaching could be that there is a demand for teachers in the country, and a person is called to become a teacher in response to that need (Manno, 2021). This finding was as well discovered during this study. Another finding by Manno (2021) was that, if one recognize the need to improve the quality of education in the country, then the reason for choosing to become a teacher is to affect change. This reason was also similar to the findings of this study. Basing on these empirical findings the rationale for choosing to be an educator was determined and the concealed reality was unveiled.

Motives or what the trainee teachers wanted to fix for becoming teachers under teaching professional.

The study brought to light the issues trainee teachers intended to address upon becoming educators such as; poverty, immorality, financial challenge, their need for money, sufferings and struggles, dependence syndrome, failure to meet their different needs, unemployment, self-development, negative attitude people have towards teachers, illiteracy and ignorance, dependence on white choler jobs, challenges of learners with disabilities, leadership, poor people being looked down upon by the rich and negative attitude towards learners by some teachers. Basing on push and pull theory majority of issues trainee teachers intended to address or fix upon becoming educators were external or push factor. This is because according to Anthony and Ord (2008) who used this approach to investigate motives of career teachers, defined push factors as 'those factors coming from external or outside the individuals.

Furthermore, Mali (2021) discovered that, a teacher, is more than just an educator but a mentor, a confidant and a friend, as one of the most common intentions for becoming a teacher in order to make a difference in the lives of as many students as one can. This was also discovered by the current study.

The study discovered another issue falling under internal factor and this was issue of fixing self-development. This was in line with a pull or internal factor because according to Anthony and Ord (2008) who considered pull factors to be 'those that seemed to draw people to teaching', which includes internal factors of a personal ability level.

However some findings of this study were not similar to the other findings by other researchers. For instance, Manno (2021) discovered that others want to become teachers in order to change the lives of students. The finding of Mali (2021) who found that, if one would want to help a child struggling with low self-esteem and problems at home, then they intend to become a teacher in order to encourage them and help them realize their potential was not in line with current findings.

# X. CONCLUSION

It is clear from the findings that the push and pull factors made trainee teachers join the teaching profession. This means that teaching depended on these factors. By implication, quality and effective teaching and learning may be denied to the learners because of these factors. Therefore, there is need for the Ministry of Education to consider the pull and push factors when recruiting teachers. If the aforementioned aspect is not put into consideration, the teaching and learning process may be affected.

## XI. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, this study recommends to the Ministry of Education in Zambia to take into account and consider the aspirations of those joining the teaching profession so that they are in line with the educational goals.

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