

Exploring Undergraduates' Perspectives on Pursuing a Career in Teaching: A Study in the Bangladesh Context

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Abstract

This study focused on how undergraduate students in Bangladesh view the teaching profession as a career path. A total of 423 undergraduate students participated in the study who shared their thoughts on what factors influence their decision to either choose or not to choose teaching as a career. From their responses, four factors were identified that attract students to pursue a career in teaching and four factors that deter them from it. The findings of the study revealed that extrinsic motivations have limited impact when students consider pursuing a career in teaching. Instead, intrinsic and altruistic motivations, such as personal fulfillment and a genuine passion for education, hold more weight in the decision-making process. Male and female students have similar motivations in selecting a teaching career. However, those who showed no interest to pursue a career in teaching responded that it's because of the external factors such as lower salary, better career opportunities in other occupations. Moreover, there are statistically significant difference between male and female students in terms of external factors influencing their decision not to pursue a career in teaching. Understanding these factors can help stakeholders make informed decisions about encouraging more students to consider teaching profession as a viable career option, ensuring a diverse and qualified group of future educators.

Keywords: Undergraduate students, teaching profession, motivational factors, gender differences

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1. Introduction

Teaching is universally recognized as a noble profession, with teachers often regarded as nation builders, holding a respected status in many societies. Their pivotal role in shaping the next generations is crucial, guiding individuals towards becoming responsible and valuable members of society. Since teaching is so important for shaping the future generations, it's really necessary to have qualified and dedicated teachers in the profession (Balyer & Özcan, 2014). To ensure educational success, it is crucial that teachers are well-educated, intelligent, and dedicated to their profession. The quality of teachers is considered the root of quality education (Kagwiria & Amukowa, 2013), making the recruitment of qualified educators a fundamental necessity for educational advancement. Despite the importance of teaching, Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) argued that the profession struggles to attract bright young minds. Issues such as a shortage of qualified primary school teachers (Newby et al., 1995), inadequate representation of male teachers (Johnston et al., 1999), and a structural problem leading to 'out-of-field' teaching (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2002; Ingersoll, 2003) contribute to the challenges in the education sector.

Despite Bangladesh's progress toward achieving upper-middle-income status, the teacher student ratios (TSR) in both primary and secondary schools are lower than the average in low-income countries (Jasim & Bhuiyan, 2021). This issue also continues in higher education, where many universities face challenges with less-than-ideal teacher-student ratios (Salman, 2023), emphasizing the critical need for improved educational standards nationwide. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2023) found that as of 2021, primary schools in Bangladesh have 61.35% female teachers, highlighting a lower representation of males in teaching roles. In contrast, the post primary education sectors demonstrated a reverse trend, with only 27.92% of teachers being female as of 2022, highlighting a clear deviation from the opposite pattern. Where there is a need to recruit new qualified teachers to fill the gap, it is seen that nowadays teaching as a profession is failing to attract bright young minds in Bangladesh (Islam, 2020). Amongst the 26 cadres in the BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service), candidates prefer the education sector as the last option, meaning that current education cadres/country's brightest minds did not prefer teaching profession wholeheartedly (Salman, 2022).

To address this issue, it is crucial to understand the factors influencing young individuals' perspectives towards choosing teaching as a career path. Despite a global interest in studying the perspectives of young individuals towards teaching, there has been no specific study conducted in Bangladesh to explore their perspectives to choose teaching as a career path. Therefore, this study aims to explore the factors that influence undergraduate students in deciding whether to choose or not to choose teaching as a career.

2. Review of related literature

Over the past two decades, many studies conducted in different countries worldwide explored the factors and reasons behind individuals' decision to pursue a career in teaching (Brown, 1992; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Andrews & Hatch, 2002; Wang, 2004; Lai et al., 2005; Watt & Richardson, 2007; Azman, 2013; Balyer & Özcan, 2014; Saks et al., 2016). These studies on motivations for choosing a teaching career had focused on two metrics. The first type involves teacher trainees, where researchers explained and explored their reasons for being interested to pursue a career in teaching. The second type involves specific inspection of the career decisions made by young individuals before committing to or declining the idea of becoming teachers. These studies brought out three important motivational factors that influence to choose teaching as a career path. The first factor is (1) altruistic, motivated by the belief that being a teacher is an important and worthwhile profession in the society. People having these types of motivations want to help children in their development and help society to progress. The second factor is (2) intrinsic motivations, which include the pleasure of teaching others, the fulfillment of sharing knowledge with others, and the culmination of using their expertise in a certain subject. The third factor is (3) extrinsic motivations, based on aspects other than the job itself, such as the probability of attaining holidays or vacations, the pay scale, rewards and social standing associated with the profession. The surrounding people can also be a reason for career choice by providing their views and experiences. It means that individuals may decide while choosing a profession based on the influence of their parents, teachers, relatives, and peers (Kemple et al., 1991; Koçak et al., 2021). Additionally, the influence of their own perspectives, school life experiences and the influence of teachers may be the motivations behind students' consideration (Hutchinson & Johnson, 1994; Chan, 1998; Butcher & Lewis, 2002).

Innumerable investigations have employed a typical framework to study the factors that influence individuals' choice to pursue a career in teaching. In Hong Kong, a study on secondary students found that students regarded teaching as the most respected profession and the one they most wanted to join (Lai et al., 2005). Additionally, they were attracted to the teaching profession mostly for altruistic-intrinsic reasons. Similarly, research conducted on high school seniors in Sydney, Australia, revealed that students pursue careers in teaching primarily driven by altruistic motives, especially when they are confident about the availability of job opportunities and job stability (Butcher & Lewis, 2002). During the study conducted in California and Oklahoma in the US, it was observed that pre-service teachers exhibited altruistic motivations (Hayes, 1990). In Estonia, the factors which influenced students to consider the teaching profession as a career went in line with altruistic reasons reported in earlier studies (Saks et al., 2016). However, a study by Balyer & Özcan (2014) in Turkey found that students chose teaching mostly for altruistic and intrinsic factors. Moran et al. (2001) claimed in their study that undergraduate education students of Northern Ireland were primarily driven by intrinsic factors in their interest of choosing a teaching career. Whereas, in Malaysia, a study conducted on first-year undergraduate education students revealed that their decision to pursue teaching as a career was predominantly motivated by altruistic and extrinsic motives. In Wang's research conducted in 2004, the focus was on understanding the motivational factors of preservice teacher education candidates in Taiwan for choosing the teaching profession. The research findings indicated that they were attracted to the teaching profession because they had been introduced to science education in informal settings during their early years. Moreover, they were enticed by the perceived material rewards, favorable work environment, and the elevated social standing that came with being a teacher in Taiwan. Similarly, a study conducted by Yong (1995) investigated the reasons why student teachers in Brunei Darussalam chose the teaching profession. The findings indicated that 45% of participants expressed external factors as their motivation for pursuing a teaching career. Yong also stated that in countries like Cameroon, Zimbabwe, and Brunei, teaching was primarily attractive due to benefits like job security and good salaries. Bastick's (2000) analysis of factors motivating teachers to enter the profession globally observed that educators in developed nations like the US, Canada, UK, and Australia were primarily motivated by a genuine passion for teaching and a desire to make a positive impact. In contrast, teachers in the developing countries such as Nigeria, the Caribbean region, Jamaica, Cameroon, Brunei, and Zimbabwe appeared more influenced by external factors such as getting rewards or benefits. Additionally, the way students see the teaching profession and how teachers view their job are closely connected (Egwu, 2015). How teachers feel about their role and how they act in that role is reflected in how they interact with students, which affects how students see and feel about becoming teachers themselves. Students' reasons behind their choice to pursue a teaching career can be influenced by their own perspectives, school life experiences and the influence of their teachers (Hutchinson & Johnson, 1994; Chan, 1998; Butcher & Lewis, 2002).

However, respect for teachers has been decreasing, as reported by researchers from different countries (Hammet, 2008; Sokolova, 2011). The main reason for this decline is that they are not paid enough for their work (Sokolova, 2011). Hammet (2008) claimed that younger generations now value respect in terms of materialism rather than traditional cultural aspects. It has been found that teaching is a profession of economically lower or middle class people in Turkey (Balyer & Özcan, 2014). In Bangladesh, primary school teachers are still coined as third-grade employees. The socio-economic status of non-government secondary

school teachers are very low and financial problems are the major cause of low status (Azad et al., 2014). Egwu (2015) claimed that in Nigeria, it is evident that students hold a negative perception towards the teaching profession. This negative perception is attributed to various factors, including inadequate and inconsistent salary payments, lack of promotion, excess workload, poor environment, negative influence of parents and poor financing of education etc. In Hong Kong, many students choose not to pursue teaching careers due to their perception of the profession as tiring and boring, with a suffocating working environment. This perception is likely influenced by their observations of their own teachers' experiences (Lai et al., 2005).

Taking all the factors into consideration, it is evident that young individuals decide on their career path by considering certain factors. By exploring these key concepts in undergraduate students, a deeper understanding about Bangladeshi young generations perspectives towards teaching and influencing factors regarding their choice of teaching can be achieved.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research approach and design

A quantitative approach was used for this investigation. In quantitative research, researchers aim to establish the overall tendency of responses from individuals and to see how this tendency varies among people (Creswell, 2012). It was an online survey. Data were collected online using a structured survey questionnaire in a Google form. Online surveys allow quick access to extensive data. It also ensures cost effectiveness for surveying a specific population (Creswell, 2012).

3.2 Sample

The study included 423 undergraduate students from four public universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Of these students, 51.1% were male (n = 216) and 48.9% (n = 207) were female. If we see their ages, 37.8% (n = 160) were between age 18 and 21, 56.7% (n = 240) were between age 22 and 25, and 5.4% (n = 23) were between 26 and 29 years. In addition, 26.2% (n = 111) of the participants were studying Arts subjects (e.g. English, Bengali, History, Languages, Music), 25.1% (n = 106) were studying science subjects (e.g. Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, Technology), 18.4% (n = 78) were studying social science subjects (e.g. Anthropology, Sociology, Philosophy, Economics, Psychology), 9.9% (n = 42) were studying business studies subjects (e.g. International Business, Management, Accounting and Information, Marketing), and 20.3% (n = 86) were studying education (e.g. Science, Mathematics and Technology Education, Special Education, Social Science Education, Language Education). Between the participants, 19.4% (n = 82) were in the first year of their study, 18.9% (n = 80) were in the second year, 20.6% (n = 87) were in the 3rd year and 41.1% (n = 174) were in the final year of their study. The research targeted undergraduates from four public universities, aiming to ensure an excellent response rate through the self-reported questionnaire. However, it is important to acknowledge that making broad generalizations to the larger population of undergraduate students should be made with caution due to this convenient sampling approach.

The online survey questionnaire (Google forms) was sent to the participants via email and social media, with a deadline for them to complete the survey at their convenience. The introductory section of the tool emphasized the assurance of data privacy and confidentiality during reporting. The survey did not collect any information that could identify the respondents or the university he/she studies.

3.3 Questionnaire

Due to the quantitative nature of the study, a questionnaire was used to collect the data (Creswell, 2012; Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Other than questions related to demographics, the questionnaire included items for self-reporting, using a 5-point Likert scale which ranges from '5' (strongly agree) to '1' (strongly disagree). The questions regarding the factors influencing their interest or disinterest to pursue a teaching career were developed based on existing literature (Brown, 1992; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Andrews & Hatch, 2002; Wang, 2004; Lai et al., 2005; Watt & Richardson, 2007; Azman, 2013; Balyer & Özcan, 2014; Egwu, 2015; Saks et al., 2016). These factors included the following aspects: interpersonal themes (providing chances to connect with young people, personal fulfillment), contributing to important or morally worthwhile services for society, school as a socialization agency preparing children for adult roles, material benefits like salary or rewards, and having compatible working hours and schedules in teaching. The draft tool was piloted on 66 graduate students of a public university to improve the quality and efficiency of the tool.

3.4 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were conducted using IBM SPSS version 25 to illustrate the demographic data of participants and see their level of agreement with reasons influencing their interest or lack of interest in pursuing a teaching career. To explore the underlying factors influencing undergraduates' preferences for teaching, exploratory factor analysis, with using principal component analysis and varimax rotation, was implemented.

Moreover, two separate T-tests were performed to examine whether there are any statistically significant differences between male and female towards choosing or not choosing a teaching career. One t-test examined individuals who were interested in pursuing a teaching career, while another t-test was conducted on those who didn't want to pursue their career in teaching.

4. Results

4.1 Level of students' interest to choose teaching as a career

Table 1. Distribution of undergraduates interested in pursuing a career in teaching by educational level

Level	Respondents (n=228)	Percentage
Primary	33	14.5
Secondary	64	28.1
Tertiary	131	57.5
Total	228	100

Among the 423 participants, 53.9% (n = 228) expressed interest to choose teaching as a career, while 46.1% (n = 195) indicated disinterest. Within the interested group, 57.5% (n = 131) considered teaching at the tertiary level, 28.1% (n = 64) at the secondary level, and 14.5% (n = 33) at the primary level (Table 1).

4.2 Influential factors for being interested to pursue a career in teaching

To explore factors that influence undergraduates' preferences for a teaching career, exploratory factor analysis with principal component analysis and varimax rotation was applied. First, a reliability check using Cronbach's alpha which was 0.79 as a whole (Table 2), indicating the overall scale's internal consistency. Next, principal component analysis and varimax rotation were applied, revealed four factors with eigenvalues over 1. These factors explained 55.47% of cumulative variance.

Table 2. Factors that influence in pursuing teaching as a career with Cronbach's alpha

Scale/Construct	Item	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
Altruistic	3, 5, 7, 11	4	0.71
Intrinsic	1, 4, 8, 12	4	0.74
Extrinsic	2, 6, 9, 10, 16	5	0.71
Influenced by others	13, 14, 15	3	0.68
Whole scale	1-16	16	0.79

Table 3 displays students among the participants who have expressed an interest in pursuing a teaching career. It outlines the reasons that could have played a role in their decision, and they were then asked to indicate their level of agreement with these reasons. The ordered list of reasons, as presented in Table 3, showcases the primary factors influencing males and females in their choice of teaching as a career. For males, the most influential reasons were 'It has always been my ambition' (Rank 1), 'Teaching is a meaningful and fulfilling profession' (Rank 2), 'A job that I find enjoyable' (Rank 3), 'Teaching fits my personality' (Rank 4), 'Love for teaching' (Rank 5), and 'Opportunities for further studies' (Rank 6). Conversely, for females, key reasons included 'Teaching is a meaningful and fulfilling profession' (Rank 1), 'It has always been my ambition' (Rank 2), 'A job that I find enjoyable' (Rank 3), 'Opportunities for further studies' (Rank 4), 'Teaching fits my personality' (Rank 5), and 'Love for teaching' (Rank 6). In both cases, these reasons predominantly represent intrinsic and altruistic factors, with four of them being intrinsic. Male participants kept 'It has always been my ambition' as their 1st choice, considering it as an intrinsic factor. In contrast, female participants favored 'Teaching is a meaningful and fulfilling profession' as their 1st choice, highlighting its altruistic nature.

While male respondents ranked 'It has always been my ambition' as their 1st choice, female participants ranked it as their second preference. Male students placed 'Teaching is a meaningful and fulfilling profession' as their second choice, while female participants regarded it as their top choice. Both male and female respondents ranked 'A job that I find enjoyable' as their third preference, reflecting its importance as an intrinsic factor. Following the third-ranked intrinsic factor, male respondents considered 'Teaching fits my personality', 'Love for teaching', and 'Opportunities for further studies' as the subsequent important influencing reasons. Likewise, female participants pinpointed 'Opportunities for further studies', 'Teaching suits my personality', and 'Passion for teaching' as the subsequent significant factors. In both groups, the primary six influencing reasons consist of a mix of two types of factors, with intrinsic factors standing out the most prominent. In addition, male participants then favored 'High social status' (Rank 7) and 'Job security' (Rank 8), which indicates external factors. Meanwhile, 'Help educate and shape the younger generation' (Rank 9) and 'Like being with children'

(Rank 10) were seen as altruistic factors. In contrast, female respondents ranked ‘Help educate and shape the younger generation’ (Rank 7) and ‘Like being with children’ (Rank 8) as their next influential factors, highlighting their altruistic tendencies. ‘High social status’ (Rank 9) and ‘Job security’ (Rank 10) were considered subsequent priorities, indicating a focus on external factors.

Table 3. Influential factors in pursuing teaching as a career: Mean, Standard Deviation, Rank order

Factors	Item	Reasons	Respondents interested in teaching (n=228)			
			Gender	Mean	SD	Rank
Altruistic	3	Teaching is a meaningful and fulfilling profession	M	3.97	0.83	2
			F	4.21	0.73	1
	5	Like being with children	M	3.45	1.04	10
			F	3.53	1.00	8
	7	Love for teaching	M	3.71	1.01	5
			F	3.66	0.93	6
11	Help educate and shape the younger generation	M	3.52	1.02	9	
		F	3.62	0.90	7	
Intrinsic	1	A job that I find enjoyable	M	3.91	0.96	3
			F	3.96	0.86	3
	4	Teaching fits my personality	M	3.73	0.95	4
			F	3.82	0.85	5
	8	It has always been my ambition	M	4.22	0.82	1
			F	4.14	0.73	2
12	Opportunities for further studies	M	3.66	1.02	6	
		F	3.91	0.88	4	
Extrinsic	2	High social status	M	3.62	1.03	7
			F	3.46	1.00	9
	6	Job security	M	3.58	1.02	8
			F	3.45	0.99	10
	9	Reasonable workload	M	3.44	1.04	11
			F	3.26	1.04	12
10	More holidays	M	3.03	1.15	14	
		F	2.90	1.16	15	
Influenced by others	16	Higher salary	M	2.56	1.20	16
			F	2.38	0.96	16
	13	Influenced by family members	M	2.81	1.24	15
			F	2.96	1.18	14
	14	Influenced by teachers	M	3.44	1.19	12
			F	3.19	1.30	13
15	Influenced by role model	M	3.19	1.26	13	
		F	3.32	1.11	11	

These findings suggest that male respondents were more attracted to societal recognition and financial stability compared to their female counterparts. After considering the initial influencing reasons, males ranked ‘Reasonable workload’ (Rank 11), ‘Influenced by teachers’ (Rank 12), ‘Influenced by role model’ (Rank 13), ‘More holidays’ (Rank 14), and ‘Influenced by family’ (Rank 15) as comparatively less influential in their decision-making process. Similarly, for females, ‘Influenced by role model’ (Rank 11), ‘Reasonable workload’ (Rank 12), ‘Influenced by teachers’ (Rank 13), ‘Influenced by family’ (Rank 14), and ‘More holidays’ (Rank 15) were perceived as lower influencing reasons subsequent to the primary considerations. These findings suggest that for both groups, reasons such as personal influence, workload considerations (Extrinsic factors), and familial influence are secondary to the primary reasons identified earlier. Both male and female individuals ranked ‘Higher salary’ (Rank 16) as the least influential reason in their decision to pursue a career in the teaching profession. This implies that neither group was primarily motivated by external factors, highlighting a stronger inclination towards intrinsic and altruistic factors in their career choice. In other words, the findings suggests that the desire for a higher income did not have a significant influence on individuals, indicating that other reasons, such as personal fulfillment and a genuine passion for education, held more weight in their decision-making process when interested to pursue a career in teaching.

Table 4. Influencing factors and gender (Those who is interested in teaching career)

Influencing factors	Gender (n=228)	Mean	SD	t	p
Altruistic	Male	3.66	0.73	-0.99	0.32
	Female	3.75	0.64		
Intrinsic	Male	3.88	0.70	-0.89	0.39
	Female	3.96	0.63		
Extrinsic	Male	3.25	0.74	1.66	0.10
	Female	3.09	0.70		
Influenced by others	Male	3.15	0.97	-0.03	0.97
	Female	3.16	0.94		

T-test analysis examined gender differences in mean scores for students interested to pursue a teaching career. Results (Table 4) indicated that there is no statistically significant gender differences across all four motivating factors ($t = -0.99, p = 0.32$; $t = -0.89, p = 0.39$; $t = 1.66, p = 0.10$; $t = -0.03, p = 0.97$) ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that both male and female students are attracted to the teaching profession for similar reasons.

4.3 Influential factors for not being interested to pursue a career in teaching

Applying the same factor analysis approach to find out reasons discouraging participants from pursuing a teaching career, 15 scale items were compressed into four factors that revealed 55.39% of the total variance in the sample. Table 5 displays students among the participants who have expressed their disinterest to pursue a career in teaching. It outlines the reasons that could have played a role in their decision, and they were then asked to indicate their level of agreement with these reasons.

The data in the table illustrates the influencing factors for males and female students who showed disinterest in choosing teaching as a career. For males, the most influential reasons for not choosing teaching as a career were 'Lower salary than other occupations' (Rank 1), 'Other occupations have better career prospects than teaching' (Rank 2), 'It has never been my ambition' (Rank 3), 'Influenced by teachers' (Rank 4), 'Too much responsibility in educating children/teenagers' (Rank 5) and 'Monotonous Job nature' (Rank 6). Conversely, for females, the prominent reasons included 'Lower salary than other occupations' (Rank 1), 'Other occupations have better career prospects than teaching' (Rank 2), 'Too much responsibility in educating children/teenagers' (Rank 3), 'Influenced by teachers' (Rank 4), 'It has never been my ambition' (Rank 5) and 'Monotonous Job nature' (Rank 6).

Table 5. Influential reasons for not interested to pursue a career in teaching: Mean, Standard Deviation, Rank order

Factors	Item	Reasons	Respondents not interested in teaching (n=195)				
			Gender	Mean	SD	Rank	
Altruistic	2	Dislike teaching profession	M	2.34	1.13	14	
			F	2.46	1.10	12	
	4	Dislike being with children	M	2.38	1.18	13	
			F	2.16	1.10	15	
	5	Dislike being with teenagers	M	2.30	1.07	15	
			F	2.16	0.94	14	
Intrinsic	1	Doesn't fit my personality	M	3.15	1.24	8	
			F	3.01	1.07	7	
	3	Never been my ambition	M	3.64	1.11	3	
			F	3.44	1.15	5	
	6	Too much responsibility in educating children/teenagers	M	3.40	1.40	5	
			F	3.71	1.13	3	
	9	Dislike working in the educational institution environment	M	2.95	1.23	11	
			F	2.54	1.08	11	
	Extrinsic	7	Monotonous job nature	M	3.39	0.97	6
				F	3.26	1.01	6
		8	Not reasonable workload	M	3.00	1.21	10
				F	2.56	1.15	10
10		Other occupations have higher social status	M	3.29	1.25	7	
			F	2.95	1.18	9	
11	Other occupations have better career prospects	M	4.01	0.92	2		
		F	3.71	0.90	2		
12	Lower salary than other occupations	M	4.26	0.86	1		

Factors	Item	Reasons	Respondents not interested in teaching (n=195)			
			Gender	Mean	SD	Rank
Influenced by others	13	Influenced by family members	F	3.97	1.05	1
			M	3.06	1.18	9
	14	Influenced by teachers	F	2.97	1.06	8
			M	3.40	1.08	4
	15	Influenced by role model	F	3.48	1.07	4
			M	2.52	1.12	12
		F	2.41	1.05	13	

Male and female participants both identified ‘Lower salary than other occupations’ as their top influencing reason, highlighting the importance of financial considerations. Additionally, both groups shared ‘Other occupations have better career prospects than teaching’ as their second preference, emphasizing a common belief in alternative professions providing better long-term prospects. In both cases, extrinsic factors took precedence. For both genders, the third-ranked reason, ‘Too much responsibility in educating children/teenagers’, emerged as a common concern, reflecting a shared perception of the demanding nature of teaching roles. The fourth-ranked reason, ‘Influenced by teachers’, played a similar role for both male and female respondents, indicating the impact of mentorship or role models on their career decisions. ‘It has never been my ambition’ occupied the fifth rank for males, indicating a lack of personal interest or aspiration in teaching. Conversely, for females, this reason took the fifth position, suggesting a similar trend but with a slightly different emphasis. The sixth-ranked reason, ‘Monotonous Job nature’, was consistent for both genders, highlighting a shared perception of monotony as a detracting element in considering teaching as a career. After stating their initial preferences, male participants prioritized ‘Other occupations have higher social status’ (Rank 7) and ‘It doesn’t fit my personality’ (Rank 8), reflecting extrinsic and intrinsic factors, respectively. Subsequently, they considered ‘Influenced by family members’ (Rank 9) and reasons related to work environment and workload, such as ‘Not reasonable workload’ (Rank 10) and ‘Dislike working in an educational institution environment’ (Rank 11). In contrast, female participants responded ‘It doesn’t fit my personality’ (Rank 7), ‘Influenced by family members’ (Rank 8), ‘Other occupations have higher social status’ (Rank 9), and similarly, reasons related to workload and work environment, including ‘Not reasonable workload’ (Rank 10) and ‘Dislike working in an educational institution environment’ (Rank 11) respectively.

After considering the initial influencing reasons, males ranked ‘Influenced by role model’ (Rank 12), ‘Dislike being with children’ (Rank 13), ‘Dislike the teaching profession’ (Rank 14) and ‘Dislike being with teenagers’ (Rank 15), highlighting mostly altruistic factors as comparatively less influential in their decision-making process. For females, ‘Dislike the teaching profession’ (Rank 12), ‘Influenced by role model’ (Rank 13), ‘Dislike being with teenagers’ (Rank 14) and ‘Dislike being with children’ (Rank 15) were perceived as lower influencing reasons subsequent to the primary considerations. These findings suggest that for both groups, altruistic factors being the least influential factors in their decision to not pursue teaching as a career path. This implies that neither group was primarily motivated by altruistic factors, instead extrinsic factors influence them in their decision to not pursue a career in the teaching profession.

Table 6. Influencing factors and gender (Those who is not interested in teaching career)

Influencing factors	Gender (n=195)	Mean	SD	t	p
Altruistic	Male	2.34	0.86	0.69	0.49
	Female	2.26	0.70		
Intrinsic	Male	3.28	0.96	0.87	0.38
	Female	3.18	0.74		
Extrinsic	Male	3.59	0.68	3.01	0.003
	Female	3.29	0.69		
Influenced by others	Male	2.99	0.90	0.32	0.75
	Female	2.95	0.82		

T-test analysis was conducted to compare the mean scores of male and female students who expressed disinterest in pursuing a teaching career revealed a statistically significant difference in extrinsic motivating factors (Table 6). The obtained t-value of 3.01 with a p-value of 0.003, which is less than the chosen significance level of 0.05, indicates that there are notable variations between male and female students in terms of the external factors influencing their decision to not pursue teaching as a career. The significance of this difference implies that these groups may have distinct perceptions, preferences, or concerns related to extrinsic motivating factors when it comes to considering teaching as a career option.

5. Discussion

The results of this study on the factors that influence young people’s specifically undergraduate students’

decision to pursue teaching as a career in Bangladesh align with findings in some western societies such as the UK and Northern Ireland (Reid & Caudwell, 1997; Moran et al., 2001). Students were primarily drawn to the teaching profession due to intrinsic motivations, being driven by ambitions, finding joy in teaching, compatibility with their personality, and the potential for further education. Additionally, altruistic motivations played a significant role in attracting students to the teaching profession, as they perceive it as meaningful and fulfilling. These findings are consistent with studies conducted in the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, and Estonia (Hayes, 1990; Butcher & Lewis, 2002; Saks et al., 2016). Predominantly, students are attracted to the teaching profession for both intrinsic and altruistic motivations. In Hong Kong and Turkey, where students prefer teaching careers for altruistic and intrinsic factors (Lai et al., 2005; Balyer & Özcan, 2014), there is a similarity, as Bangladeshi students mainly pursue teaching careers for intrinsic reasons, with altruistic motives also present. Moreover, the factor analysis revealed four motivational factors falling into distinct categories: altruistic, intrinsic, extrinsic, and influenced by others. Among these, the two dominant factors that influence the choice of teaching as a career within the sample are intrinsic and altruistic, accounting for 38.56% of the total variance. This suggests that the decision to pursue teaching as a profession likely involves a complex interplay between intrinsic and altruistic considerations. However, the differences in the factors influencing students who express interest in teaching and those who do not are noteworthy. Students who were not interested towards a teaching career point to unfavorable factors such as low salary, less rewards and low societal status, aligning with similar findings in Russia, Turkey, South Africa, and Nigeria, the Caribbean region, Jamaica, Cameroon, Brunei and Zimbabwe (Bastick, 2000; Hammet, 2008; Sokolova, 2011; Balyer & Özcan, 2014; Egwu, 2015). The socio-economic status of non-government secondary school teachers of Bangladesh is notably low, with financial problems being a major contributor to this low status (Azad et al., 2014). This aligns closely with the findings of the current study.

While the former group generally viewed teaching as an ambitious and enjoyable job, the latter perceived it as unambitious and burdensome, particularly due to the responsibility of educating children and teenagers, which they found overwhelming. The sense of responsibility was considered too much for them to bear. While the former group saw teaching as fitting their personality and offering opportunities for further studies, the latter found it monotonous with inadequate salary, along with other occupations holding higher social status than teaching. In this context, students' perceptions are likely to be shaped by their own impressions of the teaching profession and their experiences during school life, as indicated in a study conducted by Lai et al. (2005). The study findings regarding the potential reasons that discourage students from choosing a teaching career emphasize the significance of 'Influence by others', particularly from teachers and family members. This implies that students' unfavorable perception of teaching is socially constructed in their daily lives.

The t-test analysis comparing the mean scores of male and female students interested in pursuing a teaching career revealed that there are no statistically significant differences in the motivating factors. This implies that both genders are attracted to teaching for similar reasons. However, when exploring students who asserted their disregard for seeking a career in teaching, a statistically significant difference was found in extrinsic motivating factors. It suggests that extrinsic factors are more noteworthy in influencing male and female students' decision not to proceed with teaching careers. The observed differences in extrinsic motivating factors between male and female students who are not keen on teaching highlight mostly gender-specific perspectives, preferences, or concerns regarding the practical aspects of the profession. The distinction implies an urgent need to address specific hindrances that may discourage male or female students from considering teaching. In addition, it's necessary to acknowledge that while the t-test identifies a statistically significant difference, it couldn't establish a causal relationship, and further exploration may be required to comprehend the underlying reasons behind these observed differences. Furthermore, the research also found that of those who showed interest in teaching, over half of the participants expressed a desire to pursue teaching careers at the tertiary level. This implies that students are less likely to choose teaching roles at the primary or secondary school levels, indicating a shortage of dedicated and qualified teachers at these levels. This aligns with previous research findings that highlighted an insufficient number of qualified teachers in primary schools (Newby et al., 1995).

6. Limitations and future work

The study had some limitations because it only looked at public universities in one city conveniently. However, it successfully identified four factors that attract or deter students from pursuing a career in teaching. These limitations raise questions about the generalizability of the findings. Despite these limitations, the study highlights gender-related variations in these motivating factors. To gain a more comprehensive understanding, future studies, particularly qualitative, are recommended.

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