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Motivations for choosing teaching as a career: teacher trainees' perspective from a Myanmar context

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the teaching motivations of 306 B.Ed. first-year teacher trainees who chose teaching as their career. Analysing data of Likert questionnaires showed that altruistic factors were rated as more important than extrinsic and intrinsic factors regardless of gender. Interestingly, MANOVA results indicated that females were more extrinsically motivated to be a classroom teacher than males. The teacher trainees' responses to open-ended questions showed that their socio-economic background and cultural and religious beliefs were other factors that motivated them to choose the teaching profession. According to ANOVA results, there were significant differences in teaching motivations between teacher trainees who had the intention to work as a teacher before attending the teaching institution and those who did not. Significant differences were also found in teacher trainees' teaching motivations between and among the three groups in terms of their satisfaction with career choice. However, there were no significant differences in teacher trainees' teaching motivations in terms of their residency.

KEYWORDS

Teacher trainees; teaching motivations; career choice; Myanmar

Introduction

Myanmar, formerly known as Burma before 1989, is the largest country in mainland Southeast Asia in terms of land area. It has an area of 676,533 square kilometres and the estimated population is 51.5 million according to the latest national census as of May 2015. Myanmar is composed of seven states and seven regions. The seven states are represented by the seven ethnic groups – Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Rakhine, and Shan. The largest ethnic group is Bamar and these are spread among the seven regions, mostly in the centre of the country. There are 135 ethnic groups officially recognised by the government and they use 111 spoken languages.

Traditionally, teachers are highly respected because Myanmar society attaches great importance to the 'five gems' – Buddha, monks, scriptures, parents, and teachers. Likewise, a teaching career has always been regarded as a profession of goodwill, interest, and self-sacrifice. (Lwin 2000; Tin 2000). However, lack of sufficient investment in the education sector has weakened the teaching profession in Myanmar. Low salary forced many teachers to find a second job or provide private tutoring after school hours so that

they could make extra money (UNICEF 2012). In many rural areas, the local people provided additional support for teachers in order to retain them. However, this further support was generally inadequate, and such communities suffered high rates of teacher attrition (UNICEF 2012).

The government of Myanmar has expressed that it is deeply concerned about the current or potential widespread shortage of teachers especially certain geographical population groups. According to official data from the ministry of education, there were 143,162 vacancies in the basic education sector in 2017 (Yi 2017). Meanwhile, how to deploy qualified and experienced teachers in remote rural areas also presents a great challenge (NESP 2017).

Considering the shortage of teachers in Myanmar, this study will try to find out why teacher candidates chose to become a teacher. The results might help to aid the government and policy makers in teacher recruitment in their efforts to bridge the gap.

Theoretical background and state of research

Motivation 'is the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained' (Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece 2008, 4). When it comes to teacher training, understanding the motivation to teach can shed light on who will enter the teaching profession, how they stick to it, and how they do it. (Müller, Alliata, and Benninghoff 2009). Sinclair, Dowson, and McInerney (2006) also suggested students with the right motives 'engage deeply in their pre-service preparation and their subsequent professional lives' (Sinclair, Dowson, and McInerney 2006, 1138).

Studies (Davis and Wilson 2000; Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus 2012) have shown that teachers' motivation has been found to be significantly related to teachers' job satisfaction. Furthermore, teacher motivation is important for teachers' own fulfilment and satisfaction, factors which are consistently associated with lower levels of organisational absenteeism and turnover (de Jesus and Conboy 2001; Porter and Steers 1973).

Teaching motivation is also related to the quality of teaching, engagement, and commitment to the profession (de Jesus and Lens 2005). Wang and Fwu (2002) stated that there is a close relationship between motivation type and commitment level; pre-service students who are more intrinsically motivated are apt to be more committed, while the ones driven by extrinsic factors are inclined to be less committed to the teaching profession.

In the context of teacher education many studies (e.g. Chan 2006; Kyriacou, Hultgren, and Stephens 1999; Sinclair 2008) were conducted to examine the teaching motivations under three main themes: (1) extrinsic motivations (2) intrinsic motivations, and (3) altruistic motivations.

According to Deci and Ryan (2000, 56), intrinsically motivated people did something 'for its inherent satisfaction rather than some separable consequences'. They choose to engage with the teaching activities themselves and their personal beliefs and values such as personal interest in teaching, enjoying work with children and teaching were also important. On the other hand, when individuals are more interested in results that can be separated from the teaching itself, such as their income, prestige, and long vacations, they are considered to be extrinsically motivated (Kyriacou, Hultgren, and Stephens 1999).

Chan (2006) defined altruistic motivation in terms of teaching as a social value behaviour related to the desire to promote personal and social development.

From the results of conducting research in Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Netherlands, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom, the OECD reported that working with children and adults who are eager for intellectual development and making social contributions is the primary reason for entering the teaching profession (OECD 2005).

In another study conducted by Kyriacou, Hultgren, and Stephens (1999), it was found that pre-service teachers in Britain and Norway chose the teaching professions with altruistic motivation as they enjoy teaching children. Brown (1992) also found that first-year Caribbean teacher candidates were mainly motivated by altruistic motives.

On the contrary, studies from many different settings with sociocultural variety such as Brunei, Zimbabwe, and Cameroon showed that extrinsic motives such as salary, job security, and career status were more significant (Abangma 1981; Chivore 1988; Yong 1995).

Another study conducted by Watt and Richardson (2007) revealed that pre-service teachers enrolled in three Australian universities rated the highest motivation factors as perceived teaching abilities, the intrinsic value of teaching and the desire to make a social contribution.

Based on the literature available, it is difficult to surmise why students chose to teach as a career. Their varied responses may be due to the different cultural, social and economic contexts in which they live (Kyriacou, Hultgren, and Stephens 1999).

Nevertheless, there is a lack of research into teaching motivations of teacher trainees in Myanmar. It is expected that these results will contribute to the development of the literature concerning teacher trainees' career choice in Myanmar.

The situation in Myanmar

The current basic education system spans eleven years. Five years of primary education is made up of KG to Grade 4. Grades 5 to 8 make up lower secondary, locally known as middle school. Grades 9 and 10 are upper secondary, locally called high school. According to the Ministry of Education, there were 47,363 schools, 340,955 teachers and 9,257,970 in the basic education sectors in 2015–2016 Academic Year (NESP 2017).

Myanmar language is the main language of instruction and examination and the curriculum is specifically Bama-centric (Salem-Gervais and Metro 2012). Jolliffe and Mears (2016) indicated that 30 percent of all rural schoolchildren would not have heard the Myanmar language before they came to school. In the meantime, an estimated 70 percent of teachers employed in ethnic areas cannot speak the local language or dialects very well. NESP (2017) pointed out that the language barrier is one of the most significant factors that contributed to their dropping out of school for children from non-Myanmar speaking groups.

The current education system also suffers from a shortage of teachers, poor physical and internal structure of academic buildings, the practice of traditional teaching methodologies, and lack of professional development programmes for teachers (Ulla 2018). The government has recruited daily wage teachers since 2014 to fill the gap in the most difficult remote areas. These uncertified daily wage teachers accounted for about 25% of the teaching force in the basic education sector.

To become a teacher in Myanmar, the normal route is to attend one of 25 Education Colleges throughout the country. However, Education Colleges only train primary and middle school teachers and to become a high school teacher requires training at one of the Universities of Education (UoE) in Yangon or Sagaing under the Ministry of Education. Most of the qualified candidates were from the urban areas because only a few candidates from border areas could join the UoEs as the entry requirement is strictly based on the matriculation examination marks from high school. Nevertheless, there is another teaching institution called the University for the Development of National Races of the Union (UDNR) under the Ministry of Border Affairs, which provides free teacher training specifically to ethnic minorities from border areas. This university delivers similar B.Ed. courses to the UoEs, but 'special co-curricular subjects' such as traditional medicine, martial arts, and military training are added for the teacher trainees. The uniqueness of the university is that the teacher trainees representing 14 states and regions of Myanmar can be found in UDNR.

Research hypotheses

- (1) There is no significant difference in teacher trainees' teaching motivations by gender.
- (2) There is no significant difference in teacher trainees' teaching motivations in terms of their intention to work as a teacher before attending the courses.
- (3) There is no significant difference in teacher trainees' teaching motivations in terms of their satisfaction with the career choice.
- (4) There is no significant difference in teacher trainees' teaching motivations according to their residency.

Method

Participants

The researcher purposely selected teacher trainees from UDNR as it has a good sample that covers all the nationalities across Myanmar. The study involved 306 (96.23%) first-year teacher trainees out of 318 enrolled in five-year B.Ed. course. Two hundred and six (68%) teacher trainees come from different states and 96 (31.4%) are from the respective regions across Myanmar. Although the participants cover all the states and regions, the majority (68%) of them are from minority ethnic groups in border areas of the country. The study took place during the second semester of 2017–2018 Academic Year. Eighty-four (27.5%) are males and 222 (72.5%) are females. Their ages ranged from 16 to 20 years. 81.7% of the participants indicated that their mothers did not hold a degree from a university and 21.2% of them reported that their fathers were university graduates. About one-third of the teacher trainees (35.6%) stated that there was a family member who used to be or is working as a teacher. More than half of the participants (65.7%) had the intention to work as a teacher before they attended the university. However, approximately one-third of the participants (31%) had no prior intention of choosing the teaching profession and 3.3% of them were neutral. Concerning the satisfaction with their career choice, most of the trainees (91.5%) indicated that they were satisfied with their choice. Nevertheless, 3.9%

of the trainees were neutral and 4.6% of them reported that they had no satisfaction with their choice. Almost all the participants were committed to working as teachers but 0.7% of them were not. Six participants were neutral (see [Table 1](#)).

Instrumentation

The study used the questionnaires as the main instrument to collect the data. We adapted the instrument 'Reasons for Entering Teaching' Saban (2003) into the Myanmar language so that the participants could understand the questionnaires clearly. The questionnaires consisted of two parts with a cover letter that indicated that the data would be confidential and only used for research purpose and that participation was voluntary. The first part of the questionnaires comprised fixed-response questions to obtain the participants' demographic information. The second part consisted of both Likert-style items and open-ended questions. The instructions for the participants started as, 'The following items state the possible reasons that might make you decide to choose to teach as your career. How much did each of these reasons influence your decision?' The items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1 = not influential at all to 5 = most influential). Two open-ended questions: '(1) Why did you choose teaching as your career? and (2) Are you satisfied with your choice of career as a teacher? Why?' were included at the end of this section. These two open-ended questions were developed by the researcher in order that the participants could explain in detail the main reason for choosing the teaching profession and to provide the opportunity to express their satisfaction with the choice.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the teacher trainees (N = 306).

Characteristics		<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	84	27.5
	Female	222	72.5
Residency	State	208	68.0
	Region	96	31.4
	Missing	2	0.7
	16-17	167	54.6
Age	18-19	136	44.4
	20-21	3	1
	Graduate	56	18.3
Mother's Education	Non-graduate	250	81.7
	Father's Education	Graduate	65
Non-graduate		241	78.8
Anyone of my family members is a teacher	Yes	109	35.6
	No	197	64.4
I had the intention to work as a teacher before I attend university	Yes	201	65.7
	No	95	31
	Don't know	10	3.3
I am satisfied with my career choice	Yes	280	91.5
	No	14	4.6
	Don't know	12	3.9
I will work as a teacher.	Yes	298	97.4
	No	2	0.7
	Don't know	6	2

n = number of participants, % = percentage of participants.

The original English version instrument contains 20 items. The translated Myanmar version instrument was analysed with PCA using the oblimin rotation method, mainly relying on Horn's (1965) parallel analysis instead of the Kaiser-Guttman rule, which employed the eigenvalue greater than 1 to determine the number of factors to be extracted. Oblimin rotation was preferred as the previous studies (Lin et al. 2012) found that different factors of teaching motivation are correlated. According to Pallant (2011), this method of identifying the number of components to be retained was the most accurate. In order to include more representative items in the factors, only items with at least .40 loading on a factor and that did not cross-load on the others were selected as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). The results revealed that 17 items met the criteria into three factors (extrinsic, intrinsic and altruistic). These three factors accounted for 49.25% of the variable variance. Altruistic factor accounted for 31.66%, extrinsic factor accounted for 10.49%, and intrinsic factor accounted for 7.10% of the variance explained. The factor structure, the mean value of each factor, standard deviation and reliability (Cronbach alpha) of the extracted factors are shown in Table 2.

Data collection

Prior to conducting research in the selected university, the researchers requested the approval of the rector of the university for ethical reasons. After gaining approval, the researcher personally went to all the classrooms during the class hour with the permission of the relevant person in charge. Before distributing the questionnaires to all participants, they were made aware of the purpose of the research, that their participation in the study was voluntary and that all the information would be treated with confidentiality. This

Table 2. Principal axis factor pattern coefficients with oblimin rotation and mean scores.

Items	Components/Factor loadings			Descriptive	
	Altruistic	Extrinsic	Intrinsic	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
c11 I want to share my knowledge with children	0.739			4.5	0.75
c8 I want to help children learn and succeed in school	0.723			4.46	0.82
c5 I want to contribute to the future of society	0.648			4.19	0.89
c14 I want to make a difference in children's lives	0.637			4.29	0.82
c17 I want to serve as a role model for children	0.631			4.40	0.80
c12 I love children	0.452			3.98	1.06
c2 I believe that teaching is a sacred profession	0.442			4.56	0.76
c13 My employment as a teacher is assured after graduation		0.734		4.45	0.90
c7 Teaching offers good job security and a steady income		0.732		3.83	1.13
c16 Teaching is advantageous when raising a family		0.624		3.06	1.18
c1 Teachers are paid quite well		0.518		2.16	0.89
c10 Teaching has long holidays/summer vacations		0.495		2.66	1.25
c4 Teaching is a highly respected profession in society		0.485		4.29	0.94
c3 I believe that I was born to be a teacher			0.719	2.67	1.27
c15 My past schooling gave me a positive image of teaching			0.704	3.13	1.25
c6 Teaching suits best to my personality			0.631	3.24	1.26
c9 I have a strong desire to work with children			0.501	3.84	1.13
Eigenvalues	5.38	1.78	1.20		
% of variance	31.66	10.49	7.10		
α	0.80	0.70	0.74		
Mean	4.38	3.48	3.17		
<i>SD</i>	0.62	0.64	0.94		

information was also included in the questionnaires. Three hundred and six teacher trainees, except 12 who were not in the class when the questionnaires were distributed, willingly took part in the study. The participants took about 25 minutes to complete the questionnaire and they were returned to the researchers on the spot with a response rate of 100%.

Data analyses

In order to re-examine the factor structure of the original version of the questionnaires, exploratory factor analysis with principal component analysis was conducted so that it can be contextually appropriate for teacher trainees from Myanmar. A one-way MANOVA and One-way ANOVA were conducted to test the significance of the mean differences between and among the groups. Moreover, the two open-ended questions were analysed using the content analysis technique (Miles and Huberman 1994) to organise the teacher trainees' perceptions on choosing teaching profession and their expression about satisfaction with career choice.

Results

Teaching motivations of the teacher trainees

The mean scores of each item in terms of the participants' ratings of the reasons choosing teaching career are described in Table 2. The most important reasons with the highest mean scores (4.5 and above out of 5) were as follows: (1) 'I believe that teaching is a sacred profession' (4.56), (2) 'I want to share my knowledge with children' (4.5), (3) 'I want to help children learn and succeed in school' (4.46), and 'My employment as a teacher is assured after graduation' (4.45).

However, when comparing three factors, altruistic motivation seemed to be more dominant ($M = 4.38$) than extrinsic motivation ($M = 3.48$), and intrinsic motivation ($M = 3.17$) (see Table 2). Although they conceived of attending the teaching institution as a secure job employment, the item 'Teachers are paid quite well' was rated as 'not influential at all' by most of the participants ($M = 2.16$).

The participants' answers to the open-ended question, 'Why did you choose teaching as your career?' also indicated that the teaching motivations comprised a concoction of altruistic, extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. In addition, the socio-economic background of the participants was a significant factor in their decision to enter teaching profession. Two students commented as follows:

There are few educated people among my ethnic group. And they have to make a living by hill-side cultivation. I found it very hard and fatigued. In my opinion, it's the consequences of being uneducated. My aim is to educate my people so that they can make a better life. That's why I choose teaching profession.

No one graduated in my family. Only a few teachers were assigned to the public school in my village. The student to teacher ratio is unbalanced. Since my childhood, my ideal persons were teachers. I want to help uneducated people as much as I can and I want to fill the vacancy in the school in my village. Thus, I choose teaching as my career.

One participant assumed that using Only Burmese (Myanmar) language, as a medium of instruction in school is a barrier for the children of the minority group from the border areas.

Some children from poor areas cannot afford to go to school. Many children find it difficult to understand clearly their teachers' instructional language (Myanmar) as it is not their mother tongue. I want to help them with my utmost effort. I want to be a teacher who can help the children to be skillful in Myanmar and international language, English.

The comment below illustrated that cultural and religious beliefs had some influence on the participants' decisions to choose a teaching career. Nearly half of the teacher trainees described a Myanmar saying 'Kuhdho-le-ya wun-le-wa', which means 'Make merit and fill stomach at the same time' because working as a teacher is considered to be doing good deeds and earning a reasonable salary for a living.

As a saying goes, " Kuhdho-le-ya wun-le-wa", teaching is making merit or virtuous action as a teacher's duty is to educate children. We make regular income supported by the government per month. Thus, we don't need to worry much about living. Moreover, it is a prestigious job. From the perspective of Buddhist religious views, a teacher belongs to the five infinite venerable (i.e. the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, Parents, and Teachers) and we are respected by the society.

The second question examined the teacher trainees' satisfaction with their career choice. This question was asked to investigate their feelings whether they were happy with their choice while attending the training course that may affect their decision to work as a teacher after graduation. One of the participants expressed the reason why he was satisfied with his choice:

I am happy with my choice because I have a chance to share my knowledge with the children, to teach them and enlighten them. You know, the idea of becoming a teacher makes me pleased. Nothing can replace such feeling that a child comes to understand what he or she has never heard or known before until you enlightened. This is called delight, elation, and euphoria. I think only teacher can understand such feelings.

Gender differences in teacher trainees' teaching motivations

To test hypothesis 1, a one-way MANOVA was conducted to determine whether there were significant gender differences in teaching motivations of teacher trainees. There were no serious violations of normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multi-collinearity while testing the preliminary assumption.

There was a statistically significant difference between males and females on the combined dependent variables, $F(3, 301) = 3.48, p = .016$; Wilks' Lambda = .97; partial eta squared = .03. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in teacher trainees' teaching motivations by gender is rejected. However, when the results for the extrinsic, intrinsic and altruistic motivations were considered separately, statistical significance was found between male and female only in extrinsic motivations, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .017, $F(1, 303) = 10.49, p = .001$, partial eta squared = .03. An inspection of the mean scores indicated that female trainees reported slightly higher levels of intrinsic

teaching motivations ($M = 3.55$, $SD = .04$) than male trainees ($M = 3.29$, $SD = .07$) (see Table 3).

Teaching motivation in terms of teacher trainees’ intention to work as a teacher before attending the courses

One-way ANOVA was conducted to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in teacher trainees’ teaching motivations in terms of their intention to work as a teacher before attending the initial teacher training course. The participants were divided into three groups; teacher trainees who had the intention to work as a teacher, teacher trainees who had no intention to work as a teacher, and teacher trainees who had no idea of their plan before they attend the university. The results showed that there were significant differences in teacher trainees’ teaching motivation among the three groups [$F(2,303) = 18.872$, $p = .000$] (see Table 4). Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

In order to find out where the differences lay, a post hoc test was conducted using Hochberg’s GT2 method, which is used if the sample sizes are very different (Field 2013). The findings indicated that there were significant differences in teaching motivation between teacher trainees with the intention to work as a teacher and those without intention before they attend the university ($p = .000$) (see Table 5).

Table 3. MANOVA results for teaching career motivations of teacher trainees by gender.

	Mean		SD		df	F	p	η^2
	Male	Female	Male	Female				
Extrinsic	3.29	3.55	.07	.04	1/303	10.50	.001	.033
Altruistic	4.32	4.42	.06	.04	1/303	2.06	.153	.007
Intrinsic	3.10	3.23	.10	.06	1/303	1.96	.162	.006

Table 4. ANOVA results for teaching motivations of teacher trainees by their intention before they attend the university.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	11.761	2	5.881	18.872	.000
Within Groups	94.421	303	.312		
Total	106.182	305			

Table 5. Hochberg results for teaching motivations of teacher trainees by their intention before they attend the university.

(I) I had the intention to work as a teacher before I attend university	(J) I had the intention to work as a teacher before I attend university	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
yes	no	.42662*	.000
	Don't know	.09102	.943
no	yes	-.42662*	.000
	Don't know	-.33560	.199
Don't know	yes	-.09102	.943
	no	.33560	.199

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Teaching motivations according to teacher trainees' satisfaction with their choice

In order to find out the differences in teaching motivation by the three groups: the teacher trainees who expressed satisfaction with their choice, those who expressed no satisfaction with their choice and trainees who were neutral, a one-way ANOVA was conducted.

As shown in [Table 6](#), there were significant differences in teacher trainees' teaching motivation in terms of their satisfaction with the choice [$F(2,303) = 17.326, p = .000$]. Post hoc Hochberg's GT2 Test was conducted to find out where the differences lay.

Post hoc Hochberg's GT2 Test indicates that there were significant mean differences in teaching motivation between those who expressed satisfaction with their choice and both those who expressed no satisfaction with their choice ($p = .002$) and those who could not decide whether they were satisfied with their choice or not ($p = .000$) (see [Table 7](#)). Thus, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in teacher trainees' teaching motivations in terms of their satisfaction with the choice is rejected.

Teacher trainees' teaching motivations in terms of their residency

A one-way MANOVA was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in teaching motivations of teacher trainees by their residency (i.e. states and regions). There were no serious violations while testing the preliminary assumption. There was no statistically significant difference between teacher candidates from states and regions on the combined dependent variables, $F(3, 299) = 1.695, p = .168$; Wilks' Lambda = .98; partial eta squared = .017. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in teacher trainees' teaching motivations according to their residency is accepted. [Table 8](#) indicates that teacher candidates from regions seemed

Table 6. ANOVA results for teaching motivations of teacher trainees in terms of their satisfaction with career choice.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	10.897	2	5.448	17.326	.000
Within Groups	95.285	303	.314		
Total	106.182	305			

Table 7. Hochberg results for teacher trainees' teaching motivations by their satisfaction with career choice.

(I) I am satisfied with my career choice	(J) I am satisfied with my career choice	Mean Difference (I-J)	p
yes	no	.53277*	.002
	neutral	.81078*	.000
no	yes	-.53277*	.002
	neutral	.27801	.503
neutral	Yes	-.81078*	.000
	No	-.27801	.503

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 8. MANOVA results for teaching career motivations of teacher trainees by their residency.

	Mean		SD		<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
	State	Region	State	Region				
Extrinsic	3.50	3.45	.044	.065	1/301	0.41	.520	.001
Altruistic	4.37	4.46	.040	.060	1/301	1.44	.231	.005
Intrinsic	3.14	3.31	.064	.095	1/301	2.30	.130	.008

to have higher teaching motivations other than extrinsic factor compared to those from states.

Discussion and conclusion

As teacher shortage is a big challenge in many countries including Myanmar, it is becoming more and more important to investigate what motivates the prospective teachers have in choosing teaching as their career. In order to investigate this question in depth, the perceptions of teacher trainees on teaching motivations were examined. In this investigation, the target population of the study focused on B.Ed. teacher trainees from UDNR, which is especially run for the ethnic minorities from the border areas of Myanmar, which face teacher shortage disproportionately more than urban areas.

The results of factor analysis ascertained that Myanmar teacher trainees' reasons given for choosing teaching profession fell under three main themes of extrinsic, intrinsic and altruistic like other metropolitan and developing countries. Most teacher trainees believed that teaching is a sacred profession and they had a desire to work with children to share knowledge and make them succeed in learning at school. However, they did not choose the teaching profession as it had a good income. The finding is similar to that of other studies: student teachers in Turkey (Saban 2003), pre-service teachers in Britain and Norway (Kyriacou, Hultgren, and Stephens 1999), and first-year Caribbean teacher candidates (Brown 1992), in which most of teacher candidates' teaching motivations were altruistic. However, this finding was contrary to that of Bastick (2000), who found that pre-service teachers in developing or undeveloped societies, they choose teaching as a career with extrinsic or mercenary-based extrinsic motives. Although Myanmar is a developing country, the altruistic motivations seemed to be more dominant. A possible explanation for this might be that the pre-service teachers entered teaching profession not because they have a passion for salary, holidays, and so on but because they want to nurture the children and contribute to society.

In general, female teacher trainees tended to be more motivated to be a teacher than male trainees. Remarkably, females were more extrinsically motivated towards becoming a classroom teacher than males. This means that females favourably considered the extrinsic factors such as salary, holidays, job security, etc., when they chose the teaching profession. This outcome is contrary to other studies with pre-service teachers in Turkey (Yüce, Şahin, and Koçer 2013), and pre-service teachers in Ireland (Johnston, McKeown, and McEwen 1999), in which males selected a teaching career based on extrinsic and mercenary motives such as money and social status of profession.

On the other hand, it seemed that male pre-service teachers did not perceive a teacher's salary as an enticement to choose teaching career. According to Higgins et al. (2016, 126), 'low salaries for teachers have contributed to the feminisation of teaching profession' in Myanmar. The world bank data pointed out that the percentages of female teachers in secondary schools have been increasing enormously up to 85% in 2010 (UNESCO 2018). The policy-makers should give thoughtful consideration for the issues of a highly gendered profession in Myanmar. Creating incentives should be a major consideration when thinking about the recruitment of male teachers.

More than half of the participants (65.7%) reported teaching was their first choice. This group had significantly higher mean scores compared to those who did not intend to choose teaching profession (31%). Concerning satisfaction with their career choice, most of the trainees (91.5%) were satisfied with their choice. Interestingly, this group had significantly higher mean scores compared to the other two groups: those who had no satisfaction with their career choice (4.6%) and those who were neutral (3.9%). From this perspective, teacher trainees' first choice and satisfaction with their choice is important factors as teaching motivation is related to job satisfaction, commitment to teaching and the reason to remain in the career.

Regardless of whether they come from states or regions, teacher candidates' teaching motivations were not significantly different; residency is not a significant factor in teaching motivation.

One unexpected finding was that the language of instruction in a classroom is another challenge for minority children from remote areas. As a multi-ethnic country, a Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education should be fully implemented to enable children of ethnic minorities actively to engage in all teaching and learning activities without barriers, using both the national and their own languages. Recruiting more teachers for minority children remains another major and urgent consideration. Moreover, it is strongly recommended that the government provide continuing professional development for both certified teachers and uncertified daily wage teachers to enable them to keep up with the relevant and up-to-date knowledge in the subjects they teach as well as with the newest pedagogical approaches that are appropriate for the needs of the 21st century.

As the teacher trainees come from the border areas, most of them lived as children in poverty and most of their parents were non-graduates. However, they realised that education is key to the alleviation of poverty and to the improvement of society in underdeveloped areas. Therefore, they decided to choose the teaching profession to educate their people.

Limitations and directions for future research

The major difficulty encountered in this study was the lack of published research studies in the national literature regarding teaching motivations of pre-service teachers. Though the participants cover all nationalities from Myanmar, most of them come from remote areas. The generalisation to all Myanmar teacher trainees should be approached with caution. It should also be noted that teaching motivations of teacher trainees changed across year levels (Sinclair 2008). It will be enthralling to see if there will be any differences in the teaching motivations of this particular group in the years to come. A follow-up

study on this group of teacher trainees is suggested. To compare the teaching motivations of teacher candidates from other teaching institutions will be also interesting.

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