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Attitudes towards becoming a teacher: the case of student teachers in Albania



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Context

- The attitude towards the teaching profession in Albania has changed over the years. The teaching profession used to have a high regard status before 90s, but it has dropped significantly after 90s.
- During the last 28 years students with low average grade attended teacher education programs at universities of Albania.
- However, in the last 5 years major reforms are taking place to improve the status and quality of teaching & education.
- There is no any national research on teacher status and student teachers reasons for choosing teaching as a profession.

Methodology

Research aim & objectives

- To investigate student teachers attitudes towards becoming a teacher (mixed methods).
- For what reasons student teachers in Albania choose teaching as a career?
- Do the attitudes of student teachers differ according to gender, type of program of study, university entrance preference list and bachelor/ master program?

Study population / Sampling

- Random sampling was used to select student teachers from seven public universities that provide Teaching Education Programs (bachelor/master in teaching in different areas)
- Quantitative sample size= 449 student teachers
- Qualitative data sample size: 2 FGDs with 10 participants each-purposeful sampling

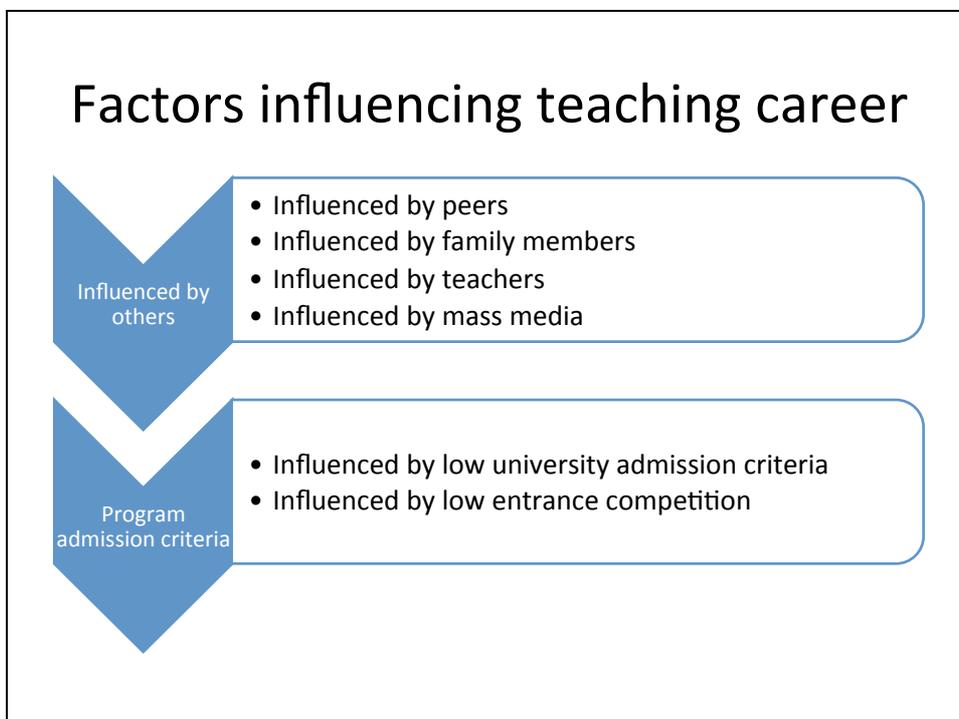
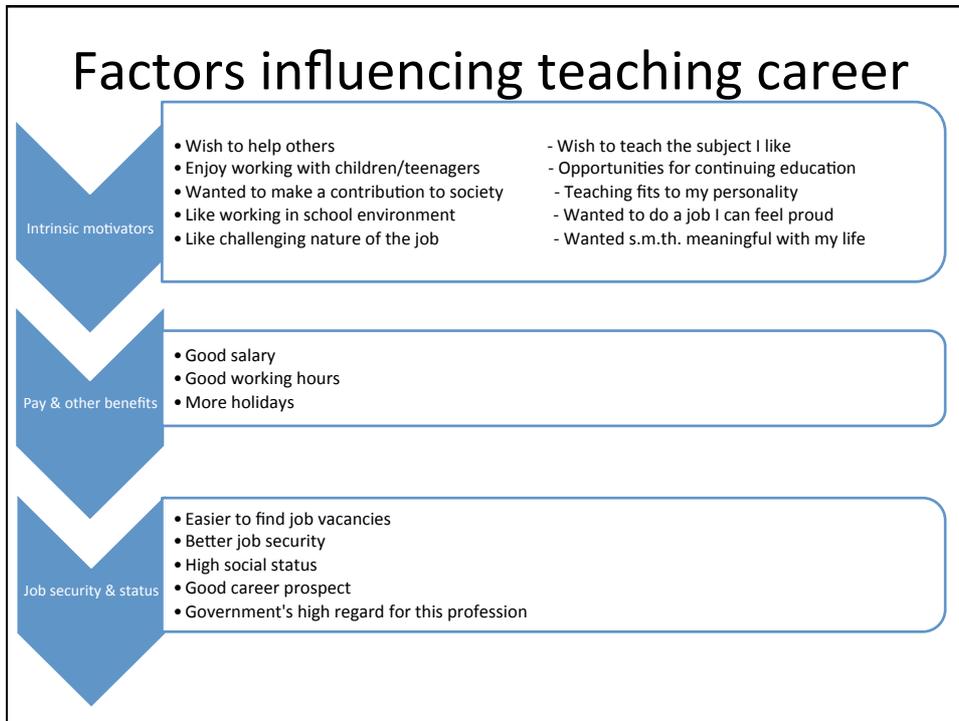
Methodology

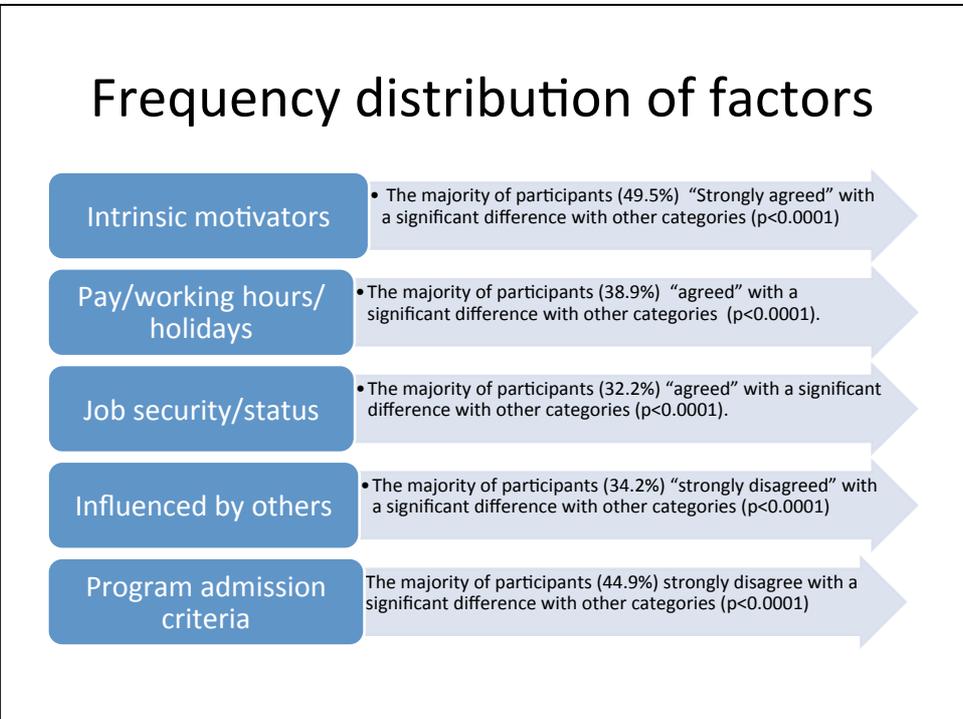
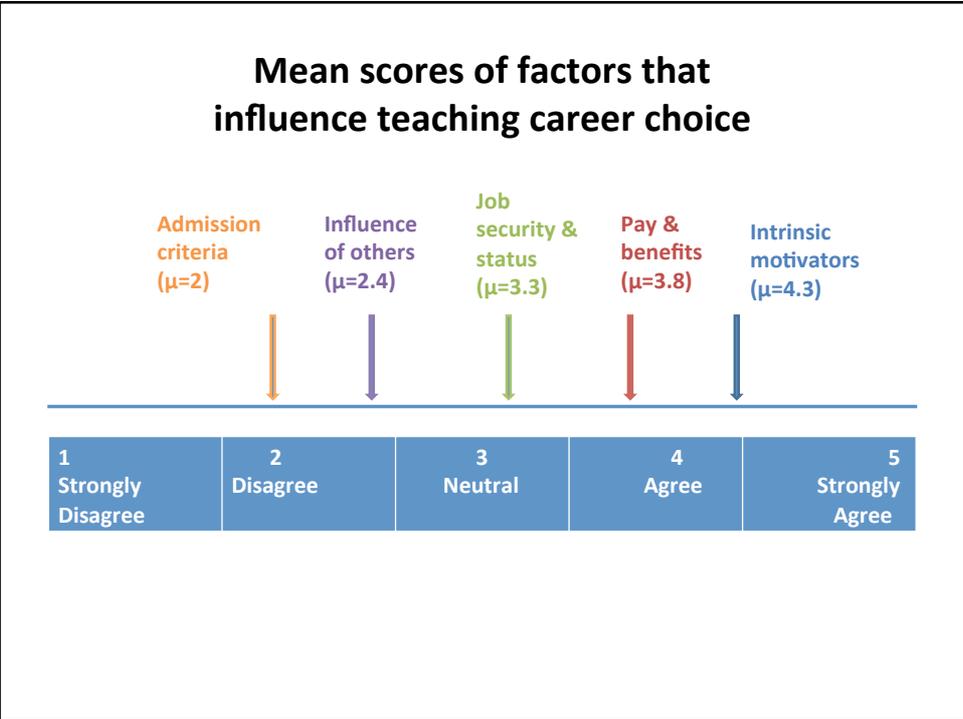
Attitude questionnaire contextualization:

- *Choosing teaching profession as a career scale* (5-point Likert scale) developed by Lai, Chan, Ko and So.
- Two FGDs -cultural relevance & include/remove items if necessary.
- Pretesting of the survey with student teachers .
- The final version was subject to exploratory factor analysis in order to identify and regroup variables into scales.

Analysis

- Quantitative data - descriptive & inferential statistics:
 - Frequency analysis of responses per each questionnaire item, identifying also items with the highest /lowest scoring;
 - Crosstabs analysis gender, study program and preference rank.
 - Factor analysis for five factors with associated statistical analysis of significant differences both across and within groups.
- Qualitative data analysis of transcripts of FG was content based focusing on identification and coding of categories acc. to main factors.





Intrinsic motivators

Difference acc. gender ($p < 0.001$)

- Females have a higher mean score ($M=4.4$) as compared to males ($M=4$).
- Females tend to more strongly agree with the fact that they have chosen teaching career based on intrinsic motivators than men do.

Items with most sig. differences:

- *Teaching fits my personality* which 83% of women SA & A as opposed to men who only 60% SA & A;
- *Enjoy working with children/teenagers* (SA & A by 90% women vs. 72% men);
- *Wanted to do a job that I can feel proud* (91% women as opposed to 76% men);
- *Wanted to do s.m.th. meaningful with my life* (90% women vs. 75% men).

Intrinsic motivators

Difference acc. rank of teaching in the preference list ($p < 0.001$)

- Students who had teaching as their 1st-2nd option in the preference list have a higher mean ($M=4.4$) vs. those who had ranked teaching as their 3rd-5th preference ($M=4.2$) and 6th-10th preference ($M=4$).
- Those who had teaching as their 1st-2nd option are more driven than others to have chosen this career based on intrinsic motivators.

Items with most sig. differences:

- This was more evident if comparing the attitude towards teaching career among those who had ranked teaching as their 1st-2nd preference and those with teaching as 6th-10th option in preference list.
- *Teaching fits to my personality* (1st&2nd preference $M=4.23$ vs. 6th-10th $M=3.8$);
- *Wanted to make a contribution to society* (1st&2nd (90% of respondents vs. only 70% of respondents who has teaching as their 6th-10th preference.

Intrinsic Motivators

Sig. difference acc. Program of study

- Teaching in Elementary Education (M=4.4) & Teaching Physical Education (M=4.4);
- Teaching of Natural Science program (M=4);
- Teaching in Preschool Education (M=4.2) & Teaching in Humanities and Social Sciences (M=4.3).
- Students of Elementary Education & Physical Education tend to be more driven from intrinsic motivators for choosing teaching career than do those attending Teaching in Natural Sciences program.

Items with most sig. differences:

- 93% of students of Elementary Education has chosen teaching career among other reasons, because they *wish to help others*, vs. only 75% of students of Teaching Natural Sciences program;
- 94% of students of Teaching of Elementary Education *enjoy working with children/teenagers*, vs only 69% of students of Teaching of Natural Sciences ;
- *Teaching fit their personality*
- 87% of student of Elementary Education & 83% of student teachers of Physical Education
- 64% of student teachers of Natural Sciences.

Pay and other benefits

Differences acc. to Gender

- Females have slightly higher mean score (M=3.8) as compared to males (M=3.6) with a significant difference ($p=0.02$).
- Females tend to be driven more from favorable working hours/ holidays that teaching career can offer when choosing the career than male respondents do. No meaningful difference between groups with regards to good salary.

Items with most sig. differences:

- The difference is more evident in terms of *favorable working hours teaching profession offer as 86% of female consider this as strong reason as opposed to 72% of men;*
- *and possibility for more holidays which 65% of females SA & A vs. 54% of male students.*
- As for the attitude towards choosing teaching as career due to the *good salary* one can get, quite similar percentages of male 43% and female 45% respondents agreed on this.

Job access/security and status

No sig. difference – acc. Gender & bachelor/master

- Analysis of variance showed:
- No significant difference in the mean score between females and males ($p=0.2$);
- No significant difference between attending a bachelor program or a master program in teaching ($p=0.4$);

No sig. difference – Program of study & Categories of preferences

- No significant difference among categories of preferences ($p=0.1$);
- No significant difference among different programs of study ($p=0.09$).

Influenced by others

Difference acc. Gender ($p<0.001$)

- Males have a higher mean score ($M=2.7$) than females ($M=2.2$).
- Male students tend to be more influenced by others in choosing their teaching career than do female students.

Individual items' analysis

- For example 20% of male respondents reported to have chosen teaching career *influenced by peers* as opposed to only 12% of female respondents;
- *influence of teachers* was also reported by 39% of male student teachers vs. only 24% of female student teachers.

Influenced by others

Difference acc. Bachelor/Master program ($p < 0.001$).

- Master's student teachers have a higher mean score (M=2.5) vs. Bachelor's student teachers (M=2.02);
- The influence of others is more evident in choosing the Master program in teaching than when choosing a Bachelor program.

Items with most sig. differences:

- 16% of Master student teachers reported *peer influence* in choosing teaching career vs. only 7% of Bachelor student teachers;
- 41% of Master student teachers reported *family influence* vs. only 23% of Bachelor student teachers;
- 34% of Master student teachers reported *teachers influence* vs. only 11% of Bachelor students;
- 13% of Master student teachers reported being *influenced by mass media* for choosing their teaching career vs. only 2% of Bachelor student teachers.

Influenced by others

Difference acc. Program of study (sig.=.000)

- While there were no meaningful diff. between student of Teaching in Elementary Education (M=2) and Teaching Preschool Education (M=1.9); this factor is sig. stronger if compared with student of Teaching of Natural Science (M=2.7) and Teaching Physical Education (M=2.5); and slightly different if compared with students attending Teaching in Humanities and Social Sciences (M=2.3).
- Choosing teaching career based on influence of others was more evident among students of Teaching in Natural Sciences and Teaching Physical Education than in other program of studies.

Items with most sig. differences:

- 46% of students of Teaching Natural Sciences and 57% of students of Teaching Physical Education reported to have been influenced by *family members for choosing teaching career* vs. only
- 30% of students of Elementary Education, 19% of students of Teaching in Preschool Education and 35% of students of Teaching Humanities and Social Sciences.

Program admission criteria

Sig. difference acc. Gender

- Males have a higher mean score (M=2.2) as compared to females (M=1.9) with a significant difference ($p < 0.001$).
- Both male and female disagree that low admission criteria have influenced their career choice, however female students tend to more against this fact.

Items with most sig. differences:

- While 15% of male respondents admit that *low university admission criteria and low competition* is one of the reasons for choosing teaching career, less female respondents 11% hold this attitude.

Program admission criteria

Difference acc. Rank teaching as preference

- There is also a sig. difference among three groups according to how they have ranked teaching as their career preference.
- The third group, those who have ranked teaching as their 6th-10th option in the preference list has a higher mean score (M=2.6) ($p < 0.001$) as compared to the group who has ranked teaching as their 1st-2nd option in the preference list (M=1.7) and 3rd-5th option in the preference list (M=2.1)
- First group is less driven than other groups in choosing this career due to this fact.

Items with most sig. differences:

- 25% of those who have selected teaching as their 6th-10th preference option for future career were *influenced by low university admission criteria*, vs. only 6% of those who had teaching as their 1st-2nd option in the preference list.

Main conclusions

- The analysis revealed the highest rated reason about choosing the teaching career was for intrinsic motivators. This was closely followed by good salary/favorable working hours/holidays teaching career can offer.
- Female student teachers; those who had ranked teaching as their 1st-2nd option; and Students of Teaching in Elementary Education tend to be more driven by intrinsic motivators for having chosen teaching career as opposed to other groups.
- Favorable working hours & holidays that teaching career can were reasons that more female than male have chosen this career.
- No sig. difference between gender was found with regards to good salary.
- Male students tend to be more influenced by others in choosing their teaching career than do female students.
- The influence of others is more evident in choosing the Master program in teaching than when choosing a Bachelor program; as well as among students of Teaching in Natural Sciences and Teaching Physical Education as opposed to the respective groups.

Directions for future research

- In depth qualitative study to explore the motives for choosing the teaching career and reasons behind those motives.