



A STUDY ON MOTIVATIONAL DRIVERS OF TEACHER EDUCATORS IN CHOOSING THE TEACHING PROFESSION

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Abstract

This study explores the motivational drivers influencing teacher educators in choosing the teaching profession. Data were collected from 75 teacher educators through a structured questionnaire designed around five key objectives: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, personal and professional experiences, demographic influences, and perception of professional role and identity. Analysis revealed that intrinsic passion for teaching and extrinsic factors such as job security and salary significantly motivate teacher educators. Additionally, mentorship and prior teaching experiences play a vital role in career choice. The majority of respondents were mid-career female educators working in private colleges, highlighting the importance of demographic context in understanding motivation. While teacher educators recognize their role's importance, a comparatively lower sense of professional pride and innovation was noted. The findings underscore the need for institutional policies that enhance both intrinsic fulfillment and extrinsic support to sustain motivation and improve the quality of teacher education. Recommendations for future research include expanding demographic diversity and employing mixed methods to deepen understanding of motivational dynamics.

Keywords: Teacher Educators, Motivational drivers.

Introduction

The teaching profession has long been regarded as a cornerstone of societal development, shaping not only individual learners but also the future of nations. While much research has been conducted on why individuals choose to become school teachers, comparatively less attention has been given to those who take on the vital role of teacher educators—professionals who are responsible for preparing and mentoring the next generation of teachers. Understanding the motivational drivers that influence teacher educators to enter this specialized branch of the teaching profession is essential for strengthening teacher education programs and informing recruitment and retention strategies within higher education institutions.

Teacher educators occupy a unique position within the educational ecosystem. They are expected to possess not only content and pedagogical knowledge but also the capacity to model effective teaching practices, foster critical thinking, and inspire a commitment to lifelong learning among pre-service and in-service teachers. Given these high expectations, it becomes crucial to explore what motivates individuals to pursue such a role. Are they driven by intrinsic passion, a sense of societal responsibility, professional growth opportunities, or external rewards. Understanding these factors can offer valuable insights into the formation of professional identity, commitment, and job satisfaction among teacher educators.

In many contexts, including both developed and developing countries, the teaching profession has undergone significant changes due to policy shifts, technological advancements, and evolving societal expectations. These changes have a direct impact on how the role of teacher educators is perceived and experienced. As the demand for competent and reflective teachers grows, so too does the need to better understand what draws individuals into the field of teacher education in the first place.

This study aims to investigate the motivational drivers—both intrinsic and extrinsic—that influence teacher educators in choosing the teaching profession. By identifying these factors, the research seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on



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teacher education, inform institutional policies, and support the development of more meaningful professional pathways for those who educate educators.

Related Literature

The motivations behind choosing teaching as a profession have been widely explored in educational research, primarily focusing on school teachers. However, the specific motivational factors influencing teacher educators—those who prepare and mentor future teachers—remain underexplored. Understanding their motivations is crucial for ensuring the quality of teacher preparation and the sustainability of the profession. Several theoretical frameworks underpin the study of motivation in education. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between intrinsic motivators (e.g., achievement, recognition, responsibility) and extrinsic factors (e.g., salary, job security). Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) similarly emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation, highlighting autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key drivers of human behavior. These frameworks provide a useful lens for understanding why individuals choose to become teacher educators, particularly as many are drawn to the profession by personal satisfaction and a desire to make a meaningful contribution. Previous research identifies a range of motivational factors that influence individuals to pursue teaching. According to Watt and Richardson (2007), motivations for teaching include a mix of intrinsic factors (such as a passion for teaching and desire to help others), altruistic reasons (such as making a social contribution), and extrinsic factors (such as job stability). These factors are often interrelated and influenced by cultural, economic, and institutional contexts. The development of professional identity is also closely tied to motivation. Teacher educators often enter the profession after years of classroom experience, and their decision to become educators of teachers is frequently shaped by their own teaching journeys. Loughran (2006) emphasizes the complexity of teacher educators' roles, arguing that their motivation often stems from a deep sense of responsibility to improve teacher quality and influence educational reform. This highlights a shift in motivation from teaching students to shaping the teaching profession itself. Several empirical studies have examined the motivations of teacher educators, although such studies remain limited compared to broader research on teacher motivation. Izadinia (2014) conducted a review of literature on teacher educator identity and found that motivations to enter teacher education often include a desire for professional growth, a commitment to education reform, and the opportunity to influence the next generation of teachers. In a qualitative study by Boyd and Harris (2010), teacher educators in the UK reported motivations such as the opportunity to engage in intellectual work, contribute to teacher development, and achieve a better work-life balance. However, they also cited challenges such as unclear role expectations and limited institutional support. Murray and Male (2005) explored the experiences of new teacher educators transitioning from school teaching. Their study revealed that many were motivated by the desire to improve teacher practice and curriculum, but struggled with identity transformation and role complexity. In a study conducted in India, Kaur and Kaur (2018) found that teacher educators were driven by a combination of intrinsic motivations (e.g., love for teaching, academic interest) and extrinsic factors (e.g., job security, promotion opportunities), though intrinsic factors were generally stronger. Snoek et al. (2011) in a European context, found that teacher educators often enter the profession with a reform-oriented mindset, driven by the aspiration to transform teacher training systems and policies.

These studies suggest that while motivational drivers among teacher educators vary, they tend to be heavily influenced by a sense of purpose, professional ideals, and personal teaching philosophies. Further research, especially within diverse cultural contexts, is necessary to understand these factors more comprehensively.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the intrinsic motivational factors that influence teacher educators to choose the teaching profession.
2. To examine the extrinsic motivational factors (such as salary, job security, and career advancement) affecting teacher educators' career choices.
3. To explore the personal and professional experiences that contribute to teacher educators' decision to enter the field of teacher education.



4. To analyze the relationship between motivational drivers and demographic variables such as age, gender, academic qualifications, and years of teaching experience.
5. To understand how teacher educators perceive their role and identity in shaping future teachers, and how these perceptions influence their career motivation.

Method-

A survey approach was used for this study.

Sample-

The study was conducted on a sample of 75 teacher educators selected from Education colleges of Patiala District by using stratified random sampling technique .

Data Collection- The researcher collected the data from various Teacher Educators of Education Colleges. The respondents marked their opinion of every item in the questionnaire. The data was tabulated carefully item wise analysis was done by using simple percentages.

Data Analysis- The data analysis was carried out on the basis of objectives of the study by employing appropriate statistical techniques. From statistical analysis the results were interpreted and conclusions were drawn.

Objective 1: To identify intrinsic motivational factors

Item	Statement Summary	%)
Item 1	Passion for educating others	62%
Item 2	Fulfillment in guiding student teachers	23%
Item 3	Belief that teaching is a noble profession	6%
Item 4	Personal connection to education	5%
Item 5	Enjoyment of academic/intellectual engagement	3%

Interpretation: Item 1 (62%) shows a strong intrinsic motivation: Most teacher educators strongly agree that passion for teaching was a key driver. Item 2 (23%) also reflects moderate intrinsic motivation, focused on mentoring. Items 3, 4, and 5 (6%, 5%, 3%) show low agreement, indicating these factors are less influential or motivating. 62% of respondents strongly agreed that they joined the profession out of passion for teaching, highlighting this as the most dominant intrinsic driver. 23% strongly agreed that they found personal fulfillment in guiding future teachers, suggesting this was a moderate motivating factor. Other intrinsic factors, such as belief in teaching as a noble profession (6%), personal connection to education (5%), and academic engagement (3%), were less commonly cited as strong motivations. Overall, the findings suggest that passion for teaching is the primary intrinsic motivator, while other aspects of intrinsic motivation are less influential for most teacher educators in this sample.

Objective 2: To examine extrinsic motivational factors

This section includes items (Items 6 to 10) related to external motivators (e.g., salary, job security, work conditions).

Item	Statement Summary	%
Item 6	Job security as a motivator	48%
Item 7	Salary and benefits were motivating	30%



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Item	Statement Summary	%
Item 8	Attracted by work schedule (e.g., holidays, working hours)	12%
Item 9	Teaching offers better career stability	6%
Item 10	Institutional facilities (e.g., training, research opportunities)	4%

Interpretation:

Item 6 (48%) indicates that job security is the strongest extrinsic motivator. Item 7 (30%) shows that salary and benefits were also an important extrinsic factor. Items 8, 9, and 10 (12%, 6%, and 4%) show low agreement, meaning that other extrinsic benefits like work schedule, stability, and institutional facilities were not major motivators for most respondents. 48% of respondents strongly agreed that job security was a major factor in choosing the teaching profession, making it the most significant extrinsic motivator. 30% of participants were strongly motivated by salary and benefits. 12% cited work schedule as a strong reason, while fewer agreed strongly that career stability (6%) or institutional facilities (4%) were key motivations. Overall, job security and financial compensation emerged as the primary extrinsic drivers, while other external benefits were relatively less influential in motivating teacher educators.

Objective 3: To explore personal and professional experiences that contributed to the decision to become a teacher educator

Item	Statement Summary	%
Item 11	Inspired by a teacher/mentor to join the profession	42%
Item 12	Prior teaching experience influenced choice to become a teacher educator	32%
Item 13	Teacher education felt like a natural career extension	12%
Item 14	Positive teaching experiences encouraged the move	10%
Item 15	Opportunities for professional growth influenced the decision	4%

Interpretation:

Item 11 (42%) shows that personal inspiration (from a mentor or role model) was the strongest experience-based motivator. Item 12 (32%) indicates a strong influence of prior teaching experience. Items 13–15 (12%, 10%, and 4%) reflect a decline in perceived influence of career progression, general positive experience, or growth opportunities as motivators. The data suggest that among personal and professional experiences, being inspired by a teacher or mentor (42%) and prior teaching experience (32%) were the most significant motivators for becoming a teacher educator. Other factors, such as viewing teacher education as a natural career step (12%), positive classroom experiences (10%), and opportunities for professional growth (4%), were less commonly cited as strong motivating factors. This indicates that role models and hands-on teaching experience play a critical role in shaping teacher educators' career paths, while institutional or systemic career incentives had comparatively limited influence.

Objective 4: To analyze the relationship between motivational drivers and demographic variables

Demographic Details

Item	Response Options
1. Gender	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other ☐ Prefer not to say
2. Age	☐ 25–35 ☐ 36–45 ☐ 46–55 ☐ 56 and above
3. Highest Qualification	☐ B.Ed. ☐ M.Ed. ☐ M.Phil. ☐ Ph.D. ☐ Other: _____



- Item Response Options
4. Teaching Experience (in years) ☐ 0–5 ☐ 6–10 ☐ 11–15 ☐ 16+
5. Type of Institution ☐ Government ☐ Private ☐ Aided ☐ Self-financed

This objective examines how gender, age, experience, and institutional type are associated with the motivational drivers among teacher educators.

Demographic Summary of Respondents:

Variable	Category	Percentage
Gender	Female	85%
	Male	15%
Age Group	35–45 years	Majority
Experience	11–15 years	Majority
Type of Institution	Private Colleges	85%
	Government/Aided Colleges	15% (combined)

Interpretation and Insights: Gender Influence:

A large majority (85%) of teacher educators are female, suggesting the profession continues to attract more women. Given the strong female representation, it's important to explore whether intrinsic motivations (like passion or fulfillment) differ significantly by gender—something your broader data may further clarify.

1. Age and Experience:

Most respondents are in the 35–45 age range with 11–15 years of experience, indicating a mid-career professional group. This group may have already established their professional identity and may now be more motivated by job stability and professional contribution than by early-career ambitions or reforms.

2. Institutional Context:

85% of participants work in private colleges, suggesting that conclusions about motivational drivers are more reflective of experiences in private education settings. This context may help explain why extrinsic factors like job security and salary scored high—private institutions often have less stability compared to government colleges.

Interpretation:-

The demographic analysis revealed that 85% of teacher educators in the study were female, predominantly in the 35–45 age group, with 11–15 years of teaching experience. A significant majority (85%) were employed in private colleges. These findings suggest that the sample largely represents mid-career female educators in private institutions. This demographic context may influence their motivational profile, especially their emphasis on job security, professional identity, and passion for teaching—as shown in earlier objectives. These relationships will be important to consider when formulating policy or institutional interventions aimed at motivating and retaining teacher educators.



Objective 5: To understand how teacher educators perceive their role and identity in shaping future teachers

Item	Statement Summary	%
Item 16	Role is crucial in shaping future teachers	45%
Item 17	Being a teacher educator enhances professional identity	32%
Item 18	Pride in being part of the teacher education community	15%
Item 19	Feels a strong sense of mission in current role	4%
Item 20	Motivated to bring reform or innovation in teacher education	4%

Interpretation:

Item 16 (45%) indicates that nearly half of the respondents strongly identify with their role in shaping future educators. Item 17 (32%) also shows a moderately strong sense of professional identity linked to their position. Items 18–20 (15%, 4%, 4%) reflect lower emotional engagement such as pride, mission, or a drive for innovation. The results demonstrate that 45% of teacher educators strongly believe their role is crucial in shaping future teachers, and 32% feel that their role enhances their professional identity. These findings highlight a clear understanding of professional responsibility among the participants. However, fewer participants strongly identified with affective and aspirational dimensions of the role—only 15% expressed pride in being part of the teacher education community, and just 4% felt a strong sense of mission or desire to drive reform and innovation. This suggests that while teacher educators recognize the importance of their role, fewer are emotionally or strategically engaged with systemic transformation or personal mission within the profession.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the motivational drivers that influence teacher educators in choosing the teaching profession.. The discussion of findings, organized around the study's objectives, is presented below:

1. Intrinsic Motivational Factors

The data revealed that intrinsic motivation, particularly passion for educating others, was a strong factor for many respondents—62% strongly agreed with this statement. However, other intrinsic factors such as personal fulfillment, intellectual engagement, or viewing teaching as a noble profession received significantly lower agreement (ranging from 3% to 23%). This suggests that while passion remains a central intrinsic driver, it may not be strongly supported by other internal motivators across the cohort.

2. Extrinsic Motivational Factors

A considerable portion of respondents expressed strong agreement with extrinsic motivations. Job security (48%) and salary/benefits (30%) emerged as major drivers. In contrast, factors like institutional facilities and work schedules were seen as less influential. These results indicate that financial and professional stability are critical motivators, especially in the context of private educational institutions, where employment conditions are often less stable.

3. Personal and Professional Experiences

Teacher educators were notably influenced by inspirational mentors (42%) and their own prior teaching experiences (32%). However, few viewed career progression or positive classroom experiences as motivating factors. These findings underscore the role of individual experience and guidance, rather than institutional encouragement, in shaping career decisions.



4. Influence of Demographics

Demographically, the majority of respondents were female (85%), aged 35–45, with 11–15 years of experience, and working in private colleges (85%). These characteristics are important as they reflect a mid-career group possibly seeking job stability and professional identity, which aligns with their high ratings of job security and professional purpose. The gender imbalance also suggests the need for gender-responsive policies in teacher education.

5. Perception of Role and Identity

Almost half (45%) of the participants strongly believed that their role is crucial in shaping future teachers, and 32% felt it enhances their professional identity. However, fewer respondents expressed strong pride in their role (15%) or felt driven by a sense of mission or innovation (4%). This indicates that while there is a cognitive recognition of their importance, there may be a lack of emotional and visionary engagement with their role.

Conclusion

The study concludes that teacher educators are motivated by a mix of intrinsic passion and extrinsic factors, particularly job security and financial stability. Inspirational mentors and teaching experience also play a significant role in shaping their decision to enter and remain in the profession.

However, the relatively low agreement with motivational factors related to pride, innovation, or mission suggests that many teacher educators may lack deep emotional investment or a transformative vision for the field. This finding is particularly relevant in private college settings, where the majority of the sample was drawn from, and where employment conditions may influence motivations toward more practical and survival-based factors.

The data further show that mid-career female educators dominate the teacher education workforce in private institutions. Any policy recommendations or institutional improvements should be tailored to this demographic group—focusing not only on security and stability, but also on inspiring intrinsic fulfillment, professional growth, and a stronger identity within the teaching profession.

Suggestions for Further Research

While this study offers valuable insights into the motivational drivers influencing teacher educators, it also opens up several avenues for further investigation. The following suggestions are proposed for future researchers:

1. This study was limited to 75 teacher educators, primarily from private institutions. Future research could include a larger and more diverse sample.
2. Further studies could compare motivational factors across different demographics, such as:
 - Gender (male vs. female),
 - Experience level (early-career vs. late-career),
 - Type of institution (private vs. government),
 - Region (urban vs. rural).
3. Quantitative findings could be enriched through qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus group discussions, to capture deeper personal narratives, emotional factors, and contextual influences behind motivation.



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4. A long-term study tracking how motivations evolve over time—from entry into the profession through various career stages—would provide dynamic insights into motivation retention, burnout, or transformation.

5. Further research could investigate the institutional environment, including administrative support, workload, training opportunities, and leadership style, and their impact on teacher educators' motivation and job satisfaction.

6. Future studies might explore the relationship between motivation and outcomes, such as:

- Teacher effectiveness,
- Student achievement in teacher education programs,
- Educator retention or attrition.

This would help understand the practical implications of motivational levels on the quality of education.

7. Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, it would be valuable to study how motivational drivers have shifted in response to online teaching, job insecurity, and changing educational demands.

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