THE EXPECTATION OF TVE STUDENT TEACHERS TO
CHOOSE TEACHING AS A CAREER

Normala Ismail (normalaismail@ymail.com)
Ab. Rahim Bakar
Ramlah Hamzah

Department of Science and Technical
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Abstract: In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in factors that influence a student teacher in considering teaching as a career. The expectations perceived by Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) student teachers became the factor that influenced them to enter the teaching profession. This paper identified the expectations of TVE student teachers to choose teaching as a career. The survey study was conducted using 300 TVE student teachers from four public universities that were involved. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant difference in the expectations of TVE student teachers to choose teaching (t=4.33, p<.05). By determining the expectations of TVE student teachers to choose teaching as a career, it indirectly enhanced the recruitment and longer retention of teachers in the teaching profession.

Keywords: TVE Student Teacher, Expectations, Teaching As A Career

Introduction

The issues of teaching careers among student teachers are seen in many countries, Bastick, 2000; Ng, (2006); Briggs (2008); Frankenberg, Taylor, & Merseth (2010), as well as Malaysia (Halimah Harun, 2006). The reasons are such as personal and environment factors, and information on the occupation that became the choices for the occupation for many individuals (Locked, 2006). Personal factors such as expectations about the job became the reasons for individuals to choose teaching as their career.

In addition, the teaching profession has undergone changes according to the job market, which has brought students in education programs to see teaching as a career (Miles and Snow 1996). This can be seen from the increasing trend of students who chose teaching as their career. Malaysian Higher Education Statistics (2009) reported that the intake of student at the Bachelor degree level at Public Higher Education InstitutionsPublic HEI in Malaysia in the field of education was 6445 in 2007, 4815 in 2008, and 5353 in 2009. As the economy changed rapidly, it influenced student teachers’ career decisions to choose teaching as a profession (Lock, 2006). Clearly, there should be reasons for student teachers to choose teaching as a career.

However, student teachers have different expectations about teaching as a career. The positive expectations about the teaching profession will influence a student teacher’s decision to choose this profession, while negative expectations will influence them not to teach. According to Ewing and Manuel (2005), education teachers who think positively of teaching as a career will probably choose to teach.

The paper aims to explore the expectations of TVE student teachers about teaching as a career. The importance of studying the expectations among TVE student teachers to choose
teaching as a career in Malaysia is to explore student teacher’s views about teaching as a profession. By understanding the student teacher’s views, educators in the universities will create better approaches for teacher recruitment (Peske, Liu, Johnson, Kauffman, and Kardos 2001).

**Literature Review**

Numerous studies have attempted to explain the expectations of student teachers, and their viewpoint of teacher diversity. The expectations of student teachers are about their beliefs about teaching, and how well they feel about becoming teachers. The importance of understanding student teachers’ expectations is for short- and long-term commitments toward a teaching career. Previous studies had been carried out, and show that student teachers have positive expectations of a teaching career. Kyriacou, Kunc, & Hultgren (2003) conducted a study on student teachers’ expectations of teaching as a career in England and Norway and found that more than 50% of the respondents stated that teaching was a worthwhile job, have lengthy holidays, and that they feel elated by pupil achievement. These findings agreed with Manuel and Hughes (2008), who mentioned that 80% of the respondents have positive expectations about teaching as a career. The positive expectations about teaching will influence student teachers to have long-term goals within the teaching profession. Findings from Yopp and Taylor (1992) found that one-third of the respondents planned on taking up teaching as a lifelong career. The majority of the candidates felt proud in becoming a teacher, and they realized the important role of teachers in shaping the lives of children and youths. Further, Kyriacou, Kunc, & Hultgren, (2003) mentioned that student teachers with positive expectations are retained much longer in the teaching profession. The positive expectations help them to maintain confidence in themselves, and increase retention.

Meanwhile, the negative expectations of student teachers about teaching will influence student teachers to not teach. Su (1997) found that most of the teacher candidates believe that teaching is a profession that required training and qualifications and specialized human service. Teacher candidates who did not train well and specialize in human service tend to not choose teaching as a career. Adding to that, Su, (1997) explained many people believe that teachers work part-time, from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM during the school year and get a long holiday. This misconception contributes to the obstacles of professionalization in the teaching profession. Meanwhile, the negative expectations may influence teachers to quit teaching or retire early. Findings from Health and Camp (1990) indicated that 15% of career and technical education teachers quit within their first year, and more than half of them left the teaching profession after six years. This problem can lead to teacher shortages at schools.

**Methodology**

Generally, this study was about student teachers under the Public Higher Education Institution Public (HEI) in Malaysia that are in technical and vocational educational programs. The present study is based on survey method, which is widely done in educational research. The purpose of the survey method is to gain information concerning the independent or dependent variables in the research. The population in this study was TVE student teachers at Public HEI. The sample size was determined by using the Cochran sample size formula. A sample size of 249 was based on the Cochran sample size formula, which stated that for a population reaching 700 the minimum sample size is 249 at a confidence level of 95%. However, the sample size that exceeds the minimum sample size was
recommended by Cohen (1969). Therefore, the researcher decided to use 300 samples of TVE student teachers in this study.

The samples were chosen randomly from each group that represents the population. By increasing the sample size, it will help in reducing the sampling error. The higher the sample size, the higher the accuracy of the results obtained in order to generalize the results to the population (Cohen, 1969). Public Higher Education Institutions Public (HEI) offer Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) programs at University Putra Malaysia (UPM), University Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), University Technology Malaysia (UTM), and University Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM). Ideally, new teacher education graduates seeking employment should have been included in this study. However, the researcher decided to use final semester TVE student teachers for two important reasons. Firstly, the final semester student teachers were likely to have made their career decision by that time. Secondly, the study would be costly and difficult to administer questionnaires once they were dispersed into the workforce (Ahmed, Alam & Alam, 1997).

**Instruments**

The researcher received permission from previous researchers Richardson and Watt (2006) for adopting and adapting the “Fit-Choice Scale” instrument. The “Fit-Choice Scale” instrument was used to study as to why people chose teaching as a career (Richardson and Watt, 2006). The student teacher was asked to circle their answer in the questionnaire, which consisted of five parts. Part D of the questionnaire focused on the expectations about teaching career. The questionnaire used five – point Likert – type scale.

The researcher conducted a pilot test before collecting the data. The Cronbach’s alpha values are as listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.806</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the questionnaires were collected directly by the researcher to ensure confidentiality. Then the data were analyzed systematically by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 18.0. The descriptive statistics were used to explain the distribution frequency, percentage, mean, variance, and standard deviation for the data in a schedule form. The mean and standard deviation were used to determine the level of expectation of respondents based on the research objectives.

The inferential statistics used in analyzing the data was independent sample t-test. The independent sample t-test was used to determine the difference between independent groups (in this case, the option to choose teaching) on the variable ‘expectation’.
Findings

Research Objective: To identify the expectations of TVE student teachers about teaching as a career

Table 1.0: Mean and standard deviation for expectations about teaching career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believe that I will be happy with the amount of holidays.</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect to work more than six years as a basic teacher before promotion.</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect teaching will enable me to contribute more effectively to the economic wellbeing of my family.</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect I will stay longer in the teaching profession.</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe teaching is perceived as a high-status occupation.</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe that I will be doing a socially worthwhile job</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect teaching to provide me with a better career path</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe that the teaching profession is the right career for me</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe teaching is a well-respected career</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel elated by pupil’s achievements</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.39</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.0 shows the mean and standard deviation for expectation items. The overall mean rating was M= 4.39, SD= 0.43. The highest mean score was M=4.66, SD= 0.52 for item “feel elated by pupil’s achievements” with 68.7 % of respondents said they “strongly agree”, and 29.0 % of respondents mentioned they “agree”. Meanwhile, 2.3 % of respondents mentioned that they “moderately agree”. The lowest mean score was M=4.02, SD= 0.84 for the item “believe that I will be happy with the amount of holidays” with 32 % of respondents saying they “strongly agree” and 42% of respondents saying they “agree”. Meanwhile, 22.3 % of the respondents said they “moderately agree”, 3.3 % of respondents stated they “disagree” and 3% of them mentioned they “strongly disagree”.

Independent sample t- test was used to identify the difference between two groups (in this study, chose teaching or not chose teaching) as the dependent variable with the independent variable (expectation).
Table 2.0: Mean expectation to choose teaching as a career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expectation</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose Teaching</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Choose Teaching</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.0 shows the analysis of the independent sample t-test. There was a significant difference from those who did not choose teaching on expectation, \((p=.000)\). The mean value for respondents who chose teaching was 4.42, and for those who did not choose teaching, 4.11. The mean difference was 0.31 points.

Discussion and Conclusion

The expectations of student teachers about teaching as a career were both positive and negative expectations. The present study shows that more than half of the respondents have positive expectations about teaching while a small proportion have negative expectations about teaching as a career. Consequently, this finding agreed with Manuel and Hughes (2006), who found that the majority of the respondents expected teaching to become a challenging and rewarding career.

However, the findings contradicted the previous research that found that teacher candidates have negative expectations about teaching and most likely believed that teachers require high qualifications and training (Su, 1997). The significant understanding of the TVE student teachers’ expectations about teaching as a career is for the long-term commitment in the teaching profession. According to Yopp and Taylor (1992), the positive expectation relates to the commitment of teaching. Kyriacou, Kunch and Hultgren (2003) mentioned the student teachers who have positive expectations may stay longer in the teaching profession. This is most likely because the positive expectations that develop will maintain the confidence and increase the retention rate of teachers in schools.

Meanwhile, the findings from this study show that there was a significant difference between expectations about teaching and choosing teaching as a career. The present findings from this study show that the majority of the respondents had positive expectations choosing teaching. The majority of the respondents with positive expectations choose teaching as a career more than those who had low expectations. This is most likely because they expect teaching will give lengthy holidays, expect to stay longer, and that teaching will contribute effectively to their economic wellbeing.

The findings produced results that corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in this field. Yopp and Taylor (1992) found that one-third of teacher candidates plan or expect to take up teaching as a lifelong career. In addition, Manuel and Hughes (2006) conducted a study of pre-service teachers and found that 80% of them chose teaching as a career, and have very positive expectations about teaching such a “challenging and rewarding career”. Moreover, Kyriacou et al. (2003) investigated the student teachers’ expectations towards teaching and found out that half of them have positive expectations in choosing teaching as a worthwhile job, lengthy holidays, and feel elated by pupil’s achievements. Further, the present findings reported that 43% of the respondents expected teaching to become a long–term career for them. High positive expectations will influence or force teachers to stay longer and be more committed to this profession (Manuel & Hughes, 2006).
However, from the present study, the findings show that a small proportion of respondents with negative expectations were less likely to choose teaching as a career. This may due to their misconceptions and expectations about teaching. Previous studies reported that teacher candidates believe that teaching is a profession that require training, higher qualifications, and have to specialize in human service. Besides that, they might believe that teachers work part-time from 8:00am-3:00pm during the school year (Su, 1997). Adding to that, Manuel and Hughes (2006) found that few of the pre-service teachers in their study had negative expectations about teaching, and expected teaching to be a short-term career for them.

In conclusion, the present study found that the majority of the respondents had positive expectations about teaching as a career. In addition, there was a significant difference for TVE student teacher’s expectations and choosing teaching as a career. Thus, the educators, school administration, Ministry of Education, and the government need to listen to new graduate teacher’s voices. The recruitment campaign by educators at universities might also attract them to become teachers. Next, a mentor program developed by the school administrations during their practicum training can also be done. This program might influence more positive expectations for TVE student teachers towards the teaching profession. The positive expectations of teaching as a career will influence student teachers to teach, and help in retaining them longer in the teaching profession, as well as reducing the teacher shortages in schools.

Bibliography


