



Journey to the Classroom: Understanding the Motivations and Concerns of Aspiring Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study explored the motivations and concerns of aspiring teachers in Cadiz City as they prepared to enter the teaching profession. It aimed to understand the factors influencing their career choice, the challenges they anticipate, and the role of their personal and educational experiences in shaping their professional expectations. A qualitative research design was employed, involving ten purposively selected participants. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes. Findings revealed that aspiring teachers were primarily motivated by a strong passion for teaching, a desire to serve learners and contribute to community development, and the influence of family members, mentors, and role models. Despite their enthusiasm, participants expressed concerns about managing classroom behavior, handling workload and administrative demands, preparing effective lesson plans, and applying theoretical knowledge in real classroom settings. The study further indicated that teacher preparation programs, mentoring support, peer collaboration, and community engagement experiences play a vital role in enhancing aspiring teachers' confidence, professional identity, and teaching competencies. Participants also viewed teaching as a meaningful and demanding vocation that requires dedication, empathy, patience, and continuous professional growth. Overall, the findings highlight the need for comprehensive and responsive teacher preparation programs that integrate experiential learning, mentorship, and reflective practices to better equip aspiring teachers with the knowledge, skills, and resilience necessary for effective classroom practice and to ensure their readiness to address diverse learner needs, adapt to changing educational contexts, and sustain professional commitment and effectiveness in the teaching profession.

Keywords: Motivations, Teacher Preparation, Aspiring Teachers

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INTRODUCTION

Becoming a teacher is a transformative process that involves both personal growth and professional development, shaped by intrinsic motivations, aspirations, and anticipatory concerns. Teaching is widely recognized as a vocation grounded in commitment, passion, and service, where educators act as agents of social transformation by developing learners' knowledge, values, and skills (Richardson & Watt, 2022). In the Philippines, the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) outlines the competencies expected of teachers at the Beginning Stage (DepEd, 2017), providing a framework for teacher quality and professional growth.

Existing studies have extensively examined teacher motivation, highlighting the influence of intrinsic factors such as the desire to inspire learners, contribute to society, and pursue teaching as a calling. Richardson and Watt (2022) emphasize that viewing teaching as a vocation fosters sustained commitment and resilience, while Flores and Day (2023) note that aspiring teachers often face concerns related to classroom management, lesson planning, and the application of theory to practice. Furthermore, research points to the role of extrinsic and structural factors—including workload, salary, and emotional demands—in shaping teachers' readiness and confidence (Darling-Hammond, 2024; Smith & Ingersoll, 2021).

However, despite these insights, a significant research gap exists in understanding the lived experiences of aspiring teachers who have applied to public schools but remain unemployed. This group is often overlooked in the literature, particularly in local contexts, yet they are in a critical transitional phase where professional identity, expectations, and readiness are continuously being shaped. In Cadiz City, while many aspiring teachers seek entry into the profession, a subset remains in prolonged waiting periods, creating a unique context that warrants investigation.

Addressing this gap, the present study aims to explore the motivations and concerns of aspiring teachers in Cadiz City who have not yet been hired. Specifically, it seeks to examine the factors influencing their decision to pursue teaching, the challenges they anticipate, and how their experiences shape their perceptions and expectations of the profession. By focusing on this underexplored group, the study intends to generate insights that can inform teacher education institutions in enhancing preparation programs, mentoring support, and transition mechanisms. Ultimately, the findings are expected to contribute to the development of more responsive and supportive systems that foster competent, confident, and resilient future educators.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study explored the motivations and concerns of aspiring teachers in Cadiz City who have applied to public schools but have not yet been hired, addressing the gap in understanding their experiences during the transition to professional practice. Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What factors motivated aspiring teachers to pursue a career in teaching despite delays in employment?
2. What concerns did aspiring teachers experience as they prepared to enter the teaching profession while awaiting hiring opportunities?
3. How did personal experiences and educational backgrounds influence their motivations and concerns during this transitional period?
4. How did aspiring teachers describe their perceptions and expectations of the teaching profession based on their lived experiences while remaining in the applicant pool?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivations of Aspiring Teachers

Motivation is widely recognized as a central determinant in the decision to pursue teaching as a career, with most literature emphasizing intrinsic rather than extrinsic drivers. Across studies, aspiring teachers consistently report passion for teaching, desire to serve, and a sense of vocation as dominant motivations (Richardson & Watt, 2022; Roness, 2021; Alcala, 2020). While these findings are consistent, they collectively suggest that teaching is largely perceived not merely as employment but as a value-driven profession anchored in personal meaning and social contribution.

However, recent research extends this understanding by demonstrating that motivation is not only affective but also functional in shaping professional behavior. For instance, Li and Guo (2024) and Li (2024) both show that altruistic and intrinsic motivations are associated with stronger engagement in learning strategies and sustained commitment to the profession. Similarly, Özcan (2024) found that intrinsically motivated pre-service teachers demonstrate deeper engagement in curriculum literacy and pedagogical preparation. These findings suggest a progression from motivation as intention to motivation as action, where strong internal drives translate into active professional development.



More importantly, Kula (2025) highlights that motivation supports lifelong learning orientation, indicating its long-term influence on professional growth and adaptability. In contrast, Prabawa et al. (2024) emphasize that motivation is also shaped by contextual realities such as teacher shortages and perceived societal needs, suggesting that external conditions interact with internal aspirations.

Taken together, the literature reveals a synthesis: motivation among aspiring teachers is not purely individual but is shaped by the interaction of personal values, social expectations, and professional conditions. However, most studies focus on pre-service teachers within training institutions, leaving limited understanding of those already in transition but still awaiting employment—an important gap addressed in this study.

Fears and Concerns of Aspiring Teachers

While motivation drives entry into the profession, literature consistently shows that aspiring teachers simultaneously experience significant anxieties about classroom practice. Common concerns include classroom management, workload, lesson planning, and translating theory into practice (Flores & Day, 2023; Dela Cruz & Lintao, 2023). These concerns are not isolated but appear across different contexts, suggesting a universal tension between theoretical preparation and practical demands.

International studies deepen this understanding by linking these concerns to self-efficacy and perceived readiness. Hagenauer and Volet (2022) and Shen et al. (2023) argue that anxiety is strongly connected to limited exposure to real classroom complexity, particularly in managing unpredictable learner behavior and instructional adaptation. This implies that concerns are not merely emotional but stem from gaps in experiential preparation.

Emerging studies further expand the scope of concerns beyond traditional classroom issues. Nguyen and Kaur (2024) show that modern pre-service teachers also struggle with evolving expectations such as technology integration, assessment literacy, and professional identity formation. This indicates that teacher anxiety is becoming multidimensional, reflecting changes in educational systems.

In the Philippine context, Rosales and Santos (2025) and Valdez (2024) confirm similar patterns but highlight an added layer: limited mentoring and uneven practical exposure intensify insecurity and reduce instructional confidence. This suggests that systemic constraints amplify global concerns within local settings.

Collectively, the literature shows that concerns are not simply individual weaknesses but structural and developmental issues. While mentoring and experiential learning are identified as effective interventions (Darling-Hammond, 2024; Yilmaz & Altun, 2023), there remains limited focus on aspiring teachers who remain in prolonged pre-employment stages, where anxiety may persist without institutional support.

Influence of Personal and Educational Experiences

Literature consistently affirms that personal and educational experiences significantly shape teaching motivation, identity, and readiness. Early exposure through family influence, tutoring, or volunteering strengthens commitment to teaching (Richardson & Watt, 2022; Kula, 2025). However, these studies collectively suggest that personal experiences function as reinforcing mechanisms rather than primary determinants, amplifying pre-existing motivations.

Educational experiences, particularly within teacher preparation programs, play a more direct role in shaping professional identity. Flores and Day (2023) argue that the integration of theory and practice is critical in helping pre-service teachers construct a coherent professional self. Similarly, DepEd (2017) emphasizes experiential alignment through the PPST framework, reinforcing the need for practice-based learning.

Recent studies converge on the importance of structured experiential learning. Nguyen and Kaur (2024), Özcan (2024), and Li (2024) all demonstrate that supervised teaching, reflective feedback, and collaborative learning significantly enhance confidence and instructional competence. These findings suggest a consistent pattern: experience is most effective when it is guided, reflective, and iterative.

In the Philippine setting, Rosales and Santos (2025) and Valdez (2024) highlight that community engagement and simulated teaching experiences strengthen identity formation and reduce anxiety. However, the literature largely focuses on enrolled teacher education students, with limited attention to individuals who have completed training but remain in transition to employment. Overall, experiences function as a bridge between motivation and readiness, but their effectiveness depends on the presence of structured support systems.

Classroom Readiness



Classroom readiness is widely understood as the convergence of knowledge, skills, self-efficacy, and professional identity. Across studies, readiness is consistently linked not only to cognitive competence but also to emotional preparedness and confidence (Darling-Hammond, 2024; Richardson & Watt, 2022).

Empirical studies reinforce the importance of experiential learning in developing readiness. Li (2024), Özcan (2024), and Kaur (2024) collectively show that simulated teaching, micro-teaching, and reflective supervision significantly improve instructional competence and classroom adaptability. These findings suggest that readiness is not developed through knowledge acquisition alone but through repeated, supported practice.

Philippine studies further emphasize the importance of contextually grounded preparation. Rosales and Santos (2025) and Valdez (2024) demonstrate that structured exposure to real or simulated teaching environments enhances confidence and reduces apprehension among aspiring teachers.

Synthesis

The reviewed literature indicates that aspiring teachers enter the profession driven by strong intrinsic motivations, including a desire to serve, inspire learners, and contribute to societal development. These motivations are often reinforced by personal experiences, such as family influence, volunteering, and prior exposure to teaching, as well as educational engagements, including coursework, supervised practice, and collaborative learning (Richardson & Watt, 2022; Kula, 2025; Flores & Day, 2023). At the same time, aspiring teachers experience fears and concerns related to classroom management, lesson implementation, workload, and translating theory into practice, which are heightened by systemic challenges such as teacher shortages and limited resources in the Philippine education system (DepEd, 2024; Department of Education, 2025; Darling-Hammond, 2024).

Evidence suggests that these motivations and concerns are intertwined with professional identity formation and classroom readiness. Structured mentoring, reflective practice, micro-teaching, and simulated teaching experiences help aspiring teachers develop competence, confidence, and resilience, mitigating fears while enhancing preparedness for real classroom challenges (Richardson & Watt, 2022; Li, 2024; Rosales & Santos, 2025). In the Philippine context, the PPST framework emphasizes the integration of theoretical knowledge and practical experience as essential for bridging the gap between pre-service preparation and professional practice (DepEd, 2017).

Overall, the literature underscores that teacher preparation is not solely about acquiring skills and knowledge but also about nurturing intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and professional identity. Supporting aspiring teachers through experiential, reflective, and mentorship-driven programs can strengthen their commitment, reduce apprehension, and ensure readiness for the complex demands of teaching. This synthesis highlights the importance of examining the lived experiences of aspiring teachers in Cadiz City to inform targeted interventions in teacher education programs and enhance the transition from pre-service to professional practice.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of aspiring teachers in Cadiz City who were in the transition period of entering the teaching profession. Phenomenology was selected because the study sought to understand how participants make meaning of their motivations, concerns, and perceived readiness based on their personal and educational experiences.

The phenomenological approach was particularly appropriate for this study because the research problem focused on subjective and deeply personal experiences that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measures. As Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasize, phenomenology is used to describe the essence of lived experiences of individuals who have encountered a common phenomenon. In this study, the shared phenomenon is the prolonged transition of aspiring teachers who have completed preparation and applied for teaching positions but have not yet been employed.

Given this context, phenomenology allowed the researcher to capture how participants interpret their motivations for pursuing teaching, how they experience and manage their concerns during the waiting period, and how these experiences shape their professional identity and perceived readiness. It also provided a means of understanding the emotional, cognitive, and contextual dimensions of their experiences in a way that more structured or numerical approaches could not fully explain.

Furthermore, the design was suitable because it enabled the extraction of rich, descriptive data that can inform teacher education institutions and policymakers. The insights generated may guide improvements in mentoring programs, pre-service training, and



transition support mechanisms, ultimately strengthening teacher preparation systems and enhancing the readiness, confidence, and professional resilience of future educators.

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were ten (10) aspiring teachers in Cadiz City who had applied for public school teaching positions within the past three to five years but had not yet been hired. All participants were Licensed Professional Teachers (LET passers) who were either completing pre-service coursework, engaged in practice teaching, or preparing for graduation and entry into the teaching profession. A purposive sampling technique was employed to identify and select participants who met the specific inclusion criteria and who shared the common lived experience of being qualified but still awaiting employment in the public school system. This sampling strategy was appropriate because phenomenological research requires participants who can provide rich, in-depth, and relevant descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation rather than a statistically representative sample.

The sample size of ten participants was considered adequate for a phenomenological study, as such designs typically prioritize depth over breadth and commonly involve between 5 to 15 participants depending on data saturation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, data collection continued until sufficient repetition of themes and no new significant insights emerged, indicating that data saturation had been reached.

By focusing on a small but information-rich group, the study was able to capture detailed narratives regarding participants' motivations, concerns, and perceptions of classroom readiness. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of their lived experiences while maintaining the rigor and depth required in phenomenological inquiry.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide to gather in-depth information on the motivations, concerns, and perceived classroom readiness of aspiring teachers in Cadiz City. The development of the instrument was systematically guided by the study's research questions, relevant literature, and the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) (DepEd, 2017) to ensure content validity and alignment with established teacher competencies. The interview guide was constructed through a careful review of related studies on teacher motivation, professional concerns, experiential learning, and classroom readiness. Key concepts and recurring themes from the literature were translated into open-ended questions that allowed participants to freely express their lived experiences. Each interview question was intentionally designed to correspond with the specific research objectives: (1) motivations for pursuing teaching, (2) concerns and anticipated challenges in entering the profession, (3) influence of personal and educational experiences, and (4) perceptions and expectations of teaching as a vocation and professional career.

To strengthen clarity and relevance, the initial draft of the interview guide was reviewed by experts in the field of educational research and teacher education. Their feedback was used to refine question wording, improve sequencing, and ensure that the questions were appropriate for eliciting rich and meaningful responses. A pilot interview was also conducted with a similar participant to assess the clarity and flow of the questions, resulting in minor revisions for improved comprehension. The final instrument consisted of open-ended, non-leading questions with follow-up probes to encourage elaboration and depth of response. This structure allowed participants to fully articulate their experiences while ensuring that all key areas of the study were systematically explored, thereby enhancing the credibility, consistency, and depth of the qualitative data collected.

Validity

To ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the qualitative instrument, the researcher-made semi-structured interview guide underwent expert validation through the Content Validity Index (CVI). Although CVI is more commonly associated with quantitative instrument validation, it was appropriately used in this study as a systematic approach to strengthen content relevance, clarity, and alignment of interview questions with the study's objectives. In qualitative research, such validation is essential to ensure that guiding questions effectively elicit rich, meaningful narratives aligned with the phenomenon under investigation. The validation process focused on assessing whether each interview question adequately reflected the key domains of the study, namely: motivations, concerns, classroom readiness, and the influence of personal and educational experiences of



aspiring teachers. This ensured that the instrument was conceptually grounded in both the research questions and the theoretical framework.

The interview guide was evaluated by seven expert validators composed of two Education Program Supervisors, three Master Teachers, and two School Principals, all of whom possess extensive experience in teacher development, mentoring, and instructional supervision. Each validator rated the items using a dichotomous scale, assigning a score of 1 if the item was clear and relevant and 0 if it required revision or was not appropriate. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was computed by determining the proportion of experts who rated each item as relevant. All items received unanimous approval from the validators, resulting in a CVI of 1.00, which indicates excellent content validity. This outcome confirms that the interview guide is highly appropriate for eliciting in-depth qualitative data and is well-aligned with the study's objectives, ensuring that participants' responses would meaningfully capture their lived experiences as aspiring teachers in Cadiz City.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, the researchers secured the necessary approvals from relevant school authorities and obtained informed consent from all participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed throughout the study. Data were gathered from ten (10) aspiring teachers in Cadiz City who are Licensed Professional Teachers (LET passers) and had applied to public schools within the past three to five years but had not yet been hired. The researcher-made semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data, allowing participants to freely discuss their motivations, concerns, experiences, and perceptions of the teaching profession.

Individual interviews were conducted in a quiet and comfortable setting to promote openness and minimize distractions. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. With participants' consent, all responses were audio-recorded and supplemented with field notes to ensure accuracy and completeness of data. After each interview, recordings were transcribed verbatim to preserve the authenticity of participants' responses. Transcripts were then reviewed by the participants for validation and clarification, ensuring that their accounts were accurately represented. Ethical standards were strictly followed throughout the process, including respect for privacy, informed participation, and data protection. This systematic procedure ensured the collection of rich, credible, and accurate qualitative data, which served as the basis for identifying patterns and themes related to the motivations, concerns, and perceived classroom readiness of aspiring teachers in Cadiz City.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, consistent with the qualitative phenomenological approach of the study. The analysis followed a systematic and iterative process to ensure that the meanings embedded in participants' narratives were accurately captured and interpreted.

First, all audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim to preserve the authenticity of participants' responses. The researchers then engaged in repeated reading of the transcripts to achieve data immersion and develop a holistic understanding of the content. During this stage, initial impressions and notable ideas were documented as preliminary insights.

Next, open coding was conducted by carefully examining each transcript line-by-line. Significant statements, phrases, and expressions relevant to the research questions—particularly those related to motivations, concerns, personal and educational experiences, and perceived classroom readiness—were identified and assigned initial codes. These codes represented meaningful units of information extracted directly from participants' narratives.

After coding, a constant comparative process was used to examine similarities and differences among codes across all participants. Related codes were then clustered into categories that reflected broader patterns of meaning. These categories were continuously reviewed, refined, and merged where necessary to ensure coherence and conceptual consistency. From these categories, overarching themes were systematically developed to represent the shared lived experiences of aspiring teachers in Cadiz City. The researchers engaged in thematic refinement to ensure that each theme was distinct, internally consistent, and directly aligned with the research objectives. This rigorous process ensured that the final themes accurately reflected participants' experiences and provided a comprehensive interpretation of the phenomenon under study.



Data Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative data, this study employed multiple strategies aligned with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility – The researchers established credibility through member checking, allowing participants to review and confirm the accuracy of their transcribed responses. Additionally, triangulation was employed by comparing data across participants to identify consistent patterns and themes.

Dependability – A clear audit trail of research procedures, including data collection, transcription, coding, and theme development, was maintained to ensure that the study process is transparent and replicable.

Confirmability – To minimize researcher bias, the study used peer debriefing and reflective journaling throughout the analysis process, ensuring that interpretations were grounded in participants' narratives rather than the researchers' assumptions.

Transferability – Thick descriptions of participants' experiences, motivations, concerns, and perceived classroom readiness were provided to allow readers to determine the applicability of findings to similar contexts beyond Cadiz City.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to strict ethical standards to ensure the protection of participants' rights, dignity, privacy, and well-being throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, the study secured ethical clearance from the institutional research ethics review committee and obtained permission from the relevant Schools Division Office and school authorities. This ensured that the study complied with institutional and Department of Education research protocols. Participation was entirely voluntary. All aspiring teacher-participants were provided with an informed consent form detailing the purpose of the study, research procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their rights as participants. They were clearly informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or negative consequence.

To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, and any identifying information was removed from transcripts and research outputs. All audio recordings, transcripts, and field notes were securely stored in password-protected devices and were accessible only to the researchers. The study also upheld the principle of non-maleficence by ensuring that interview questions were designed to avoid emotional discomfort, psychological distress, or any form of harm. Researchers maintained a neutral and respectful stance during interviews and ensured that participants felt safe and comfortable in sharing their experiences. Furthermore, the research was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical guidelines and the standards set by the Department of Education. The researchers ensured honesty, transparency, and integrity in the collection, analysis, and reporting of data. These measures collectively ensured that the study was conducted ethically while safeguarding the rights and welfare of all participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Participants' Personal/Professional

Participant	Age	Gender	Highest Educational Attainment	LET Status	Years as Aspiring Teacher
P1	26	Female	Bachelor of Elementary Education	LET Passer	3
P2	28	Male	Bachelor of Secondary Education	LET Passer	4
P3	29	Female	Bachelor of Elementary Education	LET Passer	5
P4	26	Male	Bachelor of Secondary Education	LET Passer	3
P5	30	Female	Bachelor of Elementary Education	LET Passer	4
P6	29	Male	Bachelor of Secondary Education	LET Passer	5



P7	25	Female	Bachelor of Elementary Education	LET Passer	3
P8	27	Male	Bachelor of Secondary Education	LET Passer	4
P9	27	Female	Bachelor of Elementary Education	LET Passer	3
P10	32	Male	Bachelor of Secondary Education	LET Passer	5

The participants of the study consist of 10 aspiring teachers in Cadiz City who have applied to public schools within the past 3–5 years but have not yet been hired. Among them, there is a balanced distribution in gender, with 5 females and 5 males, ensuring representation across both elementary and secondary education tracks. Regarding educational attainment, five participants hold a Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) degree, while the other five hold a Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) degree. All participants are Licensed LET passers, indicating they have met the professional qualification requirements to teach in Philippine public schools. The participants' years as aspiring teachers range from 3 to 5 years. This indicates that they have been actively seeking teaching opportunities for a considerable period, which may influence their perceptions of readiness, motivation, and concerns about entering the teaching profession.

Themes and Sub-themes

Theme 1. Motivations to Pursue Teaching

This theme explores the lived experiences and personal reasons that inspired the participants to choose teaching as a career. The analysis revealed that participants were motivated by a combination of desire to serve and contribute to society, personal passion for teaching, and the influence of family and role models. Three sub-themes emerged: (1) Desire to Serve and Contribute to Society, (2) Passion for Teaching, and (3) Family and Personal Influence.

Sub-theme 1.1: Desire to Serve and Contribute to Society

Participants consistently described a strong motivation to positively impact learners and their communities. Many cited the opportunity to help students grow and develop as a central reason for pursuing teaching.

P1 (F, BEEd) shared, “I chose teaching because I want to make a difference in children’s lives. Seeing students learn and grow gives me fulfillment. Helping the community through education is very important to me.”

P2 (M, BSEd) reflected, “Teaching runs in my family—my parents are educators. I saw how they positively impact students and communities. I want to do the same and give back through teaching.”

P3 (F, BEEd) explained, “I was inspired by volunteering and tutoring in my community. Teaching allows me to help learners in meaningful ways. I also see it as a way to contribute to society.”

Participants highlighted experiences such as volunteering, tutoring, and community outreach as formative in shaping their motivation. P6 (M, BSEd) recalled, “I volunteered to help conduct reading sessions in our neighborhood library. When children began to read on their own, I felt motivated to keep helping. It made me see teaching as a way to give back to the community.”

Overall, participants expressed that their motivation is both intrinsic and altruistic, grounded in the desire to serve learners and the wider community while also valuing the meaningfulness of the work itself.

Sub-theme 1.2: Passion for Teaching

Passion for the profession emerged as a strong driver for participant engagement and commitment. Participants described excitement in seeing students understand concepts, develop skills, and reach their potential.

P4 (M, BSEd) stated, “I feel passionate when I can inspire students to think critically. Seeing them ask questions and explore ideas motivates me. Teaching is fulfilling because I can influence their future positively.”

P7 (F, BEEd) noted, “I enjoy seeing students’ curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Their progress gives me energy and motivation. This is why I feel passionate about becoming a teacher.”

Participants also linked their passion to lesson preparation and interactions with learners. P1 (F, BEEd) shared, “I put extra effort into preparing engaging lessons because I enjoy teaching. I try to make learning enjoyable and meaningful. My passion motivates me to connect with each student.” Similarly, P10 (M, BSEd) remarked, “My passion drives me to plan lessons carefully and creatively. I try to make learning fun and interactive. It also makes me more attentive to students’ needs during class.”

These reflections highlight that passion is not merely an emotional response, but actively informs planning, engagement, and teaching practices, ensuring that participants are both motivated and effective.

Sub-theme 1.3: Family and Personal Influence



Family background and personal role models strongly influenced participants' decision to pursue teaching. Observing the dedication of family members or mentors inspired participants to emulate these positive examples.

P1 (F, BEd) stated, "My mother is a teacher, and I grew up seeing her dedication and care for her students. Her passion inspired me to follow the same path. I want to make a similar impact on learners and the community."

P2 (M, BEd) reflected, "Teaching runs in my family, with both my parents being educators. Their stories about shaping students' lives motivated me. I wanted to continue the family tradition of serving through education."

P8 (M, BEd) shared, "Both of my parents are educators, and I grew up witnessing their patience and care for learners. Their guidance motivated me to pursue teaching. I want to follow in their footsteps and help students grow."

Participants also cited early personal experiences, such as mentoring younger students, assisting siblings with homework, or participating in community programs, as reinforcing their commitment. P6 (M, BEd) explained, "I volunteered in a summer learning program for underprivileged children. Seeing how education can transform their lives inspired me. It encouraged me to dedicate myself to teaching."

The findings indicate that family influence and formative experiences play a critical role in shaping the participants' professional identity and sense of purpose, connecting personal values with career aspirations.

Patterns Across Theme 1

1. **Intrinsic Motivation and Service Orientation:** Participants consistently emphasized the desire to help students and contribute to the community.

2. **Experiential Influence:** Volunteering, tutoring, and practice teaching were pivotal in strengthening motivation and passion.

3. **Family and Role Models:** The guidance, example, and encouragement from family members and mentors shaped participants' career decisions.

4. **Passion Driving Practice:** Love for teaching translated into careful lesson preparation, creative teaching approaches, and attentive student engagement.

5. **Combination of Purpose and Practicality:** While intrinsic motivation dominates, participants also acknowledged career stability and benefits as supportive factors in choosing teaching.

Overall, Theme 1 illustrates that the participants' motivations are multi-faceted, deeply personal, and interconnected, reflecting a strong alignment between personal values, professional identity, and societal contribution.

Theme 2: Concerns About Entering the Profession

This theme captures participants' apprehensions and perceived challenges as they transition from teacher preparation programs to actual teaching practice. Analysis revealed concerns around classroom management and student behavior, workload and lesson planning, and applying theory into practice. Three sub-themes emerged: (1) Classroom Management and Student Behavior, (2) Workload and Lesson Planning, and (3) Applying Theory into Practice.

Sub-theme 2.1: Classroom Management and Student Behavior

Participants expressed anxiety about maintaining discipline, managing diverse learners, and establishing authority in the classroom. While most felt prepared academically, they anticipated challenges in handling behavioral issues and fostering a positive learning environment.

P1 (F, BEd) shared, "I worry that some students might not listen or respect classroom rules. Managing a large number of learners at once seems challenging. I plan to set clear expectations from day one, but I know it won't be easy."

P4 (M, BEd) noted, "I am concerned about students with different learning attitudes and personalities. It may be hard to address disruptions while keeping lessons on track. I hope my practicum experience will guide me."

P7 (F, BEd) reflected, "I feel moderately confident, but I anticipate challenges when students don't follow instructions. I plan to remain patient and consistent in enforcing rules."

Participants highlighted the importance of establishing routines, using positive reinforcement, and remaining adaptable. P10 (M, BEd) explained, "I know every classroom is different, and behavior can be unpredictable. I plan to use strategies I observed during my teaching practice and seek guidance from mentors when necessary."

Overall, classroom management emerged as the primary concern for aspiring teachers, emphasizing the need for practical strategies, patience, and continuous reflection.

Sub-theme 2.2: Workload and Lesson Planning

Another major concern was the volume of tasks associated with teaching, including preparing lesson plans, grading, and fulfilling other administrative responsibilities. Participants expressed both anxiety and determination to manage these responsibilities effectively.



P2 (M, BSEd) stated, “I am concerned about handling lesson planning for multiple subjects while keeping up with grading and reports. Time management will be crucial for me to balance these tasks.”

P5 (F, BEEEd) shared, “I worry about completing daily tasks efficiently, especially when unexpected events arise. Preparing lessons that meet all learners’ needs seems challenging.”

P8 (M, BSEd) noted, “Lesson planning takes a lot of time, and I want to make sure my plans are effective and engaging. I plan to prioritize and organize tasks carefully to manage workload.”

Participants emphasized the need for strategic planning, prioritization, and seeking support from colleagues to handle workload pressures. P6 (M, BSEd) reflected, “I plan to use templates and collaborate with other teachers to reduce preparation time. Organizing tasks in advance will help me stay on top of my responsibilities.”

In summary, workload and lesson planning were seen as manageable with proper organization, support, and time management, but still a significant source of concern for new teachers.

Sub-theme 2.3: Applying Theory into Practice

Participants were concerned about translating theoretical knowledge from college into practical teaching scenarios. While confident in their academic understanding, they anticipated challenges in classroom application, student engagement, and adapting lessons.

P3 (F, BEEEd) stated, “I feel confident in my understanding of teaching strategies, but applying them in a real classroom with diverse learners may be tricky. I plan to adapt techniques I learned in practice teaching.”

P9 (F, BEEEd) shared, “Sometimes what we learn in college doesn’t perfectly match real situations. I will need to think on my feet and adjust lessons accordingly.”

P1 (F, BEEEd) reflected, “I am excited to apply my knowledge, but I know that managing students’ responses and learning styles will require flexibility.”

Participants highlighted the importance of reflective practice, mentorship, and adaptability in bridging the gap between theory and practice. P7 (F, BEEEd) explained, “I plan to observe experienced teachers and incorporate effective strategies into my lessons. Learning from real classroom dynamics is crucial to applying theory successfully.”

Overall, this sub-theme underscores that practical application of theory is a central concern, and participants recognize the value of observation, reflection, and continuous adjustment to meet students’ needs.

Patterns Across Theme 2

- 1.Primary Concerns: Classroom management, workload, and lesson application were consistently identified as major challenges.
- 2.Confidence vs. Anxiety: Participants generally feel confident in content knowledge but less confident in practical classroom management and handling diverse learner behaviors.
- 3.Strategies for Coping: Participants intend to rely on routines, positive reinforcement, peer support, mentoring, and reflective practice to navigate challenges.
- 4.Preparation Gaps: While teacher preparation programs provide theoretical grounding, participants acknowledge that real-life classroom challenges may require additional skills and adaptability.
- 5.Overall Insight: Theme 2 reflects the anticipatory stress of entering the profession, balanced by a willingness to learn, adapt, and grow through experience.

Theme 3: Influence of Personal and Educational Experiences

This theme explores how participants’ personal backgrounds and educational experiences shaped their motivations, skills, and readiness to pursue teaching. Analysis revealed that teacher preparation programs, mentoring and peer support, and community engagement significantly influenced their professional development. Three sub-themes emerged: (1) Teacher Preparation Programs, (2) Mentoring and Peer Support, and (3) Community Engagement.

Sub-theme 3.1: Teacher Preparation Programs

Participants emphasized the role of their college education and teacher preparation programs in building foundational knowledge, teaching skills, and professional identity.

P1 (F, BEEEd) shared, “My courses in pedagogy and classroom management prepared me to handle lessons effectively. The fieldwork and practicum gave me firsthand experience in teaching real students. I feel more confident because of the guidance from my professors.”

P4 (M, BSEd) noted, “Practice teaching helped me understand how to apply theories. Observing mentor teachers was invaluable. Without these experiences, I wouldn’t feel ready to manage a classroom.”



P7 (F, BEEEd) reflected, “My preparation program taught me to design inclusive lesson plans. I learned strategies to accommodate different learning styles. It helped me build confidence as a future teacher.”

Participants consistently expressed that hands-on experiences, structured courses, and exposure to diverse teaching strategies were essential for shaping their teaching abilities and professional identity.

Sub-theme 3.2: Mentoring and Peer Support

Mentoring by experienced teachers and collaboration with peers emerged as critical sources of guidance, feedback, and emotional support.

P2 (M, BSEd) stated, “My mentor teacher gave me practical advice on classroom management and lesson delivery. Peer discussions also helped me solve problems and share ideas. Their support made me feel less overwhelmed.”

P5 (F, BEEEd) shared, “Working with classmates during lesson planning and practice teaching was motivating. We supported each other in refining strategies and giving constructive feedback. I learned a lot from my peers’ experiences.”

P9 (F, BEEEd) reflected, “Having mentors and supportive colleagues helped me navigate challenges. They offered suggestions on handling difficult students and keeping learners engaged. It reassured me that I can manage a classroom successfully.”

Participants highlighted that mentoring and peer collaboration strengthened their confidence, enhanced practical skills, and provided emotional support, especially when facing challenging teaching scenarios.

Sub-theme 3.3: Community Engagement

Engagement in the community through volunteering, outreach, and tutoring shaped participants’ understanding of teaching as a socially meaningful and impactful profession.

P1 (F, BEEEd) shared, “During community literacy programs, I saw how education transforms lives. Interacting with learners from different backgrounds motivated me to continue pursuing teaching.”

P6 (M, BSEd) noted, “Helping children in after-school programs taught me patience and adaptability. It reinforced my desire to contribute positively to society through education.”

P8 (M, BSEd) reflected, “Organizing school activities in remote areas showed me the importance of bringing learning opportunities to underserved communities. These experiences strengthened my commitment to teaching.”

Community engagement experiences helped participants connect theoretical knowledge with real-life contexts, fostered empathy, and enhanced their sense of professional purpose.

Patterns Across Theme 3

1. Teacher Preparation as Foundation: Participants credit structured courses, practicum, and exposure to teaching strategies as essential for confidence and competence.

2. Mentorship and Peer Support: Guidance from mentor teachers and collaboration with peers provide emotional reassurance, practical advice, and skill development.

3. Community Engagement Shapes Perspective: Direct interaction with learners in community settings strengthens commitment, empathy, and understanding of diverse learning contexts.

4. Integration of Experience and Theory: Participants consistently linked classroom theory with hands-on experiences, showing that practical application enhances professional identity.

5. Overall Insight: Theme 3 highlights that personal, academic, and community experiences work synergistically to shape participants’ readiness, confidence, and commitment to teaching.

Theme 4: Perceptions and Expectations of the Teaching Profession

This theme examines how participants perceive teaching as a profession, their sense of vocation, readiness for the classroom, and anticipated challenges. Analysis revealed that participants view teaching as a meaningful vocation, anticipate varied classroom challenges, and strive for professional competence and personal growth. Three sub-themes emerged: (1) Teaching as a Vocation, (2) Professional Growth and Lifelong Learning, and (3) Classroom Readiness.

Sub-theme 4.1: Teaching as a Vocation

Participants consistently described teaching as a calling rather than just a job, emphasizing service, responsibility, and moral purpose.

P1 (F, BEEEd) stated, “I see teaching as a meaningful career where I can make a real difference in students’ lives. It’s more than a job; it’s about guiding and shaping the future generation.”

P4 (M, BSEd) reflected, “Teaching is a vocation because it involves dedication and a commitment to serve. I feel responsible for my students’ learning and personal growth.”



P7 (F, BEEEd) shared, “I chose teaching not only for a career but because I want to help learners reach their potential. Being a teacher requires passion, patience, and a sense of purpose.”

Participants highlighted that teaching as a vocation involves commitment, empathy, and a desire to contribute meaningfully, reinforcing the intrinsic motivation that drives their professional aspirations.

Sub-theme 4.2: Professional Growth and Lifelong Learning

Participants recognized the importance of continuous learning to enhance skills, adapt to student needs, and stay current in teaching strategies.

P3 (F, BEEEd) shared, “I expect to keep learning as a teacher because education is constantly evolving. Professional development and attending seminars will help me improve my teaching.”

P6 (M, BSEd) noted, “To be effective, I need to update my knowledge and refine my skills. Lifelong learning is essential for growth and adapting to different classroom situations.”

P9 (F, BEEEd) reflected, “I plan to pursue workshops and training to enhance my teaching techniques. Continuous learning ensures I can meet my students’ diverse needs.”

Participants view professional growth as an ongoing responsibility, linking it directly to teaching effectiveness and student outcomes.

Sub-theme 4.3: Classroom Readiness

Participants expressed concerns about managing classrooms, diverse learners, and applying teaching strategies in real settings, reflecting their anticipation of practical challenges.

P1 (F, BEEEd) shared, “I feel moderately prepared, but I anticipate challenges when students don’t follow instructions. I plan to remain patient and consistent in enforcing rules.”

P5 (F, BEEEd) noted, “Managing classroom behavior and ensuring every student is engaged can be difficult. I hope to use strategies learned during practice teaching effectively.”

P8 (M, BSEd) reflected, “I am confident in my lesson plans, but handling disruptions and maintaining discipline requires experience. I aim to adapt quickly and seek advice when needed.”

Participants emphasized practical strategies, adaptability, and mentorship as essential for bridging the gap between preparation and classroom reality.

Patterns Across Theme 4

1. Teaching as a Vocation: Participants see teaching as a meaningful, service-oriented profession that requires dedication, patience, and moral responsibility.

2. Professional Growth: Lifelong learning, continuous training, and professional development are viewed as crucial for effective teaching and adaptation to changing educational needs.

3. Classroom Readiness: While confident in academic preparation, participants recognize challenges in classroom management, learner diversity, and real-life application of strategies.

4. Integration of Values and Skills: Participants’ perceptions combine ethical commitment, passion, and practical readiness, highlighting the holistic nature of professional teaching expectations.

5. Overall Insight: Theme 4 illustrates that aspiring teachers value teaching as a vocation, anticipate practical challenges, and commit to ongoing professional development, reflecting a realistic and purpose-driven orientation toward the profession.

Simulacrum

The journey of aspiring teachers can be understood as a dynamic interplay between personal motivations, educational experiences, and professional concerns. At the outset, participants are driven by a desire to serve, passion for teaching, and influences from family and role models, which form the foundation of their commitment to the profession. As they progress through teacher preparation programs, mentoring, and community engagement, they acquire the skills, confidence, and perspectives necessary to navigate the classroom. However, concerns such as classroom management, workload, and applying theoretical knowledge to practical situations emerge as significant challenges. These anxieties are tempered by strategies learned through practice teaching, peer support, and reflective practice. Ultimately, the aspirants’ perceptions of teaching as a vocation, coupled with their commitment to lifelong learning and professional growth, shape a professional identity that is both resilient and adaptive. This conceptual representation functions as a simulacrum, capturing the essence of the lived experiences of aspiring teachers, illustrating how motivations, preparation, and concerns converge to define readiness and expectations in the teaching profession.



Summary and Conclusion

This study explored the lived experiences of aspiring teachers, focusing on their motivations, concerns, and perceptions as they prepare to enter the teaching profession. Using a phenomenological approach, semi-structured interviews with ten participants revealed four overarching themes: (1) Motivations to Pursue Teaching, (2) Concerns About Entering the Profession, (3) Influence of Personal and Educational Experiences, and (4) Perceptions and Expectations of the Teaching Profession.

Summary of Findings

The findings revealed that aspiring teachers were primarily motivated by a strong desire to serve, passion for teaching, and the influence of family, mentors, role models, and early personal experiences, with volunteering and community engagement further reinforcing their commitment.

Participants expressed key concerns regarding classroom management, workload, lesson planning, and the application of theoretical knowledge to actual teaching practice, indicating anticipatory challenges as they transition into the profession.

Teacher preparation programs, mentoring, peer collaboration, and community-based experiences were identified as essential in developing their competence, confidence, and professional identity, particularly by bridging gaps between theory and practice through experiential and reflective learning.

Overall, participants viewed teaching as a vocation that requires dedication, empathy, adaptability, and continuous learning, emphasizing both professional growth and the responsibility to support learner development and contribute meaningfully to the community.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that aspiring teachers' preparation for the profession is shaped by a dynamic interaction of intrinsic motivation, formative experiences, and anticipated professional challenges. While participants demonstrate strong commitment to teaching as a means of service and impact, they also express concerns regarding classroom management, workload, and the application of theory to practice.

Findings highlight that teacher preparation programs, mentoring, peer support, and community engagement play a crucial role in strengthening competence, confidence, and professional identity by bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Overall, the study underscores the need for holistic teacher preparation that integrates values formation, experiential learning, and continuous professional development to effectively support aspiring teachers in becoming competent, confident, and professionally resilient educators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen Experiential Learning in Teacher Preparation Programs

Teacher education institutions should further enhance experiential learning by integrating simulation activities, micro-teaching, practicum exposure, and community-based engagements. These experiences should be intentionally designed to help aspiring teachers apply theoretical knowledge to real classroom situations, particularly in classroom management, lesson planning, and instructional delivery.

2. Institutionalize Mentoring and Peer Support Systems

Schools and education offices should establish structured mentoring programs that pair novice teachers with experienced mentors who can provide continuous guidance on classroom practices, workload management, and professional adjustment. In addition, peer support mechanisms such as learning circles or teacher collaboration groups should be encouraged to promote shared learning and problem-solving.

3. Sustain Targeted Professional Development Programs

Regular and targeted professional development activities such as workshops, training sessions, and seminars should be conducted to address identified concerns including classroom management, instructional strategies, and handling diverse learners. These programs should be responsive to actual classroom challenges faced by beginning teachers.

4. Promote Reflective Practice as a Professional Habit

Aspiring and beginning teachers should be encouraged to engage in structured reflective practices through journals, portfolios, or reflection logs. This will enable them to critically examine their experiences, identify areas for improvement, and continuously refine their teaching strategies.

5. Enhance Teacher Well-Being and Support Systems



Educational institutions and policymakers should develop support mechanisms that address workload distribution, stress management, and work-life balance. Ensuring teacher well-being is essential for sustaining motivation, improving performance, and strengthening long-term retention in the profession.

Conflict of Interest

The researchers declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study. The research was conducted independently, and no financial, personal, or professional relationships influenced the design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation of the findings. The participants voluntarily took part in the study, and their responses were treated with confidentiality and used solely for academic and research purposes. The researchers affirm that the results and conclusions presented in this study are based entirely on the data gathered and analyzed without any undue influence from external parties or organizations.

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