Familial, Societal and Situational Factors Influencing Career Choice among Adult Learners in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative cross-sectional survey study sought to determine three significant but under-researched factors influencing adult learners' career choice in Ghana. A sample of 350 respondents was selected through stratified sampling to engage in this survey. Analysis of the data obtained showed statistically significant relationships between specific familial, societal, and situational factors and the career choices of the study respondents. Consequently, employing school counselors' services to orient parents/guardians on career choices among trainee teachers is regarded as imperative for developing positive attitudes towards teaching. This outcome was also observed as a measure to mitigate the high turnover rate among professional teachers. Findings from this study set the tone for further studies to investigate the influence of demographic factors on teaching as a career.

INTRODUCTION

Career choice decision-making has never been an easy task for many people, yet it is a phenomenon that confronts individuals every now and then. The processes involved in making a choice(s), preparation, getting engaged, and progressing through one's career can be nerve wrenching and energy-sucking. The onset of this choice is undoubtedly the most critical stage, as career choice could have a remarkable impact on a person's entire life. Bandura et al. (2001) assert that career decision-making for most people is a lifelong process of engaging in the world of work through choosing among employment opportunities made available to them. Bandura et al. (2001) characterize individuals making career decisions as adult learners, and the choice of a teaching career is no exception.

In most countries, including Ghana, the teaching profession attracts large applicants. The factors that influence individuals to choose the profession are likely to influence their efforts and effectiveness as future teachers. Unfortunately, available literature supports the generally held perception that most pre-service teachers decided to teach as a last resort after failing to secure their first choice of career (Cummings, 2012; Mawutor, 2012). Mawutor (2012), for instance, found that pre-service teachers at Amedzofe College of Education originally intended to pursue careers in accountancy, journalism, law, policing, piloting, and banking. Similarly, Cummings (2012) found that 56% of Jamaican student teachers chose teaching as a "stepping-stone" to more desirable educational or occupational goals. In Tanzania, Mulkeen et al. (2007) indicated that only 10% of males and 15% of female teachers affirmed that teaching was their first career choice. On the other hand, Korb (2010) found that only 18% of Nigerian students chose teaching as their last career resort. The top two reasons for choosing teaching as a career as their preferred career were to shape children's future and make a social contribution. These findings call for a probe in the Ghanaian context, especially since research has yet to be conducted to examine this phenomenon in Ghana.

As the saying goes, "charity begins at home." Hence, it is not surprising that individuals, especially young adults, learn about careers through their parents or family members. Besides this option, some individuals learn about different careers through peer interactions (Kramer, 2010). Concerning changing careers later in life, individuals consulted with peers, especially, those they thought were likely to support their intentions to

change (Tan, 2008). In effect, peers' roles cannot be underestimated as an influencing factor in career choice especially among young adults.

Even though there is extant literature on career choice among pre-service teachers, most of these studies are in contexts not related to Ghana (for example, Adkintomide, 2011; Bastic, 2000; Cruz, 2013; OECD, 2005; Richardson and Watts, 2006). Additionally, most research on the teaching profession concentrate on motivation, retention, and attrition, and only a few (for example, Amanor, 2010 and Mawutor, 2012) had delved into the choice of a teaching career and had explicitly looked into the influence of the familial factors. Also, the family's influence and the societal-related factors such as teachers and peers in such life-long decisions could be very profound and need further investigation. The above gaps have necessitated the search for answers to the research question, "to what extent do familial, societal, and situational factors influence Ghanaian pre-service teachers' decision to choose teaching as a career?

Hypotheses:
$H_0 1$: There is no statistically significant relationship between familial factors and pre-service teachers' choice of teaching as a career.
$H_0 2$: There is no statistically significant relationship between societal factors and pre-service teachers' choice of teaching as a career.
$H_0 3$: There is no statistically significant relationship between situational factors and pre-service teachers' choice of teaching as a career.

SOCIO-CULTURAL THEORY OF CAREER CHOICE

The theory that underpins the study is the socio-cultural theory of career choice propounded by Blau, Gusted, Parmes, and Wilcox. The theory advocates a strong interrelationship of sociological and cultural determinants of occupational choice and development. Individual characteristics responsible for choice are biologically determined but socially and culturally conditioned through family influences, values, attitudes, place of birth, social positions and relations, environmental and educational experiences, and sex-role characteristics. Bradshaw and Ellison (2009) opined that this interplay between these events seems to extend the nature-nurture debate.

The theory suggests that socio-cultural practices are likely to influence individuals' career development, aspirations, and choices, as they are likely to make career choices that they think will enable them to meet certain obligations. The theory's other basic assumptions in career behavior stipulate that:

i. A social structure exists that imparts patterns of activities, identification with models and aspirations among various social groups;
ii. Career choice is a series of interrelated decisions involving the individual's cultural milieu and environmental conditions;
iii. Structural conditions exert influence on career development and choice; that people live their lives in socio-cultural milieus of social and cultural background and experiences, beliefs, customs, social practices, institutional constraints, and opportunity structures that influence their vocational decision-making processes;
iv. Work is a functional aspect of life, and individuals aspire to certain careers to enable them to contribute skills and labor to their cultural societies to meet certain culturally and socially predetermined obligations (Buku, 2006, p.196).

The relevance of the socio-cultural theory to the present research stems from Launikari and Puukari (2005) assertion that human beings, adult learners in this wise, are social beings who have developed cultures with both similarities and differences. These similarities and differences warrant this research to enable both families and adult learners engaged in formal education to identify and choose the right careers. The above position is in line with Kerka's (2003) argument that individual, cultural, and work-related values influence career choices, decisions, and development. Brown (2002) proposed an inclusive theory of occupational choice based on values. Consequently, Brown noted the considerable diversity within people's value systems and from the same cultural groups and extensive overlap in the cultural values held by people from different cultural groups. In a similar vein, Bolles (2008) intimated that career choice is expected in some collective societies, but the family will be the decision-maker in that matter. This approach resonates with much of the Ghanaian setting. Many families are still bonded by their culture and traditions where elders of the community or parents at home have so much stake in decision making. Therefore, choices, including career, are not left to the individual but are seen as communal. Thus, the choice will be made based on a career that will bring the family the greatest amount of respect as a whole (Bolles, 2008). However, conflicts may arise when individuals make their own decisions based on individual advantage, career progression, autonomy, financial security, personal success, responsibility, and self-respect.

Gokuladas, 2010; LeFebvre & Franke (2013) established that cultural values have a great impact on individuals' decisions to choose a career and those cultural traits such as individualism and collectivism also have an

influence on the general decision making of individuals. Chope and Consoli (2006) further pointed out that the family and culture's worldview must be addressed in the context of career decision making. Thus, while some families want their wards to earn money and be independent, others want them to achieve certain feats. At the same time, others want them to refrain from drawing attention to themselves. Attitudes about work can also be related to earnings. Family attitudes about money, savings, assets of friends, supportive loans from others, institutional loans, and financial institutions' trustworthiness can speak volumes about the relationship between cultural values and the individuals' career choice (Chope & Consoli, 2006).

Based on the proponents of the socio-cultural theory, it could be concluded that right from birth, individuals are nurtured and socialized in a socio-cultural milieu that has value systems that influence life choices ranging from food, marriage, dressing and career choices. Given the Ghanaian society's collectivist nature, the influence of the family and other significant members of society such as teachers, counselors, and peers cannot be underestimated. Therefore, any thorough and objective discussion on life choices can be executed better by situating it within the culture of the individual. Hence, the decision to attend college and become a teacher does not occur in a vacuum. Forces within the larger society and the family could have a significant influence on the individual making the choice. Based on the foregone, the socio-cultural theory was deemed helpful in establishing how familial, societal and situational factors influence Ghanaian adult learners in colleges of education to choose teaching as their career.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Familial Factors as Influencers in Career Choice

The family's role may span from choosing the specific career that the family deems valuable to where and how the individual member learns the trade. Relatedly, Echeche (2000) noted that the development of interest in occupation starts from the home. He further stressed that the occupation of the individual's parents and other key figures in his/her family influence the occupational choice of such an individual.

The family's relative strength in career choice was aptly revealed in a study conducted by Creamer and Laughlin (2005), which established that 39.9% of students identified one or both parents as influential in their career choices followed by siblings and advisors or counselors. Very similar was Rodermund and Silbereisen (1998) view that familial factors contribute to the content of adolescents' choice of careers such as parents' jobs, their socio-

economic status and family configuration. Mohd, Salleh, and Mustapha (2010) also found in their study that the lack of role models in the family and lack of career information received at home influenced the respondents' preference towards careers in technical fields. Other studies by Humayon, et al. (2018) and Meddour, et al. (2016) showed that family influence, personal interest, economic considerations, and self-efficacy influenced students' career choice in Higher Educational Institutions of Vehari, Pakistan and universities in Indonesia, respectively.

According to Brown (2004), people who have teacher parents are more likely to develop an interest in teaching. For this reason, parents have considerable influence on the career development and choice of their wards. This phenomenon is premised on the fact that the family provides the environment in which work roles, values, expectations, and aspirations are transmitted to and formed by the child. It could be inferred from the preceding review that parents have a significant influence on their wards' career choice and in certain instances, may even force them to pursue their predetermined careers.

It is on the back of the findings that Roman (2014) recommended that parents have to be properly informed about educational and vocational opportunities. In essence, parents have to know their wards well enough and help them manage conflicts properly to be a good partner for the latter when faced with important decisions about their career choices.

Apart from the family, teachers, who are in loco parentis, are also crucial in the lives of people making career choices. For instance, educational institutions have some mechanisms such as guidance and counseling to orient and help inform students to make some daunting decisions like the choice of courses and career. Additionally, Hooley, Watts, and Andrews (2015) established that teachers bring a range of resources to the career conversations they have with students. Notably, they are trusted adults who have made career decisions, built a career, and have networks of friends and colleagues who have done the same. Hence, they exert some form of influence on the students under their tutelage.

Societal and Situational Factors Influence in Career Choice

Apart from the family, the influence of societal factors especially those in the child's school environments such as teachers and peers in career choice cannot be underestimated. For instance, many students turn to their teachers to have informal conversations about their careers as teachers bring a range of resources to the career conversations that they have with students. This personal experience of career-building is a valuable resource that

teachers can bring to career conversations similarly to conversations that young people have with other working people (Hooley, Watts & Andrews, 2015). Teachers' instrumentality in students' career choice was further confirmed by Kniveton (2012) who reports that school teachers can identify aptitudes and abilities, encourage students to take certain subject options, or take part in work experience or employment visits. All these can invariably influence the career path the student decides to take. In addition to teachers' direct involvement in students' choice of teaching as a career, the way the teachers carry themselves about their work and conduct, both at school and in public, could have a lasting impact on students and thus influence them to choose teaching. For instance, Akintomide and Oluwatosin (2011) established a significant relationship between students' attitude to the choice of teaching as a career and teachers' characteristics. On that score, one may conclude that the students' attitude towards the teaching profession is influenced generally by the way teachers conduct themselves about their job performance.

There is also a generally held assumption that most students in their young adulthood years identify closely with their peers. Peer interactions during this stage in life may influence expectations for peer work relationships later in life (Jablin, 2001). In this respect, Kramer (2010) noted that peers discuss their own or family members' work experiences. It can be inferred from Kramar's assertion that the discussions go a long way to influence an individual's choice of careers as they take a cue from what others share.

Similarly, the study results by Ogutu, et al. (2017) in secondary schools in Kenya suggested that peer pressure directly influences students' career decision making such that as peer pressure increases, career decision making among students also increases significantly. Lastly, many people who are unable to pursue their original career interests may divert into teaching. Mtika and Gates (2010), for instance, found that secondary teacher trainees in Malawi presented a range of perspectives for pursuing a teacher training course: failure to follow a desired career, a springboard to other careers, or to upgrade and teaching out of vocation.

Overall, the literature reviewed has pointed out some key constructs that influence the career choice of individuals. Incidentally, the literature on the phenomenon under study is predominantly from contexts outside Ghana. To compound this, Ghanaian researchers such as Cobbold (2007), Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) and Anamuah-Mensah, (2008) concentrated on motivation, attrition, and retention of Ghanaian teachers. Only a few such as Salifu, Alagbela, and Ofori (2018), Amanor (2010), and Mawutor (2012) have

studied pre-service teachers' choice of teaching career but did not focus attention on the variables under study in this research. Hence, the ensuing sessions will seek to establish how familial, societal, and situational factors influence adult learners engaged in colleges of education in the Eastern Region of Ghana to choose teaching as their career.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. The design enabled the researchers to obtain the views of a representative sample of pre-service teachers in the Eastern Region of Ghana on the extent to which familial, societal and situational factors influenced them to choose teaching as a career. This design choice stems from the assertion by Creswell (2009) that cross-sectional surveys allow researchers to collect data once and at a point in time without going back to the sample for additional information. The researchers ensured that the sections of the questionnaire for data collection covered all aspects of the work. The main variables in the research include the choice of career, the dependent variable, and familial, societal and situational, and the independent variables.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The study population comprised second and third-year students (Levels 200 and 300) drawn from Colleges of Education in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The total population of 2,451 was drawn from four out of the six colleges of education selected randomly from the Eastern Region of Ghana. The Eastern Region's choice is based on the area having the highest number of Colleges of Education in Ghana. It is home to eight out of the 46 Colleges of Education in Ghana, which gives it a fair representation of the adult learners' characteristics of adult learners engaged in such colleges. The second and third-year students (Levels 200 and Levels 300) were deemed appropriate for this study as they have had more than a year's experience as trainees and had come to terms with the reasons for their choice of teaching as a career. The table of sample sizes required for given population sizes by Krejcie and Morgan (1990) pegged the minimum sample size for a population 2400 at 331. The multistage sampling procedure was adopted to select a sample of 400 respondents for this study.

Four [Refer to Table 1] out of the six colleges of education (SDA College of Education, Kibi College of Education, Presbyterian College of Education, Presbyterian Women's College of Education, Abetifi College of Education and Mount Mary's College of Education) were selected through

the lottery random sampling technique where the names of the six colleges in the Eastern Region were written on pieces of papers, placed in a box and shuffled, out of which four colleges were selected. At the colleges, four classes (made up of two levels 200 and two levels 300 classes) were selected through the same process used to select the colleges. After obtaining the four classes, 25 respondents were selected from each class through the stratified random sampling technique. In all, hundred (100) respondents made up of 50 level 200 and 50 level 300 students (second and third-year students) were selected from each college and administered the survey questionnaire. In all, 180 (51.4%) of the respondents were females while 170 (48.6%) were males. The distribution of the survey instrument and the response rate of 87.5 % is reflected in Table 1.

Table 1
Data response rate by institution

College	Level 200	Level 300	Total	Sample Survey
SDA College of Education (SEDATCO)	173	263	436	90
Presbyterian College of Education (PWC)	325	521	852	95
Mount Marys College of Education (MOMACO)	384	368	752	85
Presbyterian Women's College of Education (PWCE)	187	240	427	80
Total	**1069**	**1392**	**2451**	**350**

Instrumentation

The instrument used to gather the data for this study was a self-designed structured questionnaire. The questionnaire contained nineteen closed-ended items and an introductory question requesting respondents to indicate 'Yes or 'No' if teaching was their first career choice. The remaining questions were measured on a 5-point Likert scale as 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3 = Not Sure, 4 = Agree (A) and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA). The questions were grouped into sections, and by the three key constructs that influence the career choice among adult learners. Specifically, section A comprised four items to elicit responses on familial factors, section B comprised eight items to elicit responses on societal factors, and section C comprised three items to elicit responses on situational factors.

The questionnaire was pre-tested on 40 pre-service teachers from Kibi College of Education to ascertain construct validity. Using factor analysis, the results showed that the instrument was a valid measure of the three constructs, familial, situational, and societal factors, under measurement. Using the Eigen-value greater than one criterion, fifteen items were extracted. Four factors loaded highly on the first factor (familial), three

factors loaded on the situational factors, while eight factors were highly loaded on the societal factor. Based on the items that were highly loaded per component, the factors considered were true of the components (see Table 2).

Table 2

The extracted factors for the study

Factors	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
FAMILIAL								
I was influenced to choose teaching by my mother	**0.68**	-0.07	0.20	0.22	-0.20	-0.13	-0.16	-0.14
I was influenced to choose teaching by my father	**0.71**	-0.25	0.10	0.09	-0.06	-0.22	-0.05	0.10
I was influenced to choose teaching by my siblings	**0.68**	-0.30	-0.11	0.18	0.13	-0.34	-0.21	-0.07
I was influenced to choose teaching by my extended family members	**0.67**	-0.34	0.27	0.15	-0.16	0.00	0.15	0.08
SITUATIONAL								
Teaching as a last resort	0.22	**-0.75**	0.48	0.20	0.10	0.06	-0.01	-0.04
Teaching was the easiest and most available choice	0.36	**-0.76**	0.18	0.02	-0.04	0.26	0.32	0.32
Teaching after as a fallback profession	0.27	**-0.68**	0.01	0.01	-0.23	0.16	0.03	-0.14
SOCIETAL								
Forced by friends to choose teaching	0.38	-0.43	0.13	**-0.75**	0.23	0.14	-0.37	0.22
Some of my friends are in college	0.28	-0.40	-0.09	**-0.66**	0.15	0.11	0.35	0.21
My teachers advised me to choose teaching	0.39	0.41	0.35	-0.29	-0.11	**0.63**	0.30	0.03
My teachers forced me to choose teaching	0.42	0.30	0.36	-0.50	0.04	**0.68**	0.02	-0.01
My school counsellors advised me to choose teaching	0.27	0.36	0.25	-0.39	0.09	**0.72**	0.01	-0.14
Teaching because I like the way my teachers teach	0.48	-0.41	-0.01	**-0.66**	0.33	-0.12	-0.34	0.13
I like the teachers conduct themselves in public	0.27	0.39	-0.45	-0.11	-0.23	**0.71**	0.01	0.20
Influenced by my teachers help and assistance	0.40	0.49	-0.02	-0.19	-0.19	**0.70**	0.16	0.24

The reliability of the instrument was measured by examining the internal consistency of the group of items forming components discussed in the section above. Cronbach's Alpha was computed for each component. The instrument contained 15 items made up of four (4) familial factors, eight (8)

societal factors, and three (3) situational factors as reflected in Table 3. The rating of 0.7 is acceptable as established by Atindabila (2013).

Table 3
Reliability Analysis of Familial, Societal and Situational Factors that Influence the Choice of Teaching Career

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Familial	
I was influenced to choose teaching by my mother	0.717
I was influenced to choose teaching by my father	0.696
I was influenced to choose teaching by my siblings	0.729
I was influenced to choose teaching by my extended family members	0.773
Societal	
Forced by friends to choose teaching	0.737
Some of my friends are in college	0.736
My teachers advised me to choose teaching	0.720
My teachers forced me to choose teaching	0.728
My school counsellors advised me to choose teaching	0.720
Teaching because I like the way my teachers teach	0.738
I like teachers who conduct themselves well in public	0.759
Influenced by my teachers' help and assistance	0.744
Situational	
Teaching as a last resort	0.755
Teaching was the easiest and most available choice	0.743
Teaching as a fall-back profession	0.736
Overall Cronbach's Alpha (situational and societal)	*0.756*

Tables 2 and 3 contain the familial, societal, and situational factors, which were highly loaded on each factor and their Cronbach alpha values. The items forming familial, societal, and situational factors gave an overall Cronbach Alpha value of 0.756, showing a high consistent response for the

items. Thus, it was noticed that removing any of the items would not change the Cronbach Alpha significantly. Therefore, all 15 items remained in the final questionnaire that was administered to the study sample.

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

A volunteer among the respondents from the four selected Colleges of Education acted as the contact persons who helped gather the data for this study. At the various colleges, respondents who were randomly selected were informed of the purpose of the research, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation. Additionally, any respondent who agreed to complete the questionnaire signed an informed consent form. The selected respondents who agreed to participate remained and were given a questionnaire each to fill and return to the contact tutor. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, and 350 valid surveys were returned; yielding a response rate of 87.5%. The data generated from the students were analyzed descriptively. The chi-square test of independence was used to assess the univariate association between familial, societal, and choice of teaching by respondents in this study. In order to use the proposed statistical method to achieve the study objectives, the variables were coded as follows: Response/Outcome/Dependent variable (Choice of teaching) (1 – Yes 0 – No). Explanatory/Independent variables (Familial/Situational etc.) 1 – Agree (Strongly Agree or Agree response) and 0 – Do not Agree (Other responses). The chi-square test statistic was computed with its significance probability using the SPSS version 23 software and compared with the level of significance chosen at five percent ($\alpha= 0.05$). All factors with p-values less than the level of significance ($p<\alpha$) were deemed to have a significant association with the outcome variable being the choice of teaching as a career. The findings from the analysis are discussed in the next section.

RESULTS

Choice of teaching as a first career

The first issue of importance was pre-service teachers' choice of teaching as a career. The dichotomous question yielded the results showing that most of the respondents (55.9%) did not choose teaching as their first career. In comparison, the remaining 44.1% chose teaching as their first choice. This result implies that respondents originally intended to pursue professions other than education courses to make them professional teachers. The original career choices for the study included health (30%), security services (22.1%), business-related professions (7.7%), journalism (6.1%),

political science (5.1%), and engineering (1%), implying their inability to secure their original options might have influenced them to opt for a teaching career.

Familial factors influencing the choice of career among pre-service Teachers.
$H_0 1$: There is no statistically significant association between familial factors and pre-service teachers' choice of teaching as a career

Table 4
Chi-square test of the relationship between familial factors and choice of teaching

FACTORS	Chi-square	df	p-value	Decisions
I was influenced to choose teaching by my mother	4.722	1	0.003**	Reject
I was influenced to choose teaching by my father	10.000	1	0.002**	Reject
I was influenced to choose teaching by my siblings	0.135	1	0.714	Accept
I was influenced to choose teaching by my extended family members	0.072	1	0.788	Accept

*** p < 0.001   **p<0.01 Sign at * p<0.05 confidence level

The result in table 4 reflected that both fathers and mothers were the familial factors that had a statistically significant relationship with student choice of teaching as a career. Concerning the fathers, the chi-square test obtained a chi-square value of 10.000, at a p-value of <0.002, while the test on the relationship between the mothers and the choice of teaching career obtained $\chi2$ (1, N=350) = 4.722, p = 0.003). Since both p-values were less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, which implies that both parents had a significant influence on their children's choice of a teaching career. However, other familial factors, such as siblings and extended family members, were not found to be significantly related to the career choice.

Societal factors influencing the choice of career among pre-service teachers
$H_0 2$: There is no statistically significant relationship between societal factors and pre-service teachers' choice of teaching as a career
To establish the relationship between societal factors and choice of career, eight questions were posed, and the results are contained in Table 5.

Table 5
Chi-square test of the relationship between societal factors and choice of the
teaching career

Factors	Chi-square	df	p-value	Decisions
Forced by friends to choose teaching	2.797	1	0.094	Accept
Some of my friends are in college	5.702	1	**0.017***	**Reject**
My teachers advised me to choose teaching	2.102	1	0.147	Accept
My teachers forced me to choose teaching	0.053	1	0.818	Accept
Counsellors advised me	3.057	1	0.080	Accept
Teaching because I like the way my teachers teach	2.737	1	0.098	Accept
I like teachers who conduct themselves well in public	7.788	1	**0.005****	Accept
Influenced by my teachers' help and assistance	0.345	1	0.557	Accept

*** $p < 0.001$ **$p<0.01$ Sign at * $p<0.05$ confidence level

The study found a statistically significant difference between the conduct of teachers in public and respondents' choice of teaching as a career, $\chi2$ (1, 350 = 7.788, p =0.005). The result shows that adult learners undergoing training were influenced by the teachers' conduct in public to choose teaching as a career. For that matter, some teachers who have conducted themselves well in public lead to participants' decision to go into teaching. Another societal factor that was significantly related to the choice of teaching was having friends who were already in colleges of education. The test conducted showed a chi-square value of 5. 702 at a p-value of =0.017. This result shows that some pre-service teachers were influenced by their friends in college to choose teaching as a career.

Situational factors influencing the choice of career among pre-service teacher
H₀3: There is no statistically significant relationship between situational factors and pre-service teachers' choice of teaching
Results from participants to ascertain the relationship between situational factors and pre-service teachers' choice of teaching. The results obtained are found in table 6.

Table 6

Chi-square test of the relationship between situational factors and choice of teaching

Factors	Chi-square	Df	p-value	Decisions
Teaching as a last resort	55.252	1	0.001***	Reject
Teaching was the easiest and most available choice	0.002	1	0.963	Accept
Teaching as a fall back profession	0.009	1	0.923	Accept

*** p < 0.001   **p<0.01 Sign at * p<0.05 confidence level

Concerning the societal influence, the chi-square test shows a statistically significant relationship between teaching as a last resort and participants' choice of teaching as a career (Chi-square = 55.252, p-value =0.001) (Table 6). This result implies that the situational factor significantly associated with pre-service teaching choice is teaching as a last resort.

DISCUSSION

The study found that the majority of the respondents (55.9%) in the Colleges of Education probably chose teaching after they failed to secure their first career choices. The results are similar to other findings from studies conducted in Tanzania where only 10% of males and 15% of females accepted that teaching was their first career choice (Mulkeen, et al. 2007). Korbs (2010) however, obtained a contrary view where only 18% of the students he studied chose teaching as a last resort career in Nigeria. The present study findings could have serious implications on the teaching profession as most of the respondents may seize the least opportunity to exit the profession after graduation. This situation is most likely to occur if opportunities in their original career choices become available.

The study further found a statistically significant relationship between parents and adult learners' choice of a teaching career. The findings support the socio-cultural theory by Blau et al. (1956), which considers the family, specifically, parents, as one of the most important social and cultural variables that influence life choices such as career. In support of this, Echeche (2000) noted that the development of interest in occupation starts from the home. It is noted that, apart from parents, other family members have little or no influence on the respondents' career choice in this study. Therefore, it is appropriate to heed the call by Roman (2014) that parents have to be properly informed about the educational and vocational opportunities and know their

wards well. Additionally, possessing good communication skills and their ability to manage conflicts properly are imperatives in making them (the parents) good partners and not dictators in helping such a cohort of adult learners make sound decisions towards their future careers.

Furthermore, there was a statistically significant association between having friends in college and the choice of teaching. The findings from the field data showed that even though there might not be an overt attempt by peers generally to influence respondents' choice of career, friends in Colleges of Education might be instrumental in other pre-service teachers' career choice. The role of peers in this instance cannot be underestimated. In this light, Felsman and Blustein (1999) examined the role of peer relationships in career development among young adults whose ages ranged between 17 and 22 years and found that attachment to peers was positively associated with environmental exploration and progress in committing to career choices. Thus, the socio-cultural theory, advocates for a strong interrelationship between career choice and socio-cultural variables such as peers. The peers, in this case, could have a profound influence on an individual's life and career choices as they interact with them. The kind of college experiences they share with peers who are not yet in college could also influence the latter party's career choice.

Lastly, even though most of the respondents disagreed that they were directly influenced by their teachers and counselors' advice, the findings from the data analysis revealed a statistically significant association between the choice of a teaching career and how teachers conduct themselves in public. The result is supported by Akintomide and Oluwatosin's (2011) findings that factors such as quality of teaching, mode of dressing and communication skills are prominent amongst what students assess in their teachers as motivators towards choosing teaching as a career. Going by the socio-cultural theory, teachers occupy a very important position in African societies as they play significant roles in the socialization of students both at school and in society. By extension, teachers' conduct in public, such as the values they espouse, discipline, and societal roles, may encourage or discourage individuals from choosing teaching as a career.

Overall, the study's findings have established some constructs that have significant relationships with the adult learners' choice of teaching as a career. Notably, parents, friends in colleges and teachers' behavior are the familial, societal, and situational factors that influence career choice.

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS

Career choice as a process depends on the young adults' ability to explore various. This choice may be easy or difficult depending on the individuals' level of awareness and other factors that significantly influence their decision. The present study found that teaching was not the first career option for most of the pre-service teachers. Most students, therefore, chose teaching as a career after they had failed to access other careers or tertiary courses they originally intended to pursue. This finding can serve as a starting point for finding possible solutions to teacher shortages and attrition in Ghana. Making the profession more attractive through better conditions of service could make it more competitive. Furthermore, the socio-economic milieu within which individuals are brought up could profoundly influence the career choices they will make. The study thus found that parents were very influential in pre-service teachers' choice of teaching as a career. Therefore, parental knowledge of the educational and vocational opportunities available to their wards will afford them the opportunity to properly handle the conflicts that these wards, even in their early adulthood face in making important career decisions.

Besides, the conduct of teachers at school and in the communities has a profound effect on the students' career choices. The study found that teachers' conduct significantly influenced young adults to choose a teaching career. This calls for encouraging teachers to focus on the identified teacher characteristics that engender students' respect and interest by all stakeholders in education, especially the teachers themselves. This act will go a long way to encourage students to opt for teaching as a career.

Finally, most pre-service teachers were significantly influenced by their friends who were then in college to choose teaching as a profession. This finding reinforces the belief that peers significantly influence lifelong choices young adults make. As a result, proper career counselling for all students in school could place peers in a good position to do advice each other when the need arises.

The findings from this study have some career guidance and adult education implications as it brings to the fore the importance of some significant others in the lives of adult learners within the family and society at large in determining lifelong choices related to one's career. Also, the role of teachers and peers in determining the choices that students make needs particular attention. Schools should develop programs that will allow parents to be oriented on career options available and their roles in the career planning process of their wards. In other words, parents as adult learners themselves

need special career education that will position them better to guide their wards in their career choices.

This finding is imperative since the transmission of norms, values, and beliefs in the teaching profession is conveyed in the classroom and the social environment of the school and even the community at large. As a result, teachers must safeguard their conduct at all times to be the models their tutees expect to emulate.

Policy-wise, the choice of teaching by a majority as a last resort and also based on parental and peer influence presupposes that most pre-service teachers are likely to exit the profession after training or once another opportunity presents itself. This result calls for the government and its agencies associated with teacher education to develop policies and programs that will properly orient or guide adult learners, such as those in this study, to develop positive attitudes towards the teaching career during their three years of training. Should this be combined with other forms of motivation, the tendency of many teachers exiting the profession at the least opportunity may be averted.

This study is not without limitations, as our data consisted of only the levels 200 and 300 students. Therefore, the findings may only be representative of the context of this study and not beyond. It can be argued that the inclusion of level 100 students could have changed the results obtained. Besides, though this small study included a small sample size of pre-service teachers, it is hoped that it informs future research on the influence of the demographic characteristics of pre-service teachers on their choice of teaching as a career and their intentions to stay in the teaching profession after graduation.

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