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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA  
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**DETERMINANTS OF THE TEACHING CAREER  
- A STUDY ON SECONDARY SCHOOL  
TEACHERS IN SHAH ALAM**

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**DETERMINANTS OF THE TEACHING CAREER  
- A STUDY ON SECONDARY SCHOOL  
TEACHERS IN SHAH ALAM**

**BY**

**ZAITON BT. ABU HASSAN**

**A PROJECT PAPER  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MANAGEMENT**

**MANAGEMENT CENTER  
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY  
MALAYSIA**

**DECEMBER 1998**

## ABSTRACT

*The primary purpose of this study was to identify several reasons that motivate individuals to choose teaching as a career. The second purpose was to determine the relationship, if any, between the reasons for choosing teaching and its implications towards the teaching profession. The study involved 116 teachers who were chosen from five selected schools in Shah Alam. They were chosen according to the convenience of the researcher.*

*Research findings revealed that the altruistic factors, which consist of items such as the desire to impart knowledge, desire of service to society and the desire to work with children/adolescents appeared to be the most significant in influencing the respondents to be in the teaching profession.*

*The results also indicated that there is a negatively low and insignificant correlation between the reasons for teaching and the implications towards teaching profession ( $r=-.112$ ,  $p=0.144$ ).*

*An important finding from this study is that 51.7% of the teachers involved in this study said that they are fully committed towards their profession. Majority of them (90.5%) said that they never regret being a teacher, in fact, 81.9% said that they have made the right choice and 75.0% of them plan to be teachers until retirement. Clearly, the teachers involved in this study do not consider teaching as a last career choice ( $p=0.053$ ).*

**APPROVAL PAGE**

**TITLE OF PROJECT PAPER:** DETERMINANTS OF THE TEACHING CAREER  
- A STUDY ON SECONDARY SCHOOL  
TEACHERS IN SHAH ALAM

**NAME OF AUTHOR:** ZAITON BT ABU HASSAN

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The undersigned certify that the above candidate has fulfilled the condition of the project paper prepared in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Management.

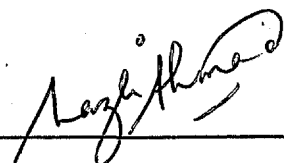
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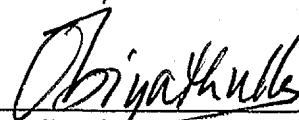
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project paper is a result of my own study, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by reference note and a bibliography is appended.

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To my husband and children,  
in great appreciation of your unfailing love, care and support...



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

Why teach? The question certainly merits serious consideration by teachers or those considering teaching as a career. Like so many simple questions, the "why teach?" question has no simple answer. Probably no single reason motivates any given person to select teaching as a career or to remain in the profession. For most people, the decision results from a consideration of a number of factors. However, some factors are weighted more heavily in the decision than others.

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

The practice of teaching requires individuals to confront a host of challenges. The point is not that teaching is more challenging than other professionals are. Every profession, of course, has its share of difficulties and frustrations. The point is teachers will be more likely to deal with the challenges of teaching in a more effective manner if they are clear about why they become teachers. Those who understand their motives react to job difficulties by thinking about how to resolve or to cope with them. Those who are unsure of their motives may use job difficulties as an excuse to withdraw from teaching.

To be successful in any profession, it is necessary to acquire and maintain a deep commitment to that profession. A strong commitment is especially critical for teachers because what they do on the job, or fail to do, directly affects the lives of students. For

example, if the issue of vacation is the only reason important to a person, then it is a very weak and unprofessional reason for him to consider the teaching profession.

The younger generations have to be educated so that they will be able to contribute towards the country's aim to achieve developed-nation status by 2020. So to prepare them, we need good teachers, not just a few in every school but almost all in all schools in the country. We need teachers who can turn the teaching-learning process in class from being a chore into a lively, entertaining and enriching activity. Good teachers thus will be able to reduce the number of dropouts. They would also be able to improve the caliber of school leavers entering the workforce of the country.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Teaching is now regarded as a last-choice career. In an article, 'Noble Profession Now A Career of Last-choice', Vijaya Rani (New Straits Times, 30/11/97, p. 16) writes:

"...Teachers themselves say that most people do not view teaching as a professional career and nor do they enter it by choice. According to them, firstly, there are many more other attractive careers today than there were two decades ago and secondly, the school environment is far from appealing."

In the same article, Dr. Suradi Salim, head of the pedagogy and psychology department at University Malaya's Education faculty said that 90% of school children say they want to be a doctor, lawyer or engineer, unlike twenty years ago where teaching would have appeared more prominently on the students' list of career choices. He added that regardless of academic inclination or interest, they go for status and furthermore very little is known about teaching as a career.



Nowadays, many of the present-day teachers are not fully committed. Many of the present day teachers say they are merely subject advisors and facilitators in the classroom. Despite the on-going reviews of teacher training programs at colleges and universities, more teachers are saying they are unable to manage their responsibilities and the students (New Straits Times, 30/11/97 p.16).

A mere improvement in academic qualification will not necessarily make a teacher any better in the classroom. On the contrary, good teachers have repeatedly declared that the innate qualities of a teacher, such as commitment and love for children, are the more dominant requirements than just academic training. Some teach because it is nothing more than a job, while others do so because they believe in the profession and therefore regard it as a calling (New Straits Times, 12/11/97 p.2).

In the past, especially over the last two decades, we have heard of trainers of teachers lamenting the fact of having to deal with students who did not opt for teacher training colleges out of the desire of aspiration to become teachers but because it was a Hobson's choice. In other words, they never really wanted to teach. Given this attitude, it is no wonder why we have heard and read of teachers who were simply square pegs in round holes. Students have been left to their own devices because of the inadequacies of these pedagogues, giving rise to poor performance and indiscipline (New Straits Times, 16/10/97 p.12).

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The main objective of this study was to identify several reasons that motivate individuals to choose teaching as a career. The research was done among the secondary

school teachers in Shah Alam. The secondary objective of this study was to investigate and determine the relationship, if any, between the reasons for choosing teaching and its implications towards the teaching profession.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

This study in particular seeks to answer the following questions:

1.4.1 What were the reasons for people to enter the teaching profession? Was teaching a deliberate choice or a last career resort?

1.4.2 Do motives for becoming teachers have implications towards the profession?

#### 1.5 Hypothesis Statement

To achieve the objectives of the study, several hypotheses are developed. The summary of the hypotheses and the related studies are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1.1: Summary of Hypotheses and Related Studies.

No.	Factors to be tested	Hypothesis Statements	Previous Studies
Ho1	Altruistic factors	There is no significant evidence that altruistic factors are the dominant factors in choosing teaching as a career.	Fox (1961), Michael Hubermann (1989).
Ho2	Implications	There is no correlation between reasons for teaching and the implications towards the profession.	Pamela B. Joseph & Nancy Green (1986)
Ho3	Gender	There is no significant difference in the determinants of the teaching profession between male and female teachers.	Glenda Griffin, (1977)

Table 1.1 (continued)

Ho4	Decision	There is no significant difference between the determinants and the time when the decision was made.	Michael Hubermann (1989)
Ho5	Choice	There is no significant evidence that teaching is considered as a last career resort.	None

### 1.6 Significance of the Study

This study would provide valuable information to screen for better teachers in the future, i.e. to select applicants who have the right aptitude for teaching is a calling similar to that of healing and preaching. The teacher must have a commitment to teach; he must not merely see it as a job.

The findings should prove useful to the officials of the Ministry of Education especially those who are involved in the selection process to ensure that only applicants who have the aptitude and commitment to teach are taken in for the teacher training courses. In other words, this study should be a great concern to authorities responsible in the recruitment of future teachers for the result of the study would help them in formulating better recruitment policies and practices. Findings from this study could also inform policy makers and teacher educators in their efforts to restructure teacher education to meet the challenge of committed teachers in Malaysia.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

Teaching covers a very wide scope. It varies from kindergarten teachers, primary school teachers and secondary school teachers to lecturers and also social education teachers. This study was limited to the secondary school teachers in selected schools in Shah Alam, Selangor. Therefore, the findings and conclusions of this study are valid only for the population studied. No attempt is made to generalize the findings of this investigation to other areas.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section describes the operational definitions of teaching, career and teaching profession. The second section reviews previous studies on motives for teaching. The third section examines the attractiveness of teaching and other possible reasons while the last section reviews related research on the unattractiveness of teaching.

#### 2.1 Definition of Concepts

##### 2.1.1 Teaching

The act of teaching can be described as giving instructions to or sharing one's knowledge with another person. Teaching can be further described as a means for providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to function successfully in the world. Teaching can also be viewed as a very personal interaction between the teacher and the students. The teacher imparts his or her own knowledge through individual lessons that are presented to the class. The students receive the knowledge in a whole set or in parts. When that knowledge is internalized, then learning takes place (Parkay, 1995).

Teaching is a complex act in which teachers take all the ideas and elements affecting education available to them and formulate them in personal way to produce

learning in their students. Teaching can be thought of as a process of communication between the teacher and students (Hubermann, 1989).

According to Evans & Brueckner (1992), teaching is:

- Committing yourself to lifelong learning and growth
- Respecting children and adolescents
- Sharing one's knowledge
- Guiding, directing, facilitating, nurturing, and planning
- Goal setting for yourself and for your students
- Meeting personal and professional challenges
- Conveying cultural and national values to others
- Creating an awareness of (and appreciation for) your potential

### **2.1.2 Career**

The term career may mean different things to different people. Some used the term to imply 'notable achievement in a given occupation'. Others may use career to describe all the occupations and activities in which they participate during their work lives. Career to many social scientists means "a succession of related occupations that are hierarchically arranged and through which a worker rises in an ordered sequence" (Parkay, 1995). According to Duke (1990), career represents a substantial record of employment in a field requiring continuous growth and self-appraisal.

### 2.1.3 Teaching Profession

What is the teaching profession? That is a fundamental question asked by many individuals who are considering education as a career choice. It is a very important question that must be addressed at the beginning of the decision making process. There are many career fields in education to consider. Some require one or two years of post-secondary training and preparation, some require a four-year college degree, and still others require more professional preparation. Individuals who are interested in teaching should receive as much information as possible about the profession so that all important decisions are made with confidence.

The term profession can be described as a special calling or occupation that requires extensive learning. That extensive learning usually begins at the college or university level and continues throughout a person's career.

A profession represents a lifetime commitment to performing special services for others. It demands continual upgrading and refining of the personal skills needed to deliver those services. It encourages and promotes high ethical standards among its members and actively seeks highly qualified persons to enter the field. A profession is characterized by its organizations and associations, which set standards for educational preparation, licensing, and assurance of professional competence.

The teaching profession tries to assure that only qualified, dedicated persons enter the field and become licensed to teach. Admittance to the college or university of your choice is an important initial step toward becoming a professional teacher. Qualified teachers are chosen over many other candidates. Personal characteristics, special qualities, previous educational records, employment experiences, and various personal

recommendations are examined to find qualified persons who may eventually become teachers. Completion of all required professional coursework is necessary.

The teaching profession places great responsibility and trust in the individuals selected to supervise, direct, guide and encourage teacher candidates while they develop their teaching skills.

What are the expectations of the profession? First and foremost, teachers are expected to give 100 percent of their abilities and talents to teach the students everything that is required. Becoming a member of the teaching profession requires a commitment to perform the duties of a professional person. Teaching students should be the top priority.

## **2.2 Studies on Motives for Teaching**

Recent years have witnessed a downward trend in the United Kingdom and the United States of America of the appeal of the teaching profession. As a result there has been a rapid decline in the number of people choosing to teach. Boyer (1983) reported that between 1969 and 1981 there was a drop from 75% to 46% in the number of parents who would like their children to become teachers. Gallup (1984) also reported the decline in the percentage of parents who would like their children to enter teaching. Ironically, each year an overwhelming number of students apply to join teacher training courses to become primary or secondary school teachers. What motivates these students to enter into teaching?