

Teaching capacity of the novice teacher - Current status

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Abstract

Teacher identity has been an increasingly burning topic for educators in understanding and promoting the teaching professionalism. In the very first few years of teaching, it is very important for new teachers to shape the academic identity. The novice teachers (1-3 years) have to face difficulties in teaching and monitoring daily classes.

This paper evaluates the career of novice teachers when presenting several reasons for choosing teaching vocation, sharing personal experience and describing the effects of school pre-training knowledge on professional practice in the early years of working.

Key words: Novice teacher, the teaching career, teaching method, community, parent.

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1. Rationale

UNESCO gave recommendation on the teaching profession "Teaching must be respected as a profession. This is the type of public service that requires the teacher to specialize in specific knowledge and skills acquired and accumulated through continuous and rigorous research; It also requires a personal aptitude and collective responsibility for the education and duties of students"¹.

The experiences and ideas of educators about their profession, working conditions, prestige, and accomplishment have a great impact on their actions, as well as on the quality and effectiveness of teaching. At the same time, subjective views of individuals are difficult to change and are often closely linked with oneself. Hence, professional identity is an important factor in developing an effective teacher.

Recently, many international studies and reports have focused on training and professional development for teachers. In the report *Teachers Problems*, a comparative survey of teacher training has been carried out and also pointed out the problem of the decline in the quality of education (OECD, 2005)², TESSA, the network for improving

¹ Déclaration sur l'éthique professionnelle <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001140/114048f.pdf>

² OECD (2005). *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*. Paris: OECD.

teacher training in Saharan sub-region Africa (Thakrar, Zinn, & Wolfenden, 2009³), or INNOTE, development partners of the high schools and the universities in the European Union, aims to construct development plans for novice teachers (Zaki, 2011)⁴. However, there was only one international comparative study focusing directly on the issue of teachers' characteristics, called TALIS, teaching and learning international study, conducted in 23 countries (OECD, 2005).

Vietnam has affirmed human resources as the decisive factor for the country's development in the period of industrialization and modernization. Instruction No. 40 CT / TW dated June 15, 2004 on "Building and improving the quality of teachers and educational administrators"; Then, on January 11, 2005, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 09/2005/QD-TTg approving the Scheme on Building and improving the quality of teachers and educational administrators in the period of 2005-2010. Thus, improving the quality of teachers is a very important task, but no less difficult for the education management from the State to local levels. One of the basic solutions to improve the quality of teachers and education administrators is to organize regular training and retraining for this group.

Vietnam's educational development strategy for 2011-2020 period affirmed "fundamental and comprehensive reform of Vietnamese education in the direction of standardization, modernization, socialization, democratization and international integration, Among them, renovation of educational management mechanism, development of teachers and educational administrators is a key factor" and "Education and training have the mission to raise the population's intellectual standards and develop human resources, fostering talents, significantly contributing to building the country, the culture and the people of Vietnam". Moreover, the Socio-Economic Development Strategy 2011-2020 has stated: "Developing and improving the quality of the human resources, especially high-quality human resources, is a strategic breakthrough". However, Vietnam has not done much research on the teaching professional characteristics.

Some related studies such as "Profession of a teacher" (Nguyen Thi My Loc, 2010)⁵ mentioned the role of the teacher in the context of the new school, the teacher is the coach, a supervisor, a learning process manager, and also a participant in the learning process. Scientific research "Research on the scientific basis and the proposal for a high-quality teacher training model to support the requirements of modern primary education

³ Thakrar, J., Zinn, D., & Wolfenden, F. (2009). Harnessing Open Educational Resources to the Challenges of Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 10(4), 1-8.

⁴ Zaki, K. (2011). Teaching is relative: Learning how to teach even more so. - The INNOTE project and its view on newly qualified teachers' freedom, support and supervision in Europe's induction cultures. In *EDULEARN11 Proceedings: 3rd International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies*. Barcelona, Spain. 4-6 July, 2011 (p. 7029).

⁵ Nguyen Thi My Loc (2010), Teacher Career, *The Science Journal*, Vietnam National University, Hanoi.

in the period of integration” (Nguyen Thi Ban, 2012)⁶ also identified that shifting the focus on teacher training from a "traditional" perspective to a learner-centered perspective should result in a better teaching performance. From the right perspective on the role of education, the decisive factor in the quality of education is the teaching staff. As a result, the quality of education is highly dependent on the quality of the teachers' skills, including in-depth knowledge and professional skills.

In recent years, a number of studies have addressed this issue. The Ministerial-level educational science program "Innovating teacher training in the period of industrialization, modernization and international Integration", implemented from 2011 to 2014, has resulted in a number of real assessments and proposals for innovative solutions for teacher training. Research topic "The innovation of pedagogical training for undergraduates to support the requirements of general education in the new period" has a system of the scientific basis for pedagogical training for teachers in pedagogical schools, also proposed to develop pedagogical training programs in the orientation of shaping vocational skills for students in pedagogical universities. (Nguyen Thi Kim Dung et al)⁷

Although there have been studies on teacher training, there is no research available for new teachers (1-3 years teaching experience). Therefore, the article evaluates the profession of new elementary school teachers; some reasons for choosing the teaching profession; Personal experience in teaching and the influence of knowledge acquired at pedagogic universities for professional practice in the early years.

2. Methodology and survey information

This study is being conducted in 2016-2017. The survey included 320 newly recruited primary teachers (1-3 years of experience) in Vietnam. The content of the survey includes the following issues: (i) reasons for choosing the teaching profession; (ii) personal experience in the early years of teaching.

Findings from the survey show that most teachers were female , and that male teachers in primary schools accounted for only 17.19%. Most of the surveyed teachers received formal training and were fully trained, with 3.13% of the teachers having postgraduate degrees, so teachers' levels were evenly matched and ensure professional knowledge; teachers are fully equipped with experience and expertise through specialized training.

Surveyed schools spread to mountainous rural areas (60.31%). The remaining is in the metropolitan area with favorable conditions. Surveyed schools are evenly distributed in terms of geographic location.

⁶ Nguyen Thi Ban (2012) “Research on the scientific basis and the proposal for a high-quality teacher training model to support the requirements of modern primary education in the period of integration”

⁷ Nguyen Thi Kim Dung et all (2015) Training pedagogical skills in the orientation of shaping vocational skills for student in the pedagogical universities. Pedagogical University Publishing.

This paper evaluates the career of novice primary teachers, several reasons for choosing teaching vocation, personal experience and the effects of school pre-training knowledge on professional practice in the early years of working.

Career profiles below will show the reasons for choosing the profession, the perceptions of the profession by the novice primary teachers as well as the difficulties and advantages of the teacher; from there understand the necessary issues and concerns that need to be adjusted for the novice primary school teachers.

3. Result of the research

3.1. Reasons for choosing the teaching career

Table 1 presents opinions of novice primary teachers about the criteria and reasons for choosing teaching career.

Table 1. The reason for decision about teaching as a career

	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Missing	
	SL	%	SL	%	SL	%	SL	%	SL	%
With a teaching qualification I am assured of a job.	28	8.75	183	57.19	84	26.25	9	2.81	16	5.00
As a teacher, I only work half-day, with three/four holidays a year.	5	1.56	51	15.94	168	52.50	85	26.56	11	3.44
I view teaching as a calling.	32	10.00	94	29.38	121	37.81	54	16.88	19	5.94
People (relatives/friends) recommended teaching as a field of study.	65	20.31	199	62.19	35	10.94	10	3.13	11	3.44
I have always enjoyed working with children.	139	43.44	171	53.44	7	2.19			3	0.94
Teaching provides a good opportunity to further my studies.	152	47.50	146	45.63	12	3.75			10	3.13
Teaching gives me the opportunity to do a second job additional to my	11	3.44	76	23.75	179	55.94	45	14.06	9	2.81

teaching.										
Teaching provides a good salary.	5	1.56	58	18.13	199	62.19	46	14.38	12	3.75

The reason for most teachers choosing teaching as their career is “Teaching provides a good opportunity to further my studies.” (Mean = 3.45 with 47.50% strongly agree and 45.63% agree) and reason “I have always enjoyed working with children” (Mean = 3.42 with 43.44% strongly agreed and 53.44% agreed). The reason that a few teachers choose “As a teacher, I only work half-day, with three/four holidays a year.” (Mean = 1.92 with 1.56% strongly agreed and 15.94% agreed) and “Teaching provides a good salary” with Mean = 2.07, 1.56% strongly agreed and 18.13% agreed.

Other reasons include: teaching gives me the opportunity to do a second job additional to my teaching; I view teaching as a calling; With a teaching qualification I am assured of a job don’t receive much approval from the teachers. This shows that most teachers agree on the reason for choosing teaching career because of their love for teaching and good judgment on their position in the society.

There is a number of teachers who has not clearly indicated the reasons for choosing a job or leave the questions unanswered. Therefore, in Table 2, 52 teachers (16.25%) said that if they could choose again, they would no longer choose a teaching career. Though this does not count a high number, it poses a problem to managers to find out specific reasons and have policies to tackle this problem.

Table 2. The opinion of the novice primary teacher for choosing a career again

	Frequency	Percent%
Yes	267	83.44
No	52	16.25
Missing	first	0.31
Sum	320	100.00

The correlation between career choice and the chance to reconsider the teaching profession indicates that there are two significant differences: “I have always enjoyed working with children” despite up to 48 teachers agreeing with this criterion, however, if they were to choose they would not choose to teach again, then the criteria (P-Value = 0.027 <0.05) “Teaching gives me the opportunity to further my study” with 42 teachers, though agreeing with this criterion, but if they were to choose, they would not teach

again, despite the fact that the number of non-selective teachers. This poses a problem that requires adjustment of teacher policies (P-Value = 0.011 <0.05);

Most of the novice primary school teachers rated teaching profession from high to very high in society (66.56% of comments were high and 6.56% were very high). This also shows the good attitudes of primary school teachers when choosing teaching profession. Most of the teachers who choose teaching profession are very positive (50.31% of comments are positive and 46.25% are very positive)

Table 3. Feeling about being a teacher

Evaluating the status of teaching	Frequency	Percent %	Feeling about being a teacher	Frequency	Percent %
Very Low	2	0.63	very negative	0	0.00
Low	75	23.44	Fairly negative	8	2.50
High	213	66.56	Fairly positive	161	50.31
Very High	21	6.56	Very positive	148	46.25
Missing	9	2.81	Missing	3	0.94
Sum	320	100.00	Sum	320	100.00

Regarding social and family aspects of teaching, all the teachers feel that the society and families both value the teaching career (family/friends opinion: 52.19% positive and 45.94% very positive). Positive community views on teaching: 51.88% fairly positive and 38.44% very positive).

Table 4. How do your family/friends feel about the fact that you are a teacher?

	Extremely negative		Fairly negative		Fairly positive		Extremely positive		Missing	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Family/friends feel about you are a teacher	0	0	3	0.94	167	52.19	147	45.94	3	0.94
Your community's view on teaching	2	0.63	24	7.50	166	51.88	123	38.44	5	1.56

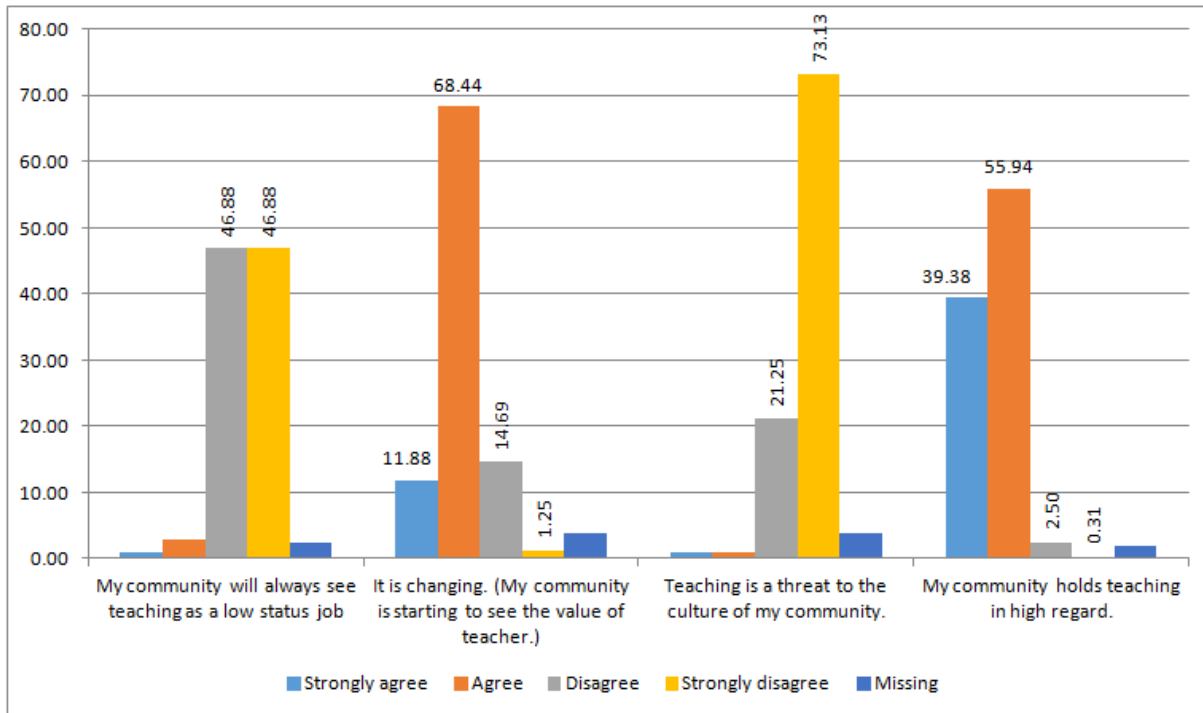


Figure 1. Opinion on future of teaching career in community

As regards to the attitude towards future of the teaching career, findings from the study show that teachers highly value the future of teaching profession, and that the community highly appreciates the teaching career (39.38% strongly agreed and 55.94% agreed) while believing that teaching is of high value in society (11.88% strongly agreed and 68.44% agreed). Two criteria for the future of teaching career are negative: “My community will always see teaching as a low-status job” and “Teaching is a threat to the culture of my community” (“My community will always see teaching as a low-status job” Mean = 1.57 and “Teaching is a threat to the culture of my community” Mean = 1.27).

3.2. Personal experience

According to the teachers’ responses, the experience obtained when being a student influences the way they teach today (70.00% of the teachers' opinions), indicating that knowledge and experience are of practical value and useful. Thus, personal experience in the teaching of novice primary teachers has been affected by the knowledge acquired in pedagogical schools for professional practice in the early years of teaching.

Table 5. Experiences in universities had an impact on the teaching method today

	Frequency	Percent %
Yes	125	39.06

No	58	18.13
To some extent	136	42.50
Missing	1	0.31
Sum	320	100.00

Teachers’ experience as a student in universities has a great influence on the teaching methods that novice teachers are using (39.06% are influenced and 42.50% are influenced to some degree). Only a small percentage of teachers (18.13%) think that their experiences as a student in universities and training have nothing to do with their teaching style.

Community’s awareness of teachers is high, such as “Parents value me as a teacher” (45.94% nearly always and 34.06% most times) and “Society has a high regard for teachers” (45.94% nearly always 33.44% most of the time). However, the teachers also commented that “Salaries of teachers are a force of attraction for people to join the teaching profession” is very rare (59.38%) and only (37.50%) at sometimes. Teachers' perceptions also show that although the community attaches great importance to teaching, it is not paid much attention by the government (55.94% sometimes and 25.0% of hardly ever/rarely).

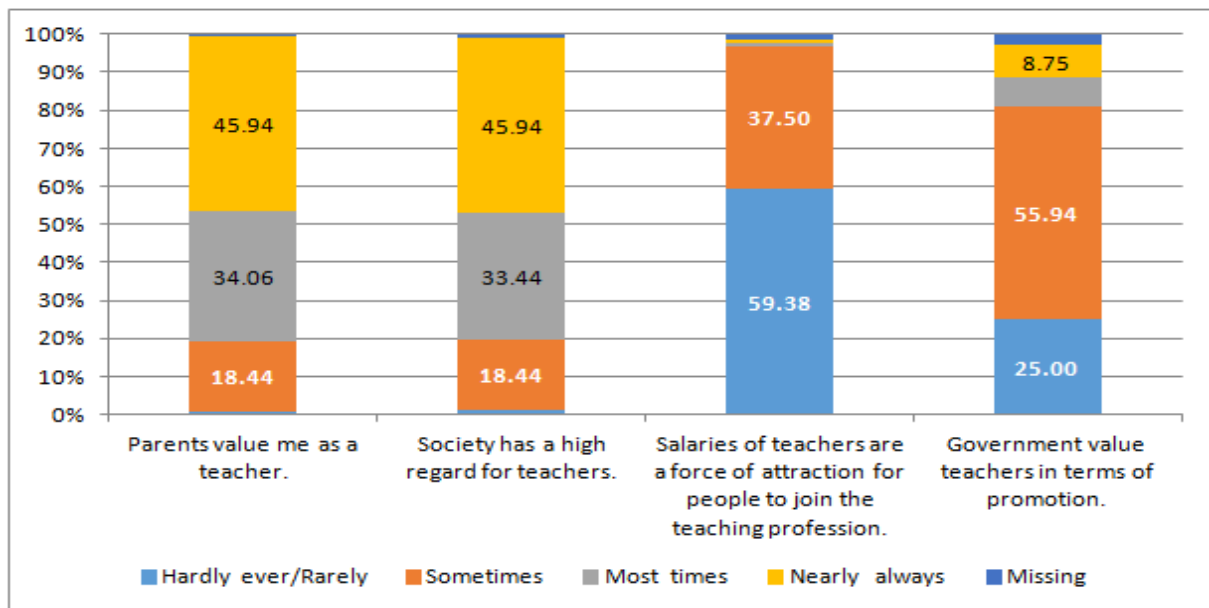


Figure 2. The novice primary teachers’ views about the current job

Thus, in the teachers’ view, teachers' salaries are very low and they receive little attention from the government. However, the teaching career is always respected by the community, parents and always holds high social status.

Figure 3 below shows the factors related to the family circumstances of the student, affecting the individual as a teacher. Three influential factors have been shown to have effects on the teachers although not often. Specifically with the distant family circumstances, the teachers have a role to play in guiding (counseling as well as mental support) (41.56% sometimes, 31.25% most of the time, and 18.75% % Almost always); Students from happy families (52.50% sometimes, 16.60% most of the time and 12.50% almost always) and parents keep forging their children at home, thus improving class behavior. (50.50% sometimes, 18.40% Most of the time, and 12.50% almost always).

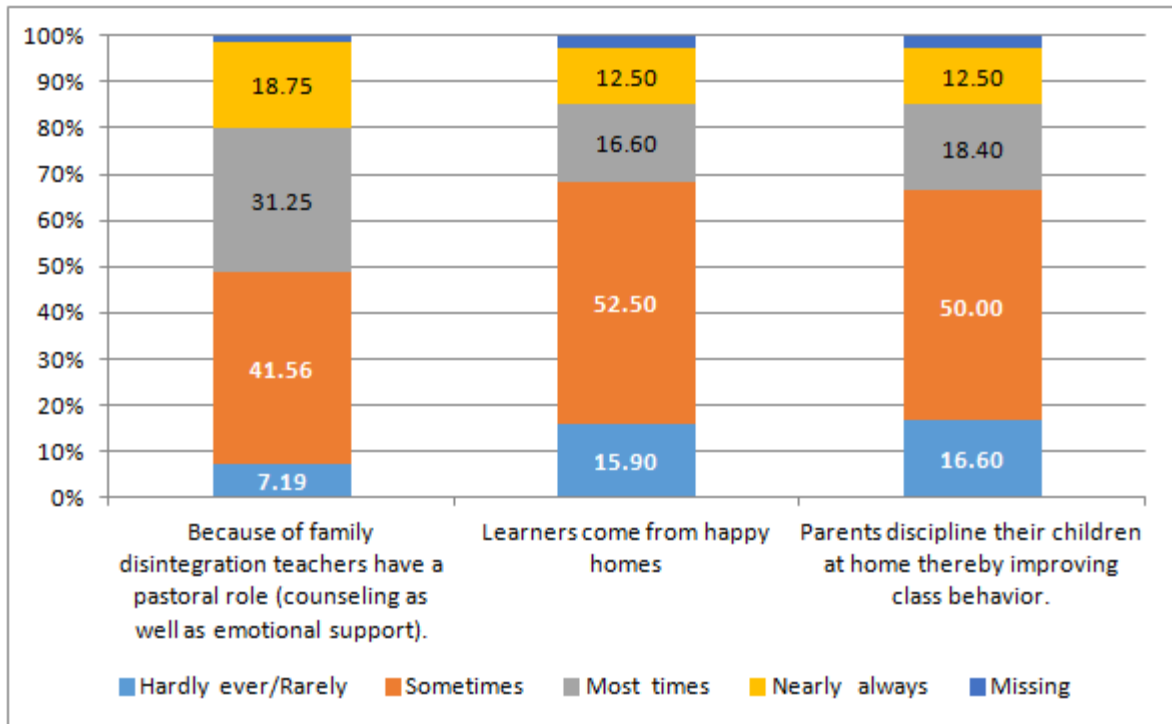


Figure 3. The factors related to the learner's home background influence the novice primary teacher

So, in the three factors that are influential, “Because of family disintegration teachers have a pastoral role (counseling as well as emotional support) is the most influential factor to a teacher.

4. Conclusion

Teacher identity has been increasingly becoming a concerned topic for educators to understand and promote the professionalization in teaching. The very first few years of teaching is very important in shaping the academic identity. The novice teachers (1-3 years) have to face difficulties in teaching and monitoring daily classes.

This paper evaluates the career of novice teachers. There are several reasons for choosing teaching profession. Most teachers choose teaching profession because they believe that this profession gives them the opportunities of pursuing higher education and doing research while enjoying working with children. The study also shows that the teacher community and parents also value the teaching profession at the present and also in the future.

As a teacher, personal experience and acquired knowledge on professional practices have strong effects on teachers' early years of working. Most of the novice primary school teachers believed that the learning experience in pedagogical universities had a positive influence on the current job. However, their quality assessment in pedagogical fields is not high, indicating that the content of the program should be improved to suit the teaching practice.

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