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Choosing to Be a Teacher: Understanding the Career Choice of Academically Excellent University Students Who Had Graduated from High Performing High Schools in the Dominican Republic

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CHOOSING TO BE A TEACHER: UNDERSTANDING THE CAREER CHOICE OF
ACADEMICALLY EXCELLENT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO HAD
GRADUATED FROM HIGH PERFORMING HIGH SCHOOLS
IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

by
Marcela Fuster de Hernández

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Educational Leadership, Research and Technology
Western Michigan University
June 2020

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Marcela Fuster de Hernández, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2020

Teachers' salaries in the Dominican Republic (DR) have become competitive, but there is a noticeable tendency for high performing students from high performing high-schools to avoid selecting teaching as a career (Figuroa & Montes de Oca, 2014). Such students often have choices to enter higher paying and status careers. Yet, some such students are now studying to become teachers, and this research captures their voices around this career choice. This topic is important given the need to improve the academic profile of future teachers who can help improve the Dominican ratings on various international measures.

This study involved 13 semi-structured interviews with preservice teachers. All had been high performing students coming from high performing high schools, and are now enrolled in a teacher preparation program as part of a scholarship program within private universities in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo, DR. Analysis of this data revealed 10 major themes.

Similar to previous research, I found that these excellent students from excellent schools in the DR disclosed their career choice was primarily motivated by the fact that they like to work with children and helping others. These academically excellent students, now preservice teachers, chose teaching as a career to help the DR with its educational challenges.

They all had a previous considerable teaching experience they refer to as critical, when asked about facts influencing their teaching career choice. They considered this experience was significant when they had to balance teaching with other careers. Many of these participants made their choice against their parents' advice, but all of them expressed pride and satisfaction in their choice, hope in a bright future and see the career as a well-paid option and gaining social status in the DR. The interviews also revealed that the DR government's scholarship program for preservice teachers within private universities is helping to increase the status of the teaching career. Teaching is now a career choice for students who want the quality of a private university, but also want to become teachers. This allows them to be part of a new lineage of teachers the Dominican government is supporting to face the country's education challenge.

Recommendations are offered that encourage leaders to start programs that expose more students in secondary education to teaching activities. Unveiling intrinsic motivations for becoming a teacher might help more high school students to consider this career option. Universities also need to put more emphasis on recruiting excellent students coming from excellent schools as they strive to increase the academic profile of their teaching career applicants.

Overall, this research captures the voices regarding the motivations of excellent students in the DR who have choose the teaching career within their rapidly developing country. Such findings contribute to the literature related to the factors that influence teaching career choice in a moment when teacher shortages have become a global challenge.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The topic of education reform is on many national and international agendas, and a common challenge during an era of reform in many countries is the recruitment and retention of school teachers (Kass & Miller, 2018). There is interest in attracting more individuals into the teaching profession, as well as attracting more academically talented individuals; this is true within both developed and developing countries (Gratacós & López-Jurado, 2016; Watt & Richardson, 2012).

The Dominican Republic (DR), is not an exception. There is a lack of teachers for all academic areas in public and the private sectors, and the group of students applying to become teachers may not have the achievement profile needed for the career. Indeed, more than 80% of the students who entered an education career in 2013 and 2014 came from families with lower academic and socio-economic levels; many came from some of the lowest performing high schools in a generally inadequate DR public school system (Figueroa & Montes de Oca, 2014; INAFOCAM, 2013). As a result, the DR is experiencing difficulties attracting high school graduates who have all the necessary skills and knowledge to pursue a teaching career. This is not an issue limited to the DR (Ahonen, Pyhältö, Pietarinen, & Soini, 2015; Aksu, Demir, Daloglu, Yildirim, & Kiraz, 2010; Al-Yaseen, 2011; Albulescu & Albulescu, 2015; Alexander, 2008; Balyer & Özcan, 2014; Chistolini, 2010), but it is a pivotal concern for the DR given the current national focus on improving the country's educational system. The present study explores what motivates a particular population of education students, academically excellent students from high-performing schools to pursue a career in K-12 education, despite a cultural context that does not encourage this career choice.

Background

The current reforms within the Dominican education system have their roots in a plan developed in 1992, the Plan Decenal de Educacion (PDE) [Ten – Years Education Plan]. PDE is a ten-year strategic plan developed and supported by the Program of the United Nations for Development, based on input from different stakeholders, including church leaders, the private and public sector, the teachers’ unions, and non-governmental organizations (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OCDE], 2008). A goal established by the PDE is the improvement of teachers’ living conditions, and the first action taken toward this goal was the revision of public school teachers’ compensation packages, along with revised criteria for yearly salaries increases. Parallel to this, there was also a revision in the criteria used to recruit public school teachers. The PDE called for the training of more than 10,000 teachers through programs established in four local universities.

Over the years, teachers’ salaries have continued to rise. In the year 2008, the average salary of a teacher was above the average salary of other professions in the country, and between 2011 and 2015, teachers’ salaries increased an average of 74% (EDUCA y Dialogo Interamericano, 2016). These serial salary raises put the Dominican teachers among the highest paid in Central America and the Caribbean (Caraballo, Educa, Javier, & Lara, n.d.; EDUCA, 2015; EDUCA y Dialogo Interamericano, 2016). Despite these aggressive salary increases, the DR is still facing significant teacher shortages (Figueroa & Montes de Oca, 2014).

Private, Semi-Private and Public Schools in the DR

The school system in the DR divides the schools into three categories, depending on the ownership of the school. These types of schools can be found in low, middle or upper SES communities, and follow the national curriculum adding what they consider necessary to fulfill

their philosophy. All schools in the country are accredited and regulated by the Ministry of Education and up to the moment the only categorizing report of its quality is the report CLASE. This report is elaborated by a non-governmental agency which ranks the schools according to their performance in the National Standardized Exams. These exams are one of the requisities of high school students to obtain their diploma to enter college.

Privately owned schools are those which are owned by a person or group of persons. These schools charge an annual fee that can be very high or very low, to students and are independent in the administration of their funds and resources and personnel recruitment. They do not receive any support from the government. Some of them are highly reputed by their quality and serve a very elitist public.

Semi-private schools are those schools owned by the catholic church and the state. These schools charge a low fee to the students and are independent in the administration of their funds and resources and personnel recruitment. They are partially funded by the government and the catholic church. They are generally very well reputed for their discipline, academic outcomes of the students and well-management.

Public schools are funded, run, and administer by the Ministry of Education. Few of these schools are well-reputed, they are mostly characterized by the lack of resources, indiscipline and poor academic outcomes of the students. Teachers and administration of these school are mostly appointed for politic reasons.

Problem Statement

Researchable Problem

Even though teachers' salaries in the DR are competitive relative to other professions requiring comparable education, there is a noticeable tendency for academically excellent

students from high performing schools in the DR to avoid choosing teaching as a career (Figueroa & Montes de Oca, 2014). In their study, Figueroa and Montes de Oca (2014) found that a career in education was the least recommended by parents from all demographics within the DR. Only 5.8% of parents recommended that their children pursue a career in teaching, while 33.1% recommended a career in medicine, and 10.6 % recommended engineering (Figueroa & Montes de Oca, 2014). This situation may be a contributing factor to the difficulties the DR is experiencing attracting preservice teachers with all the necessary skills and knowledge to the teaching career.

In addition to increasing the number of teachers, Figueroa and Montes de Oca (2014) concluded that the DR needs to improve the academic profile of potential teachers in order to make the social change needed in the country. The authors also consider crucial the need to improve the Dominican ratings on international measures, since there is plenty of evidence showing a positive correlation between improving the academic profile of those who become teachers and improved student outcomes (EDUCA y Dialogo Interamericano, 2016; NCEE, 2016). The effects of attracting more academically excellent students into teacher preparation programs in the DR might result in an improved quality of education via such teachers' higher – level academic skills and performance. Beyond that of increased salaries, policy changes to attract the brightest into teaching have yet to be the focus of significant policy initiatives in the DR. This may be an indication that there has been insufficient research into teaching as a desirable career choice for DR students entering postsecondary professional preparation degree programs.

Studies Addressing the Problem

The issue of not attracting top academic students into teaching extends beyond the DR, and many countries from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are facing a challenge attracting academically excellent students into the teaching profession (OECD, 2005a). Looking at both, the factors that influence students to enroll in teacher preparation programs, and those that discourage this choice, scholars from Israel (Kass & Miller, 2018); Turkey (Aksu et al., 2010; Kılınç, Watt, & Richardson, 2012; Topkaya & Sercan-Uztosun, 2012; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012); Italy, Australia, the United States, and other countries (Chistolini, 2010), have studied the issues surrounding teacher shortages. These studies indicate a considerable cross-national variation in high-achieving students' expectation of becoming a teacher which suggests the need for additional research into why some countries have fewer difficulties in attracting academically talented students into teaching.

For example, a study in Israel explored motivations of academically excellent students who chose teaching careers over other more respected professions. The results of this study indicated that the implicit motivations for this choice were the need to strengthen the sense of self-efficacy, the search for interpersonal boundaries as markers of identity and the need to belong; and the search of compensation for an unjust and humiliating experience in childhood (Kass & Miller, 2018).

One of the factors influencing the expectation of being a teacher are national contexts, and within the national contexts, the level of professionalization of the teaching career is the most salient aspect influencing this choice. For example, in countries where teachers have higher economic and social ranks, students are more likely to expect to be a teacher (OECD, 2005b). In other countries, where teachers do not have a high economic or social rank, students in general,

and high-achieving students specifically, are less likely to expect to become a teacher. This holds true, even after adjusting the economic and social positions of the teaching profession, sometimes in order to inspire academically talented students to go into the teaching profession (Park & Byun, 2015). Overall, participants from different contexts have reported that the satisfaction and challenges faced by education professionals, the attractiveness of the status as a teacher within the community and seeing teaching as a long-term career or a short-term solution, have been strong motivators in their decision to become teachers (Albulescu & Albulescu, 2015).

The economic incentives for college graduates to choose a teaching profession have also been considered a factor influencing students to choose teaching as a career (Park & Byun, 2015), as well as the influence of prior teachers as role models (Topkaya & Sercan-Uztosun, 2012). Nevertheless, the most common and universal motivational factor for becoming a teacher has been the job security, followed by social utility values and intrinsic career values (Watt & Richardson, 2008). These have lead the list of factors influencing the decision to choose the career of teaching over other popular options (Klassen, Al-Dhafri, Hannok, & Betts, 2011; Topkaya & Sercan-Uztosun, 2012). From any context, scholars have found that one of the main concerns during the career decision process is the income that can be earned, followed in some countries by the number of jobs available in the education system (Albulescu & Albulescu, 2015).

As part of this area of research, Watt and Richardson (2012) have created a comprehensive theoretical framework around the motivation for becoming a teacher called the Factors Influencing Teaching (FIT)-Choice model and scale, which is based in part on the expectancy-value work of Eccles and colleagues (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The FIT-Choice scale has been used in Australia (Watt & Richardson, 2008); Israel and Finland (Hoy, 2008);

Turkey (Eren & Tezel, 2010; Kılınç et al., 2012); Switzerland (Berger & D'Ascoli, 2012); Belgium, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Cyprus, and Libya (Chistolini, 2010); the USA (Lawver & Torres, 2011); Germany and Norway (Schwarzweiler & Lyson, 1978); and Spain and Indonesia (Suryani et al., 2016). In the DR, studies looking at the motivational factors of those entering the teaching profession are lacking, and to date, no one had used the FIT-Choice Scale to examine this issue.

Literature Deficiency Statement

Since it is not common for academically excellent students from high – performing high schools to choose a teaching career in the DR, it is important to study those who do fit this profile and determine what motivates them to make that choice. Further studies are also needed in the DR to identify the factors that influence students who are academically excellent to enroll in a teacher preparation program. While there are studies from other countries exploring this issue, those studies cannot be assumed to provide a full understanding of the Dominican context.

Significance of the Study

There is a need for studies that can provide valuable insights into the ways that academically excellent Dominican students from high-performing high schools experience both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for their career choice. The knowledge generated from such studies could be used to increase the actions and efforts to recruit students with a higher academic and social profile for the teaching career. My study could help policymakers and schools leaders in the Dominican educational system refine recruitment policies and practices for the teaching career. With a better understanding of the decision making that leads to entering a preparation program for the teaching career, and the factors influencing that decision, some

actions could be taken to encourage more academically excellent students to go into the teaching career.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of my study is to gain an understanding of what factors motivate academically excellent students from high – performing high schools in the DR to pursue a career in teaching. To gain this understanding, I conducted a basic interpretive qualitative investigation into the experiences, worldviews, relationships, and personal motivators that result in academically excellent students from high – performing high schools – who could effortlessly go into more high – status careers – decide to enter a teaching career instead.

The overarching research question guiding this study was: What motivates academically excellent students from high-performing high schools to pursue a K-12 teaching career? I pursue a deep and nuanced understanding of how participants make meaning of the phenomenon through the following four sub-questions:

1. What motivates these students to pursue a career in teaching, despite it being an uncommon career choice in this cultural context?
2. When do such students begin thinking about a career in teaching, and how do they arrive at their decision to enroll in a teaching degree program?
3. What and who do these students describe as having a strong influence on their decision making?
4. In what ways do they expect a career in teaching to contribute to their life goals?

Methods Overview

I used a basic interpretive qualitative methodology in this study. Such approach allows the researcher to make meaning of a specific phenomenon (Merriam, 2002). This basic

interpretive qualitative methodology allowed me to make meaning of the significant experiences my participants shared while talking about their teaching career choice.

Talking to academically excellent students who graduated from high-performing high schools and chose to go into an education career even when they had other options available, allowed me to make meaning of this phenomenon. The participants in my study all went to private or semiprivate high schools, although they come from different family backgrounds and social groups. Thus, they may have different assumptions and motivations about choosing a teaching career, and therefore, each can shed light on this phenomenon in a different way.

Since basic interpretive qualitative methodology is interested in understanding the individual experiences of people (Merriam, 2002), I collected the data using in-depth participant interviews, and sometimes more than one interview with the same participant, to get a full picture of their experience with the phenomenon. After the first interviews were done, I looked back through them, searching for patterns (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016) and, performed other interviews with the same participants. This study helped me understand how these preservice teachers understood their process of career decision making amidst so many varied influences.

The population I recruited from is a small group of academically excellent students who graduated from high-performing high schools and are now studying education at some of the private universities in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo. For each participating, I collected data through a semi-structured, face-to-face interview, sometimes, a second conversation about the topic, and the completion of the FIT-Choice Scale that helped participants go through the main aspects of the interview and go deeper in the description of how they understand their experience.

Conceptual Framework & Narrative

The conceptual framework for my study is diagramed in Figure 1. It illustrates the various factors that may have an influence on the academically excellent high school student who has graduated from a high-performing school in the DR yet chooses to enter the teaching profession. This framework is based on the FIT- Choice Theory, Holland's Theory of Career Choice and Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation.

At the center of my diagram are the academically excellent students from high-performing schools who have decided to become teachers. This decision comes at a point in time when someone makes a career choice among alternative and competing possibilities; it is committing to a course of action that implies a significance in one's life (Fitzgerald, 2002); and the outcome of a process in which several events lead to the moment of choice and beyond (Drumond, 1993).

In the context of the DR, students about to graduate from high school are exposed to a series of motivational and orientational sessions that provide them and their families with information about the different careers available in local, national and international universities. Most probably students do not hear about teaching as a career in these sessions. In the last decade, only governmental campaigns addressing students from public schools give some information about the career. This is also a factor against attracting academically excellent students to the profession.

Meanwhile, the overall process of making a decision is described as the thought process of choosing a logical option from the existing possibilities. While trying to make the right decision, an individual considers the benefits and limitations of each possibility and considers all the possible scenarios (Fitzgerald, 2002)

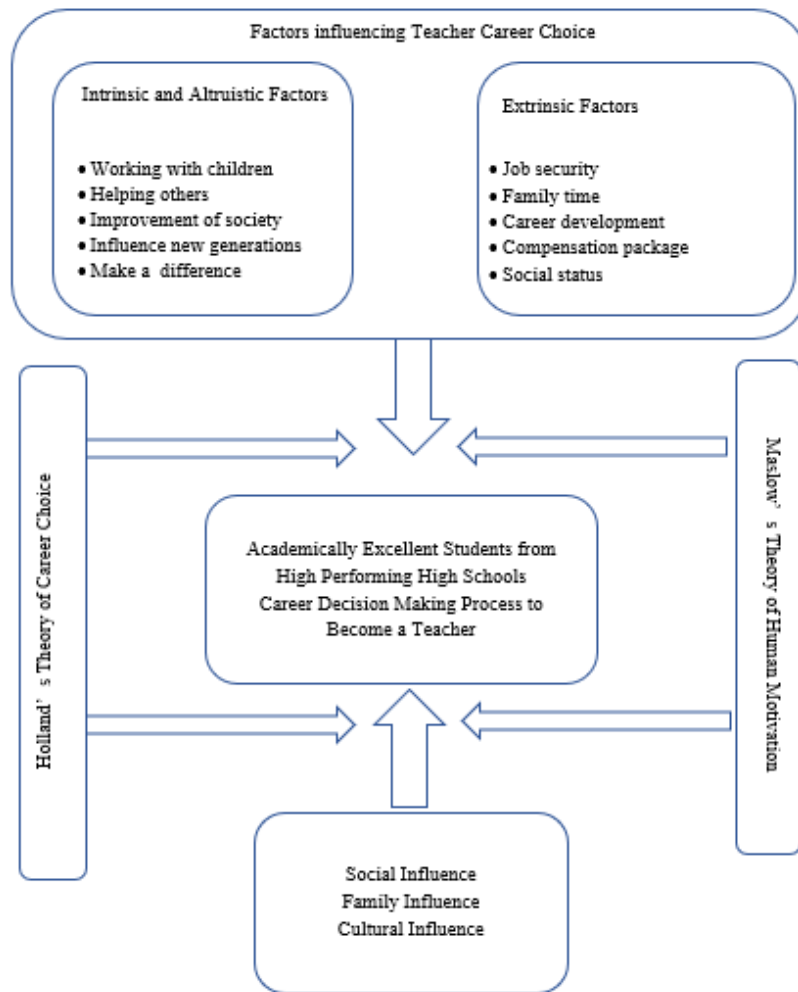


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for Fuster (2020) study.

By the time a high school student in the DR makes a decision to enter a specific career path in college, they have been routinely exposed to the influence of their social groups, their family, and a culture in which teaching as a career has low social value (Hennessy & Lynch, 2017; Watt et al., 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2007). The bottom box in my diagram depicts these factors.

The FIT-Choice (Factors Influencing Teaching Choice) framework is grounded on Eccles (2000) expectancy-value theory and offers a thorough standard to guide research into the motivations of people to choose a teaching career (Richardson & Watt, 2006, p. 31). The FIT-

Choice Theory was operationalized into the FIT-Choice scale as a corresponding measurement instrument. Some previous empirical studies on motivations for choosing teaching as a career neglect to systematically link the data to variables such as pre-service teachers' age, sex, or pedagogical experience prior to teacher education.

This theory taps the altruistic type motivations and a more personally utilitarian motivations and intrinsic motivations, as well as ability-related beliefs, this theory also taps individuals' perceptions about the demand and reward aspects of the teaching profession, and contains a measure of career satisfaction and commitment. The FIT-Choice factors contain socialization influences, task perceptions, self-perceptions, values, and fallback career. The constructs of the theory are classified and subdivided as follows: Higher order task demand and return constructs contain first-order constructs: "expertise" and "difficulty" comprise the higher order "task demand" construct; and "social status and teacher morale" and "salary" comprise the higher order "task return" construct. Similarly, higher order "values" constructs contain first order component constructs. Values constructs in our model are "intrinsic value", "personal utility value" and "social utility value". The last two values constructs contain component first-order constructs: "job security", "time for family", and "job transferability" comprise "personal utility value"; and "shape future of children/adolescents", "enhance social equity", "make social contribution" and "work with children/adolescents" comprise the higher-order "social utility value" construct (Richardson & Watt, 2006).

As part of the career decision-making process, students also must explore their motivation, defined as the desire, need or want that causes the get-up-and-go required for someone to perform in a certain way. It is what propels humans to take action and the drive that produces goal-directed behavior (Strickland, 2011). The top box in my figure focuses on the

factors influencing teacher career choice. Motivational impacts can start in the society through mass media and social interactions and continue their influence in the context of the small communities where students belong, and in the family around them.

The influence of their closer social circle can also work deep enough to become part of the values, expectations, and beliefs of individuals. These expectations and beliefs can play a determinant role in the decision-making process, as individuals are looking for their match with the demands and rewards of the profession, the assumptions, and the intrinsic value of becoming a teacher (Suryani et al., 2016). In my inquiry, I explore participants' reflections about this process to understand how the DR context is influencing our potential teachers in their career decisions, and what we can do to help attract the best candidates to the career.

As shown in the top boxes of my diagram, motivation factors are often classified as intrinsic or extrinsic (Deci & Ryan, n.d.; Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and results in high-quality learning and creativity, it reflects the natural human propensity to learn and assimilate (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Scholars have also identified that the more common intrinsic factors influencing a teaching career choice are the teaching profession's social value, also reported as rewards of the profession, the aspirations to improve society and the potential influence on new generations (See first and second boxes within the top of Figure 1.)

Salary raises which have been significant for teachers in the DR during the last decades can be described as critical extrinsic factors influencing Dominicans to become teachers (Diariolibre.com, 2017a, 2017b; EDUCA, 2015b). This change in economic status has been influencing teachers' self-esteem and social recognition by the rest of the professional community. Teachers with this salary level can interact with higher social groups, live a more

sophisticated life, and can afford to buy their cars and houses more easily. This social repositioning, the scholarship opportunities sponsored by the Dominican government, and professionalization of the career might be increasing the young people's intrinsic motivation to become teachers. This situation has served as a contextual environment that supports competence, respect and higher social recognition among teaching and other popular careers. This is also a beneficial ambience for prospective teachers' intrinsic motivation and for individuals becoming more self-determined concerning the decision of becoming teachers (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to a given outcome, to have a better salary or more time with the family, for example. Extrinsic motivation is claimed to fluctuate considerably in its relative autonomy and reflects either external control or self-regulation. Extrinsically motivated behaviors are the ones executed as necessary actions to separable consequence, they have typically been characterized as a pale and inferior form of motivation that contrasts with intrinsic motivation (Lemos & Veríssimo, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The most frequently mentioned extrinsic motivators of the teaching career are the job security, family time and career development (Dolton & Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2013; Kass & Miller, 2018; MacKenzie, 2013; Watt & Richardson, 2012).

On the far right of my conceptual framework is Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation, a multi-stage model divided into deficiency and growth needs. The theory covers the stages of human development beginning at the bottom level with passive functioning and finishing with the fully functioning, responsible individual (Huitt, 2007). Maslow describes deficiency needs (D-needs) as biological and physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs, and the growth or being needs (B-needs) as cognitive needs, aesthetic needs, self-

actualization needs, and transcendence needs. This order in the hierarchy of needs is flexible based on external circumstances or individual differences (Maslow, 1943).

Deficiency needs to motivate people when they are unmet, and the motivation to meet those needs develop stronger the longer they are denied (Maslow, 1943). Individuals satisfy lower level deficit needs before progressing on to meet higher level of growth needs. However, growth needs can become stronger once they have been satisfied. Growth needs appear from a desire to grow as a person. At the moment of a career choice, this is precisely happening; the individual is growing, becoming an adult, taking responsibility for his future, becoming independent, starting with his career decision.

Part of the current recruitment campaigns of the DR government includes billboards all over the city appealing to the intrinsic social value of the teaching career to improve society and to influence new generations. If explained through the Theory of Human Motivation (Maslow, 1943), this type of approach is targeting the growth needs of self-actualization and transcendence of the young people, trying to get them into teaching.

I have focused this study on academically excellent students because of the assumption that teachers' quality influences student outcomes (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2014; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Harris & Sass, 2011). The fact that these students are academically excellent assumes a disposition for positive academic work as a teacher. A student who has been academically excellent may have specific skills and expertise in how to get to that point and can transfer those skills to other students if they become teachers.

Holland's Theory of Career Choice (1973), on the far left of my conceptual framework, explains how the relation of personal characteristics and the unique characteristics of occupations combine and lead to success on the job and job satisfaction of individuals. Holland's Theory

(1973) has undergone several revisions to provide an argument that better complies with scientific standards of logic and evidence. The basis of this theory is that individuals are attracted to a given career because of their personalities and backgrounds. Holland sees career choice as an expression of character into the world of work. This theory considers the stability of career choice depends primarily on personality traits and that individuals are attracted to a role demand of a professional environment that meets their needs and satisfaction. Holland's theory defined six modal personal orientations and matching professional environments: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional.

Realistic orientation refers to people who like to work with animals, tools, or machines. These people evade activities like teaching, healing, and informing others; they have excellent skills in working with devices, mechanical or electrical drawings, machines, or plants and animals. They also value practical things they can see, touch, and use like plants and animals, tools, equipment, or computers; sees self as practical, mechanical, and realistic.

Investigative orientation describes those people who like to study and solve math or science problems, but generally, evades leading, selling, or persuading people. This type of person is good at understanding and solving science and math problems, values science, and sees self as precise, scientific, and intellectual.

Artistic oriented people are those who like to do creative actions like art, drama, crafts, dance, music, or creative writing; but generally, avoids highly ordered or repetitive actions. Artistic persons have artistic abilities and value them; they also see themselves as expressive, original, and independent.

Enterprising oriented include people who like to lead and persuade people, and to sell things and ideas. They avoid activities that require careful observation and scientific, analytical

thinking. They value success in politics, leadership, or business and see themselves as energetic, ambitious, and friendly.

Conventional oriented includes individuals who like to work with numbers, records, or machines in a set and orderly way. They generally avoid ambiguously, and unstructured activities and are good at working with written records and numbers in a systematic, methodical way. They value success in business and see themselves as orderly, and good at following a set plan.

Socially oriented include the type of people who like and value helping people. They are good at teaching, nursing, counseling, giving first aid, and providing information. Social people avoid using machines, tools, or animals to achieve a goal. They enjoy and value helping people and solving social problems. They see themselves as helpful, friendly, and trustworthy

I could describe “a perfect” teacher through these social orientation characteristics mentioned, although characteristics from other orientations are also necessary for teachers to do well by inspiring students to be good citizens and professionals. Teachers need to be realistic enough, investigative, artistic, enterprising, and display conventional characteristics and behaviors so they can model for their students and encourage them to develop similar traits in an adequate form.

The education revolution in the DR has not only addressed curriculum development and improved infrastructure but has also focused on the improvement of teachers’ profiles and performance. To attain this goal, the improvement of teachers’ living and working conditions have become a priority. These actions that started with significant salary raises may not only have influenced the extrinsic factors, but may be influencing the teachers’ self-esteem and social recognition from the rest of the professional community. These factors may be influencing the

young people's intrinsic motivation to become teachers in the DR. My study is looking to better understand the motivations influencing academically excellent students who decide to go to the teaching career and how they handle the influence of their environment, their assumptions, concerns, and beliefs in a context where teaching has not been socially recognized as a good career, even if it is now in the public eye. The combined lenses of both theories, Holland's Theory of Career Choice (Holland, 1973), and Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation (Maslow, 1943) provide an approachable framework for my study, with the purpose to examine these factors.

Chapter I Closure

This chapter helps the reader understand the reasons underlying the study presented here, the methods I use, as well as the theories through which this phenomenon of choosing a teaching career is explained. This topic becomes relevant due to the context where it takes place, the education revolution happening in the DR.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A literature review presents an overview of scholarly research related to the study being conducted (Creswell, 2006). It relates the present investigation to the broader, ongoing dialogue in the literature about the main topic, filling in gaps and extending prior studies (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). My literature review in this chapter also provides a context for establishing the significance of my research, as well as a standard for comparing the results of this study with previous research. This chapter summarizes past research relevant to the factors that motivate the career choice of pre-service teachers, including the literature pertinent to the factors that drive high-performing students with other career options to choose a teaching career in a variety of cultural contexts (Kass & Miller, 2018).

This chapter is divided into two major sections. The first focused on factors influencing teacher career choice, with this broken into four subsections: intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic motivational factors (as further broken down into four areas); gender differences; family, social, economic status and other personal characteristics; and social, family and cultural influences. The second significant section focuses on studies that reveal the situation in the DR. Throughout this review; I include research from many different countries attempting to address these issues.

While my qualitative study focuses at the decision-making process to become a teacher experienced by high-performing students from high-performing schools in the DR, this literature review includes many quantitative studies that examined various factors like gender, age, socioeconomic status, beliefs and expectations of the career. Relatively few qualitative data studies are presented because such studies could not be found about the decision-making process of the pre-service teachers, and the understanding of this process within the cultural contexts

where it occurs. I include studies from many different countries because I consider it essential to note that there are common concerns and findings surrounding this problem which has become communal around the world.

It is also important to note that several studies in this review use the Comprehensive Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) scale developed by Watt and Richardson (2007). The FIT-Choice scale provides an understanding of teacher candidates' motivations for choosing to teach. It was first developed for a study of first-year pre-service teacher education candidates at a university in Sydney, Australia in 2007, and since that point, the FIT-Choice scale has been validated for use in many countries. I mention this because I use the FIT-Choice scale as part of my interview with participants in my study.

Factors Influencing Teacher Career Choice

Intrinsic, Altruistic and Extrinsic Motivational Factors

Motivational factors are most frequently explored when researching the decision to pursue a teaching career, as divided into altruistic, intrinsic, and extrinsic motivations. While there is overlap between these types of motivations (especially between altruistic and intrinsic), these terms are widely used in the literature.

Altruistic behavior is described as the human actions with no apparent benefits for the person who performs them but that benefit other individuals, show a generous love of others, wishing their discovery of happiness and expecting nothing in return (*Altruism / Psychology Today*, n.d.). Examples related to motivation for choosing teaching include things like a desire to work with children and adolescents, to make a social contribution, or to make a difference.

Intrinsic motivation comprises engaging in a behavior because it is personally rewarding, performing an action for the pleasure it conveys, not for some external reward. Intrinsic

motivation defines the work itself as its reward and arises from within the individual because the work is naturally satisfying, they purely enjoy an activity, or they see it as an occasion to discover, learn, and update their possibilities (Griggs, 2017). Examples related to motivation for choosing teaching include things like enjoying the work of teaching, compatibility with other interests and activities, and compatibility with family life, and self-education

Extrinsic motivation rises from outside an individual and happens when they are moved to engage in an activity to earn a reward or evade penalty; that is, a person behaves in a specific way, not because of mere enjoyment or satisfaction, but to get a payment or avoid an unpleasant consequence (Griggs, 2017). Examples of extrinsic motivation include money, fame, grades, and admiration. People who are extrinsically motivated continue to do an action even though they do not find the task rewarding. An example related to motivation for teaching is having job security. Let us look at literature review patterns as related to these types of motivation.

Intrinsic and altruistic factors sometimes the greatest.

Some studies have shown that altruistic factors have been rated as more important than intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Al-Yaseen, 2011; Bilim, 2014; Manuel & Hughes, 2006; OECD, 2005a; Thomson, Turner & Nietfelds, 2012; Wang, 2014). For example, Manuel and Hughes (2006) reported an investigation into the motivations of 79 pre-service teachers, undertaking a teacher's program at the University of Sydney, Australia. This group was made up of 78% females, and 22% males and participants completed an open-ended and multiple-choice questions questionnaire about motivations and expectations. Their answers reflected that their reasons to become a teacher were mainly: the quest for personal fulfillment; the desire to work with young people to make a difference in their lives; and the opportunity to continue a meaningful engagement with the subject of their choice.

Manuel and Hughes (2006) also investigated the motivations of a cohort of pre-service teacher education students, undertaking a five-year, full-time combined undergraduate and initial teacher education degree program at the University of Sydney. Participants completed an extensive questionnaire which sought to gather data on the characteristics of the cohort; the factors that influenced their decision to undertake a teaching degree; their educational and work backgrounds; their perceptions of teaching, teachers, and students; their expectations of teaching as a career; and their professional goals. Participants were 79 undergraduate pre-service teacher education students in the third year of a five-year degree. The study found that most participants decided to teach based on intrinsic motivations, such as the pursuit of personal fulfillment; the desire to work with young people to and change their lives; and the opportunity to continue a meaningful engagement with the subject of their choice. They also described there was a mixture of personal aspiration; spiritual endeavor; social mission; intellectual pursuit; the desire for connectedness; and a belief in the power of ideas and relationships manifested in education to alter the conditions of their own and others' lives for the better. Salary did not figure in this research as a significant reason for choosing to teach.

Al-Yaseen's (2011) study is another that found altruistic and intrinsic as the main categories of motives. This study focused on factors influencing Kuwaiti student teachers' choice of teaching as a profession when he surveyed 400 student teachers who took a summer course at the College of Education-Kuwait University. His survey looked for the factors influencing Kuwaiti student teachers to join the College of Education. The study revealed that in making their career decision, students had been influenced mostly by altruistic and intrinsic factors, while extrinsic factors were much less influential in their decision-making process. Students' choices were mainly based on their altruistic beliefs of the crucial role they would play in

developing society and helping students succeed in their studies. The intrinsic factors revealed students' beliefs about the educational mission they would fulfill as future teachers. Being in a profession with three months end of year holiday and benefiting from a large salary were identified as extrinsic factors influencing their decision, but these were much less important.

The predominance of altruistic and intrinsic reasons for becoming a teacher as powerful motivators was also found by Thomson, Turner, and Nietfelds (2012), who used cluster analysis to identify typologies of 215 undergraduate student teachers enrolled in a teacher education program in the U.S. This mixed methods study collected data using two surveys, the Reasons for Teaching Scale (RTS), and the Career Statement Scale (CSS).

Finally, I found six studies that used the FIT-Choice scale and revealed similar findings, two from the US, two from Turkey, one from Germany, and one from the Arab Emirates. For the US-based studies, MacKenzie (2013) found that the top three most predominant reasons to become a teacher were: 1) to shape the future of children and adolescents; 2) to work with children and adolescents, and 3) to make a social contribution. The author studied motivational and demographic factors that influence pre-service teachers' decision to become teachers through the lenses of the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice. This exploratory study was conducted in a public research university in the Midwestern region of the United States and was intended to uncover any significant differences influencing motivational factors between gender, ethnicities, type of program, and level of certification pursued among 447 pre-service teachers. as the second US-based studies, Wang (2014) used the FIT-Choice scale, and shortened version of Constructivist Learning Environment Survey, to investigate the extent to which teachers' implemented constructivist teaching in their classes and whether teachers' career motivation had any relationship with that implementation. The study was carried out with 116 in-service

teachers from some schools in Pennsylvania. The results showed that the most important motivational factors for becoming teachers were: self-concept of teaching ability, prior teaching and learning experiences, intrinsic career value, and three social utility values (making a social contribution, shaping the future of children/adolescents, and working with children).

Similar findings occurred within the two studies conducted in Turkey. Bilim (2014) studied the career choice motivations of 341 pre-service elementary Turkish teachers. He found that the top motivations for choosing the teaching career includes altruistic motives, prior teaching, learning experiences, and working with children/adolescents; after that, they based their decision on intrinsic motivations such as teaching ability and career value. This study showed that these participants in Turkey selected a teaching career because they wanted to contribute to society, enhance social equity, and help shape the future. Topkaya and Sercan-Uztosun (2012) who also examined the career motivations of pre-service English teachers at a state university in Turkey using the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice Scale with 207 pre-service teachers, found that social utility and intrinsic values of teaching were important career motivations for the participants which were followed by ability-related beliefs. The research also reported the influence of prior teachers as role models as one of the main reasons for their career choice.

The last two studies that used the FIT-Choice Scale and found that intrinsic and altruistic factors were the greatest included one by König and Rothland (2012), who conducted their study with 1287 pre-service teachers from the University of Erfurt in Germany. The findings evidenced that among future teachers' motivations for teaching the three at the upper end were: work with children and adolescents, intrinsic value and shape the future of children and adolescents. Other less predominant motives were perceived teaching abilities and their wish to make a social

contribution. The lowest rated motivations found in this study were job security and time for family. Lastly, Sharif, Upadhyay, and Ahmed (2016) investigated the motivational factors that lead to the choice of a teaching career in expatriate teachers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The findings described intrinsic and altruistic factors are the most commonly stated reasons for choosing teaching as a career with not many differences in gender.

Overall, OECD (2005b) concluded that based on studies in France, Australia, Belgium (French Community), Canada (Québec), the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, and the U.K. (OECD, 2005), that the most frequently declared motives for choosing teaching as a career top reasons include the joy of working with children and adolescents, the latent intellectual achievement, and the possibility to make a social contribution.

Extrinsic can be most important. Just a handful of studies revealed that the extrinsic aspects were of higher importance, and all occurred within developing countries (Chistolini, 2010; Chivore, 1998; Gao & Trent, 2009; Yong, 1995). For example, Yong (1995) conducted a qualitative study to determine the motives of 174 trainees entering teaching in Brunei Darussalam and compared them to those of teacher trainees in developed countries. The participants were asked for the reasons they decided to become a teacher. Yong found that their motives for choosing teaching were first extrinsic, second intrinsic, and third altruistic. Another finding was that 15% of the trainees chose teaching as a last resort. Some of the extrinsic factors influencing the trainees' decisions were parents' encouragement, as either one or both were teachers; others were inspired by their previous teachers, and a few were forced by their parents into teaching. Other extrinsic reasons were salaries, job security, vacations and working hours. In the context of Brunei Darussalam, teachers' salaries are comparable with those of many professions of similar qualifications. Also, the term of service is permanent because teachers are

civil service employees, and teachers' hours, vacations and holidays are widely recognized as benefits of the career. The intrinsic reasons were the ambition to become a teacher, opportunities for academic development, natural inclination to become teachers, teaching as a challenging and respectable job, the fact that teachers are respected by society, and the joy of working with children (Yong, 1995).

As another example, Chivore (1998) studied the factors influencing the attractiveness of the secondary teaching profession in Zimbabwe. This study collected data from more than 200 student teachers. The results of this study pointed out that the factors related to salary, fringe benefits, and working conditions were considered to have the most significant influence, mainly those of comparable professions in the public and private sectors.

Within China, Gao and Trent (2009) revealed students in their study were primarily attracted to teaching in Hong Kong because of its extrinsic benefits, such as professional stability, the prestige associated with the English language teaching profession, and the opportunities to acquire valued skills transferable to other jobs including English competence. The study explored the experiences of 10 mainland Chinese student teachers of English, seeking to understand why they came to Hong Kong for a teacher education program at the Department of English, at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. This work was the starting point of a longitudinal ethnographic inquiry into the process of mainland Chinese students' development.

Finally, within Turkey, teachers there reported the importance of relatively higher job security in the teaching profession in their country as an essential part of their career choice (Chistolini, 2010). Besides that, choosing a teaching career increased the possibility of being admitted to the university. Moreover, because Turkey has reformed its teacher training since 1998, students who desire to be teachers receive more support to obtain more advanced schools

(e.g., a master's degree); this has guaranteed a higher academic level for future teachers and has also raised the status of the teaching profession in Turkey.

Mixture of motivational factors. A number of studies have found that it is a blend of all types of motivations, as well as other contextual factors (Albulescu & Albulescu, 2015; Azman, 2013; Heinz, 2015; König & Rothland, 2012; Kyriacou, Hultgren & Stephens, 1999; Park & Byun, 2015; Sharif, Upadhyay, & Ahmed, 2016; Topkaya & Sercan-Uztosun 2012). For example, Heinz (2015) explored student teacher motivations through a review of international empirical studies. The author was looking for what empirical studies could tell us about the teaching career motivations of individuals in different countries and socio-cultural contexts, what similar and different motivational themes have emerged in different countries and economic, cultural, and social contexts, what are the implications of findings from this body of research for policy and practice, and what research methodologies/instruments have been used to explore student teachers' career motivations and commitment. The studies reviewed were conducted in 23 countries. Heinz concluded that career choices and motivations of potential and actual teacher education applicants and entrants are influenced by a variety of contextual as well as individual factors including economic and human development and labor-market opportunities/conditions; teachers' tasks, responsibilities, and work environments/conditions (e.g., student-teacher ratio, quality of school buildings, and teaching materials; teachers' levels of pay, job security, and opportunities for career progression compared to other comparable professions); relative status and esteem of the teaching profession; structures of education systems including access to third-level education; organization and implementation of teacher education programs; organization of schools and teaching and learning approaches promoted in education policy/syllabi and implemented in schools; cultural, social, and/or religious features; individuals' socio-

demographic backgrounds, prior education, and other related experiences and perceived professional opportunities.

From a similar perspective, Park and Byun (2015) documented and identified cross-national differences in high-achieving students' expectation of being a teacher at age 30. The study was conducted analyzing PISA 2006 data from 37,570 students in 23 OECD countries. To address sources of this cross-national variation, researchers used two-level logit models by linking student-level data with country-level data. The findings revealed that in countries where the economic and social statuses of teachers were higher, young people were more likely to expect to be a teacher in their future than their counterparts elsewhere. These scholars also defined professionalization of the career taking into consideration two indicators, first, if the country required a bachelor degree to be a teacher, and second the proportion of fully certified teachers in a country. The study concluded that countries' levels of professionalization of teaching were systematically related to between-country differences in students' expectation of becoming a teacher.

An earlier work on teachers' motivations by Kyriacou et al. (1999) explored the reasons given by student teachers in influencing their choice to become a secondary school teacher in England and Norway. Participants included 105 student teachers in Stavanger (Norway), and 112 student teachers in York (England), who completed a questionnaire at the beginning of a postgraduate teacher training course. Twelve student teachers from each sample were interviewed. Both groups reported being strongly influenced by enjoying the subject they would teach, liking to work with children, and the fact that teaching would enable them to use their subject knowledge. This report is broadly in line with the previously cited studies. However, there was a tendency to place value on 'wanting to help children succeed' and 'liking the activity

of classroom teaching' for more of the student teachers in the York sample, compared with the Stavanger sample; conversely, there was a tendency for more of the student teachers in the Stavanger sample, compared with the York sample, to place value on 'long holidays' and 'social hours.' These tendencies may in large part be accounted for by the fact that more of the Stavanger sample were already teaching, were older, and had family commitments.

Complex Blend of Motivations and Assumptions

Some research has revealed that assumptions about the teaching profession also play a role in a career decision. Indeed, research has found that many individuals hold assumptions or "truths" about the teaching profession (Albulescu & Albulescu, 2015; Alexander, 2008; Dunder, 2014; Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Petre, 2015; Rafailă, 2014; Richardson & Watt, 2006). In a special issue on teacher motivation, Alexander (2008), a scholar from the University of Maryland offered examples of such "educational truisms," or commonly held perceptions such as (a) teaching is challenging, (b) challenges come from both external and internal sources, (c) there is a call to the profession, and (d) that can be differential successes and types of satisfaction. In her commentary, she focused her attention on teachers' motivations and concluded that even though the motives, actions, and effect of teachers or teacher candidates matter, what teachers report in terms of their reasons for entering the profession are the ones with a recognizable effect on the students they teach. She considers this as a truism and a motive that influences teachers' career choice.

Another mixture of motivational factors was found by Albulescu and Albulescu (2015) as they explored the motivations of students who decided to become teachers, enrolled at the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The authors surveyed 119 students at the beginning of their second semester, among first-year undergraduates. The results identified that

the main reasons for the career choice of the participants were: (a) the number of jobs available in the education system, (b) income, (c) self-assessed teaching skills and competencies, (d) enjoyment in working with children and teenagers, (e) satisfactions and challenges faced by education professionals, (f) the attractiveness of the status as a teacher within the community, and (h) long-term career opportunity. The authors also noted that many students did not pay proper attention to career planning and development, even though this process would have enabled a suitable career path.

Other researchers have focused on such assumptions in their research. For example, Petre (2015) identified the primary sources of motivation for selecting a teaching career for 150 future teachers for primary and pre-schools in Romania. The author used a questionnaire and found that for many future teachers, they viewed that being a teacher was not a job for the future or with a future; they describe the role for which they are preparing as inaccessible to many, very difficult and demanding, and valuable to society. They also reported feeling that society does not value them enough; participants still want to become teachers because they feel they belong to a new generation of teachers.

Dundar (2014) also found that elementary school teacher candidates believed that teaching is a difficult job, low in social status and not well-paid. Despite these assumptions, the decision to choose the teaching profession was mostly influenced by social utility values. The study was done with 176 freshman elementary school teacher candidates at two universities in Turkey. Similarly, participants in Manuel and Hughes' (2006) study considered teaching to be a challenging and rewarding career and identified that they were influenced in their decision to teach by a significant teacher or mentor. The findings, according to Manuel and Hughes reflect participants' aspiration; spiritual endeavor; a social mission; intellectual pursuit; the desire for

connectedness; and a belief in the power of ideas and relationships manifested in education to alter the conditions of their own and others' lives for the better.

Rafailă (2014) also found that a mixture of motivations plays an integral part in choosing and building a teaching career. The author studied a sample taken of students preparing to become teachers at kindergarten and primary schools in Romania. The participants responded to questionnaires, and interviews, and were also observed. The author concluded that the reasons for choosing a teaching career were: the permanent nature of the salary (although it is low); the impossibility of entering a different career at the university; the existence of inspiring teachers who had a positive impact on personal development; the job uncertainty in Romania; the ability to acquire the basic concepts for teaching different school subjects; and the opportunity for immediate teaching opportunities. Rafaela found that the career decision had been made after many factors had been considered: external and internal, psychological and sociocultural, training level, born talent, acquired competencies, the image about one's self, aspirations, scientific interests, personal experiences, career choices, and society's value system.

Hellsten and Prytula (2011) explored the motivations of beginning teachers in Saskatchewan University in Canada. The purpose of this study was to: (1) investigate the entry motivations of Saskatchewan beginning teachers; (2) determine if the entry motivations changed over time; and (3) to examine whether there were any differences in motivations due to demographic characteristics. This mixed methods study used surveys and in-depth interviews with 279 participants. The beginning teachers participating in the study suggested that the entry and teacher practice motivation factors most frequently mentioned as important involved "making a difference in people's lives," "working with children or youth," and the "opportunity to teach subjects that were of interest." There was a change in motivations conditioned by time

and demographic traits. Factors such as "having my own classroom," "salary and benefits," and "professional quality of life" grew from entry purpose to first year teaching motivation. Entry and teacher motivations were different depending on gender, age group, and program of study. Teacher motivations also varied depending on marital status. Except for "wanting to be a teacher," the external motivating factors were "teaching as an alternative option," the influence of "significant others as role model teachers," and teaching as a "good match for skills and interests." Motivational factors repeatedly recognized by the participants as "important" or "very important" involved "making a difference in people's lives working with children or youth," and the "opportunity to teach subjects that were of interest."

Hennessy and Lynch (2017) examined the appropriateness of the FIT-Choice scale for use within an Irish Initial Teacher Education setting with a cohort of 143 first year pre-service teachers. This study used exploratory factor analyses to examine participants' motivations for choosing teaching as a career, and their perceptions about teaching. The results support the validity of the FIT-Choice scale within this Irish Initial Teacher Education situation. Prior teaching and learning experiences, as well as perceived ability, were noticed as the strongest significant factors in participants' determination to become a teacher. These outcomes added importance to subject-based knowledge in Ireland. The connections between participants' motivations for becoming a teacher and their satisfaction with career choice were also explored. Choosing teaching as a fallback career was negatively related to satisfaction, whereas a desire to work with children was found to be a significant positive predictor.

Low et al. (2011) in Singapore, investigated reasons why pre-service teachers choose teaching as a career. This qualitative study recruited participants from four initial teacher training in Singapore. Participants responded open-ended questions, relevant personal profile data such as

gender, age, educational background and previous job, they also had to report if their parents were teachers and about the persons who had the greatest influence on their choice of teaching as a career. Among the main reasons to choose teaching they selected interest in teaching, the influence of teaching experience, love for children and young people and to fulfil a mission. Some participants described teaching as challenging and motivating, while others viewed teaching as a dynamic career that provides job security. Authors found participants chose the career moved by intrinsic reasons such as “It is the profession I have always wanted” and “I see it as a lifelong career”; love working with children and influencing young lives.

Finally, using the FIT-Choice scale, Richardson and Watt’s 2006 large-scale Australian study found that participants stated they perceived teaching as a highly demanding career, with low salary and social status. However, they were influenced by their teaching ability-related beliefs, personal and social utility values and positive prior experiences of teaching and learning. The values participants found relevant motivators influencing their choice of teaching included the intrinsic value of teaching, social utility values described as the desire to shape the future, enhance social equity, make a social contribution and work with children/adolescents, and then the personal utility values of job security, time for family and job transferability. These results provided a profile of a large sample of pre-service teachers whose decision to enroll in a teacher education program was made at a time when the mass media and the general public described teaching as a poor career choice.

Gender Differences

Some studies have focused on any gender differences in the career decision-making process of becoming a teacher. Gender is one of the specific variables in some studies exploring the factors influencing the choice of a teaching career in countries that have experienced teacher

shortages and the need to improve education outcomes. Gender also has been studied as an influencing factor during the career decision process. The teaching profession has been labeled as a career for females, with some studies like Richardson and Watt (2006) finding that females enrolled in teacher education in Australia outnumber males by far and that early childhood teacher education had almost exclusively female enrolments, followed by primary teacher education, and then by secondary teacher education.

Gender differences exist. Some studies have found motivation differences when broken down by gender (Azman, 2013; Bakar, Mohamed, Suhid, & Hamzah, 2014; Balyer & Özcan, 2014; Luschei & Carnoy, 2010; Roness, 2011; Sharif et al., 2016; Topkaya & Sercan-Uztosun, 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2007). For example, Topkaya and Sercan-Uztosun (2012) found that in Turkey both male and female participants were more intrinsically and socially motivated, while male participants had higher ratings for job security and employment possibilities. In other socio-cultural contexts, some studies have even concluded that the school with more male teachers have the lowest performing and least advantaged children. Such were the reported results of the analysis performed by Luschei and Carnoy (2010), who used a large dataset that includes virtually all sixth-grade students in Uruguay in 1996 and analyzed the relationship between teacher attributes and student achievement scores. Although this study did not focus on teachers' motivations to choose the career, I find that the conclusion discourages males potential intentions to become teachers when it associates lowest students' performance to the teacher's gender.

In Turkey, women often made the career choice based on their preference of working with children, while males make their decision based on the salary (Topkaya & Sercan-Uztosun, 2012). Similarly, Balyer and Özcan (2014) in their study with Turkish preservice teachers

reported that female student teachers choose their careers with altruistic-intrinsic reasons, compared to their male counterparts who chose it for extrinsic reasons.

Yüce, Şahin, Koçer, and Kana (2013), in their mixed methods study of the career motivations of Turkish pre-service teachers who had chosen teaching as a career, found gender differences whereby extrinsic (36.75 %), altruistic (33.23 %), and intrinsic (30.02 %) motives, respectively, played a preponderant role in choosing teaching as a career. Moreover, altruistic (23.39 %) motives were more dominant for females, and mercenary-based extrinsic (13.95 %) motives for males. The respondents to their survey were 283 Turkish pre-service teachers, including 106 males and 177 females. Accordingly, they were asked questions about the career decision process they underwent, career perceptions, and significant expectations.

Balyer and Özcan's (2014) study of 1,410 student teachers from seven public universities in Turkey also found differences by gender. They wanted to determine the reasons why student teachers choose teaching profession as a career and variables like gender, department, grade, family social background, the place they live, and age influence their decision and used Choosing Teaching Profession as a Career Scale (CTPCS). They found that female student teachers choose their careers with altruistic-intrinsic reasons compared to their male counterparts who chose it for extrinsic reasons

Two studies that used the FIT-Choice scale also found significant differences by gender. First, Topkaya and Uztosun (2012) examined the career motivations of 207 pre-service English teachers at a state university in Turkey using an adapted version of the FIT-Choice scale and found that social utility and intrinsic values of teaching were important career motivations followed by ability-related beliefs. Both male and female participants were more intrinsically and socially motivated, but male participants had higher ratings for job security and employment

possibilities. The motives for selecting a teaching career were headed by social utility values and intrinsic career values. Another interesting finding of this study was that the choice of a teaching career was a voluntary choice rather than a fallback choice, which counter to the idea that teaching is a poor career choice. The data also reported the influence of prior teachers as role models as one of the main reasons for their career choice. Second, studies in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) using the Factors Influencing Teaching (FIT)-Choice scale described intrinsic and altruistic factors are the most commonly stated reasons for choosing teaching as a career with not many differences between males and females; salary and prior teaching and learning experiences were also variables positively correlated to gender in this study (Sharif et al., 2016).

No major gender differences. Some studies have found no major differences based on gender (Azman, 2013; Bakar, Mohamed, Suhid, and Hamzah, 2014; Roness, 2011). For example, Azman (2013) explored first-year student teachers' views of teaching as a career choice to determine the factors that influenced their decision to enter the teaching profession in Malaysia. Participants were 425 first-year undergraduates at a local university who had just started their pre-service teacher training programme. Student-teachers completed a questionnaire in which they were asked to rate factors that influenced their decision to become teachers. The findings revealed that both male and female student teachers have similar motives in selecting teaching as a career, as moved by altruistic and extrinsic factors.

Bakar, Mohamed, Suhid, and Hamzah (2014) also found no major differences by gender. In their study at the University of Malaysia. They explored 600 student teachers' views of factors influencing them to choose teaching as a career. They compared the views expressed by those who were not considering teaching and those who were considering teaching as a career option about factors influencing their decisions. They found that for all the groups, regardless of gender

or career option, altruistic factors were considered more important than intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Similarly, Roness (2011) found no gender differences based on the results from a longitudinal research project examining newly qualified teachers' motivation for teaching and how they retrospectively value their teacher education. The study was conducted to help understand the severe challenges the teaching profession in Norway is facing. The findings indicate that teachers enjoy the job one-and-a-half years after graduation, that they are motivated both by working with their subject matter and by teaching, although there is a high level of attrition. The author collected the data using a questionnaire and 280 participants and concluded that love of subject matter being taught, and other intrinsic motivations were the most salient motivators in their career choice. No significant differences were found based on gender or degree level.

Finally, one study that used the FIT-Choice scale found that gender was not significantly associated with motivational factors that influence pre-service teachers to become teachers. In this study, MacKenzie (2013) analyzed motivational and demographic factors that influence pre-service teachers' decision to become teachers. The participants in this study were 447 pre-service teachers, enrolled in teaching certification programs during the 2013 spring semester at a college in a mid-sized, state-funded, public research university in the Midwestern region of the United States. The results indicated that the demographic factors, gender, ethnicity, type of program, and type of certification, were not significantly associated with motivational factors.

Family Social Economic Status & Other Personal Characteristics

The economic and educational backgrounds of those interested in becoming a teacher have been studied in various countries, and often reveal that those interested in teaching come

from families with a lower economic status (Balyer & Özcan, 2014; Coultas & Lewin, 2002; Kass & Miller, 2018; Richardson & Watt, 2006). For example, Coultas and Lewin (2002) reviewed the features of students entering initial teacher training programs in four countries: Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, and Trinidad and Tobago. Coultas and Lewin studied the teacher education systems in these countries and captured a demographic description of the students including age, religious affiliation, ethnic group, mother tongue, parental occupations, and academic achievement, and students' educational qualifications. They found that compared to those in the developed countries of the UK and US, the teachers came from a family background of very low cultural capital, and they often also had lower academic levels. This data was gathered collecting data from a sample of 965 students (400 student teachers in Ghana, 90 in Lesotho, 176 in Malawi, and 299 in Trinidad) with questionnaires collaboratively designed by the Multi-Site Teacher Education Research project (MUSTER).

Richardson and Watt's 2006 large-scale Australian study also profiled the background characteristics and teaching motivations for individuals entering teacher education across three major established urban teacher provider universities in the Australian States of New South Wales and Victoria, found that the SES income backgrounds for prospective teachers were generally towards the lower region of the income categories, with few participants coming from affluent family income backgrounds. They used the "FIT-Choice" (Factors Influencing Teaching Choice) Scale, which determines the strength of influence for a range of motivations from individuals choosing teaching as a career. Participants included the entire cohorts (N=51,653) of first-year pre-service teacher education candidates at three universities in Sydney and Melbourne.

Balyer and Özcan (2014)'s study of 1,410 student teachers from seven public universities in Turkey also found that teaching is a profession of economically lower or middle classes. Significant differences related to family income issues were also discovered related to the number of brothers and sisters. As such, those who come from crowded families made their choices based on extrinsic reasons. Specifically, students with five or more brothers and sisters chose their careers with extrinsic reasons compared to those with three or fewer brothers and sisters. There were also significant differences between students' views and extrinsic reasons in terms of the place they live in, whereby student teachers who lived in private dormitories chose careers with extrinsic reasons compared to their counterparts who lived with their families, relatives or friends. According to that, the student teachers who lived in private dormitories were influenced by others compared to those who did not. Furthermore, student teachers who had more brothers and sisters chose the profession for extrinsic reasons such as job security, status, pay, and career opportunities.

Only one study could be found of similar interest to my study which is the implicit motivations of *academically excellent* students' choice of teaching careers rather than more prestigious occupations. Kass and Miller (2018) collected data from students in Israel whose scores on the psychometric college entrance exams were exceptionally high, and who was choosing to become a teacher, as part of a government-sponsored accelerated teacher training program. The authors used open, in-depth interviews with 12 participants (2 men and 10 women), and their findings align with previous studies in other social contexts in that most expressed various altruistic and intrinsic motivators. However, one unique theme was that findings were that many participants expressed that choosing a career in teaching served as a corrective experience for painful past experiences of the participants. The findings revealed four

types of implicit motivations: the experience of helplessness and the need to strengthen the sense of self-efficacy; the search for interpersonal boundaries as markers of identity; the need to belong; warmth, caring, and individual attention; and compensation for an unjust and humiliating experience in childhood.

Social, Family and Cultural Influences

Some research has found that various social norms impact the decision to become a teacher, as well as family and cultural influences (Chistolini, 2010; Crow, Levine, & Nager, 1990; Moses, Berry, Saab, & Admiraal, 2017; Park & Byun, 2015; Richardson & Watt, 2005).

For example, Richardson and Watt (2005), using a mixed method approach and explored the reasons behind graduates' decisions to pursue teaching as a career. With 74 participants from a one-year pre-service teacher education program at an Australian university located in Melbourne, the authors explored five factors related to social status, career fit, prior considerations, financial reward, and time for the family were identified through factor analyses. This study also explored the typologies of people choosing teaching. To establish these typologies, the study considered the social status, prior considerations, financial reward and time for family factors. The results showed that the factors that influenced the decision to enter the teaching career coming from another career were at some point personal and related to immediate family circumstances, and in other occasions were more global and related to employment stability and quality of life. This is a relevant decision of career change, considering that the social context at the moment of this decision sees teaching as a lower priority career choice. This study provided an interesting profile of the influences, talents, abilities, interests, motives, and aspirations of second career teachers.

Early works on teacher motivations have found that the sociocultural context also has the potential to impact teacher career choice motivations. Such is the case of the ethnographic study conducted by an interdisciplinary team who explore the meanings of the career change of graduate students leaving other careers for education. Data were collected from admission folders, small group interviews, individual open-ended interviews, whole-group discussions, and meetings with the students' advisers (Crow et al., 1990). Some of the conclusions of this study suggested that in cultural and social settings where career success is associated with a high salary, career prestige, and social status, the decision to choose a career that provides for personal satisfaction, the rewards of making a social contribution, and a desire to keep learning, is as an “unlikely choice” (Crow et al., 1990)

Another important work that found cultural and social status influences was developed by an international team of experts from Belgium, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey, and the USA. The results were reported by Chistolini (2010), a professor at The University of Rome, and the study was done by implementing a survey between 2004 and 2007 in these countries. The participants were sample groups of teachers working at various levels of education, from nursery to upper secondary school. The participants were 72 teachers from Belgium, 40 from Cyprus, 1265 from Italy and 45 from Libya; other independent researchers were doing the same survey in Poland with 147 subjects, 97 in Slovakia, 202 in Turkey and 180 in the USA. One of the objectives of the study was to understand why teachers attribute certain meanings to their profession and what these meanings are. The research highlights different levels of social perceptions of the teaching role. In countries like Belgium and Libya, teachers felt appreciated by the community, while in places like Italy and Cyprus they felt separated from a social environment that does not sufficiently appreciate their work. At the time of the study, Italy

showed the least social appreciation for the profession. In Belgium, teachers were recognized as the educators of the younger generations, which reinforced the traditional role that their society fully recognized. In Poland, the results showed that teachers are expected to be aware of the connection between the school and society and are seen as creators of social transformations. The analysis in Slovakia found that 98% of respondents were women who were passive in terms of social engagement, and exclusively a member of community groups, teachers' associations, and religious organizations connected with education.

Another cross-national study was conducted by Park and Byun (2015) who analyzed the data from 37,570 students in 23 OECD countries in PISA 2006 to examine how national contexts shape the expectations of being a teacher at age 30 among high-achieving students in secondary schools. The authors used two-level logit models by linking student-level data with country-level data. The results of this study showed considerable between-country differences in the degree of students' expectation of a teaching job. Another interesting finding was that teachers' economic and social status matters for students' expectation of becoming a teacher. Countries' levels of professionalization of teaching, indicated by whether teachers have a bachelor's degree and are fully certified, are also related to students' expectation of the teaching profession. There was a reduced gender gap in students' expectation of becoming a teacher in countries with higher levels of professionalization.

The most recent work was conducted by Moses, Berry, Saab, and Admiraal, (2017) who studied student-teachers' decisions to enter and stay in the teaching profession after graduation. This study classified student-teachers based on their levels of commitment to teaching, and described these types based on student-teachers' motivation to enter the teaching profession and their perceptions of the teaching profession and environmental aspects, e.g. school condition and

significant others. Thirty-seven undergraduate student- teachers from the Dar es Salaam University College of Education in Tanzania were interviewed. Four student-teacher types from our results were identified: (1) committed passionate, (2) committed compromisers, (3) undecided and (4) uncommitted. While exploring this reference in all its details we found that this classification seems to be similar to what other authors have categorized as altruistic and intrinsic motivations.

The Situation in the Dominican Republic

In the DR, limited data exist regarding motivations to become a teacher. From what studies that do exist, the responses of the participants to what motives them to become teachers are similar to studies in different countries, where the preservice teachers favored the social contribution, the ongoing training and learning, the independence practice, and that they consider it a laid back career (Figueroa & Montes de Oca, 2014).

The earliest references found about this topic analyzed the factors influencing the composition of the Dominican teacher workforce and how these factors influence teachers' performance and potential motivations to choose the career (Dauhajre & Escuder, 2002). Some questions which guided their study were: Who are the Dominican teachers? Who goes into the teaching career in DR? How does the institutional framework affect teaching? Which are the incentives and benefits that make them become teachers? Dauhajre and Escuder surveyed 598 active teachers, 207 student teachers, 202 students in other careers, and 38 teachers who worked in other governmental areas. The study covered the period from 1989 to 1999 and offered a comprehensive description of the Dominican system of education. At the time of their study, they recommended being more careful in recruiting new teachers to respond to the new social and economic global challenges.

More recently a quantitative study by Figueroa and Montes de Oca (2014) examined the responses of 384 Dominican students from both public and private universities who were in their first year of various careers. The study was conducted to explain the perception young Dominicans have of the teaching career, and the motivational factors influencing preservice teachers in the DR. The group of participants included 64.8% females and 35.2% males. The study found a tendency to identify the teaching profession with women more frequently than with men, and that only 1% of the students who entered the career were motivated by their parents to make that choice. Another finding was that, in general, the career of education was the least recommended to participants by families and friends, with only a 5.8% as opposed to medicine that was recommended to 33.1%, and civil engineer to 10.6%. Negative representations of teachers' work in the mass media, changes in political ideology, and shifts in public opinion all impact on the popularity and reputation of teaching as a career choice. Another conclusion was that the teaching career had a very low social value and that the students who selected it were those coming from a very low socio-economic level and had attended academically underperforming schools. Social media was also found to play an influential role in the degradation of the teaching career image offering an example of students who selected teaching as a career in 2014 who had a sixth-grade educational level equivalence (Figueroa & Montes de Oca, 2014).

The Dominican authorities have been taking significant steps in the reshaping of the educational policies in the last 10 years. Public school teachers' salaries have increased by more than 70%, and the budget allocated for education has been extensively used for the professionalization of the career (EDUCA y Dialogo Interamericano, 2016). Looking at what previous studies describe and at what teaching in the DR currently implies, the extrinsic

motivational factors make it an attractive professional choice. At present, it is a career that offers a secure well-paid job and allows teachers to enjoy more family time along with the possibilities of inexpensive career development since the government affords most of the professional development of public-school teachers (INAFOCAM, 2017). These are some of the motives students can easily find for becoming a teacher in the DR.

Chapter II Closure

Overall, the perception of what being a teacher means can hinder the career decision of new people. On one side, there is the belief that students who choose teaching are academically underperformers and, on the other side, the reality of having poor working conditions, student misbehavior, ineffective school leadership, and poor government policies discourage the decision to go to the teaching career (Moses, Berry, Saab, & Admiraal, 2017; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008; Oppenheimer, 2010). Another significant assumption that has been identified in previous studies is the intense workload generated in schools; that the profession is emotionally demanding since it is closely related to the way families interact with children and finally, that it is academically demanding. Academically, a teacher must keep competitive in the areas she or he teaches, as well as technologically aware and updated to deliver the content and motivate learning (Balyer & Ozcan, 2014; Suryani, Watt, & Richardson, 2016; Watt et al., 2012; Watt, Richardson, & Wilkins, 2014).

These issues are also the case within the DR, and these perceptions of the school system have been the primary driver for a nationwide movement that brought the government to commit to allocating 4% of the national budget to education (“Pacto Nacional para la Reforma Educativa en la Republica-Dominicana 2014-2030,” 2014).

Studies from varied cultural contexts have concluded that the motives of preservice teachers to choose the career are very similar. The most common elements found in these studies are intrinsic and altruistic factors, although extrinsic factors have also been considered relevant in the decision of the participants.

Governments in developed and developing countries are planning and strategizing to attract more academically talented individuals into the teaching profession, yet their decisions are being made based on research mainly looking at the factors influencing the choice to become a teacher, rather than how to attract more academically successful teachers (Gratacós & López-Jurado, 2016; Watt & Richardson, 2012). For academically excellent students from high performing high schools in the DR, it is not common to choose a teaching career. I considered essential to study those who do fit this profile and determine what motivates them to make that choice. Due to the teachers' shortage and to the scarcity of teachers that can align their performance with the demands of a new skill-based curricular design and the nation-wide projects, the DR is looking for more capable candidates for the teaching career.

As educators and researchers, we do not expect that results of studies developed in different socio-economic contexts can offer a full understanding of the factors that motivate our preservice teachers to make that choice. However, linking our findings to the ones of previous studies can help understand teachers' shortage and its reasons in a more systemic perspective.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This study examined the factors influencing the career decision-making process of academically excellent students who have graduated from high-performing high schools in the Dominican Republic and are now in a post-secondary degree program that prepares them to teach in the country's K-12 education system. The aim of this study was to gain an understanding of: What factors motivated academically excellent students from high-performing high schools in the DR to pursue a career in teaching; when they began thinking about a career in teaching; how they arrived at their decision to actually enroll in a teaching degree program; what and who these students described as having a strong influence in their decision-making process; and in what ways they expected a career in teaching to contribute to their life goals?

Research Design, Approach & Rationale

I used a basic interpretive qualitative methodology in this study, because this approach allows me to make meaning of a specific phenomenon (Merriam, 2002). This basic interpretive qualitative methodology allowed me to make meaning of significant experiences of these high performing students from high-performing high schools who choose teaching as a career in a context where it is an unlikely choice.

Talking to academically excellent students who graduate from high-performing high schools and chose to go into an education career allowed me to gain an understanding of this phenomenon. While the participants in my study share a common academic characteristic and all went to high-performing high schools, they come from different family backgrounds and social groups. Thus, they may have different assumptions and motivations about choosing a teaching career, and therefore, each can shed light on this phenomenon in a different way.

Since basic interpretive qualitative approach is interested in the individual experiences of people and looks for the meaning people make of that experience (Creswell, 2007), this approach involves extended, in-depth participant interviews with subjects, and sometimes several interviews with the same participant, to get a full picture of their experience with the phenomenon. In my study, after the first interviews were done, I looked back through them, searching for patterns (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016) and, performed other interviews with the same participants as needed looking for the understanding of how these preservice teachers understood their process of career decision making amidst so many varied influences.

Reflections on My Identity

After more than 30 years in the teaching profession with responsibilities in teaching, curriculum development, and school administration, I have found that one of the most critical challenges has always been the quality of the teachers. In my experience, every year is more difficult than the last to find and hire teachers with high social and academic skills and knowledge for the schools where academic programs are being improved to face the social demands of their communities.

I have also observed how very few high school students lean towards teaching and how, although the government is improving working conditions and benefits, it is unusual to find excellent students from high-rated schools in the teaching profession. For different reasons, they think the career is not worthy, while in my opinion, teaching requires so many skills and knowledge that you need to be a high-performing, up-to-date professional to be able to face the challenge.

To me, it is critical to attract high profile students to the teaching career. This is an issue of concern in many countries, England, for example, responded to teachers' scarcity in the late nineties with a national effort addressing teachers' pay, work environment and with an aggressive teachers' recruitment campaign (Barber et al., 2007). Israel, introduced a reform to influence motivation to teach and teachers' perceptions of the profession, improving through this, teachers' professionalism and status (Taub , 2015). These initiatives have proved to be a way to solve the problem of these countries; we should also find our way in the DR to solve this issue.

Population, Sample, and Setting

The population I recruited from is a small group of academically excellent students who graduated from high-performing high schools and are now studying education at some of the private universities in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo. These universities have a merited status for serving the middle and high-class student community. These universities are also known for the excellence of their graduates and for the diverse global interactions they hold with similar higher education institutions around the world.

A sample of 13 individuals is enough because the total number of students with these pre-established conditions is meager, and a small sample size is acceptable for a study seeking to explore particular phenomena under specific conditions (Smith et al., 2012). During a pre-dissertation field experience, as part of a class, which had received HSRIB approval (HSRIB # 180218), I interviewed three participants who had met my criteria, and gathered good information which helped affirm the value of my study. For my full dissertation, I used their information but also went deeper in my inquiry by calling them back for a second interview. Beyond these participants, I recruited 10 additional participants. These 10 came from a list of students who had initially volunteered when I was recruiting for my pilot study. I used

WhatsApp, and asked if they were still interested in potentially participating and if so to arrange time to review the consent form and obtain their signature if they agree to participate. See Appendix A for the WhatsApp recruitment message in Spanish and English.

The inclusionary criteria for this study are:

- Students studying to become a teacher by being enrolled in their first, second or third year of a university's education program.
- Students who performed over 90 points on the National Standardized Exams at the end of 12th grade.
- Students who come from high schools ranked as A or B in the Ranking Escolar 2015 (FUNPEN, 2015).

The exclusionary criteria for this study are:

- Students who are not in the first, second or third year of a university's education program.
- Students who obtained less than 90 points on the Standardized National Exams of 12th grade.
- Students who did not attend a high school ranked as A or B in the Ranking Escolar 2015.

The setting of this study was private universities located in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. I recruited participants from a pool of 500 first, second and third-year teaching degree program students. I recruited from this pool because first, second, and third-year students still have, fresh in their minds, the process of deciding to pursue a degree in teaching.

I confirmed the profile of the participants via the Registrar's office to make sure participants met inclusionary criteria.

Instrumentation & Data Collection Procedures

I collected my data using in-depth, semi-structured interviews, the memos I wrote during the process of transcribing the interviews, and my notes and observations made during the interviews. I began by reviewing the consent form and have the students sign it (See Appendix B for the English and Spanish version). As part of the interview process, I asked each participant to complete the FIT-Choice Scale (Watt & Richardson, 2007). The FIT-Choice Scale has been designed and validated in many countries to examine motivations for becoming a teacher (Watt & Richardson, 2012). The interviews took place in a regular university classroom of the universities located in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Participants spent between 60 and 90 minutes in completing the informed consent, being interviewed, and completing the FIT-Scale. The interviews were taped, and I took notes during them.

Interview Protocol & Process

I used a semi-structured interview protocol to conduct my interviews (See Appendix C for English and Spanish versions). In-depth semi structured interviews engage researchers with participants in a way that inspires a full exchange of information. Such interviewing mode aims to discover the respondents' insights or to review into a subject to discover nuances and detail (Creswell, 2014b; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). These interviews were done face-to-face to create a rapport with participants and to better understand their answers by observing their verbal and body language.

My interview questions were aimed to provoke the interviewees to talk about the factors influencing a career decision as an act of profound reflection where individuals may discover feelings that were irrelevant to them now, but decisive in the process. Questions such as what motivated them to pursue a career in teaching, when they begin thinking about a career in teaching, how they arrived at the decision to enroll in a teaching degree program, and what and who had a strong influence on their decision making, guided the interviewees in their reflection of the decision-making process.

I began each interview with these types of questions and then stopped and asked the participants to complete the FIT-Choice Scale (See Appendix D for English and Spanish versions), which took them less than 10 minutes. Following that, I asked them if there was anything else, they wanted to share about their motivation to become a teacher that may have come to mind as they completed the scale.

One day before the interview, I confirmed that the meeting location was still available, and I called participants with a reminder about the scheduled interview, providing them the time and location of interview, driving directions, parking instructions, specific meeting location, and my mobile phone number. I also prepared an interview packet with a copy of the interview guide, the informed consent documents, and the debriefing notes template. These interview packets are labeled with an appropriate study ID. I also made provisions such as charging my mobile phone and checking the batteries in the recording equipment.

The day of the interview I had the participant's contact information at hand and arrived at the designated location at least 5 to 10 minutes early in order to adjust comfort features such as temperature, light, and sound, and to test recording equipment in interview setting (Guest et al., 2013).

FIT-Choice Scale

Watt and Richardson (2007) developed a scale to measure what influences the decision to become a teacher: Factors Influencing Teaching-Choice, hereinafter, FIT-Choice. This scale has been implemented in Australia (Watt & Richardson, 2007a), Holland (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012), Australia, Germany, Norway, and the United States (Watt et al., 2012), Turkey (Eren & Tezel, 2010; Topkaya & Sercan-Uztosun, 2012); Canada and Oman (Klassen et al., 2011); Switzerland (Berger & D'Ascoli, 2012); Germany (Canrinus & Fokkens-Bruinsma, 2013; Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012, 2014; (König & Rothland, 2012); Croatia (Jugović et al., 2012); China (Lin et al., 2012), Spain (Gratacós & López-Jurado, 2016), and Indonesia (Suryani et al., 2016). The use of this instrument in many different contexts not only allows international comparisons possible, but can help add to the knowledge of the most important factors influencing the decision to become a teacher (Berger & D'Ascoli, 2012).

The FIT-Choice model is based on the expectancy-value theory developed by Wigfield and Eccles (2000), which explains the motivational factors influencing a career choice based on success expectations and task evaluation. The FIT-Choice scale has two main constructs: motivation and perception constructs. The motivation construct is unfolded in the following factors: work with children, pragmatic utility value; social and educational contribution; altruistic service; ability, social and family influences; prior teaching and learning experiences; and fallback career. The perception construct is unfolded into: social status, salary, social dissuasion, satisfaction with choice, and task demand (Hennessy & Lynch, 2017; Watt et al., 2012). The scale is divided in three main parts, 40 items measuring the influential factors; 15 items measuring beliefs about teaching, and six items asking about the decision to become a

teacher. The answers to these questions are given using a seven-point Likert scale where one equals not at all important, and seven equals extremely important.

For my study I used the Spanish version of the FIT-Choice scale tool translated, adapted and validated by Gratacós and López-Jurado (2016). The author of this scale had authorized me to use it in my study (see Appendix D for English and Spanish versions).

Data Analysis

Once the recorded interviews were transcribed, I coded them using full open (Emergent, Intuitive) coding (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This type of coding is frequently used to distinguish concepts and categories. The interviewees consistently talked about motivations and perceptions of the teaching career, I looked for patterns in their motivations and perceptions. I also used my field notes which I completed after each interview.

During my data analysis: I listened to and read multiple times the participants' interviews to get a general perspective of the whole ideas collected. Second, I coded and excerpted noteworthy words, terms, statements, and phrases about the topic of the research. Third, I made meanings from these words, terms, statements, and phrases. After organizing these meanings into themes, I identified and pulled out the salient points. Once comfortable with the themes I reported the story resulting from each interview (Creswell, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). My analysis of the Fit-Choice assessment involve creating an individual profile for each participant and help them go deeper in their reflections.

I completed the following steps in my data analysis: I listened to, and read multiple times the participants' interviews to get a general perspective of the whole ideas collected. Second, I coded and excerpted noteworthy words, terms, statements, and phrases about the topic of the research. Third, I made meanings from these words, terms, statements, and phrases. After

organizing these meanings into themes, I identified and pulled out the salient points. After that, I divided them into descriptive (those that describe the experience with the phenomenon) and interpretive (those that describe how the participants make sense of their experiences). After this, I clustered and re-clustered until the units make sense and I found my themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Once comfortable with the themes I reported the story resulting from each interview (Creswell, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). My analysis of the Fit-Choice assessment involved creating an individual profile for each participant.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is described as investigating in a moral manner, and this is a major concern in research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to establishing: (a) credibility, (b) dependability, (c) confirmability, and (d) transferability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Credibility. Defined as the confidence in the truth of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, n.d.), credibility involves analyzing data and deciding what information is important and what themes describe the experience that participants narrated (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Credibility is connected to the internal validity of a study. To establish credibility a researcher should use the techniques of triangulation, persistent observations, peer debriefing, prolonged engagement, member checking, negative case analysis, or referential adequacy (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). To ensure credibility in my study, I used member checking to make sure that the narrative of the interview reflected the participants' ideas, what they really meant during the conversation as truthful as possible. I asked participants to read the transcripts of their interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to reflect deeper on their answers to my questions and on the conversation in general. I also asked them to add ideas they considered could enrich their answers or fill any

information gap. Eight of my 13 participants told me that the transcripts reflected exactly what they meant, and the remaining five added further details that came to their minds while reading the narrative and reflecting about it.

I also used triangulation in my study as another technique to establish credibility. Triangulation involves using multiple data sources in a research to generate understanding. Qualitative researchers commonly employ this technique to ensure that an explanation is rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed (Lincoln & Guba, n.d.). In my study, I used the individual interviews, memos containing the observations made during the interviews, which are mainly based on the non-verbal language of the participants, and their responses in the FIT-Choice Scale to help me in a better understanding of each participant's story.

Transferability. Also crucial to establishing trustworthiness is transferability, which is ensured when the researcher can show that the findings have applicability in other contexts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The technique to establish transferability is thick description which is described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a way of achieving a type of external validity. Thick description refers to the exhaustive explanation of experiences in which the researcher explicitly shows and contextualizes the patterns of cultural and social relationships (Lincoln & Guba, n.d.). A researcher ensures thick description by depicting a phenomenon in enough detail that the reader can judge the scope to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people.

In my study I described the feelings of the participants as they showed and expressed them during our conversations. I also requested them to describe their feelings and thoughts at the moments in which they decided to choose teaching as a career or started to think about that choice. It was important in the description the context in which that happened in order to have a

better understanding of their choice, compared to their possibilities to make another career choice. As well, I used thick description while detailing the steps in the data collection and analysis to facilitate that other researchers can understand the whole process.

Dependability. Demonstrating that the conclusions are consistent and could be repeated is called dependability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). One of the techniques used to confirm dependability is peer debriefing. Peer debriefing is a process in which the researcher exposes himself to a disinterested peer in a way paralleling an investigative sessions and for exploring characteristics of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). This technique involves having a researcher not involved in the process, examine both the process and product of the research study with the purpose to evaluate the accuracy and evaluate whether or not the findings, interpretations and conclusions are supported by the data (Lincoln & Guba, n.d.).

In my study, I scheduled “debriefing sessions” with a team of peers. During these sessions I talked to them about the research process, possible bias, and my point of view of the study. These sessions were very edifying because my peers’ feedback allowed me to see from different perspectives some specifics of the study that helped make it more reliable.

Confirmability. The scope to which the findings are impartial and shaped by the respondents and not biased by the researcher is called confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, n.d.). It is the traditional parallel to Objectivity in quantitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). To establish the confirmability of my study, I used reflexivity through analytic memos by recognizing my background and connecting my ideas and beliefs. In the section Reflections of My Identity in this study I depicted myself as a professional, I talked about my beliefs and aspirations as an educational leader while presenting my dispositions and assumptions about the

topic of research. The whole process of reflexivity began during the class modules of this Ph.D. program with memo writing. Putting in writing through memos the reflections about my identity as a researcher helped me refine my own definition of myself. In this study this reflexivity is of crucial importance because I am the data collection means, and regularly memoing my ideas and opinions let me use the data more objectively.

Limitations and Delimitations

Creswell (2014) explained the delimitations of a study as the decisions a researcher makes to narrow the scope of their study. In the case of this study, the delimitations are that the results were delimited to the 13 participants from private universities in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo, DR.

The limitations of the study are those characteristics of design or methodology that impacted or influenced the interpretation of the findings from the research (Creswell, 2014). One of the limitations of this study was I did not find prior studies addressing this specific topic in the DR. There was only one study of a similar topic, thus I had to examine the studies of different contexts worldwide where there are plenty of international literature related to this subject. Another limitation is that data was collected through in-depth interviews, this implies that biases could emerge from my the thoughts as the researcher; consequently I could find inaccuracies resulting in a misinterpretation of the data. The fact of addressing a small population meeting the inclusionary criteria is also a limitation of this study.

Chapter III Closure

The purpose of my study was to gain an understanding of what factors motivate academically excellent students from high-performing high schools in the DR to pursue a career in teaching. This study follows a basic interpretive qualitative approach and seeks to understand

how these preservice teachers make meaning of their motives and influencers during their career choice process. These participants are at the moment of this study in their first, second and third year of the post-secondary degree in private universities in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo, DR.

CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPANTS' NARRATIVES

Chapter IV offers individual profiles of the research participants. The purpose of this chapter is to explain what factors and/or who influenced the participants' decision to choose a career in teaching. In this chapter, we can see the description of their experience from the first moment they considered education as a significant choice. Participants describe their feelings, the people who supported or did not support their decision, and the insights of how they feel about their future in the education career.

I use aliases to protect the identities of the participants. My sample involves 13 participants from different universities in metropolitan Santo Domingo. All were enrolled in their first, second, or third year of a teacher preparation bachelor's degree program. These participants had a score of over 90 points on the National Standardized Exams (NSE) at the end of 12th grade, and came from high schools ranked as A or B in the Ranking Escolar 2015 (FUNPEN, 2015).

The fact that these participants performed over 90 points in the NSE guarantees that they were academically excellent as high school students. Passing the NSE is a requirement of getting a high school diploma in the DR education system. During four consecutive days, students who passed all regular exams at their schools are examined via national assessments in Math, Spanish, Social Studies, and Science. The participants also came from high schools classified as A or B in the Ranking Escolar 2015 (FUNPEN, 2015), a report that classified schools based on their academic results for the NSE, with the A group being the group of schools with the highest scores, and the F schools being those that need to make drastic changes to improve their teaching and learning results. In most cases, this classification of schools nationwide coincides with

people's ideas of excellent, good, or bad school based on academic performance of students, professional quality of teachers, teaching aids and resources, and school facilities. Most high scoring schools are private schools since, at the time of the FUNPEN (2015) study, public schools had not yet started their improvement plans as now required by law.

It is important to note that for years most students who had decided to go into the teaching career within the DR attended a single specific state university. Due to the bad reputation of that state university and the decay of its facilities, attending this university is often only attractive to those who cannot afford a private university, and this prevented a good number of middle-class students from choosing teaching. As part of a master plan to improve the quality of education in the country, since 2015 the government has allocated resources for teaching scholarships as a stimulus for private universities to open, or reopen, the teaching degree career area in their institutions to attract middle-class students to this career. This program started attracting big groups of applicants each year, although for the first years of the program the academic preparation, and the social, technological and intellectual skills of the applicants were under the desired standard for a student-teacher (INAFOCAM, 2013a). The screening of the applicants has become more selective each year, and although the number of applicants is still low compared to the need for teachers, it is attracting better prospects to the teaching career. All the participants in my study are part of this program. I interviewed 13 participants, all registered in the teaching program sponsored by the Ministry of Education as part of the government efforts to improve the quality of the DR's schools. Expanded teacher preparation programs are a key action of the government in this initiative. For many years, the education schools of private universities closed due to the lack of demand by their students to enter a teaching career. In the last decade, teacher salary raises and the improvement of their working conditions has served as

a motivator for certain social groups who are now considering teaching as a career option (Diariolibre.com, 2017a, 2017b).

My participants were attending some of the most expensive private universities in Santo Domingo, as sponsored by the government who pays their full scholarship, and their textbooks, and gives them a monthly stipend of approximately US\$150.00. The fact of studying in one of these universities can be a motivation for many people, the facilities, faculty and logistics of private institutions in our country are some of their main attractions.

Table 1 summarizes some key demographic information for my 13 participants. Following the table, there is a graphic representation of its content to better understand differences among the categories of gender, years in the program, parents' college level, SES, second career choice participants, of the participants. Furthermore, during the narratives, I offer a detailed the highlights of each participant's experience.

I have divided the individual narratives into five main parts: Motivations to Become a Teacher; When Teaching Became a Real Option; Influencers: People and Other Factors; How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals; and FIT-Choice Scale Results. These four align with my research questions (see Figure 2). The narrative is intended to help the reader discover a more meaningful story, allowing a better understanding of the processes and thoughts detailed here.

Motivations to Become a Teacher	• What motivates these students to pursue a career in teaching, despite it being an uncommon career choice in this cultural context?
When Teaching Became a Real Option	• When do such students begin thinking about a career in teaching, and how do they arrive at their decision to enroll in a teaching degree program?
Influencers: People and Other Factors	• When do such students begin thinking about a career in teaching, and how do they arrive at their decision to enroll in a teaching degree program?
How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals	• In what ways do they expect a career in teaching to contribute to their life goals?

Figure 2. Alignment of profile categories and research questions.

Table 1.

Background Information of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Years in the teaching program	Mother college graduate	Father college graduate	SES	Second Career choice
Barbie	22	F	3	Yes	Yes	Middle	Yes
Alex	20	F	3	No	Yes	Low	No
Pam	23	F	3	Yes	Yes	Upper	Yes
Carol	21	F	3	Yes	Yes	Upper	No
Maya	19	F	1	No	No	Low	No
Joseph	20	M	2	No	No	Middle	No
Kevin	21	M	2	Yes	Yes	Middle	No
Gerard	20	M	2	Yes	Yes	Middle	No
Irene	20	F	2	No	No	Low	No
Sherri	20	F	2	No	No	Low	No
Ed	20	M	2	No	No	Middle	No
Yanet	24	F	2	Yes	Yes	Upper	Yes
Paul	19	M	2	Yes	Yes	Middle	No

FIT-Choice Scale

During the interviews, participants completed the FIT Choice Scale, rating various items influencing their career choice. These factors are grouped into the constructs of motivation and perception which are unfolded in more specific factors, as originally cited by Watt and Richardson (2007) and Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2012). Under the umbrella of motivation, issues related to “Work with Children” and the “Intrinsic Career Value” were combined in one factor, and named “Work with Children.” The second factor “Pragmatic Utility Value,” comprises the original elements “Job Security” and “Time for Family.” The third factor

“Social and Educational Contribution” consists of the factors “Enhance Social Equity,” “Shape Future Children/Adolescents,” and “Job Transferability.” The fourth factor “Altruistic Service” includes “Make Social Contribution” and “Shape Future Children/Adolescents” issues. The sixth factor “Social & Family Influences,” consists of issues related to “Social Influences” and “Time for Family.” The seventh factor is the “Prior Teaching and Learning Experiences,” while the eighth factor relates to “Fallback Career” (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2014).

After completing the main part of the interview, participants then responded to the survey with the main purpose to visit all validated factors influencing the teaching career choice as shown in the literature review, and to reflect on the conversation they just had with me. After completing the scale, we re-engaged in the conversation and they added further thoughts based on ideas elicited by completing the scale.

Barbie

Barbie is a 22-year-old female who comes from what she considers a middle-class family and is in her third year of studying to become a teacher in a private university in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo. Both her parents graduated from the university as professionals in areas not related to teaching. Teaching is Barbie’s second college career choice. She first started studying Industrial Engineering and after not finding satisfaction with the career, switched to Education against her father advice who considered she should look for a higher status career considering her academic average and potential.

Motivations to Become a Teacher

Teaching was not at the top of Barbie’s mind when her process of thinking about a future career started in her last years of high school. Despite helping others as a Math tutor at her high school, and continuing to do this in college, she did not consider teaching as a career choice until

she started looking for more passion and self-satisfaction in her studies. She remembers with a soft smile how she had always been in roles of helping other children, even as an elementary school student. Helping others made her feel socially significant and useful. She feels that since early in her life she was trying to make a difference in other people's life.

The choice to go into the career of teaching was not directly related to my immediate family or close friends. After three years of studying Industrial Engineering, I decided to rethink my career choice because I was not feeling the satisfaction I needed. A close friend of mine advised me to explore the teaching career since I have the patience, and I am intelligent enough to make him understand math that had always been so difficult to him. After looking into the curriculum of the teaching career, I felt an 'aha' moment and realized that teaching was the career I was looking for.

When Teaching Became a Real Option

Barbie remembers that the main factor influencing her to choose the teaching career was her search for personal satisfaction, although receiving her friends' and family support when she made her choice reassured her decision.

By the time I started to think about becoming a teacher, my family and friends saw a perfect match between the career and my personality, and aspirations. My family respected the profession and never diminished it or found that I would waste myself on that profession. I am a family-oriented person and becoming a teacher will allow me to enjoy more family time. My friends also applauded my decision to become a teacher, some of them even told me that I had always "behave as a teacher" caring for them. At that moment, I only considered the factor of influencing and helping people to create a better society.

During her time studying industrial engineering, Barbie thought about looking for a career that could fill her emotionally, that could make her feel useful. Becoming an engineer was “cool,” but not satisfying.

There was a moment when I felt that although I am brilliant in math, and I was doing great academically, I was not as happy as I expected or desired in my studies. I went to the orientation department, and after a couple of visits, they suggested a career change. In the disappointment of my capabilities, I started to look at other career plans, but no one resonates to me as ‘the one’ until my friend suggested teaching and I looked at it. That was my ‘aha’ moment.

Influencers: People and Other Factors

Barbie had always wanted to be a person who could make significant social changes, and as a teacher, she is sure she can achieve her goal. She remembered having a teacher who empowered and cared for her in situations where she was vulnerable and challenged by life. One of those moments was when her family moved to Canada.

I was 11 years old and did not know the language, I had no friends and was afraid of failing at school, every insignificance was a challenge to me, and I had always been such an excellent student.... It was frustrating. But there was that teacher who pushed and pulled me, making me believe in myself. I recall those moments and think I want to be like that teacher, the support and inspiration my students need when they are facing similar challenging situations.

How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals

Barbie looks happy and enthusiastic and feels she has found the love of her life in teaching. She is planning to get a masters’ degree and to implement in her classroom

empowering strategies that allow her students to become the best they can be and to be better citizens. She talks about her passion for teaching and her body language expresses the joy of a young girl who is planning a party with her friends. It is rewarding to see this in the new generation of teachers.

Right now, I cannot understand why teaching was not my first choice. I was a teacher inside, maybe the fact that teaching is not a career the university promotes as they do with the rest of the careers, many students do not consider teaching as an option. I am sure this love for my work will not change. Thinking of being constantly surrounded by children and young people is the best scenario I can think of for my professional life and teaching provides me that. I will look for a master's degree, I need to continue studying to be the best I can, and considering the material wellbeing of the career, teachers' living conditions and salaries have improved enough in the DR to equal teaching to any other well-remunerated career. As a child I dreamed with becoming someone important.

FIT-Choice Scale Results

Teaching is Barbie's second career, chosen after two years in her search for satisfaction with what she was doing. Table 2 summarizes her scores for the FIT-Choice assessment, and as we can see, to work with children, the social and educational contribution, altruistic service, salary, satisfaction with choice and task demand were extremely important in her decision. Her lowest rating was for it being a fallback career, so even though it was her second career choice while in college, she does not think of it as a fallback choice.

Table 2.

Barbie's FIT-Choice Scale Responses

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	7.00
• Pragmatic Utility Value	5.20
• Social & Educational Contribution	7.00
• Altruistic Service	7.00
• Ability, Social & Family Influences	6.86
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	7.00
• Fallback Career	2.33
Perception**	
• Social Status	5.33
• Salary	6.50
• Social Dissuasion	5.67
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Task Demand	6.80

*Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (7); ** Not at All (1) to Extremely (7)

Alex

Alex is a 20-year-old student who noted she comes from a lower-middle-class family from one of the provinces in the DR. She is in the third year of her studies to become a teacher in a private university in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo. Her father is a university professor and her mother a housewife. Her family has always lived in a town where agriculture is the major employer. There is a state university campus in her hometown, but Alex came to the capital to study education, since this career was not offered in the university campus of her hometown. This meant leaving home for the first time at the age of 17.

Teaching has always been my dream career. I want to be like my father, who is a math university teacher, although, despite my Math skills, I want to be an English teacher. I, of

course, had the opportunity to study medicine or engineering, but I have always seen myself as a teacher.

Motivations to Become a Teacher

Alex's career choice was closely related to her father's career. In their town, he is loved and respected by everybody, and he has been the university teacher for several generations. Alex feels that becoming a teacher is continuing her father's legacy and impacting new generations as her father has done. She describes teachers as people with an aura that have a significant impact on other people's life. Alex always wanted to be a person who people recognize as socially substantial and influential, and becoming a teacher, she thinks, can help her achieve this purpose. She remembers how many students her father had helped to become better persons, go on the right path, and become socially useful. She recalls how those students recognize her father's influence on them. She wants to become a person who empowers and cares for others who are in vulnerable and challenging situations in life.

Look, in my town, everybody looks for my father's advice, he is a well-known and respected person in the community, and he has helped groups of young people to find their way in life. Even if a conflict arises, people call my father to intervene and help in its resolution. That type of influence in new generations and society is what I consider the primary motivator in my career choice. Besides that, the people in my town expect me to become my father's successor.

Alex remembers being very lucky because she had the best teachers she could ask for. She describes herself as one of the best students in the classroom, the one with excellent grades, the one volunteering for any task from helping another student to singing or reciting in a school

activity. She remembers how frequently she had groups of her peers coming to her house looking for her help and described that as a rewarding experience.

I used to volunteer for everything at school. To me, having to do homework or having to help someone academically weaker was fun and satisfying. This was not only a recognition of my capabilities and dedication, but also something that made me happy and satisfied.

When Teaching Became a Real Option

People around Alex always saw her as an excellent student, the type that although being raised in an agricultural town, had the academic and social skills that allowed her to perform higher. There were always people who advised her to aim professionally higher than teaching, to go into a higher social and economic profile career. To her that was not an option, she wanted to influence and improve people's lives in her town through teaching. She depicted herself as a follower of her father's work.

I had friends at school that considered I had to become a doctor, mainly because of my excellent academic performance. They believe that 'smart people' should become doctors, engineers, or lawyers. I think that academically outstanding students should become teachers so we can have better schools and a better society. Teachers are the key to have better professionals in all areas.

Influencers: People and Other Factors

Alex feels that her father was the most significant influencer in her career decision, but also considers that her town influenced her decision; the way its members show gratefulness and respect to a devoted teacher was always something important to her. The social recognition of a well-done teacher's work is invaluable career satisfaction. Her hometown expects her to follow-

up her father's work, and she is happy with the idea of initially teaming with her father before she takes over this responsibility. Another thing she considers significant is her memories of the vacation's times. She and her family have many stories of those periods of time and she considers that having that time is crucial for establishing tight family bonds. She is looking forward to going back to her town with the teaching diploma. It is now her immediate goal. Looking at her story and the process in her career choice, there is evidence of how a community can impact a person's career choice. To her, the family influence represented by her father's accomplishment, her social group expectations, and the cultural legacy that she wants to be part of, is very significant that there is no other possible path to follow.

How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals

Alex is working hard and continues to obtain excellent grades in her college classes. She considers she already has the social responsibility to be a high-quality teacher. She feels even more committed now that she has a full scholarship in one of the most expensive private universities of the DR.

I love the professional I am becoming, and I know that people in [name of community] will be proud of me and will appreciate my work. I see myself as a community leader, a person that children and young people will look after. I also feel committed to continue my professional development and give them the best of the best in my area of study. My people need that. Teaching does not contribute to my life goals. To become a teacher is my life goal.

FIT-Choice Scale Results

As part of this study Alex completed the FIT Choice Scale, rating items influencing her career choice. As seen in Table 3, her motivation and perception of the career as detailed by the

constructs of working with children, pragmatic utility value, social and educational contribution, altruistic service, social & family influences, prior teaching and learning experiences scored the highest, while the factor of it being a fallback career scored the lowest. In the perception construct comprising the factors of social status, salary, satisfaction with choice and task demand, she also scored the highest probably conditioned by the influence of her father, the life in her community and the lack of teachers in the DR.

Table 3.

Alex's FIT-Choice Scale Responses

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	7.00
• Pragmatic Utility Value	5.33
• Social & Educational Contribution	7.00
• Altruistic Service	7.00
• Ability, Social & Family Influences	7.00
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	7.00
• Fallback Career	1.00
Perception**	
• Social Status	7.00
• Salary	7.00
• Social Dissuasion	6.67
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Task Demand	7.00

*Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (7); ** Not at All (1) to Extremely (7)

Pam

Pam is a 23-year-old female who comes from what she considers a high-middle class neighborhood in Santo Domingo. She is now in the third year of her studies to become a teacher in a private university in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo. She comes from a large

family, all siblings as well as both parents, are university graduates, her father, a Software Engineer, and her mother, an Accountant. Pam initially decided to study Medicine and spent two years in that career until she discovered it was not “her thing.”

Motivations to Become a Teacher

To her parents’ surprise, she decided to go for teaching after a field experience in a Psychology class. During that field experience, she had to work with children who had learning disabilities and discovered “that helping children was her thing.”

She described how much she admired the teacher in charge of that field experience, and Pam felt she wanted to be like her, “a glamorous loving and caring teacher.” When Pam’s poor grades forced her to look for another career option, she could only think about becoming a teacher.

I had never thought I would be a teacher; I did not see myself taking care of everybody else. Almost at the end of my second year in Medicine, where I was not performing so well, I had this Psychology class, and I had to go for a field experience to a school specialized in children with disabilities and special conditions. On the one hand, I loved that teacher, and she was so glamorous and classy, so outspoken and seemed to know that much that I thought: ‘I want to be just like her.’ Surprisingly, being surrounded by children who needed my help made the perfect match with what I was looking for and the push required for a career change.

When informing her family of her decision to switch to a teacher career, her mother was supportive, but her father insisted on looking at more profitable options, like his career, for example. It was after a while that he “stopped fighting the inevitable” and accepted that “if Pam were going to be enthusiastically engaged in the university matters, he would support her.” Most of her aunts and uncles are teachers, although they did not influence her decision.

When Teaching Became a Real Option

Pam describes herself as having been a rebellious high schooler who found no use in learning most of the curriculum because it lacked connection with real-life as she saw it at that moment. She remembers “looking for herself in the future” and finding few answers. She remembers herself as a leader of “lost causes in her class” and as someone that someday for some reason, unknown to her at that moment, will be remembered by the whole school. She also recalled that she felt sad for her teachers who could not help her lack of interest. She described her former teachers as the most patient people in the world, the most loving and understanding people who insisted on making a good citizen from her. She expressed that her teachers were amazing people, professionals no one could equal.

I decided to choose teaching because I realized what a teacher means for students who lack guidance, love or inspiration, or those who are vulnerable and challenged by their situations in life; and because I realized that I could become the person who guide, love, inspire and help those students.

Influencers: People and Other Factors

Pam feels that her glamorous Psychology teacher was the leading influencer in her second career choice, but also sees the seed that her high school teachers planted in her. Her desire to leave a legacy, and the satisfaction to help those in need, are all factors that also influenced her decision to become a teacher.

Pam always had other career choices at hand, and she had her father’s advice, her mother's support, her brothers’ example, her friends’ opinions, and the money needed to afford any other choice. Instead, she is sure that she is going to find the utmost satisfaction in teaching.

To go to a private university in our country requires the family to dedicate money to that. This university is one of the most expensive, but luckily, money was not an issue in considering my second career choice. First, I choose medicine, which is a costly career, and I could have chosen any other, but when teaching touched me, I realized there was nothing else to look for. I will not be making the same money, but the salaries put together with the rest are not bad.

How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals

Pam thinks that teaching will contribute to her life goals by helping her feel satisfied with her daily life and her profession. She considers that being able to help children to become good citizens is a noble endeavor, and she has decided to become the best one possible by training to be a teacher for special education.

I cannot think of any other thing that makes me happier than to spend the day surrounded by children and knowing I am helping them to become good people. But I am also planning of having my own family. I see how teachers are the only professionals who spend vacations with their children, I like that, that also strengthens family.

FIT-Choice Scale Results

In her responses to the FIT-Choice Scale, Pam score with the highest values were the factors work with children, social & educational contribution, altruistic service, prior teaching & learning experiences, and satisfaction with choice (See Table 4). For Pam, the factor of it being a fallback career had the lowest score. After completing the FIT-Scale, she commented that while she was studying medicine, her psychology field experience, allowed her “to live” being a teacher, and she learned that teaching was far from being a fallback career. She responded that

the factors of pragmatic utility value, ability, social & family influences, social status, salary, social dissuasion and task demand were things that did not influence her decision as much.

Table 4.

Pam's FIT-Choice Scale Responses

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	7.00
• Pragmatic Utility Value	5.22
• Social & Educational Contribution	7.00
• Altruistic Service	7.00
• Ability, Social & Family Influences	6.43
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	7.00
• Fallback Career	1.00
Perception**	
• Social Status	6.00
• Salary	7.00
• Social Dissuasion	5.67
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Task Demand	6.20

*Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (7);** Not at All (1) to Extremely (7)

Carol

Carol is a 21-year-old college student who comes from what she considers a high-middle class family in Santo Domingo. She comes from a large family, with both parents and siblings being college graduates. She is now in the second year studying to become a teacher in a private university in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo.

Motivations to Become a Teacher

When Carol's high school counselor started the career orientation process, Carol informed her that although she would participate in all the visits and career fairs, she already

knew she wanted to be a teacher. To her parents, her career decision was not a surprise; Carol's dreamed career had always been education, and she plans to have her own preschool as soon as she graduates. Although his father insisted her to be an architect, he knew there was nothing he or her mother could say or do against that, even though they thought she could aim "higher."

When Teaching Became a Real Option

Carol does not recall a specific point in time when she started thinking about becoming a teacher, because as far as she remembers, teaching her friends and her dolls was her favorite game as a child. As a student at the elementary and secondary level, she usually helped her friends understand their school homework and had the most popular study group in the neighborhood at her house. She always wanted to be a teacher. She graduated from high school with honors, and as soon as she could, she registered as a student in the Education school. Fortunately, the scholarship program of the government allowed her to go to one of the best universities in Santo Domingo. There was always some relative or friend who advised her to go to medical school, but this type of advice would only make her laugh.

Influencers: People and Other Factors

With great emotion reflected in the tone of her voice, Carol describes the superior type of person a teacher is in her eyes.

Teaching is the most exciting activity a person can engage in. A teacher can mold the souls of the students and can feel the joy and happiness and sadness of all students and even influence their families. A teacher is someone that gives advice to and receives love from many people. Teachers help children become doctors, engineers, poets, housekeepers, mothers, and fathers. Teachers gain the love and respect of their students and their students' families. Teachers can make more solid their own families, because

they have more time with them. Besides that, teachers' salaries and working conditions have improved a lot, you put all together and find that everything about being a teacher is good.

Carol describes herself as a people person who loves to help others. As a member of her church, she has always assisted in the Sunday school with the younger children. She has also helped in summer camps, and adults in charge of these programs would include her for the asset she was as part of the team. Carol describes her teachers as the best sample to follow as a professional and as a human being.

My teachers, each of them, had different unique traits; some were quiet, and with a low voice, others had the spirit of science and investigation in them; they were always bringing interesting new things to class that looked more like playing games than taking a class. Others were the kind of person that gets so close to you that they even know the details of any conflict going on in your family. All of them have given me a complete inspiration and different patterns to become a good teacher.

How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals

Carol had the financial possibility to make another career choice and would have had the support from her parents, brothers, and sisters. But she has always been sure that teaching is the most satisfying career, and that it is also where more people can be touched and transformed.

I want to be part of the change this country needs. I want to embed passion for social justice in my students, I want to be part of the lives of better doctors and engineers, and I know that the right place to do that is in the classrooms. I cannot wait to graduate and start my routine with my kids. I am planning to spend some years in different schools, to

learn from practice as much as possible, and when the time comes, I will open my own school, I am sure I will change the world through my students.

FIT-Choice Scale Results

As part of the study Carol responded to the FIT-Choice Scale (see Table 5), and rated with the highest scores the things that influenced her including working with children, social and educational contribution, altruistic service, prior teaching and learning experiences, satisfaction with choice, and task demand. After using the scale Carol expressed her satisfaction with the improvements that teachers have recently had in the DR.

Table 5.

Carol's FIT-Choice Scale Responses

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	7.00
• Pragmatic Utility Value	6.22
• Social & Educational Contribution	7.00
• Altruistic Service	7.00
• Ability, Social & Family Influences	7.00
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	6.67
• Fallback Career	1.00
Perception**	
• Social Status	5.40
• Salary	7.00
• Social Dissuasion	5.67
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Task Demand	6.00

*Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (7); ** Not at All (1) to Extremely (7)

Maya

Maya is the youngest of five brothers and sisters, three of whom are teachers. They all are the first in their family to graduate from college. Until they started their university studies, they lived in a small town whose main economic activity is agriculture and cattle raising. Her parents can hardly read and write but know the importance of a good education in today's life. All their children, except Maya, went to the state university in the capital. It was far from home, but it is free, and the family could only afford housing, food, books and school supplies, and transportation. Maya is 19 and is in the first year in the School of Education at one of the private universities in the metropolitan Santo Domingo, with a full scholarship and a stipend.

Motivations to Become a Teacher

Maya has always been an excellent student and served as a monitor (i.e. tutor) most of her school life, enjoying the role of helping her classmates with their homework and their academic difficulties. Maya grew up seeing some of her sisters and brothers getting ready to become teachers or listening their stories from school. School life became the most frequent and entertaining conversation during family gatherings, mainly in the small town where everybody knows each other so well.

As a child and as a teenager, I remember getting involved in all my siblings did for class preparation. I think that having been raised in that environment set my mind as a future teacher. I remember my oldest sister talking about one of her students, who had some disability. I would help her cut, draw, or copy exercises for him that were different from those she prepared for the rest of the class. By that time, I understood the child was a pain in the neck, and still, my sister had the hope to make a good person from him. I also

remember how much that kid loved my sister. One of those relations that last forever, he still visits her and appreciates all her efforts.

When Teaching Became a Real Option

When the time for thinking about a career came, teaching was a natural choice. She already had three sisters and a brother who are teachers and she helped them to prepare worksheets for school during her childhood. Maya recalls some of her friends encouraged her to choose medicine or engineering, mainly because they considered she would waste her skills and intelligence in a low paid profession if she chose teaching. Her parents also wanted her to become a doctor.

I would rather be part of other people's lives and influence them in their love for studies and in making them act with responsibility in their communities. There are big changes I can make. As a teacher, I am sure I can lead my students to love Math and Science. There is an increasing need for people of Science in the world and I will teach my students to be as good students as I used to be. I remember that my teachers would ask me to help those students who needed assistance in doing their work or even understanding a given topic. That type of recognition made me feel committed to help others, and teaching is the best way to help; it is the best help one can offer.

Maya and her family feel that the actions taken by the government in the period of education reform that is taking place in the DR has directly impacted her family through her. For them, it had been impossible to think of her graduating from a reputed private college, without the recent scholarships. She recognizes that attending a private university is not only a matter of status, but also having facilities and establishing relations with people who have other type of life experience.

My family and I are grateful for the program of INAFOCAM that grants full scholarships for people who want to become teachers like me. With this program, I have the opportunity to study at this private university in which only rich people can attend. Having the opportunity to study here does not only allows me to socialize with other people but also gives me access to facilities I would not have access otherwise. Teachers here are very well prepared and very interested in the students' improved performance. I had thought of few other options, I believe teaching is more socially significant, it is something I have natural skills for, and I am sure I will have a job as soon as I graduate.

Influencers: People and Other Factors

Maya considers that her brother and sisters are the main influencers in her decision to become a teacher. The weekends preparing cutouts and worksheets, and helping them to grade notebooks and quizzes, prepared her mindset for her career choice.

Can you imagine? Weekends at home, our lives were around what was going on at my brother and sisters' classrooms. They used to share their experiences of the week, their strategies to make the students learn. They would usually ask for my help cutting, pasting or writing the grades on a form. Everything was about teaching. I enjoyed that. I think there, I started to love teaching without even knowing it. As a family we also enjoyed having a lot of holidays and almost two months' vacation time. Having lived this in my formative years, influenced my decision that I think started when I was a teenager. I do not remember willing to be anything else but a teacher.

How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals

Maya was always an excellent student, outstanding in Math and Science, and a person who thinks that there is a social responsibility everyone should respond to. At this moment, her

life goals are about becoming a good professional and setting a good example in her community as others did with her.

I am enjoying my professional development and the idea of a great future ahead helping others. I am planning to go back to my town and be part of the faculty in one of the public schools there. The pay is now very good, and there always improvement programs for teachers sponsored by the government. At every opportunity I have, I will encourage excellent students to become teachers because we need to change the image of teachers in our country.

FIT-Choice Scale Results

Maya responded the FIT-Choice Scale and rated highest the factors to work with children, salary, and satisfaction with choice, and rated the lowest of it being a fallback career (see Table 6). After answering the scale, it helped her to go back and add information to her interview. Something she finds significant is that universities do not promote teaching as a career choice as they promote other careers, even when there is a lack of teachers in the DR. She wonders whether they feel the profession is worthy or not to make the option well known to potential applicants.

Table 6.

Maya's FIT-Choice Scale Responses

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	7.00
• Pragmatic Utility Value	6.44
• Social & Educational Contribution	6.25
• Altruistic Service	6.40
• Ability, Social & Family Influences	6.29
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	6.33
• Fallback Career	1.00
Perception**	
• Social Status	6.00
• Salary	7.00
• Social Dissuasion	5.67
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Task Demand	6.40

*Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (7); ** Not at All (1) to Extremely (7)

Joseph

Joseph is the second child of what he considers a middle-class family who moved to the city when the kids started school. Both parents have a shallow academic level. His father is a skilled worker and his mother a housewife. Even though they do not have a university degree, both are very aware of the importance of going as far as possible in education to get a better life. Joseph is 20-year-old and is now in the second year of a teaching program at one of the private universities in metropolitan Santo Domingo.

Motivations to Become a Teacher

Joseph was the best in his class during high school and stood out mainly in Math and Science. All his friends expected him to be an engineer, and he also made those plans.

My first choice was to study Geology but there were specific issues at the time of registering in the university. A friend of mine told me that the university had openings in the School of Education and adding to that, they also had full scholarships for candidates that fit the profile. I went through the whole admissions process and was approved as a fit teacher candidate.

When Teaching Became a Real Option

As a student, Joseph was perceived as a Math genius at school and his peers looked for his help. His teacher always encouraged him to study engineering. Teaching was not an option in the minds of people around him or in his own mind. Something relevant is that teachers would assign him the role of a monitor (i.e., tutor) because they recognized in his skills, that made him a perfect help for certain students who were academically behind.

I never thought to become a teacher but thinking back I remember feeling flattered by teachers and by my peers when I had to help someone. I enjoyed the moment and felt proud of myself. I was well-known at school for being the ‘Math guy.’ To me, helping my friends with Math was part of the school routine. This goes back as early as elementary school. As a child and as a teenager, what I felt helping others was a very nice and unique satisfaction that I liked a lot. I think that these experiences were building up my present satisfaction with my career choice. I think that fate had, by that time, predestinated me to become a teacher although nobody, including me, were aware of that.

Influencers: People and Other Factors

Because of his outstanding performance in Math and Science, teachers, relatives and friends saw in Joseph an engineer, even Joseph himself was at first convinced that he was going

to be a Geologist. Mainly due to monetary issues he looked at teaching as a possibility. Although he is now happy with the choice.

I had only considered engineering, not only because I was induced to believe that being savvy at Math means you should be an engineer, it was also a matter of money; there is a belief that teachers do not earn enough, even though when nowadays we know it is not true that is a general belief, so people will rarely recommend others to become teachers. In my case it is a fact that I would never be able to attend a private university like this if I do not have a scholarship; the public university... well, you know... it is a problem. So, I came here, and I am not paying, and I like what is happening so far. I am ready to officially become a teacher, I have been practicing, anyway.

How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals

Joseph sees himself as a successful professional with the same aspirations any other professional might have. His most immediate aspirations are to get a teaching job, and after that, buy a car and his own house. His long-term goal is to motivate excellent students to become teachers. He considers this a commitment to society, to improve the quality of education in the DR.

I am planning to go back to my town and get a job in the high school I went. I am sure that in a few years I will buy my car and my house, you know the teachers' cooperative has plans. I will go back, and I will make sure to motivate the best students to become teachers. It is a beautiful career and it is an amazing feeling to be able to help others, not only academically but also in their personal lives.

FIT-Choice Scale Results

Joseph responded to the FIT-Choice Scale and rated highest the factors of salary and satisfaction with choice and rated the lowest social dissuasion (see Table 7). After answering the scale, he went back and add information to his interview. He thinks that the low social status of the career is conditioned, among other factors, by how excellent students refuse to become teachers, because they consider the career “unworthy of their intelligence,” and how the universities promote the career in their fairs or not. With the lack of good teachers in the DR, he considers, “teaching should be announced as much as Coca Cola.”

Table 7.

Joseph’s FIT-Choice Scale Responses

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	6.00
• Pragmatic Utility Value	6.44
• Social & Educational Contribution	6.50
• Altruistic Service	6.20
• Ability, Social & Family Influences	6.29
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	6.33
• Fallback Career	6.67
Perception**	
• Social Status	5.40
• Salary	7.00
• Social Dissuasion	5.33
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Task Demand	6.60

*Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (7); ** Not at All (1) to Extremely (7)

Kevin

Kevin is a 21-year-old young man who comes from what he considers a middle-class family. His parents came from Venezuela to DR when he was a baby. He is now in the second year within one of the private universities in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo. Both parents are university graduates in areas not related to teaching. Kevin choose the teaching career because he thinks that teaching is the key to a social change.

Motivations to Become a Teacher

Kevin had always considered teaching as a career, even when his parents and friends were not so pleased with the idea because they considered teaching as a low-income profession with low social recognition. Otherwise, Kevin is a young man who is aware of his role as a citizen and his responsibility with social changes. In his opinion, teachers are called to be the first agents of change in society, and this task has to be done from the classrooms.

I am very proud of my academic excellence, as a student, I considered that my obligation with my parents. I also consider my obligation to teach children and young people to think critically. The choice to go into the career of teaching was not directly related to my immediate family or close friends, although they supported my choice.

When Teaching Became a Real Option

Kevin had always wanted to be someone involved in significant social changes, and as a teacher, he was sure he could achieve his goal. He remembers some of his teachers who empowered and cared for him when he felt vulnerable and challenged by life, something that happened in his life recurrently as the socio-economic and political situation in Venezuela evolves. Except for his parents and sister, the rest of the family is still there.

Several times since I came to this country, I have seen the hands of my teachers comforting my family and me when the sadness of knowing what our relatives in Venezuela were going through. I remember more than one of my teachers encouraging the class to understand the Venezuelan crisis as part of Latin-American history, motivating us to be active in our future obligations as Dominican citizens. My teachers help us mold our opinions and understanding of social phenomena. I am sure that soon peers from my class will be decision-makers and will make good decisions, based on what our teachers taught us. Studying to become a teacher is my way to become that type of influencer.

Influencers: People and Other Factors

Kevin considers that the main factor influencing his career choice is his idea of making social changes through his job. The idea of improving society gives him personal satisfaction.

I started to think about becoming a teacher, as a teenager, early in high school when I understood the power of a teacher's influence in the students' behavior. My family and friends agreed it was a good choice, considering my personality, and aspirations. My family respected my choice. When the time to register at the university came, I was very happy. I can only think that I am being trained to influencing and helping people to create a better society.

Kevin's parents attempted to convince him that there were better and more profitable choices he could make; they suggested law and medicine, but Kevin did not relate to those careers, and insisted on teaching.

At some point in my teens, my parents thought that Law could be a good career for me. I even visited some of their friends' offices so that I could see and feel what lawyers do. I did not connect with the profession. As well, at some point, they explored the possibility of connecting me with Medicine. They found out opportunities for summer camps assisting some of their friends' who were doctors. After these unfruitful attempts, they convinced that they better support me in my choice of teaching as a career. After this, they supported me and understood that precisely, because I was an excellent student, teaching was a good career choice.

How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals

Kevin sees the teaching career as his ultimate life goal, he is sure of the great influencer he will be from his position. He is sure he has the change of our society in his hands having the possibility to work with children and young people.

I am sure I made the right choice; I love my choice I love the idea of being constantly surrounded by children and young people. This is the right scenario where I can make profound social changes through the molding of my students' social behaviors, teaching them to care and to be socially responsible.... Considering the material wellbeing of the career, teachers' living conditions and salaries have improved enough in the DR to equal teaching to any other well-rewarded career.

FIT-Choice Scale Results

Kevin rated highest the factors to work with children, prior teaching and learning experiences, altruistic service, social and educational contribution, salary, and satisfaction with choice and rated the lowest fallback career (see Table 8).

Table 8.

Kevin's FIT-Choice Scale Responses

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	7.00
• Pragmatic Utility Value	5.22
• Social & Educational Contribution	7.00
• Altruistic Service	7.00
• Ability, Social & Family Influences	6.57
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	7.00
• Fallback Career	1.00
Perception**	
• Social Status	6.20
• Salary	7.00
• Social Dissuasion	6.00
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Task Demand	6.40

*Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (7); ** Not at All (1) to Extremely (7)

Gerard

Gerard is a 20-year-old man from what he describes as a middle-low class family. He is in the second year of the teaching career program. His father is a doctor, and his mother is an accountant. Gerard is studying to become a Math teacher. Teaching was always Gerard's choice, although his father and mother wanted him to become a doctor.

Motivations to Become a Teacher

Gerard was the 'Math guy' at school during his school life. He was a math monitor (i.e., tutor) and became very well-known for taking care of those in trouble with Math in his grade. After school, Gerardo always had someone to help, and although her father was not so happy with that, he enjoyed it a lot.

When the day to register at the university came, my father insisted in giving me the money to go and register in the Med School. I remember our argument that day, my mother and I trying to make him understand how teachers are at the top of the chain of professionals, without teachers there are no other professionals. He was so mad at me I thought he would never forgive me. To him my academic excellence and intelligence would be a waist, in teaching, adding to that, teachers' salaries and social recognition, that would never compare to that of a doctor. As you see my choice to go into the career of teaching was not directly related to my parents; my friends on the other hand, some of them agreed with my father's opinion, some of them supported my choice.

When Teaching Became a Real Option

Gerard had always enjoyed his capacity to help others and his popularity amongst the school due to his academic skills in Math. This allowed him not only to be popular in school but also to make new friends easily. His teachers reassured his self-esteem and prepared him to become an outgoing, outspoken person. He remembers that he was shy and introvert.

When I was 11 years old, we moved, and I changed to another school. My new Math teacher, there was a young man, famous for being strict, everybody hated him. My new friends at school predisposed me with the idea that I would do badly in Math, but that did not happen. During the first days of school, I did so well in my classwork and homework that the teacher started saying that I would be the next Math teacher of the school. He showed me confidence and would recommend other students to come and see me if they needed help. He would bring me extra work and would tell everybody about that, making me famous at school. That teacher convinced me not only that I was more capable than

the majority in Math and in helping others with Math, he also convinced me of the power a teacher can have and the influence he can exert over the students.

Influencers: People and Other Factors

Gerard remembers that the main factor influencing his career choice was the motivation that had been accumulated during his school life. His Math teacher and the personal satisfaction of being able to help others and being recognized by that were key to his decision.

By the time I declared I was going to be a teacher, my father got very upset, at the beginning my mother tried to convince me to go into the Medicine School, my friends were not totally surprised by that although some of them suggested me to go to the Engineering School since the pay and social recognition of teachers is very low. I considered that there is no better reward than to feel you can help people not only academically, but also with their personality as that Math teacher helped me. I would not change this career for any other, even if money is involved.

Gerard could had gone into other career options, including engineering or medicine, since his family could obtain bank credits to provide the financial resources, and he had the academic preparation to do so. But Gerard had other thoughts.

I see the passion of my father as a doctor in endless hours of work, I see the passion of my mother and her deadlines at work, I remember the passion of my teachers I have several excellent, passionate teachers and I can only think of having that passion that allows you to feel happy every morning when you wake up for the only reason that you love what you do, and that is not only work but your life.

How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals

Gerard shows his happiness with his body language and with his words, he looks very proud of his choice and plans to be a teacher in constant search of improvement. He feels a social commitment to pay back to society, and he has promised himself to perform at the top of his knowledge and skills as a teacher.

I am sure I made the right decision; I not only choose an academic area I am good at, but also a job in constant change, a rewarding work that will raise my social value. I will make a change that will benefit our society in motivating my students to love knowledge, but also to be self-disciplined and responsible. I cannot wait to graduate and go back to the classrooms to replicate what my teachers did with me; I think I owe it to my country.

FIT-Choice Scale Results

Gerard responded to the FIT-Choice Scale and rated highest the factors to work with children, social & educational contribution, altruistic service, prior teaching & learning experiences, salary, and satisfaction with choice, and rated the lowest fallback career (see Table 9). After going through the scale, he added that maybe society should be educated on what a teacher career entails. Gerard considers that there is a lack of information in the general public about this career.

Table 9.

Gerard's FIT-Choice Scale Responses

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	7.00
• Pragmatic Utility Value	5.89
• Social & Educational Contribution	7.00
• Altruistic Service	7.00
• Ability, Social & Family Influences	6.14
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	7.00
• Fallback Career	1.00
Perception**	
• Social Status	6.00
• Salary	7.00
• Social Dissuasion	6.33
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Task Demand	6.00

*Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (7); ** Not at All (1) to Extremely (7)

Irene

Irene is the only child of what she considers a low-class family from one of the underprivileged neighborhoods in Santo Domingo. Both parents have a very low academic level and are skilled workers. Both parents have done their best to provide the best possible education to Irene who is now 20-year-old and in the second year of a teaching program in one of the private universities in metropolitan Santo Domingo.

Motivations to Become a Teacher

Irene describes herself as a good and quiet student with high grades. She was always involved in extracurricular activities and mainly in those related to performing arts. Irene feels that the nuns and teachers changed her life and kept her out of dangerous situations from within

her neighborhood. The community respected the school as an institution, and every family wanted their kids to study there.

My teachers were strict and demanding, but they also showed us love and concern for our problems. Everybody respected our teachers, and they were good, making us understand the subjects and getting us to work. I enjoyed my time at school and in my last years, I used to help in preschool. It was a nice experience, kids loved me, and I loved them, and their parents started to treat me differently. I started to love those kids differently, and to love what I did with them.

When Teaching Became a Real Option

When the school counselor started to work with Irene's group concerning their career choice, she describes how, differently from most of her peers, she had an idea of what to study. She had experienced some teaching while helping in preschool and while helping other students; she considers that the school had conditioned her to become a teacher. Furthermore, the idea of attending a private university with a full scholarship plus stipends was also a motivational factor in her career choice. She also likes the idea of becoming a teacher, mainly in the present situation where teachers are more valued, and the living and salary conditions of teachers have improved.

When the time came and I had to decide my university career, I was clear, I was going to be a teacher. I like it and I will be able to have a full scholarship in a private university...

Wow! When I officially announced that, my teachers and family were very happy. The school counselor considered a perfect match between my personality, my skills, and my choice. Besides that, it is the opportunity to give back to my community: My contribution will be my profession.

Influencers: People and Other Factors

Irene studied in the best semi-public high school within the area where she lives. These schools are administered by nuns or priests and are nationally recognized for their quality education and for the success of their graduates. These schools are great promoters of social responsibility, social awareness, and human values. Irene was always academically outstanding, and due to the nature of her school, she was involved in programs to assist underperforming students and to assist preschool teachers in some extracurricular activities. She thinks that her school philosophy was the main influencer in her career choice. It all started when as part of the school program she started helping teachers at school, there, she started liking to “teach” other children. The other influential factor she considers moved her into the teaching career was the fact that she could study in a private university with a full scholarship. Her family, friends, and teachers applauded her decision; they considered it not only a good fit but also a good future since she would have a job immediately after graduating.

How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals

Irene is sure she has a great future ahead. She is planning to go back to the school she attended as a student to give back with a heartfelt work as a well-prepared teacher. She is happy knowing that there is always be a well-paid job as a teacher when she graduates and is even making plans for her own school.

I hope I could be hired at the same school I studied. If I do not get a position there, wherever I get a position I will put my heart in my work. In a couple of years, when I have knowledge and experience, maybe I can even have my own school.

FIT-Choice Scale Results

Irene responded to the FIT-Choice Scale and rated highest the factors to work with children, ability, social & family influences, prior teaching & learning experiences, salary, and satisfaction with choice (see Table 10). Irene rated the lowest the factor of being a fallback career. After responding the FIT-Scale, she added that it could result in more people going to the teaching career if more high school students are provided with the opportunity to experience teaching while at school before making their career choice.

Table 10.

Irene's FIT-Choice Scale Responses

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	7.00
• Pragmatic Utility Value	6.44
• Social & Educational Contribution	6.50
• Altruistic Service	6.60
• Ability, Social & Family Influences	7.00
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	7.00
• Fallback Career	1.00
Perception**	
• Social Status	6.00
• Salary	7.00
• Social Dissuasion	6.33
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Task Demand	6.60

*Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (7); ** Not at All (1) to Extremely (7)

Sherri

Sherri is a 20-year-old student from what she considers a lower-middle-class family from one of the provinces in the DR. She is in the second year of her teaching career in one of the

private universities in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo. Her father is a small farm owner, and her mother a housewife. Her family lives in a town where agriculture is the primary production. Sherri moved to the capital to study education.

Motivations to Become a Teacher

Sherri's career choice was closely related to her experience as a student, to her wish to work with children and to the scholarship program of the government and "the impossibility of her family nonbeing able to afford a private university." Also, she believes teachers have great power to improve the future.

My teachers were respected and loved by all of us and by our families. They were outstanding personalities in my town. Teachers would give guidance and their opinions were respected. Teachers mold new generations, guide those troubled teenagers and show love and appreciation for the students.

When Teaching Became a Real Option

Sherri describes her teachers as the best teachers ever. She considers herself lucky for that and thinks that she owes them being one of the best students in the classroom and having excellent grades. Sherri remembers herself as an excellent student volunteering to help others and very active in extracurricular activities. She frequently had groups of peers at home looking for her help and described that as a joyful experience. When her peers started exploring ideas on career choice, she could not stop thinking about teaching. She had all the reasons she needed to choose it and had the chance to qualify for a scholarship in a private university, and this was a very strong reason.

I was the one always volunteering for school tasks that would help teachers. To do homework or to help some of my peers was always fun. My active assistance was always

recognized by my teachers who considered me as an academically excellent student who showed love for learning and for helping others. Knowing they thought like that of me made me happy and satisfied. I was also willing to study in a nice private university, and if I choose teaching, that will open the possibility to get a scholarship in a place of my dreams, but out of my reach.

Influencers: People and Other Factors

Sherri thinks that the school and her teachers embedded in her the love for teaching. The type of teachers she had were great influencers in her career decision. As an excellent student, she was advised by some of her relatives to choose a higher social and economic profile career. Yet, to Sherri, that was not an option; she wanted to influence and improve people's lives in her town and considered the way for that was teaching. She depicted herself as part of the next generation of teachers at the school she attended in her community.

My teachers showed me how to help others who needed my help, they showed me to care and to enjoy helping others they showed me gratefulness and devotion for changing people's life. The scholarship program of the government is also a huge help to society because of the lack of teachers and to people like me who are looking for a good career in a good private university.

How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals

Sherri is happy with her career choice and is looking forward to graduate and going back to her town and work there. She expects people in her town will appreciate her work and love her.

I love my choice and what I have ahead in my professional life. I know that people in my hometown will be proud of me and will appreciate my work. I hope to become a

community leader, a person that children and young people will respect, admire and look after.

FIT-Choice Scale Results

As part of this study Sherri completed the FIT Choice Scale, rating the factors influencing her career choice. As seen in Table 11, the factors highest rated were working with children, altruistic service, ability, social & family influences, prior teaching & learning experiences, salary, and satisfaction with choice. The factor of teaching being a fallback career scored the lowest.

Table 11.

Sherri's FIT-Choice Scale Responses

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	7.00
• Pragmatic Utility Value	6.11
• Social & Educational Contribution	6.50
• Altruistic Service	7.00
• Ability, Social & Family Influences	7.00
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	7.00
• Fallback Career	1.00
Perception**	
• Social Status	6.00
• Salary	7.00
• Social Dissuasion	6.00
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Task Demand	6.60

*Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (7); ** Not at All (1) to Extremely (7)

Ed

Ed comes from a middle-class family who lives in what he considers one of the middle-class neighborhoods in Santo Domingo. His parents are both successful entrepreneurs, but with very low formal academic levels. His parents own a small business that provides for the family. Even though neither have a university degree, they have done their best to provide the best possible education for their son. Ed is 20 years old and is now in the second year of a teaching program in one of the private universities of metropolitan Santo Domingo.

Motivations to Become a Teacher

Ed had some of the highest scores in his high school class; he was also recognized for his technological skills and his citizen values.

When in my group, my friends and I started thinking about a university career choice I thought I would study Technology. I had been very active in the support groups that assist other students and that has made me think about choosing teaching as a career. A friend of mine told me that the university had openings in the School of Education and adding to that, they also had full scholarships. I went through the whole admissions process and was approved as a fit teacher candidate.

When Teaching Became a Real Option

As a student Ed was perceived as an academic excellent student with special skills in Technology. His teachers would assign him the role of a monitor because they recognized in him skills, that made of him a perfect help for certain students that were academically behind. Nevertheless, his teachers constantly motivated him to study Technology. At this point, Teaching was not an option in the minds of people around him or in his own mind.

There was a time I never thought to become a teacher but thinking back I remember feeling so well when my teachers sent my peers to get my help. I loved the moment and felt honored by them for naming me the ‘Technology guy’ at school. There is a unique satisfaction helping others. I have always liked it. I think that these experiences were building up my present satisfaction with my career choice. The work of my teachers at school prepared me to become a teacher.

Due to his personality, specialized skills and outstanding academic performance, teachers, relatives and friends saw in Ed an engineer. Not only his motivation for helping others, but also the government’s scholarship, turned him to consider teaching as a possibility. He is now happy with the choice.

At the beginning, I was thinking of going into technology, but I also realize that as a teacher I can motivate and make use of my technology skills. I will not only pass my passion and skills to my students, but I will also have exceptional attractive classes using technology to make them more engaging to my students. That will be my contribution to teaching, and becoming a teacher, will be my contribution to society. A teacher, an influencer, the same thing, I will hack people’s minds. I also think a good teacher can also have a good life and make good money. On the other hand, been part of this scholarship program allows me to study in a private university, something I could not do because of the lack of money.

Influencers: People and Other Factors

Ed had always enjoyed technology and knows to deal with it more than the rest of the students of his age. He has always enjoyed his popularity based on his technological skills. In his last years in high school he was the IT monitor (i.e., tutor), and this gave him a sense of

responsibility for what his peers learned. His new role not only made him more popular and responsible; but he also started to experience the life of a teacher. He remembers how this also allows him to establish new friendly relations easier and also improved his self-confidence.

I think my life experience in high school as the IT monitor, was the main influencer in my decision of becoming a teacher, that, and my teachers. Their confidence in what I was capable of doing, it was the first time I felt people valued me, and probably the first time I felt I was capable and worthy. Another factor that influenced my decision was the possibility of having a full scholarship in a private university, that is something you cannot ignore.... I have to confess that my parents' joyful approval of my choice is also very significant to my motivation to become a teacher.

How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals

Ed wants a life where he can spend more time with his family than the time his parents could spend at home when he was a child. He has always dreamed of having a job and doing something he would enjoy. He considers teaching has it all. In the last years in high school he discovered that he could combine what he likes with a job; he thinks that his teachers put him in the right path to be a successful professional.

As a teacher, I can put more time in my family I am sure I will get a job as soon as I graduate, I will have more vacations than any other professional, and I will also get a good salary. Maybe in a couple of years, I could have my own school, recognized by the use of technology in teaching.

FIT-Choice Scale Results

Ed rated highest the factors to work with children, social & educational contribution, altruistic service, salary, and satisfaction with choice (see Table 12). Ed rated the lowest the

factor of it being a fallback career. After responding the FIT-Scale, he added that he wants to be for his students, what his teachers were for him: “inspirational.”

Table 12.

Ed’s FIT-Choice Scale Responses

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	7.00
• Pragmatic Utility Value	6.89
• Social & Educational Contribution	7.00
• Altruistic Service	7.00
• Altruistic Service	7.00
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	6.00
• Fallback Career	1.00
Perception**	
• Social Status	5.40
• Salary	7.00
• Social Dissuasion	6.00
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Task Demand	6.20

*Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (7); ** Not at All (1) to Extremely (7)

Yanet

Yanet is a 24-year-old female from what she considers a high-middle class neighborhood in Santo Domingo. She comes from a large family; all siblings are university graduates. She is in the second year of the teaching program of one of the private universities in Santo Domingo.

Teaching is Yanet’s second career choice.

Motivations to Become a Teacher

Yanet decided to become a teacher after a nervous breakdown triggered by the stress of the Medicine School. When she started to look for other career options, her relatives advised her

to go to a higher social status career, but Yanet found she had already tried teaching, and she liked it. Before being admitted at the Med School, Yanet had worked as teacher aid in the church summer camps. She remembers she enjoyed that, but still decided to study medicine. She described how much she admired her teachers during her school life, and as a student doctor, she was even more respectful of her teachers. She thinks that the job must be done by people with a special call.

I remember how much I liked the respect of my children at the church summer camp. I also remember that although to me it was work, I enjoyed it as much as they did. I went to the medical school, it was always my dream to become a doctor, but I had not realized the stress and workload of that job. When I had to think about another career choice, I considered teaching with no doubt. It is not as demanding as medicine and it has a calendar that will help me to spend more time with the family. Nowadays, the pay is not bad and there are scholarships available. I can understand that maybe people think being a teacher it is not as relevant as being a doctor, but teachers are well respected and loved, and to give that love and respect back to your students you need to be a special person, you need to have that special call.

When Teaching Became a Real Option

Yanet describes herself as a sweet people-person, excellent student and very active in her community. She was always a helper in class and among her friends, eager to know new things, loving experiments and Science. She also recalled being an admirer of her teachers and finding them exceptionally smart and interesting. Yanet considers she had the best teachers someone can think of, loving and patient people out of any earthly league. She remembers how her teachers

could help disturbed kids and how some of the students in her school are good professionals today, just because of the teachers they had.

I choose my first career very proud of myself and after getting sick because of the stress, I started looking for a career that satisfies my expectations as a future professional and that also makes me happy on daily bases. My family understood that teaching was a good choice, mainly because it will maintain a smile in my face. It was also a good motivator the fact that there were scholarships available for good teachers' candidates.

Influencers: People and Other Factors

Yanet feels that the main factor that made her turn eyes to teaching was her breakdown, while she was a medical student. At the moment she knew she could not continue in the medicine program, she started thinking about a choice that allowed her to get a college diploma. Yanet looked for the advice of her family and friends, and remembered her nice experience helping in church, serving as a teacher.

I know that teaching is an exceptional work, you influence people's values and personalities, you can make your students see the world through your beliefs and life principles, you can make generations of good people or you can make a generation of people who are indifferent and mean. That depends on you. I remember how much I could do during summer schools and Sunday school at church... parents would come to me and comment how well the kids did after they were in my group, that is really good to hear you are so meaningful to someone; that is power.

She did not consider any other career option, even when she had the financial means. She thinks that becoming a teacher will make her happy and will allow her to gain back her confidence and self-esteem. She had tried working with children and young people and it feels good. She also

noted: “After getting sick because of the stress, my family understood that teaching was a good choice, mainly because it will maintain a smile in my face”.

How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals

While in the teaching program, Yanet has reformulated her whole life goals, and is now looking forward to having her own school. She is enjoying the program and feels that she has had a significant personal growth. She is planning to get a job in prestigious schools, gain experience, get a postgraduate degree, and open her own school in the future.

I am looking forward to my graduation because besides being the best teacher I can I think that I will be opening my own school in the future. I am sure most of my friends will send their kids to me.

FIT-Choice Scale Results

Yanet answered the FIT-Choice Scale looking for details to add insights of her career choice process to the interview (see Table 13). She rated highest work with children, altruistic service, ability, social & family influences, prior teaching & learning experiences, salary, and satisfaction with choice. She rated with the lowest score the factor of it being a fallback career. One of the factors that Yanet wanted to underline is that teachers nowadays have good salaries, professional growing possibilities and permanent professional development possibilities supported by the government.

Table 13

Yanet's FIT-Choice Scale Responses

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	7.00
• Pragmatic Utility Value	6.67
• Social & Educational Contribution	6.25
• Altruistic Service	7.00
• Ability, Social & Family Influences	7.00
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	7.00
• Fallback Career	1.00
Perception**	
• Social Status	6.40
• Salary	7.00
• Social Dissuasion	6.00
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Task Demand	6.40

*Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (7); ** Not at All (1) to Extremely (7)

Paul

Paul is a 19-year-old man from what he describes as a middle-class family. His father is an engineer, and his mother is a doctor. Paul is in the second year of the teaching program with a scholarship, in one of the private universities in the metropolitan area of Santo Domingo. Paul is studying to become a Math teacher. Teaching was always Paul's choice, although his father and mother wanted him to go to a "higher status career."

Motivations to Become a Teacher

Paul, according to what he has found, as most of his peers in the Math teacher program, was the "Math guy" at school during his school life. He started been the math monitor, then "the most looked for" of those students with difficulties. According to him, he was sometimes more

successful than the teacher, making his peers understand certain topics. He remembers how much he enjoyed that, because that made him very popular at school.

By the time I had to register at the university, I remember my parents were very mad at me. Although they gave me the freedom to choose my career, their discontent made me unhappy. They had the idea that I had chosen a low-paid career, with a low social status, because of my lack of information and maturity. To them, my academic excellence and intelligence would be a waste in teaching. Right now, they are happier, because they now have more facts about my career, and I am happy with my career.

When Teaching Became a Real Option

Paul had always enjoyed helping others and his popularity at school because of his Math skills. His role as the Math guy allowed him to be popular in school and to make new friends easily. His teachers help them gain self-esteem and being the outgoing, outspoken person, he is at present. He remembers he was not like that, and it was difficult for him to make friends.

I have always had good teachers, although my favorites were always the math teachers. I think Math teachers have a different personal profile. They are strong, smart with an appealing personality. They are people who inspire confidence and help students to build up their self-esteem. I remember how some of my math teachers rescue certain boys through their work in class. They would even assign extra work for those boys who need to show off in front of the class. I will also do that...Math teachers, the good ones do not only teach math, they teach life, and I like that.

Influencers: People and Other Factors

Paul remembers that the main factor influencing his career choice was the motivation he had from his teachers during his school life. His Math teachers and the personal satisfaction of

being able to help others and being recognized by that, were crucial in taking the decision to become a teacher.

When I started to think about a career choice, money was not an issue, my parents were. The fact that I qualified for a full scholarship in a private university helped to calm my parents and made my decision easier. I think that the reward you receive when you help people not only academically, but also with their personality is priceless even more if you get that doing what you like: Math. I see that with all the changes going on in DR, teachers' salaries equal and are sometimes higher to the salaries of other professionals, that will motivate more people to become teachers. And I cannot understand why they do not see the convenience of having more time with the family, that is unique, we teachers spend more time with our families than the rest of the professionals, that's great! You put all that together, and you get an excellent profession.

How Teaching Contributes to Life Goals

Paul reflects happiness with his body language and with his words, he seems proud of himself as a Math teacher, and talks about his plans to keep on his professional development as a way to pay society back.

I am happy with my career choice, now my parents are also happy, they have started to see the teaching career differently. This is a well-paid job that keeps you happy. Someday soon, our society will also start to value more teachers' work. We touch people deep inside where nobody else can.

FIT-Choice Scale Results

Paul responded to the FIT-Choice Scale and rated highest the factors to work with children, social & educational contribution, altruistic service, salary, satisfaction with choice and

task demand (see Table 14). He rated the lowest of it being a fallback career. After going through the scale, he added that although people generally think that teaching is an easy profession, he understands how many types of intelligence a good teacher needs to do his work well.

Table 14.

Paul's FIT-Choice Scale Responses

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	7.00
• Pragmatic Utility Value	6.56
• Social & Educational Contribution	7.00
• Altruistic Service	7.00
• Ability, Social & Family Influences	6.29
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	6.67
• Fallback Career	1.00
Perception**	
• Social Status	6.40
• Salary	7.00
• Social Dissuasion	6.00
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Task Demand	7.00

*Not at all important (1) to Extremely Important (7);** Not at All (1) to Extremely (7)

Chapter IV Closure

All participants answered my questions and provided as many details as I requested. They were enthusiastic about the idea of participating in a research of this type and offered to come back if needed. Talking with future new teachers like this gives me the hope of a better Dominican Education in the future. In the following chapter I will analyze all themes and sub-themes that emerged during the analysis.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain an understanding of what factors motivate academically excellent students from high performing high schools in the DR to pursue a career in teaching, even when they could have chosen to go into higher status careers. Qualitative data was obtained and used to analyze participants' motives in choosing teaching. These data come from in-depth interviews carried out with 13 students participating in a teacher preparation program sponsored by the DR government as part of efforts to improve the education system. These interviews shed light not only on the interviewees' motives, but also on their perceptions about teaching, as well as how it will affect their life goals.

Presentation of Themes

Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyze and report patterns (themes) within data. During the interviews I found that the experiences lived by the participants were similar in most of their stories. The interviews also uncovered participants' life anecdotes, and how they see themselves as part of a given socioeconomic class.

Figure 3 is a summary of my themes and subthemes, with an "X" depicting those participants for which that theme held true. Following the table, I describe each theme in detail, offering illustrative quotes as my data sources.

The conceptual framework of this research helps structure the analysis of the data collected based on the Factors Influencing Teacher Career Choice Theory (Richardson & Watt, 2006); Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation (Maslow, 1943); and Holland's Theory of Career Choice (Holland, 1973).

Themes	Barbie	Alex	Pam	Carol	Maya	Joseph	Kevin	Gerard	Irene	Sherri	Ed	Yvette	Paul
A. Intrinsic and Altruistic Factors													
A1. I like working with children	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
A2. I enjoy helping others	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x
A3. I want to improve society and influence new generations to make a difference	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
B. Extrinsic Factors													
B1. I am sure I will have a job as soon as I finish my studies					x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
B2. I enjoy the idea of having more time with my family	x	x	x	x	x						x	x	x
B3. The salary and collateral benefits of teaching make it comparable to other high reputed professions.	x	x	x	x	x	x			x		x		x
B4. Teachers in the DR have permanent scholarship programs for graduate studies and a full array of professional growth possibilities.	x	x	x				x					x	x
B5. Teaching is not a high-status career, but that is changing for good		x			x			x	x	x	x	x	
C. Other factors													
C1. All started to think about teaching when, they experienced teaching others	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
C2. My parents did not want me to study to become a teacher			x	x	x	x	x	x					x

Figure 3. Summary of themes.

Holland's Theory of Career Choice (1973) rationalizes the relation between personal traits and the unique attributes of occupations and how this combination can determine job success and job satisfaction of people. The basis of this theory is that persons are drawn to a given career because of their traits and experiences and describes career choice as an expression of personality into the world of work. This theory believes that career choice depends primarily on personality traits and that individuals are attracted to a role demand of a professional environment that meets their needs and satisfaction. Among Holland's six modal personal orientations he describes the socially oriented which includes the type of people who like and value helping people. They are good at teaching, nursing, counseling, giving first aid, and providing information. Socially oriented people avoid using machines, tools, or animals to achieve a goal; they enjoy and value helping people and solving social problems and see themselves as helpful, friendly, and trustworthy.

Maslow explained through the Theory of Human Motivation (1943) the growth needs of self-actualization and transcendence. Growth needs appear from a desire to grow as a person, and these needs become greater once they have been assured. High school graduates who start their career choice process go into this process looking for their path to grow and become a significant adult responsible for his life outcomes.

The FIT-Choice Theory, which offers a systematic guide to study the motivations of preservice teachers and which was operationalized through the FIT-Choice scale as a measuring tool, does not consider as variables, demographic data such as pre-service teachers' age, sex, or pedagogical experience prior to teacher education. Instead, the FIT-Choice factors include socialization influences, task perceptions, self-perceptions, values, and fallback career

(Richardson & Watt, 2006). The FIT-Choice model has been used to discover that having high confidence in one's abilities, an intrinsic interest in teaching, and a belief in the social utility of the job are the three most often cited motives for becoming a teacher (Watt et al., 2014).

Each teacher was asked to complete the FIT-Choice Scale as part of my interview process with those individual scores reported as part of their narrative profile in Chapter 4. Table 16 summarizes the FIT-Choice means across all 13 participants, with various items discussed within my discussion of themes that follows..

Table 15.

Summary of the FIT-Choice Means Across All Participants

Construct	Average Mean (1-7)
Motivation*	
• Work with Children	6.92
• Altruistic Service	6.86
• Social & Educational Contribution	6.77
• Prior Teaching & Learning Experiences	6.77
• Ability, Social & Family Influences	6.68
• Pragmatic Utility Value	6.05
• Fallback Career	1.54
Perception**	
• Satisfaction with Choice	7.00
• Salary	6.96
• Task Demand	6.48
• Social Status	5.97
• Social Dissuasion	5.97

A. Motivations for Choosing the Career

(A1) I like working with children. The factor 'Working with Children' was found to be a key theme in my study, as it has been in previous studies (Richardson et al., 2014); this factor

involves intrinsic motivation. Such motivation refers to doing something because it is exciting or pleasurable; it exposes the natural human predilection to learn and assimilate (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This factor came out clearly in my interviews within 12 of the 13 students as well as one of the top factors in the FIT-Choice Scale. As shown in Table 16, this factor average mean was ranked 6.92 from a total of 7. Except for one of my participants who did not explicitly state this, the rest said they like working with children and adolescents. Their emphasis and explanations revolved around the idea of enjoying the type of activities that can be done while teaching in order to get the desired learning outcomes. Participants also implied the importance of the immediate and long-term reward of working with children and adolescents. They see these rewards either in the potential one-to-one emotional relationships, the form of personal fondness and appreciation of the child for the teacher, and/or the reward for the children's achievements due to the work of the teacher, in the form of family or community recognition. This theme is very closely related to, and most of the time justified in, the hope of making profound changes or molding the future generations.

Pam, for example said: "I cannot think of any other thing that makes me happier than to spend the day surrounded by children and knowing that I am helping them to become good people. Similarly, Carol considers that: "A teacher can mold the souls of the students and can feel what they feel and influence their families. I hope I will embed my passion for social justice in my students and I want to be part of their future lives as future professionals." Joseph thinks that: "The beauty of the career is precisely in the possibility it offers of helping others, not only academically but also in their personal lives." Kevin also expressed he loves the idea of being

constantly surrounded by children and young people, and that this gives him the opportunity to make a social change from the classroom.

As another data point to support this theme, Table 16 shows that the highest ranked motivating factor chosen on the FIT-Choice Scale is “work with children.”

(A2) I enjoy helping others. The satisfaction from helping others was a recurrent statement during the interviews, with 11 out of 13 participants expressively stating this. Reaching students and helping them grow are groundbreaking principles for teachers. To teachers, seeing students’ progress and accomplishments result in feelings of pride; this pride is consistently experienced by teachers who enjoy their profession (Watt et al., 2014).

Participants’ tendency and wish to help others was not only a factor that motivated them to choose the teaching career, but a description of their behavior that depicts their nature as socially oriented individuals, as described by Holland’s Theory (1973). This theory describes socially oriented individuals as those who like and value helping people, and includes teaching among the professions selected by this type of individuals. Holland’s theory also describes socially oriented people as individuals who look to solve social problems, and who are helpful, friendly, and trustworthy.

Barbie, referring to her life as a student and to the moment in which she made the career choice, stated: “...Helping others made me feel socially significant and useful...I had always been in roles of helping other children...I only considered the factor of influencing and helping people...” Alex remembers how frequently she had groups of her peers coming to her house looking for her help and described that as a rewarding experience. Pam describes helping

children as ‘her thing’ when she experienced teaching in a field experience project. Carol describes herself as someone who loves to help others and gives that as a factor influencing her career choice. When Joseph was assigned or asked to help, he not only enjoyed it, but also felt flattered by his friends; he told me that as a child and as a teenager, what he felt helping others was a very nice and unique satisfaction.

Helping others creates a satisfaction based on esteem from others, those who we help or those who ask for our help, and increases self-esteem which is the satisfaction of proving ourselves that we are socially significant to someone else. These are considered human motivations and are located at the half top of Maslow’s pyramid in the graphic representation of his motivation theory.

(A3) I want to improve society and influence new generations to make a difference.

The desire to make a social contribution by improving society by becoming a teacher is often one of the highest rated factors for choosing a teaching career (Watt et al., 2014). This was also true in my study where the ambition to improve society through teaching was reflected by every participant. All 13 voiced that improving society through their career choice is an opportunity that only educators have, and that every teacher should use this opportunity a social commitment. Indeed, the participants rated being able to make a social and educational contribution as a big factor on the FIT-Choice Scale (6.77 of 7.00).

Alex, for example, thinks she should follow her father’s steps in guiding the youth of her town, and she feels the people in her town expect her to do so. Kevin considers that the main factor influencing his career choice is his desire to make social changes through his job. Sherri believes teachers have great power to improve the future with their work and influence in their

students and students' families; she wants to influence and improve people's lives in her town and considered the way for that was through teaching. Barbie always had a purpose to make significant social changes, and as a teacher, she is sure she can achieve that goal. Kevin always wanted to be someone involved in significant social changes, and as a teacher, he is sure he could achieve his goal. He will use his position to be an influencer of social changes with children and young people.

Previous studies conducted in France, Australia, Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, and the United Kingdom, indicated that one of the most frequently noted motivations for choosing teaching as a career is the desire to make a social contribution (Watt et al., 2014). In the DR context, social pressure has put on education the hope for a better society; the fact that many of the interviewees are committed to encouraging excellent students to become teachers can be interpreted as an intentional effort to improve society.

B. Extrinsic Factors

(B1) I am sure I will have a job as soon as I finish my studies. Job security is described as part of the personal utility value by the FIT-Choice Theory (Richardson & Watt, 2006). Job security as a motivational factor for teaching career choice is considered decisive in some countries, but irrelevant in others. This difference among contexts depends on the unique processes for selecting teacher education applicants and the nature of their work, which may shape potential teachers' motivations in different ways (Watt et al., 2012). In the DR, it is relevant for college students to have the security of a job as they graduate. It is even more relevant that the government now recruits candidates who want to become teachers, pays for their college tuition in private universities, and gives them an allowance while in the program.

Adding to this, they are guaranteed a job position upon graduation with a competitive salary and possibilities of professional development. Seven of my participants implicitly expressed they do not doubt they are going to have a job as a teacher after graduation, and that this was a motivating factor in their career choice. While not as highly rated on the FIT-Choice Scale as some other factors, participants, on average still rated “pragmatic utility value” (e.g., salary and job security) as 6.07 out of 7.00.

Irene stated that she and her family and friends are sure she will have a teaching position as soon as she graduates. Ed is sure he will get a job as soon as he graduates. Yanet is already planning to get a job in a prestigious school. Paul already sees him in the job when he expresses that this is a job that keeps him happy.

(B2) I enjoy the idea of having more time with my family. Many of my participants (8 of 13) think that having more time with their family due to their work schedule is a privilege of teachers. Teaching has been stereotyped as a profession chosen mainly by women because it is a family-friendly career; yet, when measured against competing motivations, *Time for family* is indeed recognized as a benefit of the career, but it is not a conclusive factor (Richardson & Watt, 2014). This is also true in my study where some of the participants mentioned the convenience of having a schedule with longer periods of vacations, yet they do not consider it as a critical motivational factor in their career choice process. Alex, for example, expressed that: “Me and my family have many stories of those periods of time, having that time together was crucial for establishing tight family bonds.” Pam said: “I see how teachers are the only professionals who spend vacations with their children, I like that, that also strengthens family. Maya stated: “As a family we also enjoyed having a lot of holidays and almost two months’ vacation time. Ed said:

“I can put more time in my family, I am sure.” Yanet expressed: “It is not as demanding as medicine and it has a calendar that will help me to spend more time with the family.” Paul stated: “The convenience of having more time with the family, that is unique, we teachers spend more time with our families than the rest of the professionals, that’s great!”

As noted within other studies in different sociocultural backgrounds, time for family is a factor recognized as a privilege of the teaching profession, but ranked relatively low as a determining factor for the career choice (Eren & Tezel, 2010; Han & Yin, 2016; Han & Yin, 2016). In previous studies in the DR, there has been no reference to this factor (Figueroa & Montes de Oca, 2014), although 8 of 13 students specifically mentioned this as a slight factor in their career decision making choice to become a teacher.

(B3) The salary and collateral benefits of teaching make it comparable to other high reputed professions. In some earlier studies teachers’ salaries have not been considered a significant factor influencing the choice of teaching as a career in comparison to intrinsic factors such as working with children and helping others. This does not mean that teachers would not appreciate a raise in salary, but it might not be the most important factor of career motivation. Yet, in a study within Germany, it was rated highest, suggesting definite salary differences across social contexts (Watt et al., 2012).

In the case of the DR, the low teachers’ salaries at the time of Montes de Oca’s (2012) study was one of the reasons parents had for not recommending teaching as a career to their children. In my study, salary was been mentioned and ranked high on the FIT- Choice Scale, (6.96 of 7.00) but not alone; it is one of the benefits that at the time of my study the participants mentioned in their interviews as appealing to their choice.

The recent DR government reforms significantly increased salary levels for teachers, and nine of my 13 participants mentioned that current teaching salary and benefits now make it comparable to other high reputed professions. For example, Barbie thinks that the career has now better salaries and working conditions that equal teaching to any other well-remunerated career; Pam accepts that teachers' salaries put together with the rest of the benefits are not bad; Carol considers that teachers' salaries and working conditions have improved a lot and that adding that to other characteristics of the profession being a teacher is good; Maya stated that the pay is now very good, and there are always improvement programs for teachers sponsored by the government; Joseph hopes to buy his own car and house soon after he graduates; Irene sees that the living and salary conditions of teachers have improved; Ed knows he will earn a good salary; and Paul describes teaching as a well-paid job that keeps you happy.

(B4) Teachers in the DR have permanent scholarship programs for graduate studies and a full array of professional growth possibilities. Earlier studies have defined professionalization of a career as needing official accreditation and by the number of people in a country holding such accreditation (Park & Byun, 2015). In the DR, having a bachelor's degree is now a requisite to get a teaching job in all public and most private schools. Nowadays a job in the public sector is much more attractive, and it is what preservice teachers in my study looked forward. At the moment of this study, the high demand for quality teachers in the DR has created an ongoing supply-demand cycle in developing more teachers. Preservice teachers respond to this in a dynamic explained by the ongoing need for self-esteem by individuals who are easily located at the top of Maslow's pyramid.

These are the same individuals classified as socially oriented by Holland (1973). They need to be recognized as those who are helpful, friendly, and trustworthy, and this demands them to be constantly updating teaching strategies and contents. The existence of professional development programs now sponsored by the government has enhanced the value of the career, and has helped improve the professionalization of teaching. Six of 13 participants in my study specifically mentioned such current professionalism, and future professional development, as added values of their choice.

Barbie, for example, will look for a master's degree because she wants to continue studying to be the best possible teacher; Alex feels committed to continue her professional development and give her community the best; Pam is planning to specialize in special education; Kevin will look for a master's degree, because he thinks that is the way to excellence; Yanet is planning to get a postgraduate degree; and Paul has plans to keep on his professional development as a way to pay society back.

(B5) Teaching is not a high-status career, but that is changing for good. Prior studies looking at the factors that influence the teaching career choice in different socio-economic contexts have found that teaching is not a high – status career (Bilim, 2014; Watt et al., 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2007). Such studies have stated that the teaching career social status is closely related to salary levels. In my study participants worded their awareness that teaching is considered as a low social status career. They have expressed their satisfaction with the improvement of this situation, supported by the actions of the Dominican government in the last decade. In the case of teachers in the DR, salaries have raised to the point that graduate teachers are better paid than any other college graduate, (Dauhajre & Escuder, 2002). Seven of the 13

participants in this research, were advised by their parents not to choose the teaching career, because they considered it a low status career with a low salary. In spite of this, all participants are happy with their choice and verbalized their hope in the future of teaching as a career in the DR as a respectful and well-paid profession, thus a high social status career. Barbie, for example is sure she will make her dreams as a child come true of becoming someone important, and she is sure she will become an important person through teaching. Alex is looking forward to becoming a community leader, and she is planning to do so through teaching; Kevin sees the teaching career as his supreme life goal, he is sure he will become an influencer, capable of making profound changes in our society through his work with children and young people. Paul said he is happy with his career choice, and his parents are also happy and have started to see the teaching career as a well-paid job that keeps him happy. All participants see themselves as important people in the society due to the teaching profession.

C. Other Factors Influencing the Teaching Career Choice

(C1) All started to think about teaching when, as students, they experienced teaching others. In previous studies in different sociocultural contexts, prior teaching experience has been mentioned as a factor that influences teachers' career choice, and although this has not been the highest rated factor, it appears as a significant motive to choose the teaching career (Akar, 2012; Figueroa & Montes de Oca, 2014; Klassen et al., 2011; Wang, 2004). In my study, all participants had prior teaching experience either as a tutor at school or as a Sunday school at church, and they refer to these experiences as something that made them proud at the moment and after and as something they enjoyed.

Barbie, for example, mentioned that she used to help others as a Math tutor at her high school. Alex remembers how frequently she had groups of her peers coming to her house looking for her help and described that as a rewarding experience. Carol remembers how as a student at the elementary and secondary level, she usually helped her friends understand their school homework and had the most popular study group in the neighborhood at her house.

Although these are not formal experience events, I am using them as actions that allowed interviewees to have an idea of what becoming a teacher encompasses, mainly because these informal actions were mostly remotely controlled and encouraged by their teachers. As additional data to support this theme, prior teaching and learning experiences were on average rate 6.77 of 7.00 by all my participants.

(C2) My parents did not want me to choose teaching as a career. Over half of my participants recurrently mentioned their parents advised them to look for career options that had better salaries and higher social status. In a previous study performed in the DR, the teaching career was only the fifth most recommended career by parents to their children, with most of those participants coming from a low socio-economic status families (Figueroa & Montes de Oca, 2014). In my research, four of the 13 participants decided to go into the teaching career against their parents' advice. Pam, for example, says her father did not like her career choice and insisted on her to look at more profitable options. Kevin, told me how his father sent him to a friends' office, to have him close to a lawyers' work, because he did not want Kevin to become a teacher; Gerard's father gave him the money to register in the medical school the same day he was supposed to register in the School of Education. In Paul's case, his father wanted him to go to a "higher status career." Three of these families whose parents who did not want their

children to go into the teaching career were described by participants as middle SES, and one of them as upper SES. In the four cases, both parents are college graduates. These profiles differ from the ones of a previous study in the DR where the highest academic level of the participants' parents was high school (Figueroa & Montes de Oca, 2014). In the case of the participants in my study, only five of 13 participants' parents did not have a college degree.

Chapter V Closure

This chapter describes the themes and subthemes that emerged from analysis of the data generated by the interviews of 13 participants in my study. In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings that allow me to answer my research questions in the light of the FIT-Choice Theory, Holland's Theory of Career Choice and Maslow's Motivation Theory.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter focuses on answering the research questions of this study using the themes that emerged from the data collected during this research. While interpreting these findings, I make connections with previous literature as reviewed in Chapter II. Additionally, I provide recommendations for leaders dealing with teachers' recruitment and development in the DR, as well as offer my recommendations for future research.

The theories supporting the conceptual framework of this study are the FIT- Choice Theory (2006), Maslow's Motivational Theory (1943), and Holland's Theory of Career Choice (1973). The FIT-Choice Theory is a comprehensive theoretical framework around the motivation for becoming a teacher which has been used in different socio cultural contexts around the world (Watt et al., 2014). Maslow's Motivational Theory covers the stages of human development and goes from biological and physiological needs to self-actualization and transcendence needs (Maslow, 1943). The third theory supporting this study, Holland's Theory of Career Choice (1973), deals with the relation between individuals, their personal characteristics and backgrounds and their career choice. Holland's theory classify modal personal orientations and matching professional environments.

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the factors that motivated academically excellent students from high performing high schools in the DR to pursue a career in teaching, when they could have effortlessly gone into higher status careers. For this study, I selected students who were enrolled in their first, second or third year of a university's education program, and who had performed over 90 points on the National Standardized Exams (NSE) at the end of 12th grade in a high schools ranked as A or B in the Ranking Escolar 2015 (FUNPEN,

2015). High school graduates must pass National Standardized Exams in order to get their national high school diploma and be able to be admitted to a college program. The Ranking Escolar is the only document that has classified schools according to their students' outcomes in the NSE, extending this to the idea that it is a good if it was well ranked by this report. This classification is widely used by parents as a reference when looking for good schools for their children.

This study involved 13 participants, all with a scholarship in a teaching program in private universities in the metropolitan Santo Domingo. During the data collection of this study I conducted semi-structured interviews and asked them to complete the FIT-Choice Scale. The completion of this scale helped them to go back to certain information mentioned during the interview, and to deepen the details or added additional information omitted during the initial conversation.

These interviews revealed 10 major themes, offering insights related to excellent students who came from excellent high schools and choose teaching as a career when they had other career options available. I use the interpretation of these themes to answer my research questions.

Research Questions Analysis and Connections to Previous Research

Research Question 1

My first research question focused on the factors that motivate excellent students from excellent high schools to pursue a career in teaching, despite it being an uncommon career choice in the DR context for such students. Motivational factors influencing career choice have been classified by the FIT-Choice Theory as intrinsic and altruistic motivations, and extrinsic motivations (Watt et al., 2014). Intrinsic and altruistic motivations are described as those forces that move humans to act benefiting others with no apparent benefits for the person who performs

the action; such actions demonstrate love for others, wishing their discovery of happiness and expecting nothing in return.

Reasons offered by my participants classified as altruistic and intrinsic include the pursuit for personal satisfaction; the desire to work with children and young people; the desire to make a difference in other peoples' lives; and the opportunity to have a socially meaningful career, and to make a social contribution. Indeed, all my participants expressed that the most influential factor in their decision is that they want to improve society and influence new generations to make a difference (Theme A3). Twelve of 13 said they like working with children (Theme A1), and 11 expressed they enjoy helping others (Theme A2). These three factors have been previously considered intrinsic and altruistic motivations when analyzing preservice teachers' reasons for career choice (Fray & Gore, 2018; Watt et al., 2014).

In previous studies of the factors influencing teaching as a career choice, in a variety of cultures and socio-economic contexts, altruistic and intrinsic factors have been ranked as more relevant and frequently mentioned than extrinsic factors (Al-Yaseen, 2011; Bilim, 2014; König & Rothland, 2012; MacKenzie, (2013); Manuel & Hughes, 2006; OECD, 2005a; Thomson, Turner & Nietfelds, 2012; Wang, 2014). This clearly holds true for this population of preservice teachers in the DR who had been academically excellent students coming from excellent high schools.

Research Question 2

For my second research question, I sought to understand when participants began thinking about a career in teaching, and how they arrived at their decision to enroll in a teaching degree program. During the interviews I found different answers: nine participants had planned to become teachers at an undetermined point of their lives in that they “always wanted to be a

teacher;” and three choose teaching as a second career, two of them looking for self-satisfaction, and the other having failed in the previous career and finding in teaching a comfortable and enjoyable choice. One participant decided on the teaching career as an opportunistic choice because it could be obtained via a scholarship in a private university.

Despite different time periods for career decision-making, all participants revealed they had some informal teaching experience during their life as elementary and/or high school students. These informal experiences included things like serving as a tutor for other students in their school, or as Sunday school teachers in their churches. During the interviews, such participants recognized that experience as a starting point for seriously looking at teaching as enjoyable work (Theme C1). This finding has also been found in previous research whereby previous teaching experiences has a positive influence in the teaching career choice (Choi & Song, 2015; Glutsch & König, 2019; Low et al., 2011)

Research Question 3

The third research question of my study explores what and who these students describe as having a strong influence on their decision making. All participants described previous teachers as having the strongest influence on their decision to become a teacher. As noted previously, all were engaged in some sort of peer tutoring or teaching role early in their life, having teachers who helped “coach them” into teaching and whose roles in their education transcended to their professional life (Theme C3). In only one case, a participant expressed the strongest influence coming from her father, but he is a teacher as well.

On the other hand, the interviews also revealed that many parents do not recommend their children to go into the teaching profession (Theme C2), as was Pam’s, Kevin’s, Gerard’s, Barbie’s, Yanet’s, Carol’s, and Paul’s case; such parents actively discouraged this option. Such

parental discouragement is similar to that found in a previous study performed in the DR (Figueroa & Montes de Oca, 2014).

In my study, however, contrary to the study of Figueroa and Montes de Oca (2014), participants reported higher educational level of their parents as well as higher SES (See Table 1). Yet, similar to the lower educated and SES parents in the Figueroa and Montes de Oca study, for seven of participants, their parents did not want them to study teaching. Such discouragement could be related to the continued perceived low social status of the career, as emerged via one of the themes in my study (Theme B5). In my study, most participants' parents were college graduates, with careers other than teaching, and during the career selection process, more than half still found teaching as a choice unworthy of their children. Despite this resistance from their parents, these seven participants chose to pursue teaching, and all noted that their parents are now okay with their choice.

Research Question 4

The fourth and last question of this study looks at what ways these preservice teachers expect a career in teaching will contribute to their life goals. In all cases, participants are satisfied with their choice and see a bright fulfilling future ahead. Most of them expressed they are aware that the career does not have the social status it should have, but they hope this situation will change in the future (Theme B5). They all consider that the salary of the career in the DR is higher than the salary for other highly recognized careers (Theme B3), and that the teaching career will allow them to become professionals with permanent growth and improvement (Theme B4).

Overall, all participants are satisfied with their career choice, and they show a sense of self-realization and pride aligned with what the Theory of Human Motivation describes as higher

order needs. Participants expressed how much they love the work they will have to do with this career choice, and recurrently mentioned that they would be working with children (Theme A1), helping others (Theme A2) and influencing new generations to make a difference in society (Theme A3). These motives are very significant for the sustainability of a quality education and the current investment of the Dominican government since some studies reveal that such motives will increase the chance of preservice teachers actually remaining in the teaching career (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010).

Discussion of Major Findings and Connections to Previous Literature

The goal of this study was to gain an understanding of what factors motivate academically excellent students from high performing high schools in the DR to pursue a career in teaching.

This study revealed that the main factor motivating excellent students from excellent schools in the DR is that they like to work with children and helping others. These reasons are considered intrinsic and altruistic motivators, and align with findings in similar studies in different sociocultural contexts around the world (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2014; Hellsten & Prytula, n.d.; Hennessy & Lynch, 2017; Low et al., 2011; Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Watt et al., 2014). In addition, these factors are similar to those from a prior study in the DR conducted by Figueroa and Montes de Oca (2014) with participants with a very different profile. Teachers who are intrinsically motivated enjoy their work more and are more involved in learning. Indeed, this type of motivation for the job is an essential driver for accessing further teacher professional development, staying on the job, and for the future teachers' commitment to be successful professionals (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2014).

My participants described themselves as people who like and value helping people; this is a description of socially oriented people who are good at teaching, they enjoy and value solving social problems and see themselves as helpful, friendly, and trustworthy. They all also had a previous significant teaching experience that they refer to as important when thinking about the factors that influenced their career choice decision. They described their varied experiences as joyful, rewarding, and self-satisfying, this is reflected in their satisfaction with the career choice ranked as 7.00 of 7.00 when they answered the Fit-Choice Scale. This feeling aligns with Maslow's description of humans' higher needs of belongingness, respect and self-realization (Maslow, 1943). The fact is that these preservice teachers are more likely to find this reward in their work as teachers, which guarantees not only they will feel satisfied with the career choice, but that they will enjoy their work and stay in it (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010).

Another interesting finding in my study is that nine of my 13 participants come from middle and upper SES, and for seven of them, their parents are college graduates. All of the participants came from excellent high schools, 10 of which are private, and had high scores on the national high school test. They are all also studying in private universities with scholarships from the government, which requires good grades to maintain the scholarship benefits. These characteristics describe better prepared individuals who have chosen a teaching career even when they have other available options. This is quite different than a previous study that described preservice teachers in the DR as coming primarily from low SES families, and who had graduated from public high schools (Figueroa & Montes de Oca, 2014). Also, teacher preparation programs in the DR used to exist only in one state university where facilities and programs did not have the best reputation at the top of people's minds; contrary to this, all my

participants are part of teacher programs in highly reputed private universities in the metropolitan Santo Domingo.

The need for better prepared preservice teachers in teachers' preparation programs is a global concern (OECD, 2013). Fortunately, findings from my study reveals that the DR government's scholarship program within private universities appears to be attracting and supporting the increasing status of the teaching career. The screening process to be admitted in teachers programs has also started to be more demanding of academic quality of the applicant (INAFOCAM, 2013b). It is now a career choice for students who want the quality of a private university, but also want to become teachers. This allows them to be part of this new lineage of teachers the Dominican government is supporting to face the country's education challenge. However, It is important to note that twelve of the 13 participants mentioned they had not been actively recruited by the universities to enroll in the career of teaching. The fact that universities do not put the same effort on the recruitment of students for the career of teaching, puts this career in a dissadvantegeous condition, compared to other reputed careers.

Attitudes might also be changing along generational lines. Many of my participants decided to choose teaching as a career even though their parents discouraged them to choose teaching and advised them to go into another higher status and better paid career. Yet, all of their parents now support their career choice. This is particularly important in the DR culture where parents have a strong influence in the career decision of their children.

Table 16 offers a summary of my key findings as connected to previous literature.

Table 16.

Summary of Overarching Findings

Fuster (2020) Findings	Related Literature
The main factor motivating excellent students from excellent schools in the DR is that they like to work with children and helping others (Themes A1 and A2).	Similar to Figueroa and Montes de Oca (2014); Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2014); Hellsten and Prytula (n.d.); Hennessy and Lynch (2017); Low et al. (2011); Manuel and Hughes (2006); Watt et al. (2014)
Academically excellent students choosing teaching as a career are doing this in part to help their country with its educational challenges (Theme A3).	This factor has not been reported in previous research in the DR
Participants all had a previous significant teaching experience they refer to as important when thinking about facts influencing their teaching career choice (Theme C1).	Similar to Hennessy and Lynch (2017). This factor has not been reported in previous research in the DR.
DR government's scholarship program within private universities is attracting high achieving students and supporting the increasing status of the teaching career (Theme B4 and B5).	Similar to INAFOCAM (2013); OECD (2013)
Many participants' chose teaching even though their parents discouraged them to choose teaching and advised them to go into another higher status and better paid career (Theme C2).	Similar to Fray and Gore (2018); Watt et al. (2014). This factor has not been reported in previous research in the DR.
Middle and upper SES students are starting to look at teaching as a career choice	Contrary to the SES of participants in Figueroa and Montes de Oca (2014).

Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Research

This qualitative study sought to understand the process of career choice for 13 preservice teachers who are now part of a teacher program in private universities in the metropolitan Santo Domingo, DR. Findings from this research contribute to the literature related to the factors that influence teaching career choice in a moment when teacher shortages have become a global challenge. Still, gathering more information about the motivations of students who decide to become teachers in different socio-economic contexts would be valuable for policy makers who can look for more systemic solutions to teachers' shortages.

For example, additional research could be carried out focused on capturing the perceptions of the teaching career in the DR from larger numbers of high- and middle SES status high school students. Those with economic means usually have access to a higher quality education, and more comprehensive cultural input, as well as travelling in and out of the country. These students would have much to offer as future teachers, and yet, they might have a wrong idea of what being a teacher is, and not even be considering teaching as a career choice.

Finally, it would also be useful to track high school students who serve as tutors and see how being tutors during secondary education influences their career choice. This future study could even explore how tutoring in given academic areas might influence teacher career decisions.

Recommendations for Leaders

All participants in this study, enthusiastically agreed to take part in the research and expressed their satisfaction with their career choice. They expressed their commitment with

improving as professionals and encourage more excellent students to become teachers. This is very positive development given the DR's present situation of teacher shortages.

I recommend our Ministry of Education, specifically, INAFOCAM (Instituto Nacional para la Formación y Capacitación de Maestros) which puts into practice the state plans for teacher development programs, to join the efforts of schools of education and through the teachers' preparation programs, start looking at possible applicants for the teaching career at an earlier stage, specifically during the beginning of their secondary education. Having high school students involved in programs where they are exposed to teaching and caring activities with younger students can identify strengths and motivations of such students, which could later be channeled through academic programs.

I recommend the Ministry of Education to continue the scholarship programs for those willing to go into the teaching career, since it is forming people with a social commitment who want to improve DR's education.

Indeed, having university leaders combine their efforts with the official efforts in recruiting excellent high school students could guarantee a future of excellence in teachers' preparation and a closure in the gap between teaching jobs and teachers available. This model is successfully applied in Finland which is a leader in international measurements (NCEE, 2016).

Chapter VI Closure

This study sought to understand the factors that influence the teaching career choice of excellent students from high performing schools in Santo Domingo, DR. I interviewed 13 participants, using in-depth questionnaires as well as the FIT-Choice Scale to explore deeper in the information.

I concluded that my participants were mainly influenced by intrinsic and altruistic motives, and that they as current college students perceive the teaching career as a well-paid career that is gaining social status in the DR. This is despite many of their parents, just one generation older, discouraging them from becoming teachers given their perception of it being a lower status career. This is an important change within the DR. Participants expressed they not only feel satisfied with their career choice, they also feel a social commitment to assist with the improvement of education in the Dominican Republic. They showed an interest in also encouraging more people to become teachers.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Script (WhatsApp) (Spanish and English)

Appendix A.

Message in Spanish

June, 2019

Santo Domingo

Estimado estudiante,

Mi nombre es Marcela Fuster, soy profesora de Inglés del Departamento de Lingüística de Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra y estoy trabajando en mi tesis de Doctorado, titulada “ Factores que influyen en la decisión de carrera de los estudiantes de alto rendimiento de escuelas de alto rendimiento que eligen estudiar educación”

Hace meses conversamos sobre tu interés en este estudio. Te estoy contactando para saber si aún estás interesado in saber más sobre participar en este estudio. Si estás interesado, contáctame para explicarte en más detalles el propósito de esta investigación, así como el tiempo y el compromiso de los participantes, los procedimientos utilizados en el estudio, y los riesgos y beneficios de participar en este proyecto.

Gracias,

Marcela Fuster

marcelafuster@gmail.com

Tel & WhatsApp: 809-884-3170

Message in English

June, 2019

Santo Domingo

Dear Student,

My name is Marcela Fuster, I am an English teacher in the Department of Linguistics of Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra and I am working on my PhD thesis, entitled "Factors that influence career choice of high-performance students of high-performance schools who choose to study education "

Months ago, we talked about your interest in this research. I am contacting you now to find out to find out if you are interested now in learning more about participating. If you are, please contact me. If you are, please contact me so I can explain you in more detail the purpose of this research, as well as the time and commitment of the participants, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this project.

Marcela Fuster

marcelafuster@gmail.com

Tel & WhatsApp: 809-884-3170

Appendix B
Informed Consent/Assent Documents (Spanish and English)

Appendix B

Consent Form in Spanish

Western Michigan University

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Principal Investigador: Louann Bierlein Palmer, Ed.D

Estudiante Investigador: **Marcela Fuster**

Título del estudio: LA ELECCION DE SER MAESTRO: ENTENDIENDO LA SELECCIÓN DE CARRERA DE ESTUDIANTES ACADÉMICAMENTE EXCELENTES QUE PROCEDEN DE ESCUELAS EXCELENTES EN REPUBLICA DOMINICANA.

Resumen del Estudio

Este formulario de consentimiento es parte de un proceso de consentimiento informado para un estudio de investigación y proporcionará información que lo ayudará a decidir si desea participar en este estudio. La participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. El propósito de la investigación es obtener una comprensión de los factores que motivan a los estudiantes académicamente excelentes de las escuelas secundarias de alto rendimiento en la RD a seguir una carrera en la enseñanza. Para obtener esta comprensión, llevaré a cabo una investigación fenomenológica sobre las experiencias, las cosmovisiones, las relaciones y los motivadores personales que resultan en estudiantes académicamente excelentes de escuelas secundarias de alto rendimiento, que sin esfuerzo podrían ingresar a carreras de más alto estatus, decidir ingresar a docente en su lugar y servirá como Marcela Maria Fuster de Hernández, disertación, proyecto de investigación) para los requisitos del Doctorado en Liderazgo Educativo. Si participa en la investigación, se le pedirá que participe en una entrevista y responda una encuesta. Su tiempo en el estudio tomará 90 minutos. No hay riesgo posible y participar en este estudio no implica ningún costo. Su alternativa a participar en el estudio de investigación es no participar en él.

Usted está invitado a participar en este proyecto de investigación titulado "ELEGIR SER MAESTRO: ENTENDER LA ELECCIÓN DE CARRERA DE ESTUDIANTES ACADÉMICAMENTE EXCELENTES QUE SE GRADUEN DE ESCUELAS SECUNDARIAS DE ALTO RENDIMIENTO EN LA REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA" y la siguiente información en este formulario de consentimiento proporcionará más detalles sobre el estudio de investigación. Haga cualquier pregunta si necesita más aclaraciones y para ayudarlo a decidir si desea participar en el estudio de investigación. No renuncia a ninguno de sus derechos legales al aceptar participar en esta investigación o al firmar este formulario de consentimiento. Una vez que se hayan respondido todas sus preguntas y se haya revisado el documento de consentimiento, si decide participar en este estudio, se le pedirá que firme este formulario de consentimiento.

¿Qué estamos tratando de descubrir en este estudio?

Este estudio tratará de obtener una mejor comprensión de los factores que motivan a los estudiantes de alto rendimiento académico que entran a la carrera de educación en República Dominicana y vienen de escuelas de alto rendimiento.

¿Quién puede participar en este estudio?

Participarán en este estudio los estudiantes de primero, segundo y tercer año de la carrera de educación de universidades privadas de República Dominicana.

¿Dónde se llevará a cabo este estudio?

Este estudio se llevará a cabo en aulas asignadas para tales fines de cualquiera de estas universidades.

¿Cuál es el tiempo de compromiso para participar en este estudio?

El tiempo de compromiso de los participantes es de aproximadamente 90 minutos el día de su conveniencia.

¿Qué se te pedirá que hagas si eliges participar en este estudio?

Si eliges participar en este estudio, se te pedirá que contestes preguntas sobre el proceso de elección de la carrera participando en una entrevista. Estas entrevistas serán grabadas. Se te harán preguntas, se te pedirá que llenes una encuesta, tratando de ayudarte a identificar experiencias significativas durante el proceso de elección de tu carrera.

¿Qué información se mide durante el estudio?

Vamos a hacerte preguntas relacionadas con tus datos demográficos y tu decisión de estudiar educación.

¿Cuáles son los riesgos de participar en este estudio y cómo se minimizarán estos riesgos?

No se conoce ningún riesgo por participar en este estudio.

¿Cuáles son los beneficios de participar en este estudio?

Los resultados de esta investigación serán utilizados para añadir información y ayudar a la formulación de políticas a favor de la educación. No hay ningún beneficio directo de participar en este estudio.

¿Hay algún costo asociado con la participación en este estudio?

No hay ningún pago o incentivo por participar en este estudio.

¿Hay alguna compensación por participar en este estudio?

Los participantes no recibirán pago ni incentivo alguno por contestar el cuestionario.

¿Quién tendrá acceso a la información recopilada durante este estudio?

Los resultados de este estudio pudieran ser publicados en eventos o revistas nacionales e internacionales. Tu identidad será protegida a través de un sistema de códigos numéricos. La data original, será guardada de manera digital en un archivo protegido con contraseña en un dispositivo de almacenamiento digital. Este último será mantenido en un lugar asegurado con llave bajo la custodia del investigador principal.

¿Qué pasará con mi información recopilada para esta investigación una vez que finalice el estudio?

La información recopilada sobre ti para esta investigación no será utilizada ni distribuida a los investigadores para otra investigación. Tus datos se almacenarán en formato digital en un archivo protegido con contraseña en un dispositivo de almacenamiento de la unidad. Este dispositivo estará bajo mi custodia. Estos archivos se mantendrán durante al menos 3 años, después del cierre del estudio, en un lugar seguro en el campus de la WMU

¿Qué pasa si quieres dejar de participar en este estudio?

Puede elegir dejar de participar en el estudio en cualquier momento y por cualquier motivo. No sufrirá ningún perjuicio o penalización por su decisión de detener su participación. No experimentará NINGUNA consecuencia, ya sea académica o personalmente, inmediata ni futura, si decide retirarse de este estudio. El investigador también puede decidir suspender su participación en el estudio sin su consentimiento.

Si tiene alguna pregunta antes o durante el estudio, puede comunicarse con el investigador, Louann A Bierlein Palmer en el departamento de educación de Western Michigan University, con Marcela Fuster en el teléfono 809-884-3170 o en marcelafuster@gmail.com; Skype: marcela.fuster. También puede contactar al presidente del Consejo de Revisión Institucional de Trabajo con Sujetos Humanos en el 269-387-8293 o el Vicepresidente de Investigaciones en el 269-387-8298 si le surgen preguntas durante este estudio. Este documento de consentimiento ha sido aprobado por el Consejo de Revisión Institucional de Trabajo con Sujetos Humanos (HSIRB) como se indica en la fecha del sello estampado y firmado en la esquina superior derecha. No participe en este estudio si la fecha es más antigua que un año.

He leído este consentimiento informado. He sido informado de los riesgos y beneficios de mi participación en esta investigación. Estoy de acuerdo en participar en este estudio.

Escriba su nombre completo

Firma del participante

Fecha

Consent Form in English

Western Michigan University

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Principal Investigator: Louann Bierlein Palmer, Ed.D

Student Researcher: Marcela Fuster

Title of the study: CHOOSING TO BE A TEACHER: UNDERSTANDING THE CAREER CHOICE OF ACADEMICALLY EXCELLENT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO HAD GRADUATED FROM HIGH-PERFORMING HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (DR)

Study Summary

This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide information that will help you decide whether you want to take part in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The purpose of the research is to gain an understanding of what factors motivate academically excellent students from high – performing high schools in the DR to pursue a career in teaching. To gain this understanding, I will conduct a basic interpretive qualitative investigation into the experiences, worldviews, relationships, and personal motivators that result in academically excellent students from high – performing high schools – who could effortlessly go into more high – status careers – decide to enter a teaching career instead and will serve as Marcela Maria Fuster de Hernandez, dissertation, research project) for the requirements of the PhD in Educational Leadership. If you take part in the research, you will be asked to participate in an interview and answer a survey. Your time in the study will take 90 minutes. There are no possible risk and participating in this study does not imply any cost. Your alternative to taking part in the research study is not to take part in it.

You are invited to participate in this research project titled " CHOOSING TO BE A TEACHER: UNDERSTANDING THE CAREER CHOICE OF ACADEMICALLY EXCELLENT STUDENTS WHO GRADUATE FROM HIGH-PERFORMING HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC" and the following information in this consent form will provide more detail about the research study. Please ask any questions if you need more clarification and to assist you in deciding if you wish to participate in the research study. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by agreeing to take part in this research or by signing this consent form. After all of your questions have been answered and the consent document reviewed, if you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form.

What are we trying to find out in this study?

This study will try to obtain a better understanding of the factors that motivate the students of high academic performance who enter the career of education in the Dominican Republic and come from high performance schools.

Who can participate in this study?

Students in the first, second and third year of the education career from private universities in the Dominican Republic.

Where will this study be carried out?

This study will be carried out in classrooms assigned for such purposes in any of those universities.

What is the commitment time to participate in this study?

The time of commitment of the participants is approximately 60 minutes on the day of their convenience.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer questions about your career choice process by participating in an interview. These interviews are going to be audio-recorded. You will be asked questions, you will be asked to feel a survey as a participant, trying to help you in identifying meaningful experiences during the career choice process.

What information is measured during the study?

We will ask you questions related to your demographics and your decision to study education.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?

There are no known risks for participating in this study

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

The results of this research will be used to add information and help formulate policies in favor of education. There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study.

Is there any cost associated with participating in this study?

Participating in this study does not imply any cost.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?

There is no payment or incentive for participating in this study.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?

The results of this study could be published in national or international events or magazines. Your identity will be protected through a system of numerical codes. The original data will be stored digitally in a password protected file on a digital storage device. The latter will be kept in a locked place under the custody of the principal investigator.

What will happen to my information collected for this research after the study is over?

The information collected about participants for this research will not be used by or distributed to investigators for other research. The data will be stored in digital format in a password protected file in a unit storage device. This device will be in my custody. These files will be kept for at least 3 years, after close of the study, in a secure location on the WMU campus.

What happens if you want to stop participating in this study?

You can choose to stop participating in the study at any time and for any reason. You will not suffer any loss or penalty for your decision to stop your participation. You will not experience ANY consequence, either academic or personally, immediate or future, if you decide to

withdraw from this study. The investigator may also decide to suspend your participation in the study without your consent.

If you have any questions before or during the study, you can contact the researcher, Louann A Bierlein Palmer at the Educational leadership Department in Western Michigan University, with Marcela Fuster at the telephone 809-884-3170 or at marcelafuster@gmail.com; Skype: marcela.fuster. You can also contact the president of the Institutional Review Board for Work with Human Subjects at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President of Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during this study. This consent document has been approved by the Institutional Review Board for Work with Human Subjects (HSIRB) as indicated on the stamp date stamped and signed in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the date is older than one year.

I have read this informed consent. I have been informed of the risks and benefits of my participation in this investigation. I agree to participate in this study.

Enter your full name

Signature

Date

Appendix C

Semi-Structured Questionnaire (Spanish and English)

Appendix C

Semi-Structured Questionnaire in Spanish

Gracias por aceptar hablar conmigo hoy. Como sabe, me interesa saber su historia personal sobre cómo tomó la decisión de convertirse en maestro. Para ayudarlo a contar su historia, le haré algunas preguntas específicas, y le animaré a responder de una manera que se sienta natural para usted y le ayude a asegurarse de que entiendo su decisión de convertirse en maestro. Por favor, utilice mis preguntas como guía y no dude en elaborar cualquier punto que considere importante.

Parte A

1. ¿Cuándo recuerdas haber comenzado a pensar en la carrera de maestro?

Posibles preguntas colaterales:

- a. ¿Qué o quién te instó a la idea de considerar la enseñanza? ¿Cómo? Pon ejemplos.
- b. ¿Hay alguna experiencia en particular que recuerdes que te haya puesto a pensar en un futuro en la enseñanza? Si es así, por favor descríbelos.
2. Por favor, háblame sobre tus propias experiencias en la escuela, como alumno.
 - a. ¿Cómo te describirías a ti mismo como estudiante?
 - b. ¿Cómo describirías a los maestros que tuvieron la mayor influencia en tu éxito académico?
 - c. ¿Cómo describirías a los maestros que tuvieron la mayor influencia en que consideraras la enseñanza como una elección de carrera para tí?
 - d. ¿Cómo se basan ustedes o se basarán en su experiencia académica previa en su enseñanza?
3. ¿Cómo llegó a considerar un futuro como maestro?
 - a. ¿Describir el momento en que decidió inscribirse en un programa de grado de enseñanza?
 - b. Describe cómo reaccionaron los demás (familia, amigos, etc.) cuando compartiste tus pensamientos acerca de convertirte en maestro.
4. Por favor, coméntame a través del proceso que pasaste en la toma de la decisión de prepararte para una carrera en la enseñanza.
 - a. Describe el proceso y cualquier otra opción de carrera que considere
 - b. Describe cómo te sientes acerca de esa decisión ahora.
 - c. ¿Cómo esperas que la elección de una carrera docente afecte tu vida? ¿Y apoyar tus metas de vida?
5. Al recordar el proceso de tomar esta decisión, ¿quién tuvo la mayor influencia en su decisión?

- a. ¿Qué factores o individuos tuvieron la mayor influencia? ¿Cómo?
 - b. ¿Qué factores, circunstancias o individuos plantearon dudas sobre esta elección de carrera?
 - c. ¿Cómo superó esas dudas?
6. En este punto de su programa de preparación para maestros, ¿cómo está pensando en la decisión que tomó?
- a. ¿Qué apoya tu motivación para continuar en esta dirección?
 - b. ¿Qué, si acaso, te hace repensar esa decisión?
 - c. ¿Qué tan seguro está de que convertirse en maestro es la elección correcta para tí?

Parte B

Me detendré aquí y pediré a los participantes que completen la Escala FIT. (Conmigo saliendo de la habitación durante 10 minutos)

Después de que el participante complete la Escala FIT, regrese a la entrevista e inicie la Parte B de la conversación:

Gracias por tomarse el tiempo para completar la Escala FIT. Te pedí que lo hicieras para ayudarte a reflexionar más sobre tu decisión de ser maestro. Ahora, me gustaría escuchar qué pensamientos tienes después de completar la Escala y pensar en tus respuestas.

1. Mientras respondías a las preguntas de la Escala, ¿qué te encontraste pensando?
2. Al mirar sus respuestas, ¿qué le hacen pensar acerca de su decisión de convertirse en maestro?
 - a. ¿Sus respuestas reforzaron algo de lo que ya hablamos? Si es así, ¿qué?
 - b. ¿Descubriste algo que sea diferente de lo que ya hablamos?
 - c. ¿Hay algo en sus respuestas que le gustaría reflexionar más antes de concluir nuestra conversación?

Semi-Structured Questionnaire in English

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me today. As you know, I am interested in learning your personal story about how you made the choice to become a teacher. To help you tell your story, I will ask you some specific questions, and will encourage you to respond in a way that feels natural to you and helps you make sure I understand your decision to become a teacher. Please use my questions as a guide and feel free to elaborate on any points you feel are important for me to understand.

Part A

1. Thinking back, when do you remember starting to think about a career in teaching?

Possible Probes:

- a. What or who prompted the idea to consider teaching? How? Examples?
- b. Are there any particular experiences you remember prompting you to think about a future in teaching? If so, please describe them.
2. Please talk about your own experiences in school.
 - a. How would you describe yourself as a student?
 - b. How would you describe the teachers who had the greatest influence on your academic success? On your consideration of teaching as a career choice for yourself?
 - c. How do you or will you draw upon your previous academic experience in your teaching?
3. How did you come to consider a future as a teacher?
 - a. Describe the moment when you decided to enroll in a teaching degree program?
 - b. Describe how others (your family, friends, etc.) reacted when you shared your thoughts about becoming a teacher.
4. Please walk me through the process you went through in actually making the decision to prepare for a career in teaching.
 - a. Describe the process and any other career options you considered
 - b. Describe how you feel about that decision now.
 - c. How do you expect the choice of a teaching career will affect your life? And support your life goals?
5. As you think back on the process of making this decision, please share who and what had the strongest influence in your decision?
 - a. What factors or individuals had the greatest influence? How?
 - b. What factors, circumstances, or individuals raised doubts about this career choice?

- c. How did you overcome those doubts?
- 6. At this point in your teacher preparation program, how are you thinking about the choice you made?
 - a. What supports your motivation to continue in this direction?
 - b. What, if anything, causes you to re-think that decision?
 - c. How confident are you that becoming a teacher is the right choice for you?

Part B

I will stop here and ask participants to complete the FIT-Scale. (With me leaving the room for 10 minutes)

After the participant completes the FIT Scale, return to the interview and start Part B of the conversation:

Thank you for taking the time to complete the FIT Scale. I asked you to do that to help you reflect further on your choice to become a teacher. Now, I would like to hear what thoughts you have after completing the Scale and thinking about your responses.

- 3. As you were answering the questions on the Scale, what did you find yourself thinking?
- 4. As you look at your answers, what do they make you think about your decision to become a teacher?
 - a. Possible probes: Did your answers reinforce something we already talked about? If so, what?
 - b. Did you discover anything that is different from what we already talked about?
 - c. Is there anything in your responses, you would like to reflect on further before we conclude our conversation?
- 5. As you reflect on our entire conversation today, what will be your greatest take-away? In other words, what did you learn about yourself and your decision to become a teacher by participating in the interview today?

Thank you and I wish you all the best in your teaching career.

Appendix D

FIT-Choice Scale (Spanish and English)

Appendix D

Fit-Choice Scale in Spanish

FIT-Choice Scale (Factors Influencing Teaching Choice Scale): Copyright © HMG**Watt & PW Richardson**

Por favor, expón brevemente tus principales razones para elegir ser maestro/a:

PARTE B – FACTORES INFLUYENTES

Para cada frase de abajo, por favor puntúa la importancia que ha tenido en TU decisión de ser maestro, desde **1** (ninguna importancia en tu decisión) hasta **7** (extremadamente importante en tu decisión).

Por favor, **marca** el número que mejor describe la importancia de cada ítem.

	Muy Importante						
	Nada						
“He decidido estudiar Educación porque...”							
B1. Me interesa la enseñanza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B2. Por el horario escolar, trabajar como maestro me permitiría tener más tiempo para la familia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B3. Mis amigos piensan que debería ser maestro/a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B4. Siendo maestro tengo más vacaciones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B5. Tengo cualidades para ser buen maestro/a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B6. La enseñanza me permite dar un servicio a la sociedad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B7. Siempre he querido ser maestro/a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B8. La enseñanza puede darme la oportunidad de trabajar en el extranjero	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B9. La enseñanza me permitirá formar en valores a niños/adolescentes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B10. Quiero ayudar a niños/adolescentes a aprender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B11. No tenía claro qué carrera quería estudiar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B12. Me gusta enseñar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B13. Quiero un trabajo que suponga trabajar con niños/adolescentes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B14. La enseñanza me ofrecerá un trabajo estable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B16. Los horarios me permitirán compatibilizarlo con mis responsabilidades familiares	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B17. He tenido profesores a los que he admirado y me han influido positivamente	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B18. Siendo maestro tendré una jornada laboral corta	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B19. Tengo buenas habilidades para enseñar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B20. Los maestros hacen una contribución valiosa a la sociedad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B22. La titulación de maestro tiene un reconocimiento en todas partes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B23. La enseñanza me permitirá influir en la próxima generación	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B24. Mi familia piensa que debería ser maestro/a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B26. Quiero trabajar en un entorno con niños/adolescentes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B27. Ser maestro/a me permite tener un sueldo fijo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B29. Las vacaciones escolares encajan con mis obligaciones familiares	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B30. He tenido profesores que han sido buenos modelos	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B31. Ser maestro/a me permite devolver a la sociedad lo que he recibido	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B35. No fui aceptado en la carrera de primera opción	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B36. La enseñanza me permitirá elevar las ambiciones de la juventud desfavorecida	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B37. Me gusta trabajar con niños/adolescentes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B38. La enseñanza es un trabajo seguro	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B39. He tenido experiencias de aprendizaje positivas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B40. La gente con la que he trabajado piensan que debería ser maestro/a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B43. La enseñanza es una profesión que se adecúa a mis habilidades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B45. La enseñanza me permitirá elegir donde quiero vivir	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B48. La carrera de Educación era la última opción que tenía	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B49. La enseñanza me permitirá ayudar a las personas socialmente desfavorecidas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B52. La enseñanza es una profesión que te realiza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B53. La enseñanza me permitirá influir en los niños/adolescentes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B54. La enseñanza me permitirá trabajar contra la desventaja social	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PARTE C – CREENCIAS SOBRE LA EDUCACIÓN

Para cada cuestión, por favor puntúa hasta qué punto estás de acuerdo desde **1** (nada) hasta **7** (totalmente de acuerdo). Por favor, **marca** el número que mejor describe tu acuerdo con cada ítem

C1. ¿Crees que los maestros están bien pagados?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C2. ¿Crees que los maestros tienen una fuerte carga de trabajo?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C3. ¿Crees que el ejercicio de la enseñanza está bien remunerado?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C4. ¿Crees que a los maestros se les percibe como profesionales?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C5. ¿Crees que los maestros tienen un alto nivel de entusiasmo?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C6. ¿Crees que la enseñanza es una profesión que requiere de especiales capacidades?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C7. ¿Crees que la enseñanza requiere un gran trabajo emocional?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C8. ¿Crees que la enseñanza se considera una profesión de alto status?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C9. ¿Crees que los maestros se sienten valorados por la sociedad?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C10. ¿Crees que la enseñanza exige un alto nivel de conocimiento?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C11. ¿Crees que la enseñanza es un trabajo exigente?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C12. ¿Crees que la profesión de maestro está bien considerada?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C13. ¿Crees que los maestros consideran que su trabajo tiene un alto status social?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C14. ¿Crees que los maestros necesitan altos niveles de conocimiento técnico?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C15. ¿Crees que los maestros necesitan conocimiento altamente especializado?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PARTE D – TU DECISIÓN DE SER MAESTRO

Para cada cuestión, por favor puntúa hasta qué punto es verdad para ti, desde **1** (nada) hasta **7** (mucho). Por favor, **marca** el número que mejor describe tu acuerdo con cada ítem.

	importante			importante			
D1. ¿En qué medida has considerado seriamente tu decisión de ser maestro/a?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D2. ¿Te animaron a elegir otras carreras antes que la de Educación?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D3. ¿En qué medida estás satisfecho con tu decisión de ser maestro/a?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D4. ¿Te dijeron otras personas que ser maestro no era una buena elección de carrera?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D5. ¿En qué medida estás contento con tu decisión de ser maestro/a?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D6. ¿Otras personas te influyeron para que consideraras otras carreras alternativas a Educación?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

MUCHAS GRACIAS POR TU COLABORACIÓN

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work, please contact the authors to ascertain whether you have the current version.

Traducción, adaptación y validación de la versión española realizada por Gratacós (2014).

FIT-CHOICE Scale in English

FIT- Choice Scale

PART I – INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

“I chose to become a teacher because...”		Not at all important				Extremely important		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B1.	I am interested in teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B2.	Part-time teaching could allow more family time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B3.	My friends think I should become a teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B4.	As a teacher I will have lengthy holidays	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B5.	I have the qualities of a good teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B6.	Teaching allows me to provide a service to society	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B7.	I’ve always wanted to be a teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B8.	Teaching may give me the chance to work abroad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B9.	Teaching will allow me to shape child/adolescent values	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B10.	I was unsure of what career I wanted	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B11.	I like teaching	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B12.	I want a job that involves working with children/adolescents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B13.	Teaching will offer a steady career path	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B14.	Teaching hours will fit with the responsibilities of having a family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B15.	I have had inspirational teachers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B16.	As a teacher I will have a short working day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B17.	I have good teaching skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B18.	Teachers make a worthwhile social contribution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B19.	A teaching qualification is recognised everywhere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B20.	Teaching will allow me to influence the next generation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B21.	My family think I should become a teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B22.	I want to work in a child/adolescent-centred environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B23.	Teaching will provide a reliable income	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B24.	School holidays will fit in with family commitments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B25.	I have had good teachers as role-models	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART II – BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING

For each question below, please rate the extent to which YOU agree it is true about teaching, from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely). Please CIRCLE the number that best describes your agreement for each.

		Not at all				Extremely		
C1.	Do you think teaching is well paid?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C2.	Do you think teachers have a heavy workload?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C3.	Do you think teachers earn a good salary?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C4.	Do you believe teachers are perceived as professionals?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C5.	Do you think teachers have high morale?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C6.	Do you think teaching is emotionally demanding?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C7.	Do you believe teaching is perceived as a high-status occupation?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C8.	Do you think teachers feel valued by society?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C9.	Do you think teaching requires high levels of expert knowledge?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C10.	Do you think teaching is hard work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C11.	Do you believe teaching is a well-respected career?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C12.	Do you think teachers feel their occupation has high social status?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C13.	Do you think teachers need high levels of technical knowledge?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C14.	Do you think teachers need highly specialized knowledge?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

ART-III. YOUR DECISION TO BECOME A TEACHER

For each question below, please rate the extent to which it is true for YOU, from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely). Please CIRCLE the number that best describes your agreement for each.

		Not at all				Extremely		
D1.	How carefully have you thought about becoming a teacher?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D2.	Were you encouraged to pursue careers other than teaching?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D3.	How satisfied are you with your choice of becoming a teacher?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D4.	Did others tell you teaching was not a good career choice?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D5.	How happy are you with your decision to become a teacher?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D6.	Did others influence you to consider careers other than teaching?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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For information about this work, please contact Helen M. G. Watt and Paul W. Richardson.

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Appendix E
HSRIB Approval



Institutional Review Board

FWA00007042

IRB00000254

Date: September 12, 2019

To: Louann Bierlein Palmer, Principal Investigator

Marcela Fuster, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: IRB Project Number 19-08-09

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled "Choosing to be a Teacher: Understanding the Career Choice of Academically Excellent University Students who had Graduated from High-Performing High Schools in the Dominican Republic (DR)" has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Western Michigan University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may only be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes to this project (e.g., add an investigator, increase number of subjects beyond the number stated in your application, etc.). Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation.

In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the IRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals. A status report is required on or prior to (no more than 30 days) September 11, 2020 and each year thereafter until closing of the study.

When this study closes, submit the required Final Report found at <https://wmich.edu/research/forms>. Note: All research data must be kept in a secure location on the WMU campus for at least three (3) years after the study closes.

Office of the Vice President for Research

Research Compliance Office 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5456

PHONE: (269) 387-8293 FAX: (269) 387-8276 WEBSITE:

wmich.edu/research/compliance/hsirb

CAMPUS SITE: Room 251 W. Walwood Hall