

Teachers' Willingness to Teach: An Empirical Study of Graduating Normal Students: Taking School A as an Example

Lin Ding*

School of Teacher Education, Hubei University of Education, Wuhan, Hubei, China

**Corresponding Author.*

Abstract: Teachers are the backbone of education, and the willingness of normal students to enter the teaching profession is crucial for building a robust teaching faculty and enhancing education quality. This study examines the perspectives of normal students teachers, focusing on the 2024 graduates of School A, and investigates the core issue of “teachers’ willingness to teach.” Utilizing questionnaire design and field investigations, this research explores the factors influencing normal students teachers’ willingness to join the teaching profession. Through comprehensive data analysis and logical examination, the study reveals that normal students teachers’ willingness to teach is shaped by a combination of multiple factors and uncovers the interactive relationships among these factors. Based on the findings, this paper proposes targeted strategic suggestions to enhance normal students teachers’ willingness to teach, aiming to effectively boost their teaching aspirations. This study provides solid data support and a theoretical basis for the reform of teacher education, promoting the sustained development of the education sector.

Keywords: Graduating Normal Students; Willingness to Teach; Influencing Factors; Countermeasures and Suggestions

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the deepening of educational reforms and the dynamic evolution of the job market, the employment landscape for normal students is experiencing unprecedented opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, the country's increasing emphasis and investment in education, coupled with society's rising demand and expectations for high-quality teachers, have opened up broader and more diverse employment

channels and development platforms for normal students. On the other hand, normal students also face increasingly fierce competition in the job market and diverse career choices. In the face of a volatile employment environment, how to effectively adapt to professional demands and enhance their professional qualities and core competitiveness has become an important issue that normal universities need to address urgently. As the reserve force for the future primary and secondary school teacher workforce, the willingness of normal students to teach is directly related to the stability of the teacher workforce and the quality of teaching. Currently, normal students generally face five urgent issues regarding their willingness to teach [1-5]: Firstly, there are cognitive biases regarding the social status and economic benefits of teachers. Some normal students have reservations about the social recognition and economic returns of the teaching profession, believing that it cannot meet their material and spiritual needs; secondly, career cognition and expectations are becoming blurred. Many normal students lack in-depth understanding and clear planning for the education industry before entering the field, leading to unclear career goals and development paths; thirdly, there are conflicts between personal factors and professional identity. Some normal students' personal interests and values do not align with the characteristics of the teaching profession, causing confusion and contradictions in their professional identity; fourthly, there is a disconnect between professional theory and teaching practice in the training process. Although normal education emphasizes the integration of theory and practice, students often find it difficult to effectively apply theoretical knowledge to teaching practice in actual operations, affecting their mastery and improvement of professional skills; fifthly, the

external environment has a significant impact on professional identity. Family, school, society, and other factors jointly influence the process of normal students' professional identity, and any negative influence from these aspects may weaken their willingness to teach. These problems not only affect normal students' identification with the teaching profession but also restrict their future career development. Therefore, there is an urgent need for scientific and systematic research to deeply understand the willingness of graduating normal students to teach and the reasons behind it.

2. Definition of Concepts

The willingness to teach refers to the internal attitude of normal students towards whether they are willing to engage in the teaching profession. It is a comprehensive form that internalizes professional cognition and professional identity as beliefs, views teaching goals or professional development goals as directions for struggle, and externalizes them into behavior. The willingness to teach refers to an individual's willingness and motivation to engage in the education industry, including their identification with, love for, and pursuit of educational work, as well as their sense of responsibility and mission towards it. It is a complex concept involving personal values, career motivations, interests, and hobbies. For normal students, the willingness to teach is one of the important factors determining whether they are willing to engage in educational and teaching work and is also an important driving

force for cultivating and enhancing their educational and teaching abilities.

3. Research Design

This research project systematically explores the topic from six major aspects: problem identification, objectives, variables and hypotheses, research model, data collection and analysis, and research significance. It focuses on studying the overall level of teaching aspirations among graduating teacher-training students as the dependent variable, with the components of teaching aspirations serving as independent variables. Internship experiences, sense of achievement, and other factors act as mediating variables, while family economic support, social recognition, and similar factors function as moderating variables. Through questionnaire design, data collection, and data analysis, the study investigates the status and characteristics of teaching aspirations, identifies key factors influencing teaching aspirations, and examines the pathways through which these factors operate. The findings aim to provide data and decision-making references for educational management, career development, and the education industry.

To conduct empirical research centered on the issue of "teaching aspirations among graduating teacher-training students," it is first necessary to establish the relevant factor variables and research model for the questionnaire survey based on variable research and hypotheses, as illustrated in Figure 1.

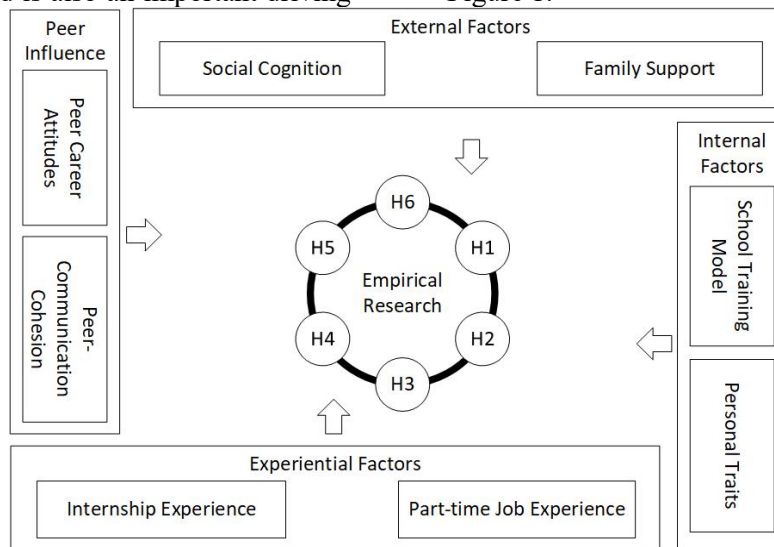


Figure 1. Diagram of the Relationships Among Relevant Factors in the Questionnaire Survey for This Research Project

In Figure 1, the diagram of the relationships among relevant factors, several hypotheses are initially established based on the hypothesis testing methods in statistics, as listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Null Hypothesis Formulation for This Research Project

Preset	Hypothesis Meaning
H1	The higher the societal recognition of the teaching profession, the stronger the teaching aspirations of teacher-training students.
H2	The higher the level of family support for the teaching profession, the stronger the teaching aspirations of teacher-training students.
H3	The training model of the school has a significant impact on the educational identity of teacher-training students.
H4	The higher the sense of achievement gained from teaching during internships, the stronger the teaching aspirations of teacher-training students.
H5	Part-time experiences unrelated to education have a negative impact on teaching aspirations.
H6	Positive attitudes toward the teaching profession among peer groups enhance the teaching aspirations of teacher-training students.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 The 2024 Cohort of Teacher-Training Students at University a Have an Intention to Pursue Teaching Careers

Based on the data from Questions 2, 3, and 4, it can be confirmed that the 2024 cohort of teacher-training students at University A have an intention to pursue teaching careers. Among them, a portion of students exhibit a strong desire to teach, while another group, after approximately three years of gaining a thorough understanding of the teaching profession and acquiring sufficient professional knowledge and skills, have seen their initial weak teaching aspirations grow stronger.

4.2 The Turning Point in Teaching Aspirations for the 2024 Cohort of Teacher-Training Students at University a Mostly Occurs in Their Third Year

Whether their teaching aspirations shift from

strong to weak or from weak to strong, the turning point for the 2024 cohort of teacher-training students at University A mostly occurs in their third year. After identifying this fact, further analysis reveals that the main reasons for the shift from strong to weak include pursuing postgraduate studies, realizing a mismatch between themselves and the teaching profession, changes in interests, personal internship and part-time experiences, as well as students perceiving slow progress in their teaching abilities.

On the other hand, the main reasons for the shift from weak to strong include the guidance provided by the university's teacher education program, significant improvement in teaching abilities, personal internship and part-time experiences, and some students recognizing their compatibility with the teaching profession. Additionally, a portion of students consistently maintain their passion for teaching, with their sustained enthusiasm primarily due to the alignment between the teaching profession and their personal interests.

4.3 The 2024 Cohort of Teacher-Training Students at University a Rate Their Abilities at an Average Level

According to the survey data, the 2024 cohort of teacher-training students at University A rate their abilities at an average level. Only 56.92% of the students feel relatively confident, believing they possess the necessary professional knowledge, skills, and qualities for the education industry. Meanwhile, 37.69% of the students feel less confident, believing they lack the required professional knowledge, skills, and qualities. A mere 3.33% of the students feel very confident, believing they fully possess the necessary professional knowledge, skills, and qualities. (This data provides some insight: there is room for improvement in the cultivation of teacher-training students' qualities and skills.)

4.4 The Main Reasons Why the 2024 Cohort of Teacher-Training Students at University A Want to Pursue Teaching Careers Are Relatively Concentrated

Based on the survey data, the main reasons why the 2024 cohort of teacher-training students at University A currently want to pursue teaching careers are as follows: enjoying the state of being a teacher, favorable

teaching environments, enjoying interactions with students, and satisfaction with the benefits of the teaching profession [6,7]. The main reasons for not wanting to pursue teaching careers include the perception of high work pressure and heavy responsibilities, as well as low salary levels in the teaching profession.

4.5 Other Data Analysis from the Survey on Teaching Aspirations of the 2024 Cohort of Teacher-Training Students at University A

(1) The 2024 cohort of teacher-training students at University A have a strong desire to obtain teaching qualifications, which further confirms their sufficient intention to pursue teaching careers.

(2) The 2024 cohort of teacher-training students at University A do not have a strong desire to teach in rural areas, or are uncertain about whether they would choose to do so. Their thoughts on this matter remain unclear.

(3) The primary channels through which the 2024 cohort of teacher-training students at University A learn about the job market are online platforms or media (such as recruitment websites and We Chat public accounts). They also obtain rich employment information through the university's career guidance center or related departments. Additionally, they receive recommendations or introductions from friends, family, or classmates. However, the proportion of students who actively contact or seek out employers or institutions is relatively small.

(4) The 2024 cohort of teacher-training students at University A have a high demand for employment guidance and services provided by the university. Many students hope the university can offer more employment guidance and services.

5. Analysis of Influencing Factors

5.1 General Factor Analysis

Through an in-depth exploration of influencing factors, the research team identified strong correlations among multiple factors, as detailed below:

(1) Social factors are closely related to personal factors

As society's recognition of the teaching profession and the level of compensation fluctuate, teacher candidates' perceptions and expectations of the profession also change

accordingly. When society's respect for the teaching profession increases and compensation improves, teacher candidates' sense of professional identity significantly strengthens, thereby enhancing their willingness to pursue teaching. Conversely, if societal recognition of the teaching profession declines, teacher candidates' willingness to teach may also be negatively affected.

(2) School factors are closely linked to personal factors

The quality of education, internship opportunities, and career guidance provided by schools directly impact teacher candidates' professional skills and career planning abilities. High-quality educational resources and rich internship experiences not only help improve teacher candidates' professional competence but also boost their confidence and willingness to teach. Therefore, the teacher training process and individual efforts complement each other, jointly shaping teacher candidates' professional identity and teaching aspirations.

(3) Family factors play a significant role in teacher candidates' career planning

Family attitudes and support toward teacher candidates pursuing a career in education directly influence their career choices and willingness to teach. Family support and encouragement provide strong emotional motivation, enabling teacher candidates to commit more firmly to the education profession.

(4) Channels for obtaining employment information are closely related to the breadth and depth of teacher candidates' professional awareness

Through diverse channels of employment information, teacher candidates can gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the current state and future trends of the teaching profession, thereby making more informed career choices. A thorough understanding of the profession helps enhance teacher candidates' willingness to teach and their career planning abilities.

In summary, the positive interaction and combination of factors such as personal interest and social recognition, school education and professional confidence, family support and career planning, and employment information and cognitive depth play a decisive role in enhancing teacher candidates' willingness to teach. Only by comprehensively

considering these factors and implementing effective measures to guide and promote them can we cultivate a high-quality, passionate teaching workforce, providing strong talent support for the sustainable development of education.

5.2 Analysis of Decisive Factors Figures

When exploring the decisive factors influencing the teaching intentions of graduating teacher candidates, the following points are particularly critical:

(1) The alignment between personal interest and social recognition is the primary factor in teacher candidates' strong willingness to teach. When teacher candidates have a deep interest in and passion for the teaching profession, and society also accords high respect and widespread recognition to the profession, the effect of this dual positive force significantly enhances teacher candidates' sense of professional belonging and honor. This alignment not only motivates teacher candidates to seek self-fulfillment in the field of education but also makes them more inclined to choose teaching as a career, thereby solidifying their teaching intentions [8,9].

(2) The construction of school education and professional confidence is a crucial foundation for enhancing teacher candidates' willingness to teach. High-quality teacher education not only provides teacher candidates with systematic professional knowledge and teaching skills but, more importantly, helps them gradually build recognition and confidence in their abilities through the integration of practical training and theoretical learning. This professional confidence serves as the internal motivation for teacher candidates to face challenges and overcome difficulties in their careers, as well as the psychological support for their teaching beliefs. When teacher candidates realize they have the potential and ability to become excellent teachers, their willingness to teach naturally becomes more resolute.

(3) Family support and the clarity of career planning play an undeniable role in teacher candidates' willingness to teach. As a crucial environment for teacher candidates' growth, family attitudes and level of support directly influence their career choices and psychological state. When families provide clear support and encouragement for teacher

candidates to pursue a career in education, this positive family atmosphere not only offers emotional comfort and motivation but also encourages them to plan their career paths more clearly. At the same time, if teacher candidates can develop reasonable career plans under the guidance of school education, clarifying their career goals and development paths, the dual support from family and school will form a powerful internal and external force, profoundly impacting their willingness to teach.

In conclusion, the alignment between personal interest and social recognition, the establishment of school education and professional confidence, the clarity of family support and career planning, and the breadth and depth of employment information and cognitive understanding together constitute the decisive factors influencing teacher candidates' willingness to teach.

6. Countermeasures and Suggestions

Based on the aforementioned analysis and conclusions, this study proposes targeted countermeasures and suggestions to improve the teaching intentions of graduating normal students.

6.1 Strengthening the Dual Driving Forces of Personal Interest and Social Recognition

(1) Enhance the social status of the teaching profession. The government should continue to increase investment in education, improve the social benefits and professional prestige of teachers, and enhance the respect and recognition of the teaching profession across society by commending outstanding teachers and promoting advanced educational deeds.

(2) Strengthen career enlightenment education. Implement career enlightenment education at the freshman stage to guide students in understanding the characteristics and requirements of the teaching profession, and to stimulate students' interest and passion for teaching. Organize career experience activities and teaching profession sharing sessions to allow students to personally experience the joys and significance of teaching work.

6.2 Deepen the Cultivation System of School Education and Professional Confidence

(1) Optimize teacher education curriculum. In line with educational development trends and

the actual needs of students, optimize the curriculum of teacher education by emphasizing the integration of theory and practice. Increase the inclusion of case studies, simulated teaching, and practical training to enhance students' educational teaching abilities and professional confidence.

(2) Establish personalized guidance mechanisms. Develop individualized academic and career planning guidance mechanisms tailored to the characteristics and needs of different students. Provide customized training programs and consulting services to help students clarify their career goals, stimulate intrinsic motivation for learning, and improve professional competence and self-confidence.

6.3 Construct a Collaborative Mechanism for Family Support and Career Planning

(1) Strengthen home-school cooperation. Establish a home-school cooperation mechanism by regularly organizing parent-teacher meetings, career planning seminars, and other activities to enhance communication and collaboration between families and schools. This will ensure joint attention and support for the professional growth of normal students [10,11].

(2) Guide the establishment of correct perspectives. Through educational campaigns and psychological counseling, guide the establishment of correct educational perspectives and career planning awareness. Encourage families to support normal students in pursuing teaching careers, providing them with positive spiritual support and psychological comfort.

6.4 Broaden Access to Employment Information and Deepen Understanding

(1) Improve employment information platforms. Schools should establish and enhance employment information platforms by integrating various employment resources to provide timely and accurate employment information and guidance services. Simultaneously, encourage students to actively stay informed about job market trends and utilize online platforms, job fairs, and other channels to gather extensive information.

(2) Strengthen employment guidance and training. Intensify efforts in providing employment guidance and training for students. Offer career guidance courses, organize mock

interviews, and host career planning competitions to improve students' job-seeking skills and professional competence, helping them gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the teaching profession and industry trends.

6.5 Implement Comprehensive Measures to Form a Multi-Party Synergy

(1) Policy incentives and safeguards. The government should introduce relevant policy measures, such as providing scholarships, loan incentives, housing subsidies, etc., to alleviate the financial burden and life pressure on normal students, thereby enhancing their enthusiasm for teaching. Simultaneously, improve systems for teacher title evaluation, salary, and benefits to provide teachers with a favorable career development environment and opportunities for advancement.

(2) Foster a social atmosphere of respecting teachers and valuing education. The entire society should work together to promote the noble character and spirit of dedication of the teaching profession through media campaigns, public welfare activities, and other forms, thereby enhancing the social recognition and attractiveness of the teaching profession.

By strengthening the dual driving forces of personal interest and social recognition, deepening the cultivation system of school education and professional confidence, constructing a collaborative mechanism for family support and career planning, broadening access to employment information and deepening understanding, and implementing comprehensive measures to form a multi-party synergy, the teaching intentions of graduating normal students can be effectively enhanced. This will lay a solid talent foundation for the long-term development of the education sector.

7. Conclusion

This paper takes a normal university as an example, and through empirical research combined with data analysis, delves into the teaching intentions of graduating normal students and their influencing factors.

The study finds that the majority of graduating normal students have a strong intention to teach, but there are also some students with doubts.

The students' teaching intentions are

influenced by various factors, including personal factors, family factors, school factors, and social factors.

In response to these influencing factors, this study proposes some measures to enhance the teaching intentions of graduating normal students, which have certain reference significance for cultivating an excellent teaching force.

At the same time, this study also has some shortcomings, mainly reflected in the fact that the research only targeted nine professional classes of graduating normal students from University A, and there is a need to further expand the research subjects and scope.

This study only used questionnaire surveys for data collection, and there is also room for further research in terms of technical level and methods.

Acknowledgments

This article is the periodical achievement of the general project of Humanities and Social Sciences Research of Hubei Provincial Department of Education, "Case Teaching Research in the Flipped Classroom Model" (Project No. 15Y162). This article is the periodical achievement of the general project of Hubei University of Education, "The Effect of Flipped Classroom in Teaching: A Comparative Study of Traditional Classroom and Flipped Classroom" (Project No.27).

References

- [1] Chen Juanhuai, Gao Zhihong, Liu Hui. An Empirical Study on the Teaching Intentions of Undergraduate Students in Vocational Teacher Education. *Contemporary Vocational Education*, 2018 (6): 66-72.
- [2] Chen Hongcai, Lanxin. An Empirical Study on the Teaching Intentions of Students in Vocational and Technical Normal Universities and Their Influencing Factors: A Case Study of Students from Tianjin University of Technology and Education. *Journal of Tianjin University of Technology and Education*, 2012, 22(4): 59-63.
- [3] Lan Xin, Lan Xin, Chen Hongcai. A Study on the Professional Identity of Vocational and Technical Normal Students and Its Influencing Factors. *Vocational and Technical Education*, 2015, 36 (779): 46-51.
- [4] Yin Jifen. A Study on the Professional Identity of Free Normal Students Majoring in Physical Education. Wuhan: Central China Normal University, 2017.
- [5] Wei Shuhua. A Study on Teacher Professional Identity. Chongqing: Southwest University, 2008.
- [6] Cui Shasha. A Study on the Teaching Intentions of Free Normal Students in Arts and Physical Education and Their Influencing Factors. Wuhan: Central China Normal University, 2014.
- [7] Sun Sumin. A Preliminary Study on the Professional Identity of Normal Students. Nanjing: Nanjing Normal University, 2017.
- [8] Ao Junmei, Lin Ling. The Current Situation, Causes, and Countermeasures of the "Feminization" of Gender Structure in Primary and Secondary School Teachers. *Ethnic Education Research*, 2020, 31 (2): 54-62.
- [9] Zhou Yuxiang. An Analysis of the Characteristics and Formation Reasons of China's "Post-90s" Population. *China Youth Research*, 2020 (11): 43-51.
- [10] Liu Jia, Fang Xing. An Empirical Study on the Willingness of Normal Students to Teach in Rural Areas and Its Influencing Factors in China. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 2015, 2 (5): 72-80.
- [11] Sun Jian, Zhao Min. Empirical Research and Reflections on the Teaching Intentions of Normal Students: Based on a Survey of Three Normal Universities in City C. *Contemporary Education and Culture*, 2023, 15 (2): 64-70.