

# In-service teachers' motives and commitment in teaching

## 在職教師的教學動機及承擔感

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### Abstract

A questionnaire was administered to 106 in-service teacher education students of a university in Hong Kong to study their motives and commitment in teaching. Three motive factors were identified accounting for their choice of teaching as a career: "intrinsic/altruistic", "extrinsic/job condition" and "influence from others", amongst which, the strongest one is "intrinsic/altruistic" motive. Four factors influencing teachers' commitment were found, viz. "students' learning and school development", "demands on teaching and school practices", "teaching as a career choice", "teacher-pupil interaction and attitudes". Further analysis of the commitment factors highlighted the supporting and discouraging elements associated with school heads and collegial support, students' learning outcomes, behaviour and attitudes in learning, parents' demands and educational policy changes. All of which deserved the attention of the education authority to address with appropriate measures. Pearson correlation analysis showed that "intrinsic/altruistic" motive was significantly related to the four commitment factors, suggesting the relative importance of "intrinsic/altruistic" motive upon teacher's commitment in teaching. This should be noted by schools and universities in the process of recruiting prospective teachers.

### Keywords

teachers' motives, extrinsic, intrinsic, altruistic, teaching commitment

### 摘要

本港一所大學的106位在職教師學員接受一項調查，以了解他們從事教學的動機及承擔感。調查顯示，他們從事教學工作的動機有三個因素：分別是「內在／利他」、「外在／工作條件」和「受他人的影響」，其中以「內在／利他」動機最強。另外，調查發現有四個因素影響教師對教學的承擔和投入感，分別是「學生的學習和學校發展」、「對教學要求和學校的運作」、「選擇教學為職業」、「師生互動和態度」。分析影響教師對教學的承擔因素有支持及令人沮喪元素，它們和校長及同事的支援、學生學習成果、行為及學習態度、家

長要求及教育政策改變有關。上述所有因素值得教育有關人士留意，並運用適當措施處理。皮爾遜相關分析顯示「內在／利他」動機和前述四項承擔因素有明顯相關，啟示「內在／利他」動機對教師教學工作承擔的重要性，值得學校和大學師範機構在挑選職前和在職教師學員時作參考。

## 關鍵詞

教師動機，外在，內在，利他，教學承擔

## Introduction

The quality and performance of teachers has been a focused concern in education (Ballou & Podgursky, 1997; Hong Kong Government, 1992). While academic qualification, subject matter knowledge, pedagogy and teaching skill are important factors in determining teachers' competency and teaching efficacy, a knowledgeable teacher without motivation and dedication to teaching may not sustain quality education (Manning & Patterson, 2005). In other words, the quality of teaching is not only governed by the knowledge and skill competence of teachers but also their enthusiasm and commitment in teaching (Rikard, 1999). When a teacher is motivated and loves the teaching profession, the students not only learn the content taught by the teacher, they may also be motivated toward learning (Czubaj, 1996). Teachers who are dedicated and committed to teaching might facilitate school-based innovations or reformations that are meant to benefit students' learning and development. In fact, teacher commitment and engagement has been identified as one of the most critical factors in the success of education (Huberman, 1997, Nais, 1981). Thus, the recruitment and retention of quality teachers is a crucial issue in education.

The problem of recruitment and retention of quality teachers has been repeatedly reported in literature and government documents in different countries. For

example, in the United States, there is a shortage of qualified teachers particularly in maths and science or special education. Moreover, there is continuing concern that professionals are leaving the teaching field much earlier in their careers than are professionals from other fields (The National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; Certo & Fox, 2002). The constant leaving of good teachers from the teaching profession to other careers, such as the business and government sectors suggests that teaching is not an attractive career to prospective and in-service teachers (Ingersoll, 2001; National Center for Education Statistics, 1992). Literature review on teachers turnover rate shows the first few years of teaching seem to be critical for novice or beginning teachers (National Center for Education Statistics, 1992). Studies show that a fairly high proportion of teachers leave the teaching profession in the early years of teaching and that some potential teachers do not join the teaching profession (Baker & Smith, 1997; Ingersoll, 2001). The National Center for Education Statistics (1997) also reported that across the nation 9.3% of public school teachers left before they completed their first year in the classroom and over 1/5 of public school teachers left their positions within their first three years of teaching. Additionally, nearly 30% of teachers left the profession within five years of entry and even higher attrition rates existed in more disadvantaged schools (Delgado, 1999; Darling-

Hammond, 1999). Recently in Hong Kong there has been an increasing tendency for school teachers seeking for early retirement or leave the teaching profession, many of them are well experienced, with 10 to over 30 years of teaching experiences. The phenomenon has caused much concern in the public and the education sector.

Certainly there are many reasons accounting for the turnover of teachers. For some people, salary, status and working conditions may be determining reasons for them to join and stay or leave the teaching profession. Ingersoll (1997) has pointed out that high rates of teacher turnover are often a result of teachers seeking to better their careers or teachers are dissatisfied with teaching as a career. Ingersoll (2001) has pinpointed that school characteristics and organizational conditions, including lack of administrative support, salary, student discipline and motivation, class size, inadequate planning time, and lack of opportunity for advancement, have significant effects on teacher turnover, even after controlling for the characteristics of both teachers and schools. Connected with the above, stress and burnout resulting from the teaching tasks and environment (e.g. constant changes in educational policy, school and curriculum reforms, class management problems, etc) may cause teachers to feel physically and emotionally exhausted, subsequently diminish their enthusiasm and commitment to teach. Eventually, some of them leave the teaching team with disappointment and a sense of helplessness (Chan, 1995, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001). Even worse, sad news about teachers anxieties and suicide due to high stress are repeatedly reported in newspapers in Hong Kong, raising alarm and concern to the public about teachers' working conditions that may affect their motives and commitment in teaching (星島日報, 2006年1月5日; 經濟日報, 2004年9月; 鄭燕祥 (2004)).

Given that recruiting and retaining qualified teachers who are motivated and committed to teach is important in securing quality education, it is significant to understand the motives for teachers to take up teaching as a career and their commitment to teach; and factors which may influence their passion and commitment in teaching. The present study attempts to examine teachers' perceptions of teaching as a career in terms of their motives and commitment to teach and how they are related. The findings would provide useful information for teacher educators and school authorities to address the problems of recruiting and retaining quality teachers with appropriate measures.

## **Related literature**

Teacher commitment is one of the most important aspects of performance and quality of school staff (National Centre for Education Statistics, 1997; Reyes, 1990). According to Nias (1981, 1989), teacher commitment distinguishes those teachers who are caring, dedicated, and who take the job seriously from those who put their own interests first. According to Coladarci (1992), commitment to teaching was defined as the "teacher's psychological attachment to the teaching profession" (p.326). When teachers are not committed to the teaching profession, they would leave their work early. The significance of teacher commitment has made it a subject of research in teacher professionalization by many researchers. Different aspects of teacher commitment and associated factors have been studied, including commitment to student learning, and school loyalty (Steen, 1988). Teacher commitment is closely associated with job satisfaction, morale, motivation, and identity and a predictor of teachers' work performance, absenteeism, burn-out, and turnover, as well as having an important influence on

students' achievement in and attitudes toward school (Day, 2004; Day, Elliot, & Kington, 2005). Teacher commitment may be enhanced or diminished by factors such as student behaviour, collegial and administrative support, parental demands, national education policies, and their own professional histories and career phase (Day, 2004).

As found by Coladarci (1992), the most frequently reported reason for leaving the profession was low salary and working conditions. When teachers were surveyed whether they would choose the profession again, the reasons given by the teachers not wanting to return to the profession included "excessive non-teaching responsibilities, large classes, lack of job autonomy and discretion, sense of isolation from colleagues and supervisors, insufficient administrative support, and powerlessness regarding important decision-making processes" (p.327). In addition, it was found that teacher commitment was associated with teachers' sense of efficacy. The teachers' commitment shifted and/or declined when they felt unsuccessful and felt unable to influence the students' learning and/or the other community members (Coladarci, 1992; Joffres & Haughey, 2001).

In a study investigating the relationship between several components of teacher burnout and various professional factors of Indian teachers, Kudva (1999) found that there was a significant negative relationship between feeling exhaustion and fatigue and teaching level. Professional commitment was also found to have a significant negative relationship with development of negative attitudes towards students and lack of personal achievement. The results suggest the possible negative factors on teachers' commitment in teaching. Other researchers (e.g. Joffres & Haughey, 2001) studied the associations between teachers' characteristics (age,

education, gender, experience, organizational tenure, career stages) and commitment, they found varied and inconsistent findings suggesting there are still many unanswered questions about the factors that influence teachers' commitments.

It is speculated that the performance and commitment of teachers in teaching are influenced by their motives in taking up teaching as a career, their confidence level, efficacy and concerns in teaching (Day, 2004; Joeffres & Haughey, 2001). Qualified teachers lacking the motivation to teach often have little enthusiasm and driving force in their work. When a teacher has taught for some time, work may become routinized. Consequently, interest decreases and the teacher fails to work to his/her full capacity and becomes less effective. In concrete terms, the result is lack of planning, resistance towards change, and general negligence. Thus; understanding the motives of teachers in choosing teaching as a career and maintaining teacher motivation in the teaching profession is an important issue if we are concerned about teachers' commitment and quality of education.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the motives of senior secondary students, university undergraduates and teachers entering the teaching profession in the United States, Britain and Asian countries (Hutchinson & Johnson, 1994; Johnston, Mckeown, & McEwen, 1999; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Reid & Caudwell, 1997; Yong, 1995).

Research on prospective teachers in the United States and Britain shows that their major motives in choosing a teaching career are both altruistic and intrinsic. However, the study conducted by Yong (1995) shows that extrinsic motives were the determinants for teacher trainees entering into teaching in Brunei Darussalam. The results do not lend support to earlier

research studies in Western countries. In a study of non-graduate pre-service teacher education students by Chan (1998), it was found that their major motives in enrolling in the teacher education program were mainly extrinsic. Whether this applies to the motives of in-service teachers is subject to investigation as the two groups of teachers differ in their background. In addition, it is of significance to examine if there is any relation between the teachers' motives and their commitment in teaching. The findings would help teacher educators and education authorities better understand the current situation and problems of in-service teachers, based on which implications can be drawn for maintaining teachers' motivation and commitment in teaching, in turn upgrading teacher professionalization and teacher qualities.

## Research Questions

Four research questions were drawn to address the objectives of the present study.

1. What are the Hong Kong in-service teachers' motives in choosing teaching as a career ?
2. What are the factors affecting Hong Kong in-service teachers' commitment to teach ?
3. Are there any significant differences in their motives and commitment to teach with respect to demographic variables such as gender, age and teaching experiences ?
4. How do the teachers' motive factors to teach relate to their commitment in teaching ?

## Method

A questionnaire was administered to a group of in-service non-graduate teachers on voluntary basis. They had qualified teaching status and enrolled in a part-time Bachelor degree program of a university in Hong Kong.

## Participants

The participants were 106 students of part-time Bachelor degree in language education program of a university in Hong Kong.

Of those who indicated their gender, 17 were male (18.1%) and 77 were female (81.9%). The age ranged from 20 to 36 and above. The frequency and percentage distribution in each age band was: 20-25, (31, 30.1%), 26-30, (30, 29.1%), 31-35, (20, 19.4%) and 36 and above, (22, 21.4%). Their teaching experiences ranged from less than 1 year (6, 5.8%) to more than 20 years (8, 7.7%). The frequency and percentage distribution of grouped teaching experiences were: around 1-5 years (39, 37.5%), 6-10 years (24, 23.1%), 10-15 years (21, 20.2%) and a few 16- 20 years (6, 5.8%). All the participants taught either Chinese or English language in secondary schools.

## The Material

The questionnaire consisted of 55 items which were rated on a five point Likert scale, from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). 21 items were written to measure the motives of the participants to take up teaching as a career. 34 items were written to examine the teachers' commitment in teaching. The items were developed from literature review and dialogues with in-service teachers about their teaching work in and out of classes. Demographic characteristics of the participants were also sought when they completed the questionnaire.

## Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical analysis of the item responses was conducted, followed by exploratory factor analysis using principal component analysis and varimax rotation to determine the number of factors accounting for the

motives to take up teaching as a career and teachers' commitment to teaching. Reliabilities (Cronbach alphas) of the identified motives and commitment factors/subscales were computed. Multivariate analysis (MANOVA) was also applied to investigate if there was any significant difference of the identified factors or subscales with respect to the demographic characteristics of the participants. Pearson correlation analysis was applied to study the relations between the motive and commitment factors in teaching.

## Results

### 1. Motives to teach

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of individual item responses. When the reasons were examined, four reasons were chosen by an overwhelmingly high percentage (80% and above) of teachers. These included (in descending order) "Desire to teach subject(s) I like" (89.6%), "Meaningful job nature" (83.9%), "Desire to help others" (83.0%) and "Interest to work with children/teenagers" (80.2%).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the reasons in choosing teaching as a career

Item	Disagree *	Neutral	Agree #
M1 Easy to find teaching post	81 (76.4%)	18 (17.0%)	7 (6.6%)
M2 Better job security	43 (40.6%)	28 (26.4%)	35 (33.0%)
M3 Higher salary	26 (24.5%)	35 (33.0%)	45 (42.4%)
M4 More holidays	32 (30.2%)	33 (31.1%)	41 (38.6%)
M5 Better working hours	56 (53.3%)	32 (30.5%)	17 (16.2%)
M6 Higher social status	52 (49.1%)	32 (30.2%)	22 (20.7%)
M7 Good career prospect	64 (60.4%)	33 (31.1%)	9 (8.5%)
M8 More opportunities for continuing education	35 (33.0%)	41 (38.7%)	30 (28.3%)
M9 Government's regard for education	67 (63.2%)	30 (28.3%)	9 (8.5%)
M10 Reflecting my religious belief	36 (34.0%)	33 (31.1%)	37 (34.9%)
M11 Fitting my personality	6 (5.7%)	21 (19.8%)	79 (74.5%)
M12 Meaningful job nature	2 (1.9%)	15 (14.2%)	89 (83.9%)
M13 Challenging job nature	7 (6.6%)	18 (17.0%)	81 (76.4%)
M14 Interest to work on campus	3 (2.8%)	22 (20.8%)	81 (76.4%)
M15 Interest to work with children/teenagers	1 (.9%)	20 (18.9%)	85 (80.2%)
M16 Desire to help others	--	18 (17.0%)	88 (83.0%)
M17 Desire to teach subject(s) I like	3 (2.8%)	8 (7.5%)	95 (89.6%)
M18 Influence of teacher(s)	28 (26.4%)	24 (22.6%)	54 (51.0%)
M19 Influence of family	61 (57.5%)	28 (26.4%)	17 (16.0%)
M20 Influence of peers	68 (64.2%)	27 (25.5%)	11 (10.4%)
M21 Influence of the mass media	86 (81.1%)	18 (17.0%)	2 (1.9%)

\* Sum and percentage include Strongly Disagree and Disagree

# Sum and percentage include Strongly Agree and Agree

The item responses were factorized to identify the motive factors to take up teaching. With eigen-value of 1 as the cut-off point and scree-plot check, three factors were extracted accounting for an accumulative percentage of variance equals to 50.36%. The first factor accounts for a variance of 21.16%, the second factor 19.21% and the third one 9.99%. With factor loading of .3 as cut-off point, 7 items loaded on factor 1, 7 items

(item 10 has a loading value of .299 and was excluded) loaded on factor 2 and 6 items loaded on factor 3. According to the nature of items, factor 1 was labeled "Extrinsic/Job condition", factor 2 was labeled "Intrinsic/Altruistic" and factor 3 was labeled "Influence from others". The factor structure and the mean, standard deviation and reliability (Cronbach alpha) of the extracted factors are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Factor structure, mean, standard deviation and reliability (Cronbach alpha) of the motives in choosing teaching as a career Rotated Component Matrix (Principal Component Analysis and Varimax Rotation)

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
M3 Higher salary	.812	-.216	-
M2 Better job security	.779	-.178	-.162
M4 More holidays	.770	-.178	-
M5 Better working hours	.726	-	.226
M7 Good career prospect	.667	.123	.410
M1 Easy to find teaching post	.638	-	-
M6 Higher social status	.637	.307	.172
M15 Interest to work with children/teenagers	-	.840	-
M12 Meaningful job nature	-	.830	-
M13 Challenging job nature	-.114	.793	-
M11 Fitting my personality	.128	.710	-
M16 Desire to help others	-.209	.630	.127
M14 Interest to work on campus	-	.613	-
M17 Desire to teach subject(s) I like	-	.430	-
M10 Reflecting my religious belief	-.157	.299	-
M20 Influence of peers	-.130	-.108	.781
M21 Influence of the mass media	.161	-.151	.755
M19 Influence of family	-	-	.703
M9 Government's regard for education	.387	.109	.504
M8 More opportunities for continuing education	.248	.211	.428
M18 Influence of teacher(s)	.110	.333	.335
Percent variance	21.16%	19.21%	9.99%
Mean	2.604	4.065	2.478
Standard Deviation	.752	.542	.609
Reliability	.858	.835	.661
(Cronbach Alpha)	(N=105)	(N=106)	(N=106)

As indicated by the relative mean values of the three motive factors in taking up teaching as a career, the most influential one is Intrinsic/Altruistic (Mean=4.065, SD=.542), followed by Extrinsic/Job condition (Mean=2.604, SD=.752) and Influence from others (Mean=2.478, SD=.609). Multivariate analyses (MANOVA) of the motive factors showed no significant differences at .05 level with respect to the participants' gender, age, elective, and teaching experiences.

## 2. Commitment to teach

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of individual item responses in describing the reasons affecting commitments in teaching. Of the 34 items representing the reasons affecting teachers' commitment in teaching, 20 items were positive or supporting elements (Mean=3.78, SD=.54, N=106, Cronbach Alpha=.91) and 14 items were negative or discouraging reasons, denoted by (-) sign, (Mean=3.01, SD=.59, N=104, Cronbach Alpha=.79).

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the positive/supporting and negative/discouraging reasons (-) for commitment in teaching

Item	Disagree *	Neutral	Agree #
C1 My aspiration is to be a teacher	16 (15.1%)	20 (18.9%)	70 (66.0%)
C2 I like teaching more than before	20 (18.9%)	26 (24.5%)	60 (56.6%)
C3 I like to teach my elective subject matter knowledge to my students	--	20 (18.9%)	86 (81.1%)
C4 I am willing to try my best to help my school development	4 (3.8%)	25 (23.6%)	77 (72.6%)
C5 No matter how bad students behave, I am still trying my best to teach them	4 (3.8%)	33 (31.1%)	69 (65.1%)
C6 Teaching is not my first career choice (-)	54 (51.4%)	17 (16.2%)	34 (32.4%)
C7 Teaching different types of students make me like teaching more	16 (15.1%)	32 (30.2%)	58 (54.7%)
C8 My teaching experience of students made me more committed in teaching	7 (6.6%)	23 (21.7%)	76 (71.7%)
C9 Should I know teachers have to bear such a great pressure, I won't choose teaching (-)	17 (16.0%)	27 (25.5%)	62 (58.5%)
C10 I found teaching a very interesting task, full of satisfaction	4 (3.8%)	29 (27.4%)	73 (68.9%)
C11 To be a teacher is one of my first three career choice	9 (8.5%)	14 (13.2%)	83 (78.3%)
C12 Teaching is meaningful, students need my help in their development	--	18 (17.0%)	88 (83.0%)
C13 Teaching is too hard and there is no adequate return (-)	44 (41.5%)	27 (25.5%)	35 (33.0%)
C14 If school does not provide teachers sufficient support, then teachers need not be committed in implementing school policy promotion (-)	34 (32.1%)	44 (41.5%)	28 (26.4%)
C15 The school teachers' attitudes and performance in teaching have enhanced my commitment to teach	5 (4.7%)	41 (38.7%)	60 (56.6%)
C16 The students' attitudes and behaviour have weakened my enthusiasm to teach (-)	41 (38.7%)	37 (34.9%)	28 (26.4%)
C17 The teaching workload is too much for me and I want to give up teaching (-)	42 (39.6%)	25 (23.6%)	39 (36.8%)
C18 The parents' attitudes and unreasonable demands made me feel frustrated (-)	35 (33.0%)	33 (31.1%)	38 (35.9%)



C19	I am frustrated with the school's emphasis in students' drilling and practices to get a better results (-)	32 (30.2%)	49 (46.2%)	25 (23.6%)
C20	In general, I like teaching my students	1 (.9%)	22 (20.8%)	83 (78.3%)
C21	I like school life and am willing to teach lifelong	10 (9.4%)	23 (21.7%)	73 (68.9%)
C22	Too many school reforms make teachers burn out, reduce their enthusiasm to teach (-)	82 (77.4%)	16 (15.1%)	8 (7.5%)
C23	If I have to sit for the language proficiency/information technology proficiency assessment test, I'll better give up teaching (-)	21 (20.0%)	33 (31.4%)	51 (48.6%)
C24	I am concerned about students' learning attitudes and behaviour, I'll continue to teach them with patience and not give up	3 (2.8%)	27 (25.5%)	76 (71.7%)
C25	I am frustrated, with no sense of achievement in teaching (-)	17 (16.0)	28 (26.4%)	61 (57.6%)
C26	If there is a better paid job, I won't teach any more (-)	24 (22.6%)	32 (30.2%)	50 (47.2%)
C27	I believe every student can be taught to be good	11 (10.4%)	32 (30.2%)	63 (59.4%)
C28	The appreciation displayed by the school/principal made me work harder	6 (5.7%)	20 (18.9%)	80 (75.5%)
C29	I found I am now not as energetic as before (-)	39 (36.8%)	35 (33.0%)	32 (30.2%)
C30	It is difficult to teach the remedial class, and there is no sense of achievement (-)	26 (24.5%)	25 (23.6%)	55 (51.9%)
C31	I have a strong sense of belonging to the school I teach	23 (21.7%)	43 (40.6%)	40 (37.7%)
C32	I value more about my students' acceptance of my teaching than the principal's acceptance	4 (3.8%)	23 (21.7%)	79 (74.5%)
C33	If I am going to choose again, I still choose to be a teacher	10 (9.4%)	18 (17.0%)	78 (73.6%)
C34	I am very satisfied with the school I teach.	19 (17.9%)	41 (38.7%)	46 (43.4%)

\* Sum and percentage include Strongly Disagree and Disagree

# Sum and percentage include Strongly Agree and Agree

The items explaining reasons for commitment were factorized with principal component analysis and varimax rotation. With eigen-value of 1 and loading value of .3 as the cut-off, and scree-plot check, four factors were extracted, accounting for an accumulative percentage of variance equals to 51.71%. The first factor accounts for 29.41% of variance, the second, third and fourth factors account for 9.45%, 7.43%, and 5.42% of variance respectively. These four factors represent the reasons influencing the in-service teachers' commitment

in teaching in different perspectives/areas. According to the nature of items loaded on the factors, factor 1 was labeled "Students' learning and school development", factor 2 was labeled "Demands on teaching and school practices", factor 3 was labeled "Teaching as a career choice", and factor 4 was labeled "Teacher-pupil interaction and attitudes". The factor structure, the mean, standard deviation and reliability (Cronbach alpha) of the extracted factors are given in Table 4.

Table 4: Factor structure, mean, standard deviation and reliability of the commitment in teaching  
Rotated Component Matrix (Principal Component Analysis and Varimax Rotation)

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
C21 I like school life and am willing to teach lifelong	.731	-	-	-
C8 My teaching experience of students made me more committed in teaching	.729	-	-	-
C24 I am concerned about students' learning attitudes and behaviour, I'll continue to teach them with patience and not give up	.716	-	-	-
C10 I found teaching a very interesting task, full of satisfaction	.714	-	-	-
C34 I am very satisfied with the school I teach.	.699	-	-	-
C2 I like teaching more than before	.697	-	-	.366
C31 I have a strong sense of belonging to the school I teach	.687	-	-	-
C20 In general, I like teaching my students	.643	-	-	.326
C4 I am willing to try my best to help my school development	.635	-	-	-
C12 Teaching is meaningful, students need my help in their development	.627	-	-	-
C28 The appreciation displayed by the school/principal made me work harder	.604	-	-	-
C5 No matter how bad students behave, I am still trying my best to teach them	.602	-	-	-
C7 Teaching different types of students make me like teaching more	.583	-	-	.456
C25 I am frustrated, with no sense of achievement in teaching (-)	.417	.395	-	.317
C23 If I have to sit for the language proficiency/ information technology proficiency assessment test, I'll better give up teaching (-)	-	.627	-	-
C17 The teaching workload is too much for me and I want to give up teaching (-)	-	.622	-	.461
C18 The parents' attitudes and unreasonable demands made me feel frustrated (-)	-	.553	-	-
C19 I am frustrated with the school's emphasis in students' drilling and practices to get a better results (-)	-	.541	-	-
C14 If school does not provide teachers sufficient support, then teachers need not be committed in implementing school policy promotion (-)	-	.536	.372	-
C29 I found I am now not as energetic as before (-)	.445	.515	-	-
C9 Should I know teachers have to bear such a great pressure, I won't choose teaching (-)	.346	.512	-	.342
C22 Too many school reforms make teachers burn out, reduce their enthusiasm to teach (-)	-	.493	-	-
C13 Teaching is too hard and there is no adequate return (-)	-	.483	-	.378
C11 To be a teacher is one of my first three career choice	-	-	.824	-
C6 Teaching is not my first career choice (-)	-	-	.819	-
C4 I am willing to try my best to help my school development	-	-	.818	-
C3 I like to teach my elective subject matter knowledge to my students	.509	-	.539	-
C33 If I am going to choose again, I still choose to be a teacher	.454	-	.506	-

C16	The students' attitudes and behaviour have weakened my enthusiasm to teach (-)	-	-	-	.667
C15	The school teachers' attitudes and performance in teaching have enhanced my commitment to teach	.397	-	-	-.509
C32	I value more about my students' acceptance of my teaching than the principal's acceptance	-	-	-	.490
C27	I believe every student can be taught to be good	.317	-	-	.486
C26	If there is a better paid job, I won't teach any more (-)	.372	.368	.382	.416
C30	It is difficult to teach the remedial class, and there is no sense of achievement (-)	-	.324	-	.373
Percent variance		29.41%	9.45%	7.43%	5.42%
Mean		3.720	2.914	3.846	3.259
Standard Deviation		.594	.670	.806	.578
Reliability		.910	.783	.819	.588
(Cronbach Alpha)		(N=106)	(N=105)	(N=105)	(N=106)

As indicated by the relative mean values of the four commitment factors in teaching, the most influential one is "Teaching as a career choice", (Mean=3.846, SD=.806), followed by "Students' learning and school development", (Mean=3.720, SD=.594), "Teacher-pupil interaction and attitudes" (Mean=3.259, SD=.578) and "Demands on teaching and school practices" (Mean=2.914, SD=.670). Multivariate analyses (MANOVA) of the commitment factors showed no significant differences at .05 level with respect to the participants' gender, age, elective, and teaching experiences.

### 3. Relation between motives and commitment to teach

Table 5 shows the correlation coefficients between pairs of variables in motives and commitment in teaching. Several pairs of significantly correlated variables were found in Pearson correlation analysis between the motive and commitment factors. Within the motive factors, "Extrinsic/Job condition" and "Influence from others" motives were significantly and positively related at .01 level ( $r=.296, p=.002$ ). Between motive and commitment factors, "Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive was significantly and

positively related to overall commitment in teaching (the sum of all four factors or subscales) at .01 level ( $r=.639, p=.000$ ). The correlation was moderately strong.

On further analysis of the relation between individual motive and commitment factors it was found that "Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive was significantly and positively related to all four factors in commitment, viz. with "Students' learning and school development" at .01 level ( $r=.700, p=.000$ ), "Demands on teaching and school practices" at .05 level ( $r=.222, p=.023$ ), "Teaching as a career choice" at .01 level, ( $r=.509, p=.000$ ), and "Teacher-pupil interaction and attitudes" at .01 level ( $r=.437, p=.000$ ). In general, the relation was strong to moderate.

"Extrinsic/Job condition" was significantly and negatively related to "Teacher-pupil interaction and attitudes" at .05 level ( $r=-.223, p=.022$ ). The magnitude was weak to moderately weak. No significant correlation was found between "Extrinsic/Job condition" and the other three factors of teacher commitment.

There was no significant correlation between the motive "Influence from others" and all four factors in teacher commitment.

Table 5 : Correlation between motives and commitment in teaching

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Extrinsic/Job condition	1								
2. Intrinsic/Altruistic	-.071	1							
3. Influence from others	.296**	.116	1						
4. Total motive	.715**	.494**	.678**	1					
5. Students' learning and school development	-.181	.700**	.061	.249*	1				
6. Demands on teaching and school practices	-.086	.222*	-.044	.031	.415**	1			
7. Teaching as a career choice	-.170	.509**	.021	.178	.434**	.257**	1		
8. Teacher-pupil interaction and attitudes	-.223*	.437**	-.113	.022	.602**	.459**	.395**	1	
9. Total commitment	-.205*	.639**	.000	.185	.880**	.727**	.627**	.763**	1

\*\*  $p < 0.01$  level (2-tailed).

\*  $p < 0.05$  level (2-tailed).

Total motive, comprises the three motive factors together

Total commitment, comprises the four commitment factors together

## Discussion

In the present study, three motive factors were identified for the in-service teachers to take up teaching as a career, viz., "Extrinsic/Job condition", "Intrinsic/Altruistic" and "Influence from others" motive. In terms of the mean values of the three motive factors (Table 2), the in-service teachers in the present study chose teaching as a career mostly due to the "Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive, next, the "Extrinsic/Job condition" and last the "Influence from others" factor suggesting the "Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive was a significant and influential factor in motivating the in-service teacher's choice of teaching as a career.

That is, the in-service teachers under study took up teaching as a career mainly due to the fact that they liked to work with children and adolescents; they liked to help others and found the work meaningful and challenging, and suited their personality. Material rewards such as salary, stability, working condition such as holidays, and easy to find a job as contained in the "extrinsic/job condition" factor were not as important

and determining as the "intrinsic/altruistic" factor in their career choice in joining the teaching profession. Also, "influence from others" factor such as teachers, parents, peers and mass media was not as decisive when compared with the previous two factors.

The finding was different from previous study of pre-service teachers who joined the teaching profession mostly based on extrinsic motive factor (Chan, 1998; Yong, 1995; Young, 1995). The difference was probably due to the different composition and characteristics of the samples in the studies (e.g. educational qualification and background). In the previous studies of pre-service teachers (Chan, 1998; Young, 1995), the students usually took teacher education program as an alternate means or last resort of continuing further study when they could not enter their desired university programs. Thus, they might not be intrinsically or altruistically motivated in joining the teaching profession. In the present study, the sample comprised in-service teachers who had already got the Certificate in Education qualification (qualified teacher status) and they enrolled in a part-time degree program to upgrade their qualification to

university graduate status. They had destined to take up teaching after completing their Certificate course (a full-time two or three year sub-degree program designed to prepare non-graduate teachers for primary and junior secondary level teaching) some years before they enrolled in the part-time degree program. Thus, they were much more determined in taking up teaching as their career, else they might have already left the teaching team. The "Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive factor would be more influential in keeping them in the teaching profession.

Four factors determining or influencing teacher commitment in teaching were identified. Of the four factors, the highest mean value was found in "Teaching as a career choice", followed by "Students' learning and school development", "Teacher-pupil interaction and attitudes" and lastly "Demands on teaching and school practices" (Table 4). Except the factor "Demands on teaching and school practices", all other three factors had mean values above the mid-point ("3") of the five point rating scale, pointing to the areas or aspects of teaching which the teachers in the present study were mostly concerned about and dedicated in their teaching. The significantly high mean values of the factors "Teaching as a career choice" and "Students' learning and school development" suggested the in-service teachers in the present study had high commitment in their teaching work, caring much about their students' learning and development, as well as the development of the schools they teach, implying they had reached the highest level of teachers' concern (impact concerns) according to the Fuller (1969) model of concerns.

The relative high values of the factors "Teaching as a career choice" and "Students' learning and school development" suggested that there existed close bearing to the motives of the in-service teachers, especially their

"Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive, which included the interest to work with teenagers/children, etc. The in-service teachers under study who carry the "Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive probably would consider teaching as their career choice and they were concerned with the learning and development of students. The close relationship between the "Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive and commitment factors in teaching was further supported by the high to median correlation coefficients of the two variables: "Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive and interest in "Students' learning and school development", "Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive and "Teaching as a career choice" and "Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive and sense of achievement, collegial and school practice which were significant at .01 (Table 5). On the other hand, stress and burnout, resulting from heavy teaching load, (e.g. "I found I am now not as energetic as before", "Too many school reforms make teachers burn out, reduce their enthusiasm to teach") and unreasonable expectation from parents (e.g. "The parents' attitudes and unreasonable demands made me feel frustrated") and frustration resulting from dealing with students (e.g. "The students' attitudes and behaviour have weakened my enthusiasm to teach", "I am frustrated, with no sense of achievement in teaching") might reduce teachers' commitment in teaching. Teachers who joined the teaching profession with "Extrinsic/Job condition" motives might decrease their commitment in teaching when they could not find adequate collegial and school support, which was in contrast to the job or working condition they expected when they took up teaching as their career (e.g. "The teaching workload is too much for me and I want to give up teaching", "If school does not provide teachers sufficient support, then teachers need not be committed in implementing school policy promotion"). The relationship was illustrated by the

significant and negative correlation coefficient between "Extrinsic/job condition" motive and "Teacher-pupil interaction and attitudes" factors at .05 level (Table 5).

The moderate to strong correlation coefficients between "Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive and commitment factors suggests the relative importance of "Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive upon teacher's commitment in teaching. This implies that if schools and universities wish to recruit and retain highly committed prospective teachers or teacher education students, this factor should be noted and be an important factor in consideration in the recruitment process.

Further examination of the items which comprise the four commitment factors in teaching (Table 3) shows both positive/supportive and negative/discouraging responses which affect teachers' commitment in teaching. The results of the present study supported researchers' views and findings (Day, 2004; Maddox, 1998; Ruhland, 2001) that teachers' passion and commitment may be enhanced or diminished by factors such as student behaviour, collegial and administrative support, parental demands, educational policies and their own professional histories and career phases. Illustrations could be found in the present study. Positive examples which would enhance teachers' passion and commitment to teach include, "My teaching experience of students made me more committed in teaching", "The students' attitudes and behaviour have weakened my enthusiasm to teach", "The appreciation displayed by the school/principal made me work harder", "Teaching is meaningful, students need my help in their development", "To be a teacher is one of first three career choice", "The school teachers' attitudes and performance in teaching have enhanced my commitment to teach". On the other hand, there were negative and discouraging elements weakening the

teachers' commitment in teaching. These included, for example, "Should I know teachers have to bear such a great pressure, I won't choose teaching", "The teaching workload is too much for me and I want to give up teaching", "If I have to sit for the language proficiency/information technology proficiency assessment test, I'll better give up teaching", "If there is a better paid job, I won't teach any more", "It is difficult to teach the remedial class, and there is no sense of achievement", "I am frustrated with the school's emphasis in students' drilling and practices to get a better result".

The positive and negative elements indicated that the motives and teachers' perceptions of teaching as a career were important in affecting the passion and the commitment of the teachers to teach, and whether they stay or leave the teaching profession.

## **Conclusion and Implication**

Good teaching is affected not only by the knowledge and pedagogy of teachers, but also their passion to teach, which is associated with enthusiasm, caring, commitment, and teaching efficacy. The present study attempts to examine teachers' motives to choose teaching as a career and their commitment in teaching, as well as their relations. Despite its limitation in generalization due to a relatively small sample size, the results would be meaningful and significant for educators and researchers in related areas of study. As well, the present study developed reliable scales/subscales for measuring teacher motives and commitment to teach for future quantitative studies of larger sample.

Good teaching is fundamental to raising standards. It is clearly both the responsibility of the teachers and the schools to ensure that teachers are able to continue and sustain passion, to exercise the love, care and respect necessary to good teaching and carry on for a better

future (Day, 2004). The identified factors which affected teachers' enthusiasm and commitment in teaching are seemingly important for the relevant parties, including the education and school authorities, parents and teachers to reflect and address. Teaching efficacy is expected to decrease with teachers' lowering of confidence and drives in teaching. Passion and commitment would begin to fade as teachers become debilitated by the daily demands of students, the environment and personal life factors (Day, 2004). A reduction of anxieties, stress and burnout, an awareness of the need for life-work balance, coupled with support from colleagues and others, under a good leadership in the school would have to be formulated in order to restore teachers' passion and commitment in teaching. Appreciations from students and parents of teachers' passion and effort, a trusting and respectful relationship between students and teachers, parents and teachers; and collaborative working among school members definitely would uphold the spirit of teachers and maintain their enthusiasm and commitment in teaching. As pointed out by Day et al. (2005), institutional support for the person in the professional is an essential contributory factor to sustaining commitment. Nevertheless with the frequent and enormous educational reformations and changes, the school with the personnel stand alone would find it hard to cope with all the problems and constraints, and inevitably need the adjustment and support from the policy makers

of the education authority. In education, it has been too common to say that a top down policy mechanism is ineffective, and that consultation and collaboration with schools, teachers and other parties are essential, yet it is surprising to find flaws and problems which previously happened are repeating. While keeping education ideals is important, it is hoped that we are not going to give in overwhelming anxiety and eventually lose the teachers' passion, motive and commitment to teach.

As indicated in this study, personal factors such as the "Intrinsic/Altruistic" motive to choose teaching as a career is significantly related to teacher commitment in teaching. The set of core values and beliefs in helping students' learning and development should be promoted in teacher education program, allowing teachers' constant reflection and support at the institution level. As concluded by Day et al. (2005), whether teachers are mobilized and ready to respond to new challenges and changing circumstances very much depend on sets of core values-based identities which are related to strongly held purposes and principles of care and commitment to pupils' learning and achievement. The negligence of these core identities in the management and implementation of change and reform agendas is likely to result in a decline in pre-service and in-service teachers the very qualities essential to sustain their passion and commitment for high-quality teaching.

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