"Not motivated but frustrated": Preservice Teachers' Career Choice Motivations and Professional Identity in an African Context

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Abstract: This study examines preservice teachers' career choice motivations and professional identity in an African context, Nigeria, using a narrative research method. It draws on the stories of 37 social education preservice teachers at a university in Nigeria about their teacher-becoming trajectory and teaching practice experience to realize its aims. Findings show that in Nigeria, the choice of teaching is highly motivated by fallback higher education programs, extrinsic and socialization influence factors, while intrinsic, perceived abilities, and altruistic factors are the least motivators. The choice of teaching is influenced by gender in Nigeria, with women's sociocultural status and traditional gender roles influencing their choice of teaching and intention to remain in the teaching profession. The majority of the preservice teachers (83.78%) have poor and negative teaching professional identities. Also, intrinsic and altruistic motivation factors are associated with positive teacher professional identity in Nigeria. Preservice teachers' professional identity develops from social influences, intrinsic perspectives, and their teacher education experiences and institutional factors such as teacher welfare and development policies. The findings provide insights into social education teacher pedagogic and ethics training needs that could, drawing on teacher agency to navigate the structural challenges confronting the education profession in Nigeria, foster preservice teachers' strong interest in teaching and possibly reduce teacher attrition in developing contexts.

Introduction

Research on teachers' career motivations has been largely general in nature, covering teachers of all subjects (Kiliniç et al., 2012; Leech et al., 2019; Lin et al., 2012; Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Parr et al., 2021), with few of these research comparing the career motivations of teachers of various disciplines of which social science education teachers were referenced (Glutsh & König, 2019; Kiliniç et al., 2012). There are, however, subject-specific studies that have considered teachers' motivation, and their findings are similar to the findings of studies on teaching motivation generally (Coon, 2020; Spittle & Spittle, 2014; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). There seems to be no study that has specifically studied social education teachers' career choice motivations. Social education programs deal with preventing and solving social problems through promoting pro-social, economic, political, and environmental behaviors. They include subjects like social studies, civic education, political science education, history education, economics education, geography and environmental education, human rights education, and peace education.

These disciplines share some characteristics that could impact students' choice of them as a career. For example, some of the social topics are difficult and controversial, thereby presenting discomfort and classroom management challenges to teachers (KUŞ & ÖztÜrk, 2019; Misco & Patterson, 2007). Social education deals with affective, complex, and dynamic issues that are usually elusive or contested. Commitment to some of its goals—such as protecting human rights and promoting justice and activism—is associated with stress, trauma, depression, and other mental health issues (Knuckey et al., 2018; Parnes et al., 2020). These characteristics of social education make it imperative to particularly explore why pre-service teachers choose to study and teach them, along with their teaching professional identity. Understanding the motivations behind social education preservice teachers' choice to teach or study social education is important for a better appreciation of their positionality (worldviews and practice) about social education. Also, understanding the motivations behind choosing social education as a career is important for making sense of the challenges and problems (e.g., theory-practice gap, uncritical implementation of social or global issues, emphasis on cognition and achievement, and misunderstanding of the scope of social education) observed with social education implementations (Obiagu, 2022; Idowu, 2017; Kwenin, 2021; Mezieobi et al., 2012) and for making decisions on how to address the observed challenges since motivations are central to behaviors, practice and willingness to change.

It is also worth mentioning that most teachers' career choice motivation studies are quantitative (Parr et al., 2021) and mainly situated in developed contexts. Employing a qualitative approach to the study of teachers' career choices will contribute to the richness of data on this topic by providing more nuanced perspectives from studied participants. This study is a step in this direction. The study draws on a qualitative method (narrative data from 37 social education preservice teachers in a university in Nigeria) to explore issues of teachers' career motivations and professional identity. Structural challenges notwithstanding, the findings of the study revealed social educators' knowledge and competency skills' training needs that are prerequisites to decolonial, critical and transformative practices largely emphasized in social education research today. Such prerequisite training needs will prepare teachers to appreciate social education's purpose, contents, and pedagogy. The findings of the study could further offer insights into social science education practices, including how to defeminize the profession, in countries with similar social dynamics.

Theoretical Framework

The interpretation of this study's findings is guided by FIT-Choice (factors influencing teaching as a career choice) theory, grounded in Eccles et al.'s (1983) expectancy-value theory and developed by Watt and Richardson (2007). Eccles et al. (1983, 2005) expectancy-value theory assumes that academic choices or behaviors are mainly motivated by the chooser's expectancies of success in the chosen task and perceptions of the values (immediate and continuous gains and costs) of the task and minimally influenced by the chooser's socialization and previous experience's perceptions. Watt and Richardson (2007) extended expectancy-value theory to the teaching career and built on the theory to develop FIT-Choice integrative model designed to assess the reasons why individuals choose teaching as a career. FIT-Choice theory holds that the choice to teach is motivated by teachers' socialization influences (e.g., peers, family, and teachers' encouragement or dissuasion); perception of teaching task demands (e.g., expected expertise and availability of opportunities) and task returns (e.g., social status and salary); perceptions of self-ability to teach; values' perceptions such as intrinsic values (love for and interest in teaching), personal utility or extrinsic values (e.g., job security and time for family) and social utility or altruistic values (e.g., desire to nurture future generation and make social contributions); and perception of teaching as a fallback career.

The model, though designed for preservice teachers' motivation assessment, has been replicated and validated in studies assessing both preservice teachers' (Bergmark et al., 2018; Kilinç et al., 2012; Sinclair, 2008) and in-service teachers' (Leech et al., 2019; Parr et al., 2021) motivation to teach in both developed and developing countries, with findings of the validating studies similar. Anchoring the present study on the FIT-Choice model is based on the speculation that it will aid the understanding of preservice teachers' (of all subjects) motivation for choosing to teach in Nigeria's context. The next section reviews previous literature on teaching career choice motivations and teacher professional identity to put the study in context.

Literature Review

This section reviews existing literature on two related factors, pre-service and in-service teachers' career choice motivation and professional identity.

Teachers' Motivation for Choosing Teaching as a Career

Teacher motivation is "what attracts individuals to teaching, how long they remain in their initial teacher education courses, and the teaching profession" (Sinclair, 2008, p. 37). Shortage of teachers and teachers' recruitment and retention needs have mostly informed studies on teachers' motivation for a teaching career in developed countries, while the need to improve teachers' active practice and effective classroom practices have been additional motivating factors for similar studies in developing countries. Teacher motivation is usually categorized into intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivations. It is believed to impact teachers' professional identity, teaching practice, and students' educational outcomes, including students' interest in learning. Over the last ten decades, studies have explored the motivations behind the choice of teaching career using similar models (Brown, 1992; Chivore, 1988; Gould, 1934; Greene & Scott, 1962; Lin et al., 2012; Olasehinde, 1972; Parr et al., 2021; Sinclair, 2008; Tudhope, 1944; Willcox & Beigel, 1953). Post-2007 teaching career choice studies have relied more on an integrated FIT-Choice model developed in 2007 by Watt and Richardson (Watt & Richardson, 2007). However, both pre-2007 and post-2007 studies, in both developed and developing

contexts, consistently point to intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivations for choosing teaching.

In developed countries, studies have consistently shown intrinsic and altruistic factors to strongly motivate preservice teachers' choice of teaching career than fallback career and socialization reasons, though these factors occur in varying degrees in these contexts. Studies in the contexts of Australia (Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Sinclair, 2008; Watt & Richardson, 2007, 2012), the United States (Lin et al., 2012; Thomson et al., 2012), China (Lin et al., 2012), Sweden (Bergmark et al., 2018), Germany (Glutsh & König, 2019; König & Rothland, 2012), Spain (Alvariñas-Villaverde et al., 2022), and Turkey (Kilinç et al., 2012) consistently showed the top motivations for choosing teaching among preservice teachers to include perceived ability to teach and intrinsic and altruistic reasons, such as a passion for teaching, a desire to make a social contribution, and a desire to work with children; with fallback career and socialization influence reasons the least ranked motivations in these contexts. The findings of studies exploring in-service teachers' motivation for choosing teaching across these contexts (Alexander et al., 2020; Parr et al., 2021) are consistent with the findings of studies that explored preservice teachers' motivation.

In developing contexts, findings are inconsistent and mostly reverse of what exists in developed countries. In countries such as Zimbabwe and Nigeria, studies showed that extrinsic and mercenary factors, such as salary, working conditions, and job transferability (Chivore, 1988; Nwagwu, 1981), and socialization influences, including referrals by family and friends (Yusuf et al., 2018), were the highest ranked motivating factors for choosing teaching as a career. In these contexts, changes or improvements in students' interest in choosing a teaching career were observed when the working conditions of teaching service were improved, as shown by findings of a Nigerian comparative study of two settings whose participants were secondary school, final-year students—first setting being in 1972 (when working conditions of teachers were poor) and second setting being in 1977 (when teaching conditions were better) (Nwagwu, 1981). Recent studies in Ghana, Nigeria, and Zambia showed that the desire to make social contributions and shape children's future were the highest motivating factors for preservice teachers' choice of teaching (Abonyi et al., 2021; Akpochafo, 2020; Mweemba & Allida, 2021) while job security and salary were the least chosen factors in Nigeria and Zambia (Akpochafo, 2020; Mweemba & Allida, 2021). Preservice and in-service teachers in Nigeria reported negative attitudes towards the teaching profession, with most of them preferring other professions to teaching, defining teaching as a feminine profession, and doing teaching because they have no other options (Egwu, 2015; Olasehinde, 1972).

Sociodemographic factors, such as gender and education programs, are also implicated as influencing teachers' motivation. Female teachers report stronger intrinsic and altruistic motivations, especially the desire to work with children and shape their future, for choosing teaching than males (Kilinç et al., 2012; Spittle & Spittle, 2014; Ṡtemberger, 2020; Yüce et al., 2013) while male teachers rank higher in negative motivations such as choosing teaching based on extrinsic values, fallback career and social influence reasons (Alexander et al., 2020; Kilinç et al., 2012; Sinclair, 2008; Yüce et al., 2013). More women than men chose to teach on intrinsic grounds and for time for family in Ghana and Nigeria (Abonyi et al., 2021; Akpochafo, 2020). Women were also found to have stronger positive attitudes towards the teaching profession and greater intention to remain in or continue with teaching than men (Nwagwu, 1981; Sinclair, 2008; Ṡtemberger, 2020): This is due to their higher intrinsic and altruistic motivations (Watt & Richardson, 2007).

For study programs variable, findings are inconsistent. Kilinç et al. (2012) found that preservice teachers of non-science programs, including social science education programs, scored higher on intrinsic and altruistic motivations for teaching, while preservice teachers in science-related programs scored higher on fallback career and socialization influence motives. In another study, social studies/humanities preservice teachers were reported to show lower intrinsic, social, and pedagogical motivations compared to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and language preservice teachers (Glustch & König, 2019). The authors explained the finding as strange given that social studies/humanities programs deal with human behaviors and humanity (Glustch & König 2019). This inconsistency between findings of previous studies adopting various approaches calls for a robust study focusing specifically on social science education program preservice teachers' motivations for choosing this teaching course, and this is part of what the present study considers. The following section reviews the literature on another variable of this study, the teachers' professional identity, given its connection with teachers' teaching choice motivation.

Teachers' Professional Identity and How It Develops

There is no universally agreed definition of teacher professional identity. The concept is represented differently and sometimes approached as teachers' motivation, attitude, or belief in the existing literature. The reason for this is not farfetched. As Day et al. (2006) noted, the understanding of self is important to beliefs, attitudes, and actions; and identity "is a key influencing factor on teachers' sense of purpose, self-efficiency, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness" (p. 601). Additionally, Beijaard et al. (2004) stated that belief is a part of identity. A review of the literature shows that the concept is defined from two perspectives, individualistic and collectivistic or normative perspectives, with an individualistic perspective representing personal identity and a collectivistic perspective representing group identity. Sachs's (2001) definition of teacher professional identity as "a set of attributes that are imposed upon the teaching profession either by outsiders or members of the teaching fraternity itself" (p. 153) represents a normative or collectivistic perspective. Some of these attributes or norms expected of or ascribed to the teaching profession include caring, mastery of content and pedagogical knowledge, tolerance, patience, social-emotional competencies, and global competencies, among others.

Most definitions in literature take the individualistic perspective that involves self-awareness and self-conception in relation to being a teacher and teaching. One's awareness and conception of self in a teaching role, just like career motivation, is influenced by one's idiosyncrasies and biography, personal experiences from culture, schooling, intrinsic, extrinsic, and social factors, as well as by institutional factors like educational policies and political and economic contexts. From this perspective, Beijaard et al. (2004) noted teachers' professional identity as an answer to the question, "who am I as a teacher"? Kelchtermans (1993) outlined five components of teacher professional identity as self-image, self-esteem, job motivation, task perception, and future perspectives. Notably, one common feature with the various representations of teacher professional identity is its characterization as a dynamic, non-straightforward, and ongoing process (Beijaard et al., 2004; Day et al., 2006; Sachs, 2001).

To focus this article, this study defines teacher professional identity from an individualistic perspective to mean a teacher's perception of teaching both as a career and practice along with their conception of self in a teaching role or as a teacher. It implies a teacher's identity that reflects an interconnection between the self, the teaching professional

community, and the teaching profession. This definition allows for distinction between components of teacher professional identity—teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and motivation—from teacher professional identity itself and for a clearer assessment of teacher professional identity. Where a teacher's perception of teaching does not come simultaneously with (or is not woven into the teacher's) conception and narrative of self in relation to the teaching role, then the perception is the teacher's professional belief and not the teacher's professional identity. Teacher professional identity can be negative or positive. It is negative when teaching is perceived from a contemptuous view as non-demanding or less interesting, with the perceiver disassociating themself from the teaching role now or in the future. It is positive when teaching is perceived as noble, interesting, satisfactory, and fulfilling, with the perceiver associating themself with the teaching role in the present and in the future. To be regarded as positive, the teacher must perceive teaching as noble and interesting and, at the same time, exhibit the intention to remain in the teaching profession.

Just like teachers' teaching motivation studies reviewed in the previous section, studies have evidenced that teacher professional identity develops from institutional factors, such as educational policies and sociocultural factors, intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and personal experiences (Day et al., 2006; Flores & Day, 2006; Kelchtermans, 1993; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011; Ye & Zhao, 2018). It is also found that new teachers express a lack of confidence and a sense of powerlessness in their professional lives (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) found that new teachers lack a strong and positive feeling about their professional selves, despite the fact that some came into the profession with a positive identity (Flores & Day, 2006). Where new teachers hold positive teacher professional identity, negative school cultures and contexts that challenge the meanings, values, and images they bring into teaching destabilize the positive identity, and hence make the work a routine and less creative job for many (Flores & Day, 2006).

Ensuring that teachers develop a positive professional identity is imperative. This is because a teacher's understanding of their professional identity impacts their decisions about curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student learning (Mockler, 2011). For preservice teachers, Zhang et al. (2016) found that their professional identity influenced their performance in their program through impacting their task value belief. Zhao and Zhang (2017) showed that preservice teachers' professional identity is positively impacted by teaching practice fieldwork and mentor support. Yet, teacher education programs fail to provide opportunities and experiences for preservice teachers to develop a strong positive professional identity (Flores & Day, 2006; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). Reviewed studies offer general knowledge about teacher professional identity and the identity holder's success in teaching programs or practice. Additional specialized knowledge of teacher professional identity is important for an effective teacher education practice of respective programs. Hence, this present study is more concerned with understanding how social education preservice teachers undergoing teaching practice view teaching as a profession and themselves as teachers at present and in the future, along with how held identity develops in the Nigerian context as well as how the identified identity relates with their intention to teach.

The Present Study

This study examines preservice social educators' motivations for choosing social education, their professional identity, and how it relates to their motivations. The study was conducted in a developing context, the south-east region of Nigeria and appears to be the first

specifically exploring social educators' motivation for choosing to teach social education across teachers' career choice literature. The factors (such as teacher shortages, teacher attrition, and the entrance to the teaching profession by people from high-paying and prestigious disciplines) that mainly motivate studying motivations for the choice of a teaching career in developed countries are not pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa. Hence, it is considered important to explore, using qualitative methods, why people choose to teach in this context, given factors—such as overcrowded classrooms, poor working conditions, and poor and delayed salaries, amongst others—that embroil the teaching profession in sub-Saharan African contexts. Also, all reviewed studies in developing contexts and most reviewed studies in developed contexts relied on quantitative methods. Given the nature of the items measured in these studies, quantitative methods are highly susceptible to social desirability and unconscious bias. It will be difficult not to pick 'the desire to make contributions to society or shape children's future' as strong motivating factors. These options will most likely be ranked highly by anyone, irrespective of discipline, whether medicine or teaching. My study will contribute to the discourse by drawing on qualitative data, which has the potential to give a nuanced picture of career choice's trajectory and also reveal the point at which preservice teachers developed altruistic motivations for teaching. Findings will most likely be remarkably different from the findings of previous studies and inform policies that could impact teacher education practices. It is further anticipated that the evolving complex and sometimes controversial nature of social education will impact differently social educators' motivations for choosing teaching as a career and the professional identity they develop.

Method

This study employs a narrative research method. Narrative research is focused on how individuals experience the world and assign meaning to their experiences via the stories they tell (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Moen, 2006). The sources of narrative data include field notes of shared experiences, storytelling, interviews, journal entries, and autobiographical and biographical writing (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Narrative research is criticized as open to fraud or unethical practices since researchers can tamper with participants' original stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). This risk notwithstanding, narrative data, collected through stories, is adopted for this study because of its potential to allow SEP teachers freedom to share their thoughts and experiences without pretense and with limited room for social desirability bias. Again, the question of motivations and identity is best revealed through stories: This is because stories are the embodiment of our identity and experiences, and "without a story, there is no identity, no self, no other" (Lewis, 2011, p. 505). Also, telling stories does not confine participants to items that may not be representative of their identities or items that are highly susceptible to social desirability/unconscious bias. It gives the participants the opportunity to reflect on their journey, process their experiences, and share it accurately. As observed by Parr et al. (2021), "researchers' overreliance on quantitative methods signals an important gap in the study of teacher education. More qualitative… research is needed to better understand the complexities of how teachers define and interpret their motivations for teaching."

Narrative research is one of the qualitative methods mainly used in educational studies. It has been applied in studying educational issues, especially curriculum making and human rights, and multicultural education, and a reflective approach is usually adopted in data reporting (Coulter et al., 2007; McGraw et al., 2017; Mittson-Kiikner et al., 2010; Oser & Zhu, 2011; Valdez et al., 2000). The present study aligns itself with the practice of previous educational

narrative research but focuses on teachers' career motivations and professional identity. Relying on narrative data for this research aids the understanding of the complexities of motivations for teaching and professional identity. From this perspective, this study considers narrative research as appropriate since the paper sought to explore SEP teachers' teaching career choice motivations and professional identity. The following specific research questions guided the study:

1. What motivates social science education (SSE) preservice teachers to choose teaching and their specific programs?
2. What professional identity do SSE preservice teachers have? And, how do they develop that professional identity?

Participants

The sample of the study comprised 37 (22 females and 18 males; see Table 1 for participant profile) social science education preservice teachers out of the 40 preservice teachers supervised by the author in four schools in the 2018-2019 session who gave consent to have their stories used for this research. The area of the study is Enugu state in south-east Nigeria.

Table 1

Profile of Participants—Preservice teachers for the 2018 – 2019 session

SN	Gender	Specific Course Program	Program Level	School	Subject Taught	Class Taught
Preservice Teacher [PT] 1	Male (M)	–	300	1	Government	SSS3
PT 2	M	–	300	1	Civic Edu	SSS2
PT 3	M	–	400	1	Government	SSS 2
PT 4	M	–	400	1	Government	SSS2
PT 5	Female (F)	–	400	1	Social Studies	JSS3
PT 6	M	–	400	1	Civic Edu	SSS3
PT 7	F	–	300	1	Economics	SSS3
PT 8	F	–	400	1	Economics	SSS2
PT 9	F	–	300	2	CRS	SSS1
PT 10	F	–	400	2	Economics	SSS1
PT 11	F	–	300	2	Economics	SSS2
PT 12	F	–	300	2	Civic Edu	SSS1
PT 13	M	–	300	2	Social Studies	JSS2
PT 14	M	–	400	2	Government	SSS2
PT 15	F	–	400	2	Civic Edu	JSS2
PT 16	M	–	300	2	Civic Edu	JSS2
PT 17	M	–	300	2	Government	SSS1
PT 18	M	–	300	3	Civic Edu	SSS1
PT 19	M	–	300	3	Civic Edu	SSS3
PT 20	F	–	300	3	Civic Edu	JSS1
PT 21	M	–	400	3	Government	SSS3
PT 22	F	–	300	3	Social Studies	JSS2

SN	Gender	Specific Course Program	Program Level	School	Subject Taught	Class Taught
PT 23	F	–	400	3	Civic Edu	JSS3
PT 24	M	–	400	3	Government	SSS1
PT 25	F	–	400	3	Social Studies	JSS1
PT 26	F	–	300	3	Economics	SSS1
PT 27	F	–	400	4	Government	SSS2
PT 28	M	–	300	4	Social Studies	JSS2
PT 29	F	–	400	4	Economics	SSS2
PT 30	F	–	300	4	Economics	SSS1
PT 31	M	–	300	4	Civic Edu	JSS2
PT 32	F	–	400	4	Civic Edu	JSS1
PT 33	F	–	300	4	Government	SSS1
PT 34	F	–	300	4	Social Studies	JSS3
PT 35	F	–	400	4	Social Studies	JSS2
PT 36	F	–	400	4	Social studies	JSS1
PT 37	M	–	300	1	Civic Edu	SSS1

Note. Specific course program details (Education/Economics, Education/Political Science, and Education/Social Studies) were removed to further blur the identity of the participants.

Procedure for Narrative Data Collection

This study adopts storytelling as a method for narrative data collection (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Data was collected on preservice teachers' teacher-becoming and teaching practice experiences. The study further constructed interpretations about the experiences of the participants and the meaning attributed to the experiences. The narrative data were collected using an instrument, 'supervisee's teaching program (TP) motivations, experiences and practice inquiry template,' developed by the author for eliciting the stories of TP supervisees. The template was administered to the supervisees on a day prior to their actual instructional and classroom practice supervisions. This occasion for eliciting information is a pre-teaching conference –an interactive meeting between the supervisor and their supervisees where the supervisees share stories of their teaching trajectory or teacher becoming. The goal of a pre-teaching conference is to help the supervisor identify their students' needs and improve the supervisor's practice that could meaningfully impact the professional growth of the students. More broadly, the conference aimed to:

- Build supervisees-supervisor trust;
- Understand (and encourage or inhibit) the psycho-sociocultural factors that may influence, positively or negatively, preservice teachers' practice and professional development;
- Reduce the high level of anxiety, caused partly by observation by supervisors, found among preservice teachers (see Danner, 2014) through establishing a first interactive contact with them;
- Raise supervisees' consciousness about and reflection on their teaching trajectory, their challenges, and their improvement opportunities;
- Identify, from the perspectives of preservice teachers, areas of improvement for supervisors and teacher programs.

The inquiry template comprised five questions. In your story:
- Tell us your motivation for choosing the program you are studying;
- Tell us the challenges you have so far encountered in your journey in this program;
- Tell us what you enjoy about teaching;
- Share with us your difficulties in your teaching practice exercise;
- Where do you see yourself in the future? Do you intend to teach after graduation?

Preservice teachers were asked to follow the above template in telling their stories about their journey into the social education program and how the journey has been for them. Through these questions, the supervisor allowed themselves into their students' perspectives and thoughts and explored ways of helping them improve their practice. The supervisor also used the forum to create opportunities for preservice "teachers to map and understand the patterns of their lives experience, both in their personal and professional lives, in order that they may better understand their current purposes and practices" (Leitch & Day, 2000, p.188). Preservice teachers were informed that participation in the conference does not carry any reward or consequence and will not influence their TP assessment; that the conference is aimed at understanding their idiosyncrasies and challenges with teaching; and that their stories will be used for research on understanding social education preservice teachers' motivations for choosing to study social education, their professional identity, and challenges with teaching. They were informed of their right to choose not to share their stories. Three elected not to share their stories, while 37 shared them. The author took handwritten notes of the stories with the students' consent. Permission was further obtained from the Department of Social Science Education of the University of Nigeria to use the data for research purposes. Using the collected data, the study explored social science education preservice teachers' motivation for choosing the social science education program and their professional identity through identifying themes on these variables from the shared stories and the meanings preservice teachers attributed to their shared experiences.

Data Analysis

The collected data were used to draw conclusions on preservice teachers' motivations for teaching, professional identity, and challenges in Nigeria; only findings on career choice motivations and professional identity are reported in this study. The researcher's handwritten notes (stories or narrative data) collected on each study participant were deductively thematically analyzed using an analytical coding method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to identify codes that are present in previous literature, including in Watt & Richardson's (2007) FIT-Choice model. The stories of individual participants were compared for similar and divergent views or contents. Noteworthy is that the codes were quantified to enable percentage calculations. Final themes, together with their percentage level of emphasis by participants, were developed by harmonizing collected codes resulting from the analysis of individual data. The generated final themes were grouped and presented as subheads under the two variables, namely preservice teachers' motivations and preservice teachers' professional identity, captured in the research questions guiding this study. Eight themes emerged under preservice teachers' motivations, while four themes emerged under preservice teachers' professional identity. A peer researcher reviewed the themes to reduce interpretation bias and ensure that they accurately represented the information contained in the field notes.
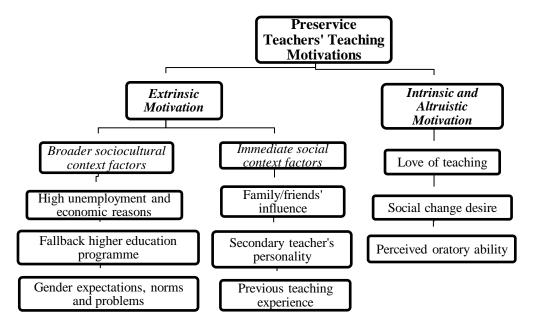
Findings

The results showed that a number of intrinsic and extrinsic factors motivate social science education preservice teachers to choose their course of study. It further showed that preservice teachers' professional identity is in flux and shaped by mostly sociocultural experiences. These results are presented below.

Social Education Preservice Teachers' Motivation for Teaching Choice

This part presents findings on the first variable, pre-service teachers' career choice motivation, explored in this study. The result showed that preservice teachers' choice to study social science education (SSE) is motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The extrinsic factors are similar to those discussed in FIT-Choice theory by Watt and Richardson (2007). The extrinsic factors include broader sociocultural context and immediate social context factors influencing preservice teachers' decision to teach or study teaching programs. Unemployment and economic reasons, fallback higher education and gender expectations, problems, and norms are the broader sociocultural factors, while family influence, previous teaching experience, and secondary teacher's personality are the immediate social context factors. The intrinsic factors include a love of teaching, a desire for social change, and a perceived oratory or leadership ability. These factors are represented in Figure 1 and subsequently discussed in detail.

Figure 1
Social education preservice teachers' motivation for program choice

Socialization (Family and Friends') Influences

Family members, both extended and nuclear, and friends are instrumental in influencing the choice of teaching career or program among social science preservice teachers, as depicted in the following statements:

> PT18: I wanted Law but my Mum hated it because she believes they are liars. I tried it for years. Didn't work. So, I later tried Education/political Science and got it.

> PT4: I wanted to do business at Onitsha with my father. But all my siblings who are graduates were begging me to go to university that I can't be the only one that didn't go to school in our house. They encouraged me to try JAMB ones, if I didn't make it then I should go into business…
>
> PT16: I don't talk too much. My mum is a lecturer and she wants someone to succeed her. I am the one she chose.

The influence of family and friends on one's career choice is defined as a socialization factor (Watt & Richardson, 2007). Generally, socialization factors featured in the stories of 23 out of the 37 (62.16%) participants. This indicates that socialization influence is the strongest motivating factor for choosing to teach in Nigeria. This factor, however, is strongly mediated by a prolonged stay at home without admission and connects with fallback higher education motivation.

Fallback Higher Education Program

The fallback higher education program factor noted in this study is similar to Watt and Richardson's (2007) fallback career factor, except that individuals in a fallback career consider teaching as a career option in the future while those who chose it as a fallback higher education program do not have interest in a teaching career in the future, but are only interested in becoming higher education graduates and working in any financially better sector. In fact, an education program is a course of last resort for this group of preservice teachers. This factor, the fallback higher education program, ranked as the second highest motivating factor for choosing to teach among the studied sample. Out of the 37 participants, 19 (51.35%) indicated choosing to study education program because they could not get admitted into their desired programs.

> PT19: I wanted political science major. I tried JAMB [Nigerian Joint Admission Matriculation Board Examination] four years without getting admission. I was teaching in lesson center before admission. I had to go for Education/Political Science. I was not motivated but frustrated.
>
> PT5: I stayed 5 years without getting admission into my choice of course, Political Science. I was advised by my friends to try Guidance and Counselling. I tried it and got the admission.
>
> PT30: I wasted 3 years trying to get admission to study Economics (Major) because they have many job opportunities. My friend told me to try Education/Economics that it is easier to get… So, I tried it and got it. I even prefer it to economics major now.
>
> PT10: I wanted Law. My family hated Education. Stayed at home for long. I decided to do Education. It is better than not going to school.

Few students who chose teaching as a fallback higher education program later developed an interest and love for the profession, as shown in the section reporting their professional identity.

Economic and Employment Reasons

The results showed that economic reasons are strong motivators for choosing to study SSE among preservice teachers. Economic reasons involve aims to acquire a source of livelihood and improve one's standard of living. This reason featured strongly in their responses. Nine (24.32%) out of the 37 preservice teachers who shared their stories identified economic reasons as motivating their choosing SSE. They believed that it is easy to get a teaching job and that demand for teaching services is steady, though the pay is poor. These factors are deducible from Preservice Teachers' [PT] statements presented below.

> PT 1: Initially, I wanted to do philosophy. But the nature of philosophy in Nigeria is useless. I then decided to go for political science. But I was advised by people to go for Education/Political Science so I can have double opportunities.
>
> PT 3: I wanted Mass Communication because of a friend who is a radio presenter. In senior secondary, I noticed I wasn't understanding Literature… Lack of job motivated me to attach education to political science. So, I went for political science education.
>
> PT 2: I wanted Mass Communication. My Dad was advised by an uncle that education is lucrative now. That was how I found myself in education. I didn't like the course before. I like it now.
>
> PT 9: I wanted to do Psychology. My Dad wanted Law. Not being able to get law, I enrolled for Guidance and Counselling and Social Studies Education. But my parents and friends were not happy that I went for education. I got to love G & C because my aunt abroad called me and told me to continue with the course that it sells abroad. So, I continued. Before I resumed my 3rd year, my mum asked me how far? I informed her that I have settled with my Dad. I promised him that I will do Law as a 2nd degree.

The above quotes also indicate a belief that SSE offers double opportunities for graduates: teaching job opportunities and employment opportunities in any industry that employs graduates of the program, which they combined with education.

Gender Expectations, Norms, and Problems

Time for family, which Watt and Richardson (2007) group under personal utility value, featured as a factor for choosing teaching. However, in the Nigerian context, this factor is noted only by female preservice teachers. Even though time for family has been used in most western studies, where both male and female teachers consider it important, this study identifies this factor as rather propelled by gender expectations and norms in Nigeria. Gender expectations or issues were behind the choice of teaching social education by six out of the 22 female social education preservice teachers (i.e., 27% of the female sample; 16.23% of the total sample) who shared their stories, with three of these women expressly pointing to their traditional gender roles as women. For example:

> PT22 said "I wanted social studies education. My motivation is because I am a woman. I want a profession that will give me time to take care of my family… I want to be closer to my children. Social studies education does not require much commitment."
>
> PT12 said "I love teaching because as a woman. It will give me time to take care of myself and my family."

There seems to be a connection between intrinsic motivations and time for family in the above excerpts from their narratives. The intrinsic factor is, however, connected with gender expectations that seem to limit the career exploits of women or their genuine independence in making career choices. The excerpts strongly emphasize "less work time and less demand," "being female," and "carer roles" as strong motivating factors. Aside from gender expectations as motivating female preservice teachers' choice of teaching, *gender problems* featured as motivating preservice teachers' choice.

> PT23 narrates, "I went to a missionary school. I had a counsellor. The school was in Northern Nigeria, Plateau State. In Berom culture, it is the tradition for a girl child to give birth at home so that when you marry there will be children singing at home. Thank God my teachers were good and supportive and you must know Jesus whether you like it or not. So, I escaped teenage pregnancy. This made me choose Guidance and Counselling/Social Studies against my Dad's taste for Law. I don't look forward to teaching. My mother is a teacher and

> she complains of salary delay. I learnt tailoring. So, I will go into fashion and designing, be a youth counsellor and fight immorality."

Notably, PT23's experience of high teenage pregnancy (which she also connects to non-spirituality) and her encounter with a school counsellor and teachers who helped some of them avoid the menace motivated her choice of program. This, though related to gender norms factors, also strongly indicates altruistic goals and previous school experiences as motivating factors to choose teaching.

In another scenario, the choice of teaching by women features as a consequence of both poverty and patriarchy that enable the dependence of women on men or dichotomizes young Nigerian women's fate into either furthering with education or entering into (early) marriage.

> PT7 recounts, "I wanted Accountancy. I wrote JAMB three times but didn't make it. My father said he can't continue like this; that he has eight children. And suitors were already coming; I was refusing. My father appointed one for me… I told my husband I can do Business Education because it is related to accountancy. My husband chose Education/Economics for me."

This situation, though it did not indicate that the participant chose the course by imposition but with influence, seemingly reflects patriarchy as a reason for choosing teaching.

Intrinsic Motivations for Choosing Social Education

Few preservice teachers choose teaching on intrinsic grounds. In all, six preservice teachers (5 females and 1 male; 16.23%) show love and interest in teaching as behind their choice of the teaching study program. This is reflected in the following statements:

> PT13 (male): I have loved teaching. I am the last to go to school in my family after I helped train my younger ones. Teaching interests me since it provides me the opportunity to do what I like doing, training younger ones.
> PT17: I love teaching that is why I chose my course. Teaching is also cheap and easy to do.

In some cases, as explained in the section on gender expectations, the intrinsic motivation is associated with gender expectations.

Secondary Teacher's Personality

Secondary school teachers' personalities featured as an influencing factor among the participants' choice of teaching (5 of the 37 preservice teachers, i.e., 13.51%). It is interesting that despite poor working conditions of teaching in Nigeria, some teachers are able to serve as career models for their students. Four preservice teachers note being positively motivated, by their teachers' practices, to choose teaching. The story of PT23 under a subhead above (i.e., gender expectations, norms, and problems subhead) showed that her school teachers impacted her program choice.

> PT11: I wanted nursing so I will have opportunity to care for people. But things scare me. My Economics teacher was caring and this motivated me to go for education…
> PT20: I didn't know anything when I was in secondary school. I couldn't speak English. I chose to study education so I can speak like my teachers…
> PT22: My teachers in secondary school motivated me to study education. They cared for… My dream is to be a teacher. My students don't give me trouble.

On another hand, one preservice teacher noted negative experiences with teachers as their reason for choosing teaching with the intention to change the status quo. According to PT24:

> "…I see teachers in school, I thought the teachers do not do well because they went to NTI or NCE. So, I decided to go to University…"

Altruistic Motivations for Choosing Social Education

Despite the social utility and altruistic nature of social education, only four (10.81%) of the study's participants showed altruistic reasons for choosing their program. Only two of these students (out of all participants) expressly connected their motivations to their specific programs. Refer to the statements of PT23, PT 11, and PT13 presented in previous subheads. Additionally, PT 25 noted;

> "I like teaching. My motivation for going for social studies is to teach students and direct them to behave well. It will give me time for my family. Job opportunities in education is much. I am older than my students. I feel I am in charge of the class."

The small number of SEP teachers choosing the program on altruistic grounds is disappointing and raises very strong implications for social education teacher training reforms.

Perceived Ability to Teach

Three preservice teachers (8.11% of the total sample) chose social education because of their perceived qualities which they assume indicate an ability to teach. Statements reflecting this motivation are presented below.

> PT32: I chose teaching myself. I like talking and teaching is about talking. I enjoy to teach and didn't have difficulty with my students.
> PT24: I see myself as a motivational speaker. I made inquiry on what course will fit me more. I deemed it fit to go for Political Science/Education.
> PT28: I have the talent to make people understand things. Like, I can easily convince people during discussions that is part of the reason I decided to go for teaching when my dream to study publication Admission failed.

These students believed that they possess some inherent qualities, including oratory skills, attributed to the teaching profession. This perception motivated them to choose teaching and social education that deals with human beings.

Previous Teaching Experience

The results further show that some preservice teachers gained motivation to choose a teaching career from their previous engagement in teaching in extramural lesson centers or private schools. This is the least motivating factor for choosing to teach in Nigeria, as shown in this study. Two preservice teachers, including PT19, who "was teaching in lesson center before admission" and whose experience with the course contributed to their finally choosing a teaching course because "it is easy and not stressful" fall into this category. PT21, who wanted to be a priest or politician, "taught in church and private school before starting this program." Their previous backgrounds in teaching were an encouraging factor for their decision to enroll in the program.

Social Education Preservice (SEP) Teachers' Professional Identity

This part presents findings on the second variable, pre-service teachers' professional identity, of this study. The narratives of SEP teachers revealed the teacher professional identity they hold, including their future career goals. Positive and negative self-imagination as a teacher or teacher professional identity, how teacher professional identity develops, and the intention to remain in teaching were revealed. Each of these components of professional identity is individually discussed below.

Positive Self-Image as a Teacher

In all, only four preservice teachers (PTs 13, 15, 22, and 25) exhibited positive teacher professional identity, which implies a satisfaction with their self-image as a teacher and a positive identity about the teaching profession. This is measured by their perception of the teaching profession, along with their intention to remain in the profession. One participant perceived teaching as demanding expertise, though with a poor task return (salary). This belief developed from her experience with her mother, who is a teacher. As she noted:

> PT15: 'I hated teaching because my mum is a teacher. She is always marking scripts at home. Teaching is stressful and the pay is small. I am beginning to like it… I look forward to teaching.'

Evident in the above story is that the pre-service teacher perceived the teaching task as requiring expertise and was satisfied with the teaching profession irrespective of the poor working condition bedeviling the profession. This indicates a positive professional identity. Another participant defined the profession as interesting.

> PT13: I have loved teaching…Teaching interests me since it provides me the opportunity to do what I like doing, training younger ones. I will teach after graduation if I get the opportunity.

PT13 did not, at any point, associate teaching with poverty but is satisfied with the profession. Other participants who have a good attitude towards the teaching profession but lack interest in remaining in the profession are not recognized as having positive teaching professional identity.

Negative Self-Image as a Teacher

Negative teacher professional identity was more profound in the stories shared by the study participants. Many of the social education preservice teachers shared the perception that "teaching is a cheap course and easy to do course" (PT17) and an easy and less time-consuming job (14 of the 37, that is, 37.83% of SEP teachers).

Three participants represented teaching as a disrespected and very poor profession. Consider the story below:

> "My first day in class, I was evaluating my lecturer. Can he afford SUV? Can he buy a good house in a cool town? I looked him from head to toe and I was like, No, I can't [I can't do teaching job]. The only thing I like about teaching is that it makes me come in contact with people with different views" – (PT4).

Two pre-service teachers, although they defined teaching as noble and the mother of all professions, perceived it as a poor and disrespected profession with regard to Nigeria's context and hence, disassociated themselves from teaching in the future. For example, PT31 said,

> "…Teaching is a noble profession. In ancient days, it was a job done by only philosophers, like Plato, who were intellects. In some countries, teachers are respected. But in Nigeria, the job is disrespected and teachers remain poor and do not care to improve on their knowledge. I plan to go and study Law after graduation."

The above statement additionally depicts that teachers in the Nigerian context are perceived as unintelligent and lacking knowledge. This perception impacts pre-service teachers' self-image as teachers.

Intention to Continue with Teaching

Self-image and self-esteem as a teacher and the intention to remain in teaching are important components of teacher professional identity. Overall, the preservice teachers with negative professional identity were not satisfied with their self-image as teachers, and they planned to switch professions. The preservice teachers that did not identify themselves in a

teaching role, at the pre-higher education level, in the future amounted to 83.78% of the sample (i.e., 31 out of the 37 participants). Two out of these 31 participants, however, wish to lecture at a higher institution level. Some others consider moving abroad or pursuing a second degree in a non-teaching course, while many others dream of doing business or moving into politics. Consider the following statements:

> PT18: … I don't have interest in education. My interest is in politics. So, if I get into politics, the interest of teachers will be my priority.
>
> PT24: … If I have my way, I will recommend to ministry of education to make a policy that no school should be licensed without projectors. I will switch to Criminology and retire as a lecturer there.

Although the above participants did not identify with the teaching profession in the future, they showed an intention to contribute to improving the conditions of teaching and teachers in Nigeria if they find themselves in a position of political power.

Only seven pre-service teachers (PTs 7, 12, 13, 15, 22, 25, and 34) out of the 37 participants identified (18.92% of the study sample) with the teaching profession in the future. These pre-service teachers are satisfied with their self-image as teachers and, as PT22 puts it, "dream to be a teacher," although few of them characterized teaching as non-demanding. It is worth highlighting that six of these preservice teachers who hold the intention to teach in the future belong to the seven (7) participants who either chose teaching for intrinsic or altruistic reasons, including three of the women who chose teaching on gender grounds.

How Teacher Professional Identity Develop

The results showed that negative professional identity among social education pre-service teachers initially developed from their interaction with their social networks, especially family and friends, as highlighted under the previous section. For example, TP9 noted:

> "I wanted to do Psychology… I enrolled for Guidance and Counselling and Social Studies Education. But my parents and friends were not happy that I went for education. My Dad hates the program…I promised him that I will do Law as a 2nd degree."

They also develop professional identity through their teacher training experiences. Sadly, pre-service teachers' experiences with the teacher education schooling system consolidate their negative identity more than they disrupt it. This observation is supported by PT24's statement below,

> "…I thought the teachers do not do well because they went to NTI or NCE. So, I decided to go to University. Unfortunately, when I got to university… The lecturers are archaic. No innovative ideas. They dictate from old handouts and teach everyday stuffs."

Additionally, PT14 noted,

> "…I love teaching. The first course I learnt was introduction to education. The lecturer told us teachers are poor and education is cheap. I was discouraged. The course is simply cheap..."

It is obvious that the hope and positive identity that some students brought with them to the program were dashed by their experiences with learning practices, especially the hidden curriculum. The broader university system, in which teacher education students encounter professional harassment from professional "Others," additionally compounds the negative professional identity reported by participants. PT26 said, "my friends do mock me for doing education. My defense to my friends is that I will be a lecturer".

Positive professional identity appears to develop from within an individual through the process of self-awareness than from external factors like social networks and pay. This

observation is evidenced in PT13's statement thus, "I have loved teaching…since it provides me the opportunity to do what I like doing –training younger ones."

The way some preservice teachers feel about teaching changes with time during the course of their study, as evidenced in the stories shared by some of the participants. Specifically, 16.22% of the preservice teachers (PTs 6, 8, 9, 15, and 30) who lacked initial likeness for or interest in teaching developed a likeness for teaching at a later stage, usually their second or third year into the program. These students' stories showed that they overcame professional harassment and developed weak positive teacher self-image through focusing on the strengths of their profession, such as (1) the future of other professions and sustenance of the future generation depends on their services as teachers, (2) the program, which is combined with other major non-educational courses, presents many job opportunities, and (3) some of the programs, such as Guidance and Counselling/Social Studies, offer higher chances of migrating to advanced countries. Their positive self-image as teachers is characterized as weak because they are not sure whether they would want to continue with teaching.

Discussion

This study explored social education preservice (SEP) teachers' motivation for choosing teaching and their professional identity. Findings on each variable are individually discussed below.

Social Education Preservice Teachers' Motivation for Choosing Teaching

Findings showed that the motivating factors for choosing teaching among social education preservice teachers include socialization influence, fallback program choice, task demand (economic and employment reasons such as availability of job factors), gender factors including time for family, intrinsic factors (love of teaching), secondary teachers' personality, altruistic factors (desire to contribute to the society and shape younger ones), perceived ability to teach, and previous teaching experiences. These reasons are listed from the highest to the least referenced. Evidently, participants' choice of teaching program is strongly motivated by mercenary, extrinsic, and negative factors. Noteworthy is that socialization influence, the highest motivating factor, interlinks with fallback program choice in Nigeria because many students who chose social education as a fallback program did so due to the pressure from family and friends to start higher education. This finding compares to the findings of studies that explored teachers' career choice motivations in developing contexts (Chivore, 1988; Nwagwu, 1981; Yusuf et al., 2018) and contrasts with findings of similar studies in developed countries (Bergmark et al., 2018; Glutsh & König, 2019; Lin et al., 2012; Parr et al., 2021; Thomson et al., 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2007). This can be explained by the poor social welfare and social representation of teaching in Nigeria. Teachers receive one of the lowest salaries and are owed a salary more than any other group of civil servants. Work conditions are poor; schools and classrooms which serve as teachers' offices lack modern facilities and are, in some cases, dilapidated; and teachers' promotion policies are unfriendly – postgraduate degrees are not recognized or rewarded (for promotion purposes) at K-12 education levels and 20 years teaching experience in a public school is required to head or lead a public school. The condition of work as the explanation for extrinsic motivations for the choice of a teaching career is supported by Nwagwu's (1981) findings that students' interest in the teaching profession fluctuates/varies with changes or improvements in service conditions of teaching in Nigeria. Another reason for greater fallback program and extrinsic motivations for teaching program choice in Nigeria is the nature of

employment in the country: Employment in a sector is not determined by specialized qualification in most cases but by one's social network. Hence, studying education is largely not for it to serve as a future career but for getting a higher education certificate required for employment in any sector or for belonging to the class of highly educated people in a classed society.

Intrinsic and altruistic motivations were the least reported factors for the choice of social education by preservice teachers. This contrasts with Akpochafo's (2020) finding of altruism as the highest motivating factor in Nigeria. The contradiction may be explained by Akpochafo's (2020) use of a questionnaire which is highly susceptible to social desirability bias. Yet it is interesting that despite a poor social representation of teaching in Nigeria, some preservice teachers were motivated to choose teaching on intrinsic and altruistic grounds, just as it is interesting to find that some chose the profession due to their previous positive experiences of their teachers. However, the fact that these factors were the least reported motivators in social education preservice teachers' stories is disappointing. Since the discipline deals more with moral and civic values and character formation, it is expected that its students and practitioners would be more motivated by and inclined to moral and civic needs. A similar result was found among social studies and humanities preservice teachers in a Turkish context (Glustch & König, 2019). This indicates that something is lacking in social education teacher training programs across the world. The disappointing result can be explained by the high-stakes testing focus of educational activities in Nigeria. It can further be explained by the non-consciousness of preservice teachers about the specialty and peculiarities of their disciplines as one pattern was predominant in participants' stories: they focused on their reasons for choosing teaching and ignored pointing to their specific programs. Only one of the two students with altruistic motivations particularly connected her motivations to her specific programs. This pattern strengthens the greater fallback program motivation factor revealed by this study.

Findings showed that the choice of teaching is influenced by gender in Nigeria. Female teachers are more likely to choose teaching on intrinsic, personal utility, and altruistic goal grounds. This is consistent with previous findings (Abonyi et al., 2021; Akpochafo, 2020; Spittle & Spittle, 2014; Ştemberger, 2020). Cultural and social norms are behind women's choice of teaching on gender grounds. Teaching is perceived as a feminine profession in Nigeria (Egwu, 2015; Olasehinde, 1972). Women's income is seen as a supplement to men's income in this context (Obiagu, 2022); hence, women do not mind doing any job – underpaid or uninteresting to them – because they are socialized to be carers, non-ambitious, unassertive, and "*theoretical* non-providers"; theoretical non-providers because women are active providers in Nigeria's family. Also, society's expectation of women as carers and nurturers of a family is a strong influence on their choice of teaching, which they perceive as providing adequate time needed to be effective in traditional women's roles. Some married female preservice teachers were also found to not have a hand in their choice of the teaching profession; instead, their husbands chose it for them. This is the consequence of a patriarchal society where men make decisions on or determine the future of their wives, who they mostly expect to be home carers.

Beyond the poor working conditions of teachers in many countries across the globe, especially in the global South (see Tikly et al., 2022), the motivation of these female preservice teachers seems to be another major reason for the gradual feminization of the teaching profession (Obiagu & Nwaubani, 2020; OECD, 2017). Linking teaching to being a non-demanding task, usually associated with women, as seen in this study, runs the risk of misconceiving a teaching career as a non-valued or non-technical task. This false knowledge, which contradicts the

expectations of teaching in Nigeria, is the consequence of the poor attitude to work by the Nigerian teachers who preservice teachers encounter and observe. This deceptive knowledge can topple the transformative task of education if female teachers are not empowered to challenge traditions that limit their ability and involvement in social change and agency (Obiagu & Nwaubani, 2020, p. 19). Also embedded in the findings are preservice teachers' stereotype of some cultural societies (that they are non-indigene of), preservice teachers' inability to distinguish societal problems (teenage pregnancy "out of wedlock") from culture, and their inability to distinguish cultural issues from immorality (spiritual issues); if at all out-of-wedlock teenage pregnancy is part of a culture. All these could hamper constructive/disruptive classroom practices and social change goals. These and the non-involvement of some married women in choosing their teaching career have implications for social education teacher training.

Social Education Preservice Teachers' Professional Identity

Results revealed that social education pre-service teachers' career choice motivation factors, discussed in the previous section, influenced their teacher professional identity. Teacher professional identity develops from social influences, intrinsic perspectives, and more strongly from the teacher education training experiences of the preservice teachers. It found that the pre-service teachers who were motivated by altruistic and intrinsic factors were the only ones who had positive teacher professional identity –that is, good self-image and self-esteem as teachers alongside the intention to become a teacher. A majority of the studied preservice teachers have a negative professional identity. Many of them explained teaching as an easy and non-demanding job. The finding of the study that preservice teachers conceive teaching as easy-to-do work corresponds with Egwu's (2015) finding that only 9% of participants thought teaching is a difficult task. This finding agrees with studies that found that Nigerian preservice and in-service teachers have negative attitudes towards the profession (Egwu, 2015; Olasehinde, 1972). It is surprising that while teachers in developed worlds report classroom practices as overwhelming and define teaching as demanding, stressful and difficult (Chaplain, 2008; Klassen & Chiu, 2011), most preservice teachers in Nigeria define teaching as simple, non-demanding, and less stressful. This can be explained by the prescriptive nature of contents emphasized in Nigerian curricula and textbooks and the dominance of lecture methods in Nigerian classrooms (Obiagu, 2019). Their perception of teaching as cheap, non-demanding, and unfit for them is arguably informed by the general poor perception of teaching held in Nigerian society.

Preservice social teachers with negative professional identities do not want to continue with the teaching profession in the future. Preservice teachers in this study also prefer Law, Business (trading), Criminology, and 'Politics' and described them as high-esteem jobs. Most of them plan to train in and do these jobs after graduation from the teaching program. This is consistent with Egwu's (2015) finding that 71% of preservice teachers in Nigeria prefer other professions to teaching. Their disassociation of themselves from teaching can be explained by the poor socioeconomic status of teaching in Nigeria, as earlier noted. However, the fact that the teaching profession is respected and desired in contexts such as USA and Australia, where they are also among the least paid professions, suggests factors beyond socioeconomic status of teaching in Nigeria as the cause of preservice teachers' disrespect of teaching in the country. A greater cause of this could be the inadequate and low-quality teacher education training they receive, resulting in a lack of a sense of purpose by social educators, along with a poor understanding of the purpose of the teaching profession and the power of social education in society. Some of the findings support this argument. It was found that some of the preservice

teachers came into the program with strong hopes but were disappointed by their teacher training schooling experiences. This is similar to Thomas and Beauchamp's (2011) findings regarding new teachers who lost or lack a positive feeling about their professional selves due to the school contextual issues, such as values and policies, they experienced in their job. Notably, some preservice teachers who initially disliked teaching later developed a likeness for the profession. These findings have implications for teacher education.

Pedagogic and Ethics Implications for Social Education Teacher Training

We need to have the majority of social education teachers motivated to pursue a teaching career for intrinsic and altruistic reasons. This is because teachers with altruistic motivations and positive professional identities are found to be more committed to teaching and making social change via teaching (Sinclair, 2008). That social education preservice teachers have strong extrinsic and socialization influence motivations for choosing to study social education programs, and stronger negative professional identity is revealing of some program intervention needs, especially pedagogic and ethics needs, of social education teacher training programs. Focus on program intervention needs is not a denial of the importance of (or the challenges presented by) systemic structural factors and broader sociocultural issues in changing the status quo and improving teacher professional identity. Priestley et al. (2015) noted how policies require teachers to be creative in their working practices, while effectively ignoring the structural and cultural challenges that disable or constrain teachers' pedagogic practices. In Nigeria, these structural disablements are in the form of poor working conditions, politicization of teacher recruitment, and the non-implementation of policies seeking to improve teachers' welfare. Hence, teachers and teacher educators need to fight back against systemic structural disablement or neglect through disruptive pedagogic practices, while hoping for systems changes to take effect.

Sequel to the above, the intention of emphasizing pedagogic solutions is to project the roles of teacher-educator agency and pedagogical resistance practices in contexts where structural agency or changes is slow. This is especially as findings showed that getting admitted into the programs or studying experiences of the programs did not disrupt the poor perception of teaching that the majority of the pre-service teachers came into the program with; it, in many instances, worsened their negative professional identity. Teacher agency means teachers' engagement with/in actions or practices that counter societal constraints to educational goals and outcomes. According to Priestley et al. (2015), the achievement of teacher agency is always informed by past professional and personal experiences. Hence, the findings of this study on teachers' career motivation and professional identity have implications for teacher education pedagogic practices, including professional ethics, that could promote social education teachers' agency and resilience.

These teacher education pedagogic practices necessary to promote teacher professional identity and agency among social education preservice teachers include program emphasis on developing a sense of purpose that tilts towards social justice, altruism, and social engineering, and a strong professional self-image or self-esteem. This is because self-esteem is an important aspect of teacher professional identity (Kelchtermans, 1993). For the development and sustenance of a positive teacher professional identity, *professional self-esteem* is needed. Self-esteem can be initiated through developing and teaching professional ethics in social education teacher training programs. The specialized professional ethics course is central to the professionalism of disciplines, such as Law and Medicine, as well as crucial in empowering

professionals with professional identity, purpose, and esteem necessary for resisting and rewriting sociocultural practices that underestimate their profession.

Yet teaching professional ethics courses is omitted in Nigerian universities, and teacher educators ignore or neglect coaching their students on it. Even though scholarship on teaching and teacher ethics exists (Boon, 2011; Campbell, 2000, 2008), the advocated principles (e.g., reflecting moral rules such as caring, honesty, compassion, and diligence) are usually unimplemented, unregulated, or often taken for granted. Notably, educational ethics concerns arise in questions of moral dilemma, especially in cases of unprecedented events, conflicts of interest in student-teacher relationships (e.g., Campbell, 2000; Colnerud, 1997), and implementing school justice regulatory policies capable of occasioning 'moral injury' (Levinson, 2015; Levinson & Fay, 2016). Emphasizing these topics in teacher education will help to empower teachers with the ability to distinguish between elements of culture and moral dilemmas encountered in their practice.

In social education, ethics of (political) belief's non-disclosure and disclosure or neutrality in teaching controversial topics, such as sexuality, race, and political ideologies, are argued to be necessary (Journell, 2017, 2011; Kelly, 1986). In addition to these ethics, some ethics are embedded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1990. They are the four CRC cardinal principles of non-discrimination and equality, best interest of the child, participation and inclusion, and survival and development. Also important for the development of a professional sense among preservice social educators is training on ethics of fashion, lifelong learning, social leadership, civic leadership, communication, and civic cum social justice agency. All these ethics could be harmonized and adopted in planning, conducting, managing, and implementing social education goals and content. Social education teacher training programs should pursue (1) exposing social education students to general teaching and specific subject ethics in their first year (in fact, first class) and (2) emphasizing professional ethics throughout their programs' tenure.

Presenting these ethics to students in their first year is important for the reasons listed below. Exposing pre-service teachers to *teaching professional ethics* will contribute in:

- Disrupting preservice teachers' poor attitude towards the teaching profession formed prior to being admitted into the program;
- Challenging preservice teachers to seriously commit to and be intentional about their programs;
- Transforming preservice teachers' extrinsic, fallback program and socialization influence motivations to intrinsic and altruistic motivations;
- Increasing preservice teachers' consciousness about their roles in promoting human rights, peacebuilding, democracy, and civic and social justice in and through education;
- Imbuing preservice teachers with a sense of professional responsibility and expertise;
- Empowering preservice teachers with a worldview of themselves as sitting at the center stage of the implementation of local, national, and global development plans;
- Launching preservice teachers into a new educational and teaching world that is different from their previous experience with learning and teaching either as students or teachers in secondary school or extramural lesson centers. This includes empowering them with the real expectations of the teaching profession that will disrupt their current poor understanding of the profession as less demanding and consuming, which false expectation is the product of the poor attitude to work of the teachers they experienced.

> Real committed teachers sure know that teaching is not less demanding or less time-consuming.

- Empower preservice teachers with consciousness of the strengths of their programs and prepare them to focus only on the strengths. The success stories of some participants who later liked teaching after some years into their program provide hope about the success of this approach for developing a positive professional identity.

Based on the above, it is suggested that social educators across the globe, via organizations such as the Social Studies Educationist Association of Nigeria (SOSAN) and the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), begin conversations on articulating social education ethical codes, and developing social education ethics courses and intervention programs for preservice teachers around the world. We need a universal but contextualizable textbook or social education ethical code manual in this regard.

It is very imperative that social education teacher program pedagogical practices begin to *defeminize teaching* through questioning (1) assumptions of what it means to be feminine, how the assumptions affect teachers' commitment to their duties, and (2) social expectations of women and the impact such expectations have on women's effectiveness in their participation in human and national development. This questioning and deconstruction process will empower female teachers with the goal and capabilities to engage in active social change-making, while caring for children via their teaching practices, thereby disrupting their tendency to minimize teaching roles and time. The defeminization should also target encouraging men to continue with teaching to serve as role models for younger boys and girls in schools. Moreover, while waiting on policymakers and leaders to tackle structural challenges, the leadership of social education programs and associations can engage in systems-oriented change approaches, such as partnering with the private sector to create opportunities for students to experience the social engineering, service, and development aspects of social education. This could increase their teacher professional identity and foster altruistic motivations for entering the teaching workforce.

Limitations of the Study and Future Directions

Despite its many strengths, including providing a picture of preservice teachers' career motivation and professional identity in a developing context, this study is limited by its use of a narrative method that restricted the use of probing questions that could interrogate and clarify some statements made by students in their stories. Yet the approach is more reliable since questionnaire items on an individual's motivation for choosing teaching as a career and professional identity are highly susceptible to social desirability bias, especially in a context where teachers face ridicule. The researcher's interpretations of the stories may also be affected by unconscious bias. The sample of the study is small because of the interactionist and qualitative nature of this study. These limitations did not affect the quality of the study but its generalizability. Future studies in developing contexts should consider adopting a mixed-method design in exploring these issues. The discussed study implications raise some important future research goals, including the need for studies on (1) how teacher education programs confront the structural challenges to teacher development and (2) teachers' perceptions of what teaching ethics and social education ethics involve. Exploring these could lead to the creation of teacher development support tools in contexts of structural neglect and the development of a scientific body of universal but contextualizable professional ethics courses for teaching professionals generally and social educators in particular.

Conclusion

With pre-service teachers' lack of interest in teaching and the increasing need to reduce the attrition of qualified teachers, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, examining the career choice motivations and professional identity of pre-service and in-service teachers becomes important. This is because teaching career choice motivations and professional identity can be crucial factors in teachers' retention or withdrawal from schools, especially in a context where the economic conditions of most professionals are similar. Following this perspective, this study explored the motivations behind social education preservice [SEP] teachers' choice of social education teaching program and profession, as well as their professional identity. It found that SEP teachers have a poor and negative professional identity and that extrinsic, socialization, and mercenary factors are the strongest motivations for choosing to study social education in Nigeria. These findings suggest, as theorized in past literature, that context –intrapsychic and social factors– influence teaching career motivations and professional identity. Not neglecting the importance of structural factors, the study points to the need to explore and emphasize social educators' knowledge, ethics, and socioemotional skills training needs that are important for empowering social education preservice teachers with altruistic motivations and positive professional identity about teaching. This empowerment is important to realize the goals of social education, including promoting empathy, peace, and human rights, since an individual's identity connects to their practices. By exploring these issues in a West African country, Nigeria, this paper contributes to the literature on teaching career choice motivations and professional identity and further provides insights into the causes of teachers' attrition in the region.

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