

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE BACKGROUND OF STUDENTS TEACHERS IN THE TRAINING COURSE BETWEEN GHANA AND JAPAN

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Abstract : Education is an important investment any nation needs to make in its people to enable achieve better developments. Many nations realizing the value of education are putting in all that they can to ensure that its nationals acquire the best form of education. Education can not go in if there are not qualified and willing teachers to carry it out. Many developing countries are faced with shortage of qualified and willing teachers who will do the job. According to Towse et-at (2002), there appears to be a paradox best summed up as: everybody values education, but nobody wants to be a teacher.

Ghana like many developing nations is also faced with lack of qualified teachers. This research was therefore conducted to investigated students teachers attitude towards this chosen profession and some of their fears and aspirations for this career.

The results obtained were compared with that of NUE student teachers, Japan. The comparison brought to light many similar and varying opinions of student teachers from the two nations.

Keywords : Comparative study, background of students teachers, consideration for education, Ghana, Japan.

抄録 : 教育はどんな国にとっても人々がより良い発達を可能にするのに必要な重要な投資である。教育の真価を知っている多くの国は、国民が最も良い教育が受けられるように、いろいろなことを取り入れている。もし指導力と意欲のある教師がいなければ、教育をすることができない。多くの発展途上国は指導力と意欲のある教師の不足に直面している。Towse ほか (2002) によれば、それらは以下にまとめたパラドックスとして現れる。みんなは教育を評価するが、だれも教師になりたがっていない。また、多くの発展途上国と同様にガーナは教員免許のある教師の不足に直面している。それ故、この研究ではこの職業を選んだこと、およびこの仕事のための彼らの心配と抱負について学生を対象に調査を行った。得られた結果については、鳴門教育大学の学生と比較し、その比較から2つの国の学生の類似点と相違点を明らかにした。

キーワード : 比較研究, 教育系学生の背景, 教育に対する意識, ガーナ, 日本

I Introduction

Education is the foundation for higher living standards and democratic societies. It is an important long-term investment in peace and development. Education is essential not only for human development, that is, empowering each individual with the necessary knowledge and capabilities, but it is also crucial for the development of countries. It is furthermore vital for cultivating understanding and acceptance of other peoples and cultures for building a foundation for international cooperation.

Parents see education as an investment for further gains, and to students it is a ladder of opportunity, which can determine the social class one can belong to in future.

These and many other benefits of education make it worthwhile for any nation to make education possible for its people but according to Towse et. al (2002), there appears to be a paradox best summed up as : everybody values education, but nobody wants to be a teacher.

It is impossible for any nation to achieve the numerous gains of education if there are no teachers who are willing to carry it out. Since students generally perform better if taught by

well qualified, trained and motivated teachers, recruiting qualified young people is a prerequisite to improving educational provision. This view is shared by Towse et al (2002) and Skyes (1996).

Ghana, like many other African countries, has experienced profound political, economic and social changes since the IMF and the World Bank suggested structural adjustment programme. One significant consequence has been the significant retrenchment of public sector and parastatal employees through the liquidation or divestment of their enterprises to the private sector. However, the emerging private sector can only absorb a tiny fraction of those leaving school and teacher training is one of the few remaining avenues to formal sector white color employment.

The economic situation makes it impossible for many parents to send their children who have qualified to the few universities in the country. Freshmen who gain admission to these universities pay nothing less than 600 dollars to be able to study for a year. Aside this, parents have to pay for accommodation and living allowance for their children. This makes the financial commitment at this level so huge that only a few parents can afford it. The teaching sector becomes one of the few avenues, as stated above, left for such students to explore, but due to the poor economic state of the nation, which seems to affect all other government sectors, students are reluctant to enter the teaching profession. In order to attract more people into this profession, the government established an allowance scheme where student teachers are given monthly allowances. Also, most of such institutions are boarding based where students are given free accommodation and meals. This scheme worked for some time since many people enrolled to become teachers but recently most of the students who enroll do so for only the allowance. Especially those who qualify to enter the universities only come to save money to enable them enter the universities. Some even enroll, save money and go into other ventures. In the end, even though many people enter the teacher training institutions to train to become teachers only a few actually end up teaching.

Ghana's educational system, which 20 years ago was known to be one of the most highly developed and effective in West Africa, has deteriorated in quality because there are not enough qualified teachers to do the work. Skyes (1996) explains further that teacher learning must be at the heart of any effort to improve education in our society. While other reforms may be needed, better learning for more children relies on teachers. Fullan (1995) suggests that continuous development of all teachers is the cornerstone for meaning,

improvement, and reform.

II Research Method

To find out why many students enter the teacher training institutions but only a few of them end up teaching, a survey was thus conducted to bring to light reasons why this happens. Based on other research carried out that aimed at issues associated with the recruitment, retention and effectiveness of teachers, a self completion questionnaire was developed to provide not only quantitative data but also, more importantly, qualitative statements from which to derive various constructs.

III Questionnaire and Population

The questionnaire consisted of 20 items, which students were to respond to and were distributed to 2nd year students of the Presbyterian Training College (PTC) in Ghana and Naruto University of Education (NUE) in Japan.

IV Results and discussion

Questionnaires were completed and returned by 86-second year student teachers of the NUE and 96 second year student teachers of PTC.

1. Age of student teacher

The age of the student teachers is very different. The demographic data for age are:

	PTC	NUE
18- 20 years	11.7%	83.7%
21- 23 years	77.7%	16.3%
24- 26 years	8.5%	0.0%
27- 30 years	2.1%	0.0%

Majority of PTC student teachers fall within the 21-23 year age group, while majority of NUE student teachers fall within the 18-20 year age group.

2. Gender of student teachers

The gender of student teachers is very different.

A large majority of student teachers in PTC are males. On the other hand, female students form a greater majority of NUE student teachers.

Table 1 The demographic data for gender

	PTC	NUE
Male	61.7%	30.2%
Female	38.3%	69.8%

3. Subject specialization

The subject specialization of student teachers is different.

There are more science student teachers at PTC than non-science student teachers. In the case of NUE, there are more non-science student teachers than the science.

Table 2 The data for subject specialization

	PTC	NUE
Science	59.6%	16.3%
Non-science	40.4%	83.7%

4. Having parents as teachers

In order to determine if student teachers are taking after their parents in terms of career, students were asked to state if their parents are/were teachers.

It is evident that majority of student teachers in both PTC and NUE do not have parents who are/were teachers.

Table 3 Having parents as teachers

	PTC	NUE
Yes	23.4%	11.6%
No	74.5%	83.7%

5. Deciding to choose teaching as career

Education is a valuable thing in life but only a few want to become teachers. That means others influence many peoples decision in choosing the teaching career. Thus student teachers were asked to state those who influenced their decision most in choosing teaching as a career.

Student teachers of NUE were mostly influenced by their teachers in choosing this career as compared to those in PTC. Some students in this category stated they had very good teachers thus they also want to become teachers. Others stated that they had very bad experiences with some teachers; thus, they want to become teachers to have good influence on their students. In the case of PTC, many students' decision in becoming teachers was influenced by their parents, because most parents cannot afford to send their children to the university or other institutions where admission and tuition are very costly. When their children get into the training colleges they are given some allowances which help reduces the financial burden on them. This last reason also holds for the

percentage that decided to become teachers themselves of PTC.

Table 4 Deciding to choose teaching as career

	PTC	NUE
Parents/Guardian	42.6%	7.0%
Teachers	7.4%	67.4%
Yourself	39.4%	16.3%
Others	10.6%	9.3%

6. Other careers considered

Looking at the data above, many of the student teachers in both schools would have loved to pursue other careers but situations such as mentioned above made them change their mind. Thus student teachers were asked to state other careers considered.

Many student teachers of NUE want to be teachers as compared to those of PTC. Many student teachers of PTC originally wanted to pursue science related careers like medicine, pharmacy and nursing as compared with their counterparts in NUE. No student teachers of NUE had either commerce related or engineering related careers as their dream careers as was the case of PTC, and while some NUE student teachers are not decided, all PTC student teachers are decided on what they want on what they want to do in future.

Table 5 Other careers considered

	PTC	NUE
Commerce Related	14.9%	0.0%
Engineering Related	10.6%	0.0%
Science/Health Related	38.3%	14.0%
Still thinking	0.0%	18.2%
Teaching	10.9%	38.8%
	22.1%	20.8%

7. Reasons for not pursuing this career

There are many reasons that prevent people from pursuing their dream career. Student teachers were asked to state some of these reasons. The responses obtained are very different comparing the two schools.

Majority of student teachers of PTC could not pursue their dream career because of financial and qualification reasons. Only a few had teaching as their dream career. However in the case of NUE, majority of the student teachers had teaching as their dream career, and none were prevented by financial reasons from pursuing their dream career even though tuition maybe very expensive. The economic standing of most Japanese is very good due to the fact that Japan is a developed country. This makes it possible for most parents to

finance their children's education. Ghana, on the other hand, is a developing country where most people do not receive enough salary. This makes it difficult for most parents to finance their children's education especially at the tertiary level.

Table 6 Reasons for not pursuing this career

	PTC	NUE
Finance	39.4%	0.0%
Qualification	22.3%	9.3%
Parental Influence	5.5%	14.0%
Wanted to be teacher	11.0%	48.8%
Others	21.0%	23.3%

8. Reasons for choosing teaching career

When student teachers were asked why they chose teaching career, many varying responses were given. Most student teachers in both schools however chose teaching because they loved children.

Many NUE student teachers chose teaching because they loved children as compared to that of student teachers of PTC, but the difference is not that great. However as some student teachers of PTC chose teaching because it is noble and respectable, as well as easy to get employed. However, none of their counterparts in NUE shared the same idea. Also, while some NUE student teachers were motivated by their teachers in choosing the teaching career none of PTC student teachers were motivated by their teachers.

Table 7 Reasons for choosing teaching career

	PTC	NUE
Noble & respectable profession	20.3%	0.0%
Easy to be employed	9.6%	0.0%
Educating / love children	45.7%	60.5%
Influenced by parents	2.2%	4.7%
Influenced by teachers	0.0%	20.9%
Others	19.1%	14.0%

9. Teaching is good career

Student teachers were asked to state whether teaching was a good career or not. There were similarities in their responses. Student teachers in both PTC and NUE think teaching is a good career, however some think otherwise because they think the behaviour of some teachers does not make the profession good and noble enough.

Table 8 Teaching is good career

	PTC	NUE
Yes	90.4%	83.7%
No	6.4%	12.3%

10. Interest area in teaching career

Student teachers were asked what they like most about the teaching career.

Almost the same number of student teachers in both institutions stated educating others as what they like most about the teaching career even though PTC students teachers were a little more than those of NUE. Many more student teachers of NUE stated relationship with children as what they liked most about the teaching career. This was true for only a few number of PTC student teachers. Other interesting revelations are that, some student teachers of PTC stated long vacations and allowance given at training as what they liked most about the teaching career, but none of their counterparts of NUE shared the same idea. It is obvious that student teachers like the social relation with children.

Table 9 Interest area in teaching career

	PTC	NUE
Educating others	57.4%	32.6%
Long vacations	17.0%	0.0%
Allowance given during training	7.4%	0.0%
Understanding children	0.0%	11.6%
Relating with children	9.0%	46.5%
Others	4.8%	9.3%

11. Dislikes in the teaching career

Student teachers were asked to state what they disliked about the teaching career. Their responses were very different. The data shown below explains their responses.

Majority of student teachers at PTC wrote poor condition of service as what they disliked most of the teaching career. Some issues they mentioned are low salaries, posting to rural areas for a long period of time, which, is sometimes difficult to change, and lack of incentives for those who accept postings to the rural areas. On the other hand, NUE students mentioned inability to relate with students, students' parents and fellow teachers as what they dislike most about teaching.

Table 10 Dislikes in the teaching career

	PTC	NUE
Poor condition of service	59.6%	0.0%
Difficult responsibility	12.8%	27.9%
Negative perception of society	23.4%	7.0%
Training conditions	2.1%	0.0%
Inability to relate with students	0.0%	37.2%
Poor relation between teachers and parents	0.0%	27.9%

12. Becoming a schoolteacher on completion

To know the number of student teachers who would really want to become schoolteachers on completion, they were asked to state whether they would become school teachers on completion or not. The Responses obtained were very similar. Majority of student teachers of PTC and NUE intend to become schoolteachers on completion. However some student teachers of both institutions have no intention of teaching on completion

Table 11 Becoming a schoolteacher on completion

	PTC	NUE
Yes	67.0%	72.1%
No	33.0%	27.9%

13. Reasons for becoming/not becoming classroom teacher on completion

To know the reasons why students would or would not become schoolteachers on completion, they were asked to explain the stand they chose. Very different reasons were given by student teachers of the two institutions. Their responses are:

Majority of NUE student teachers would become teachers on completions because they want to teach. Only a few PTC student teachers have the same intention. Many PTC student teachers would become teachers because they have been trained to do so and almost the same percentage would become teachers and look for other job avenues.

Table 12 Reasons for becoming/not becoming classroom teacher on completion

	PTC	NUE
I want to become a teacher	11.2%	73.8%
I have been trained to do so	36.7%	0.0%
Stepping stone	31.9%	0.0%
Poor conditions of service	9.6%	0.0%
Find another job	3.1%	20.9%
Not decided	0.0%	5.4%

14. Teaching career is in terms of classroom teaching only

Student teachers were asked to state if they see the teaching career only in terms of classroom teaching or not.

Student teachers in the two groups think the teaching career is not in term of classroom teaching only. They think teaching is more than just classroom teaching but also teaching goes on in the community and society where you find yourself.

Table 13 Teaching career is in terms of classroom teaching only

	PTC	NUE
Yes	20.2%	16.3%
No	75.5%	83.7%

15. Pursuit of dream career in future

Many student teachers in both institutions have stated that they have other dream careers but were motivated by others or situation to choose the teaching career. Thus student teachers were asked whether they would pursue their dream careers in future when given the opportunity.

A greater majority of PTC than NUE student teachers said they would pursue their dream career if given the opportunity in future. Giving the fact that many student teachers of the two groups were motivated by others in choosing this career might have led to this responses.

Table 14 Pursuit of dream career in future

	PTC	NUE
Yes	86.2%	67.4%
No	11.7%	32.6%

16. Factors that cause people to leave teaching

To enable more teachers to remain in the teaching career it is good to know what might cause them to leave so that solution may be found to them. In view of these, student teachers were asked to state factors that cause people to leave teaching. Student teachers responses were very different. While many student teachers of PTC think poor conditions of service and negative perception of society towards teachers would cause many people to leave teaching with comments like " if teachers are not given incentives given to other sector like nursing, I will be compelled to leave the service", no NUE student teacher shared the same view. Many student teachers of NUE rather think people would leave teaching when they lose interest in teaching or fail teachers' exams. No PTC student teacher shared in this opinion.

Table 15 Factors that cause people to leave teaching

	PTC	NUE
Condition of service	64.9%	0.0%
Negative perception of Society	20.2%	0.0%
Difficult work	2.1%	20.3%
Difficult human relation	6.4%	11.6%
Loss interest in teaching	0.0%	40.5%
Fail teachers exams	0.0%	24.3%

17. Factors preventing many people from becoming teachers

To encourage more people to become teachers it is good to know what prevent many people from becoming teachers so that remedies can be found for them. Students were asked to state what factors prevent many people from becoming teachers.

Many student teachers of PTC think getting sponsorship for training is what would prevent many people from becoming teachers. Recently, to ensure that every district in Ghana, whether rural or urban, get an equal distribution of trained teachers, every district is given some budget to sponsor students in the training colleges. These students must come back to the district they got sponsorship from to teach. Many students find this difficult because they do not get sponsorship in urban areas they would love to be.

Many NUE student teachers however think many people do not become teachers because they have other dreams.

Table 16 Factors preventing many people from becoming teachers

	PTC	NUE
Conditions of service	25.9%	0.0%
Negative perception of society	20.2%	0.0%
Sponsorship	43.3%	0.0%
Teachers exams is difficult to pass	0.0%	25.6%
People have other dreams	0.0%	44.2%
Difficult responsibility	0.0%	11.6%

18. Greatest problem of Basic education today

They are many problems that beset basic education in every nation. Student teachers were thus asked to state the greatest problem of basic education today. From the responses, it was obvious that what was a problem for one country was not true for the other and vice versa.

In Ghana the greatest problem of basic education seem to be economical since majority of student teachers stated lack of classrooms and curriculum materials as the greatest problem. The greatest problem of basic education in Japan seem to be social because majority of students stated difficulty in understanding and relating with children as their greatest problem.

In Japan, there are fully equipped schools with qualified teachers in every part of the nation whether rural or urban and government gives a lot attention to education thus, the issues of lack of classrooms and curriculum materials, and lack of qualified teachers is not a problem for basic education at all as is in the case of Ghana. In Japan therefore, the issue of understanding and relating with children as well as bullying are their greatest problems.

Table 17 Greatest problem of Basic education today

	PTC	NUE
Government policy	12.8%	0.0%
Lack of classrooms and curriculum materials	42.6%	0.0%
Over loaded curriculum areas	10.6%	0.0%
Lack of qualified teacher	27.7%	0.0%
Bullying/broken class	0.0%	25.6%
Difficulty in understanding and relating well with children	0.0%	68.8%

19. The role of a teacher in the society

For every teacher to be able to perform his duties well he must know his role in the society in which he is going to function. Student teachers were thus asked to state the role of the teacher in the society. Student teachers in both institutions think educating others especially the younger generation is the role of a teacher in the society.

Table 18 The role of a teacher in the society

	PTC	NUE
Educating others (younger generation)	50.0%	54.2%
Community work/activity	10.1%	4.3%
Role model	24.5%	22.6%
Support students growth	9.0%	9.2%

20. Qualities of a good teacher

There are many qualities that make a teacher to be seen as a good one. Students were asked to list any four qualities in descending order, from excellent to good, of a good teacher.

The data show some interesting differences between the perceptions for the two groups of student teachers. PTC student teachers stated knowledge as an excellent quality of a good teacher. This is followed by ability to communicate knowledge to students, respecting students' opinion and showing concern for students needs, and showing interest in chosen career.

On the other hand NUE student teacher view respecting students opinion and showing concern for students needs as excellent quality of a good teacher. This is followed by showing interest in chosen career, knowledge and able to communicate knowledge to students.

Table 19 Qualities of a good teacher

	PTC	NUE
Must be knowledgeable	86.8%	48.8%
Must be able to communicate knowledge	53.4%	21.7%
Respect students opinion, be fair and firm, show care and concern for students	48.3%	87.9%
Must show interest in chosen career	37.8%	55.2%

21. Qualities of a good lesson

Student teachers were asked to state the qualities of a good lesson.

Both groups of student teachers indicated good presentation as an excellent quality of a good lesson, followed by a lesson that is student and activity oriented, use of teaching learning materials and good preparation.

Table 20 Qualities of a good lesson

	PTC	NUE
Good preparation	36.6%	19.3%
Good presentation	81.8%	97.23%
Use of teaching learning materials	50.4%	26.7%
Student/activity oriented	59.8%	71.9%

22. Understanding children in order to become a good teacher

Every child in a class is different from the other because they have different characters, personalities and come from different homes. They learn the same things at different levels and understand same issues differently. To be able to teach children well it is very important to learn and understand them, thus student teachers were asked to state whether it is important to understand children in order to become a good teacher or not.

Student teachers of the two groups believe it is important to understand children in order to become a good teacher. Some comments made were:

- : Teachers need to understand children individually and this will help them become good teachers. (Japan)
- : Children have individual differences. What might be good for one might not be good for another so teachers need to study about children to help cater for their individual difference. (Ghana)

Table 21 Understanding children in order to become a good teacher

	PTC	NUE
Yes	97.4%	93.0%
No	0.0%	0.0%

V Summary

After analyzing the data question by question, a summary of the major background information of student teachers is given below:

1. A large majority of the PTC student teachers were between 21 and 23 years old while a large majority of NUE

student teachers were between 18 and 20 years old.

2. Most of the student teachers of PTC were males while most of the student teachers of NUE are females.
3. Most PTC student teachers were science students while a greater majority of NUE student teachers were non-science students.
4. A large majority of student teachers in both institutions do not have parents who are or were teachers.
5. Most PTC student teachers were either influenced by their parents or decided themselves in choosing the teaching career. NUE student teachers were mostly influenced by their teachers in choosing the teaching career.
6. Majority of student teachers of both PTC and NUE had considered other careers aside the teaching career.
7. Many of PTC student teachers could not pursue other careers considered aside teaching because of financial reasons, but many NUE student teachers did not pursue other careers considered because they wanted to become teachers.
8. Student teachers in both institutions were motivated to choose the teaching career by their love for children.
9. A large majority of both PTC and NUE student teachers consider teaching as a good profession.
10. What most student teachers of PTC liked most about the teaching career is the fact that they would be able to educate others. NUE student teachers stated relationship with children as what they liked most about teaching.
11. PTC student teachers dislike the poor conditions of service of the teaching career. NUE students dislike the teachers' inability to relate well with students
12. Many Student teachers of both institutions plan to become classroom teachers on completion.
13. A large majority of NUE student would become school-teachers because that is what they want to be. Some student teachers of PTC would become schoolteachers because they have been trained for that. A good percentage of PTC student teachers would also become schoolteachers till they find another career.
14. Student teachers of both PTC and NUE do not perceive teaching only in terms of classroom teaching.
15. A good majority of student teachers of both institutions would pursue their dream careers if given the opportunity in future.
16. Most PTC student teachers think many people would leave the teaching career because of poor conditions of service and the negative perception society has about teachers. On the other hand NUE student teachers would leave the teaching career if they do not able to perform their duties well.

17. Student teachers of PTC believe that getting sponsorship for training, poor conditions of service and negative perception of society towards teachers are the main reasons preventing many people from becoming teachers. In the case of NUE, student teachers believe that people having other dreams and difficulty in passing teachers exams are some reasons that prevent many people from becoming teachers.
18. PTC student teachers mentioned poor conditions of service and lack of qualified teachers as the greatest problems of basic education. NUE student teachers stated difficulty in understanding and relating with children, and bullying as the greatest problem of basic education. This makes it clear that problem of basic education in Ghana are economic, while that of Japan are social.
19. A significant number of student teachers of both PTC and NUE agree to the fact that the role of a teacher in the society is to educate and serve as role models to others especially the younger generation.
20. Student teachers of NUE believe that respecting students' opinion, showing care and concern for students needs, followed by showing interest in the teaching profession are some good qualities that a good teacher must exhibit. PTC student teachers however believe that in order to be

a good teacher one must be knowledgeable, should be able to communicate knowledge to students.

21. In ranking qualities of a good lesson, student teachers of both PTC and NUE stated good presentation followed by student/activity oriented lesson, use of teaching learning materials and well plan lesson in that order as what makes a lesson good.
22. A large majority of student teachers of both institutions believe that it is very important to understand children in order to become a good teacher.

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Table 22

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PERSONAL DATA AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF TEACHER TRAINEES.

Please answer every question on this sheet. (You need not write your name)

Part 1(Personal data) Tick where applicable.

Age: 18-20 [] 21-23 []

Gender: Male [] Female []

Grade/Class: 1st year[] 2nd year[] 3rd year[]

Part 2: (Background information)

Circle your options and write brief explanations where necessary.

1. Which is your area of specialization? Science / Non-science
2. Are / were your parents teachers? Yes/ No
3. Which of the following individuals influenced your decision most in choosing to become a teacher?
A. Parents / Guardians B. Teachers. C. Yourself D. Others
4. What other careers had you considered?
5. What prevented you from following that career?
6. Why did you want to become a teacher?
7. Do you think teaching is a good/noble career?
8. What do you like most about the teaching career?
9. What do you dislike most about the teaching career?
10. Do you intend to become a schoolteacher on completing your training? Yes/ No
11. Briefly explain your stand.
12. Do you see the teaching career only in terms of classroom teaching? Briefly explain your stand.
13. If you get the opportunity in future to pursue your dream career, or another career would you do so?
14. What other factors might cause you to leave teaching?
15. What factors might prevent more people from applying for teacher training courses?
16. What do you think is the greatest problem of basic education today?
17. What do you think is the role of a teacher in the society?
18. List four qualities of a good teacher in a ranking order, e.g. excellent, very good, good and average.
19. List four qualities of a good lesson using the ranking order as stated in Q.18.
20. Do you think it is necessary to understand children in order to become a good teacher? Briefly explain your stand.