
Teaching as a Prospective Career: Motivators and Disincentives

Angele Pulis

Abstract

There is a growing sentiment that teaching, as a prospective career, is losing its attractiveness. Encouraging young people to pursue a career in teaching is becoming a challenge. A teacher shortage crisis is being experienced globally, and locally a similar situation has evolved. Young people are shying away from teaching as a career. In this scenario, a quantitative study to investigate 16- to 18-year-olds' perspectives on teaching as a prospective career will be conducted through a questionnaire survey. The participants, all in post-secondary institutions, will be invited to share their opinions and ideas on the topic. The aim of this research is to comprehend the factors that encourage or discourage 16- to 18-year-olds when considering teaching as their prospective career. The research findings could help inform future decisions at a policy level to help render teaching a desirable profession. The motivators and disincentives perceived by young people could provide a valuable perspective to different stakeholders who are interested in overcoming the teacher shortage crisis and in attracting the best talent from young people for the teaching profession.

Keywords

Teaching career, young people, teacher shortage, quantitative study

Introduction

My father was a Head of School, my mother was a teacher, and I had an uncle and an aunt who were teachers. I gravitated towards the teaching profession in a natural way. In 1989, when I started my University teacher-training course, teaching was considered a prestigious career, it was a vocation. As decades passed, I witnessed a decline in the popularity of teaching as a career. Nowadays, my observations about young people around me confirm that teaching no longer seems to be an estimable career. Many years have passed since 1989; Malta's economic and social progress have facilitated a wider range of career

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opportunities to young people, and this could partially explain the diminished interest in teaching as a prospective career. Nevertheless, teachers have a unique and pivotal role in the actualisation of the future of education. I believe that a better future for education in Malta is only possible if young people choose teaching as a career, with passion and with pride. These thoughts and feelings have ignited my curiosity on what motivates and demotivates young people when considering teaching as their prospective career. This curiosity, in turn, fuelled my motivation to conduct research in the hope of finding answers on how to make teaching a more attractive career to young people.

Structure of the Article

This article commences with the rationale for the research conducted. This is followed by a brief review of the literature on the emanant themes under the remit of the research topic. The quantitative research design is delineated; the methodology is explained, and the results are presented and discussed. The findings are juxtaposed against corresponding literature. This is succeeded by a set of recommendations stemming from the research outcomes, on ways how to render teaching a more attractive career for young people. The article draws to an end with the final salient conclusions.

Research Rationale

The research rationale is constructed on two main pillars: the apparent disenchantment of young people with the teaching profession and the indispensable role of the teacher in ensuring a successful educational journey for students. In recent years, globally, the popularity of teaching as a career choice has plummeted (Haruana & Millicent Sackey, 2023; Peetz, 2022). In most OECD countries, encouraging young people to pursue a career in teaching is becoming a challenge (OECD, 2019). In 2022, on World Teachers' Day, UNESCO declared a global teacher shortage crisis and appealed to governments to address this problem (UNESCO, 2022). Locally, a similar situation has evolved. According to Bonnici, the President of the Malta Union of Teachers, young people are shying away from teaching as a career because of the inferior working conditions being offered (Bonnici, 2022, as cited in Farrugia, 2022). One might argue that Bonnici, being a union boss, might have his own agenda when referring to the apparent lack of interest in the teaching profession. However, the reluctance of young Maltese people to choose teaching as a career option is also acknowledged by the Education Minister, Clifton Grima, who admitted that there are challenges when trying to attract prospective students to the

teaching profession (Grima, 2022, as cited in Arena, 2022).

Apart from the concern about the declining number of prospective teachers, the research rationale is also rooted in the urgency of attracting the best talent for the teaching profession. In a meta-analysis of over half a million studies on the effects of different influences on student achievement, Hattie (2003) concluded that the influence of the teacher contributes to 30% of student achievement variance, furthermore noting that:

We have poured more money into school buildings, school structures, we hear so much about reduced class sizes and new examinations and curricula, we ask parents to help manage schools ... (it) is like searching for your wallet which you lost in the bushes, under the lamppost because that is where there is light. The answer lies elsewhere – it lies in the person who gently closes the classroom door and performs the teaching act – the person who puts into place the end effects of so many policies, who interprets these policies, and who is alone with students during their 15,000 hours of schooling. (pp. 2–3)

The vital role of teachers is recognised by many students. Local quantitative research conducted with 1618 students in 42 state primary and secondary schools on the quality indicators of a good school (Pulis, 2018) revealed that students rated 'good teachers' as the top priority. Apart from the immediate effect of teachers on students, teachers have a far-reaching effect on society. The Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, in its economic vision for Malta 2020–2025, proposed: "we need highly skilled, highly motivated teachers" (2021, p. 1). This recommendation chimes very closely with Alvarinas-Villaverde et al.'s observation when referring to a global perspective: "Today's society needs highly educated and motivated teachers" (2022, p. 1). Teachers prepare young people for future careers and responsibilities. Indubitably, teachers are the prime actors in the enactment of the vision for tomorrow that was mapped out during the 4th Annual Symposium of the Institute for Education.

Research Purpose

The purpose of the research conducted is to comprehend what motivates and what discourages young people when considering teaching as a prospective career. The ultimate aim of the study is to identify ways to render

teaching a more desirable option, in the hope of increasing the probability of attracting the best talent to the teaching profession.

Understanding the Research Territory

The research territory spans two main areas. The first area covers the state of the teaching profession in Malta. This provides the background to the study and describes the terrain that might be cultivating motivators and demotivators for choosing teaching as a prospective profession. The second area refers to the motivators for teaching as a career choice from an international perspective.

The State of the Teaching Profession in Malta

During the 2021/2022 scholastic year, there were a total of 10,229 teachers and academic staff in Malta (National Statistics Office Malta, News Release 203/2023), out of which 66.1% were female. In October 2023, 10% of the total number of teachers in state schools were Supply teachers; the number of Regular teachers was 3408, whereas the number of Supply teachers was 346 (L. E. Grech, personal communication, November 11, 2023). Supply teachers are employed to fill the shortages of teachers; the call for Supply teachers stipulates that no teaching qualification is needed (Ministry for Education, 2024). The inability to fill all vacant teaching posts with Regular teachers could be interpreted as a failure to attract enough young people to the teaching career.

There seem to be indicators that, for some years, trouble has been brewing within the teaching profession. In 2017, the then-Dean of the Faculty of Education, Sandro Caruana (as cited in Micallef, 2017) cautioned that teachers' conditions of work needed to be improved; moreover, he also raised the alarm on the declining number of education graduates. The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (2018) gathered data from 1656 lower secondary school teachers in Malta and the findings indicated signs of weariness and lack of contentment among teachers: 28% of Maltese teachers cited a high level of stress; this figure was higher than the OECD average of 18%. In addition, 20% of teachers aged 50 or less reported that they would like to leave the profession within the next five years, whereas the OECD average was 14%. There are various reasons for teacher attrition. Galea (2020) conducted interviews with 15 participants to investigate teacher exit attrition determinants. The findings showed that these included poor remuneration, a lack of teaching resources, limited career advancements, the volume of work outside school hours,

students' misbehaviour, lack of respect from parents, the sense of apathy from colleagues, the demands made by the school's Senior Management Team, the stress caused by the job, the conflicting messages sent from education reforms, and education policies being used as political tools. According to Galea, between 2008 and 2018 the number of teachers who resigned in Malta increased by 119%. This might be an indication of a lack of contentment within the teaching profession.

Research on different facets of teachers' professional lives was conducted by Attard Tonna and Calleja (2018). Data from 755 teachers was gathered through a questionnaire. The results showed that there are cracks within the teaching profession. The findings piece together a teaching body that believes it is being short-changed financially, is tempted to move to another career if the opportunity presents itself, and feels that the teaching role has a low social standing; on the other hand, contact with students is the strongest contributor to teachers' satisfaction. Of the respondents, 94% reported that they feel they do not earn an adequate income, whilst only 18% said that they would refuse a career opportunity to leave the classroom if offered one. When asked what was sustaining their motivation to remain teaching, 49% of the participants referred to contact with students, 24% cited the working hours, 20% the school environment, and the rest referred to miscellaneous reasons. Attard Tonna and Calleja's research was conducted around the time when a sectoral agreement was being finalised between the government and the Malta Union of Teachers. The researchers had hoped that the agreement would bring about changes to facilitate better career progression for teachers and to inspire more young people to choose teaching as a career. Unfortunately, this agreement referred to by Attard Tonna and Calleja, signed in December 2017, seems to have fallen short of providing the necessary boost to the profession, as evidenced by data referred to earlier. Coincidentally, the research being presented in this article was also conducted amid a pending sectoral agreement between the government and the Malta Union of Teachers, with the main bone of contention being the financial package offered to educators (Bonnici, 2023, as cited in Magri, 2023). The lack of agreement led to 97% of educators striking for one day on 23rd November 2023 (Bonnici, 2023, as cited in Calleja, 2023). The rift between the government and the Malta Union of Teachers could, potentially, demoralise teachers and discourage young people from choosing teaching as their future career.

International Research on the Motivations for Choosing a Teaching Career

International research on the motivations for opting for a teaching career could help identify and classify the main drivers. In 2015, Heinz conducted a systematic review of 41 studies carried out in 23 countries on five different continents, on the motivations of student teachers. Drawing on empirical studies conducted between 1960 and 2013, Heinz (2015) refers to the three main motivators for teaching as a career choice: intrinsic, altruistic, and extrinsic motivators. Heinz defines intrinsic motivators as the joy derived from teaching and the enthusiasm for the subject being taught; altruistic motivators are described as the desire to help others and as perceiving teaching to be an important and public-spirited job in society; extrinsic motivators are explained as the salary, the number of holidays, job security and flexibility. Meta-analytical research conducted by Domjan (2019) on 13 studies examining intrinsic motivation and other factors influencing teaching as a career choice revealed that the most crucial factor when opting for a teaching career is intrinsic motivation. The determining role of intrinsic motivations is corroborated by more recent studies. In a study with 104 Turkish student teachers, Etkin et al. (2021) revealed that intrinsic career values were the most influential when choosing teaching as a career, followed by altruistic motivators and finally, extrinsic motivators. Similarly, research conducted with 262 student teachers in Spain (Alvarinas-Villaverde et al., 2022) found that intrinsic motivators were the most important factors determining the choice of a teaching career. Furthermore, a review of 212 international studies conducted by See et al. (2022) showed that women were more motivated by intrinsic and altruistic factors, whereas men were more motivated by extrinsic factors.

Different international studies conducted on young people's perceptions of teaching as a career choice reveal different factors that might have a motivating or demotivating effect. Gore et al. (2015) carried out a scoping review of 75 studies published in English. Apart from the intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic motivators that were also referred to in Heinz's (2015) meta-analysis, Gore et al.'s research identified other factors that influence the choice of teaching as a career: the influence of others, teaching as a fallback career, and socio-cultural influences. A quantitative study investigating young people's perceptions of teaching as a career was conducted by Gorard et al. (2022) with 4469 undergraduates in 53 universities and 788 trainee teachers in 10 training institutions in England. The top three perceptions of teaching as a career were: "the long holidays are attractive", "teachers' salaries are not high enough", and

“it is a more suitable career for a woman” (Gorard et al., 2022, p. 10). Apart from societal and gender-stereotypical ideas that might be shaping the last perception, it could partially stem from the fact there is a high percentage of females in the teaching profession in the UK. During the 2022/23 scholastic year, 77% of classroom teachers in the UK were female (GOV.UK, 2023). Furthermore, when asked about the top career influence that makes teaching as a career most attractive for students most likely to become teachers, participants in Gorard et al.’s (2022) study cited “interest in my subject area”, whereas the career influence that was the least attractive was “the salary”.

This concise review of literature has offered an overview of the context of this study focusing mainly on the different aspects of teaching as a career in Malta and international literature on motivations for choosing teaching as a career.

Methodology

The main aim of the research was to uncover the motivators and disincentives for young people when considering teaching as a prospective career. The research questions were:

What motivates young people when considering teaching as a potential prospective career?

What demotivates young people when considering teaching as a potential prospective career?

What could be done to attract more young people to the teaching profession?

To address the research inquiry, a quantitative approach was adopted. Quantitative research focuses on quantification during data collection and data analysis (Bryman, 2012). Since the research inquiry sought objective knowledge of the motivators and disincentives for young people, the collection of numerical data on these phenomena was deemed to be the best strategy for the study. Hence, an online survey was conducted with all sixth-form students in Malta and Gozo. Consent to conduct the research was first obtained from the Institute for Education, since the researcher works there. Then consent was obtained from the corresponding gatekeeper, depending on the type of sixth form: MEYR, the

Secretariat for Catholic Church, and the individual Heads of independent sixth forms. An online questionnaire was distributed to all students in state, church and independent sixth forms. As a pilot study, a draft copy of the questionnaire was distributed to six sixth-form students during the first two weeks of October 2023. Acting on the feedback received, a question on the influence of parents was added. Data was gathered from mid-October till the end of November 2023. A total of 554 responses were collected. The questionnaire responses were anonymous.

The Research Tool

The research tool was an online questionnaire. Its design was guided by the research questions and was informed by the main motivators and demotivators as outlined in the literature. The questionnaire took approximately four minutes to complete. The first part of the questionnaire was devoted to demographic questions. In the second part, participants were asked to gauge their agreement, through a five-point Likert scale, to a set of statements. These statements focused on the participants' general perceptions of teachers' role and status in society, conditions of work, and media influences on choosing teaching as a career. The third section of the questionnaire asked about the participants' perspectives on teaching as a prospective personal career. The final question was an open-ended one and asked participants for their ideas on how more young people could be encouraged to opt for teaching as a career.

The gathered quantitative data was analysed statistically using DataTab. DataTab is an online statistics software that is user-friendly and very convenient to use. Data can easily be imported into the online statistics calculator and then analysed. The last question collected qualitative data and this was analysed descriptively, using Lichtman's (2017) 3Cs. First, the descriptive data was coded. Then the codes were grouped together to form the main categories. In this way the data was reduced and rendered more manageable.

Limitations of the Research Tool

As a research tool, questionnaires lack the opportunity of interpretation, and there is no guarantee that the participant is being honest (Ruane, 2005). In addition, online questionnaires typically have a lower response rate when compared with other research tools (Ary et al., 2006). The online questionnaire used in this research also suffered from these limitations. The response rate cannot be calculated accurately since information on the number of sixth-

form students during the time that the data was collected was not available. However, the statistics for the 2021/2022 scholastic year could help provide a rough estimate. According to the National Statistics Office, Malta (News Release 195/2023) during the 2021/22 scholastic year, there was a total of 4,650 post-secondary, non-tertiary students in non-vocational training. This means that a rough estimate for the response rate of the questionnaire conducted would be about 12%.

Findings and Discussion

Demographic Information about the Participants

The following pie charts display the demographic information about the participants.

Figure 1

Age Distribution

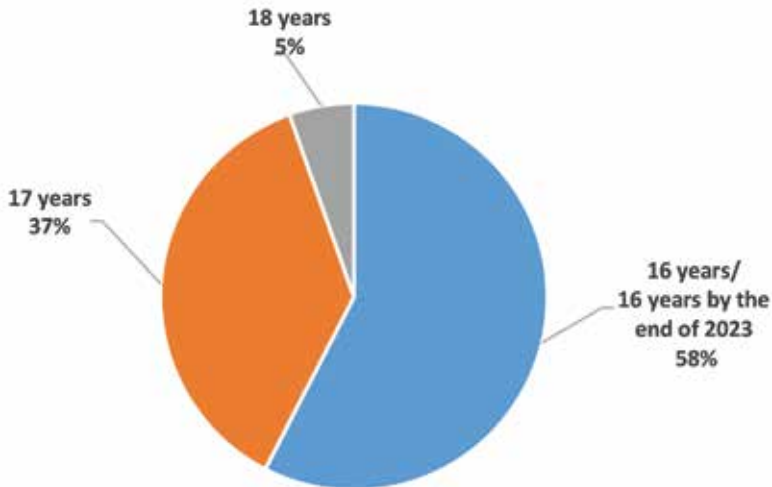


Figure 2

Gender Distribution

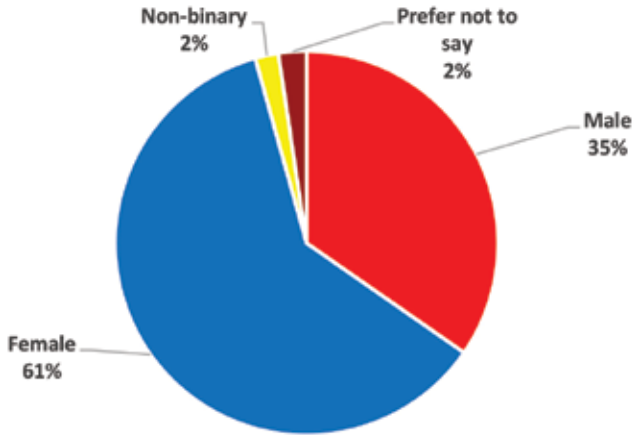
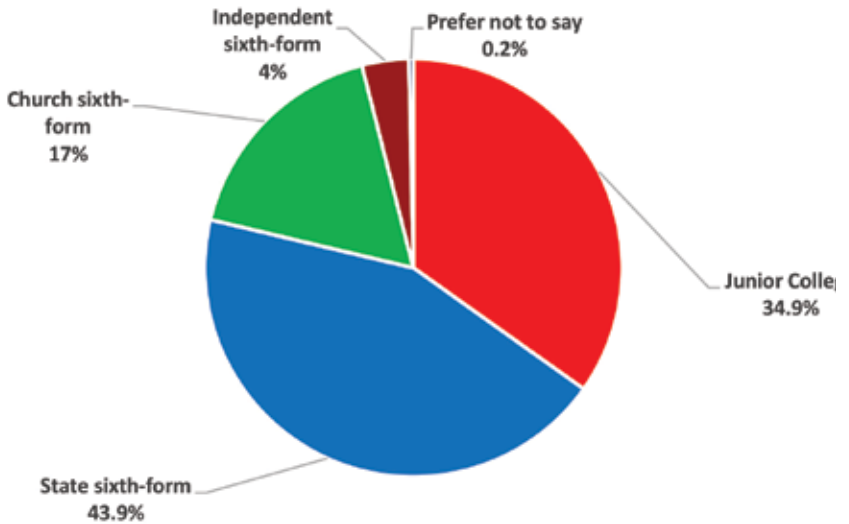


Figure 3

Type of Sixth Form Distribution



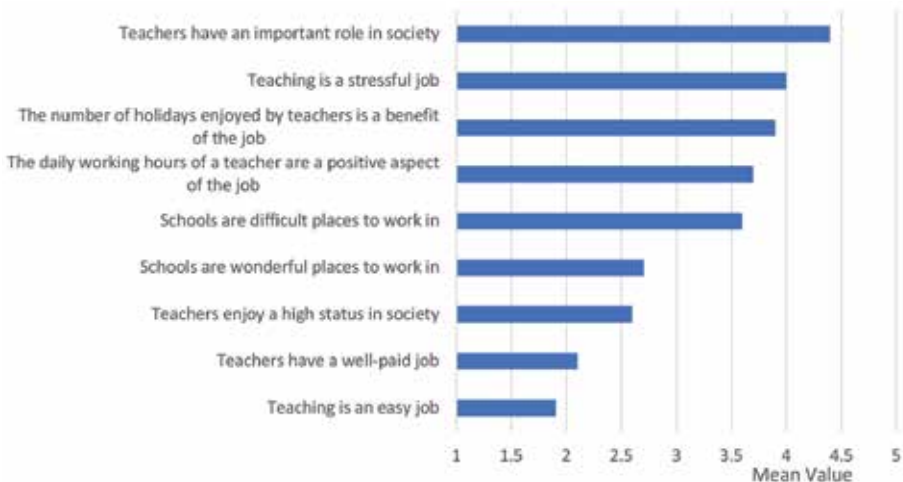
Sixth-Form Students' General Perceptions of Teaching as a Career

In the online questionnaire, students were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a set of statements describing different aspects of teaching as a career. On a five-point Likert scale, the participant's level of agreement with each statement corresponded to a numeric value, with 'Strongly disagree' being assigned '1' and 'Strongly agree' being assigned '5'. To obtain an overview of sixth-form perceptions of the teaching career, the mean value for each statement was calculated. In this way, a rank order showing the level of agreement with each statement on teaching as a career could be generated, since an increasing level of agreement corresponded with a higher numeric value. The rank order is displayed in Figure 4.

The overall picture portrayed by sixth-form students is that teaching is an important job, with the daily working hours and the number of holidays being favourable working conditions. On the other hand, they describe teaching as an underpaid, difficult, stressful and low-status job. Nearly half of the students

Figure 4

Rank Order Showing Degree of Agreement with each Statement



consider schools as difficult places to work in. Seventy percent of sixth-form students think that teaching is a stressful job. Nearly 70% believe that teachers do not have a well-paid job; this finding confirms research conducted by Attard Tonna and Calleja (2018) that had shown that 94% of teachers feel that their salary is too low. According to sixth-form students, although teachers have an important role in society, this does not match the status that society assigns to the teaching profession. While 90% agree that teachers have an important role in society, only 15% think that teachers enjoy a high status in society, confirming findings from Attard Tonna and Calleja’s (2018) study. More detailed results on students’ perceptions of teaching as a career are displayed in the following stacked bar chart:

Figure 5

Likert Scale Results for General Perceptions on Teaching as a Career

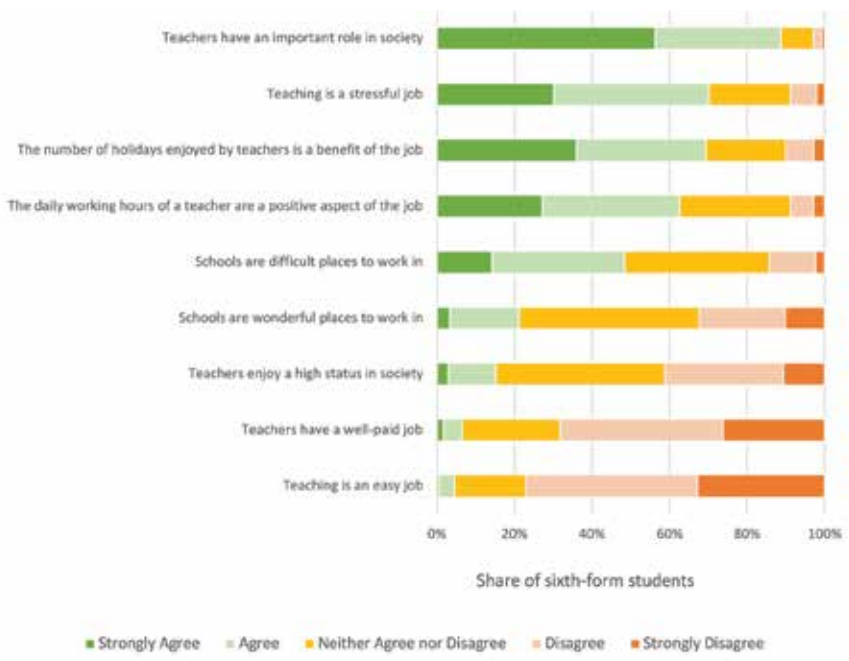
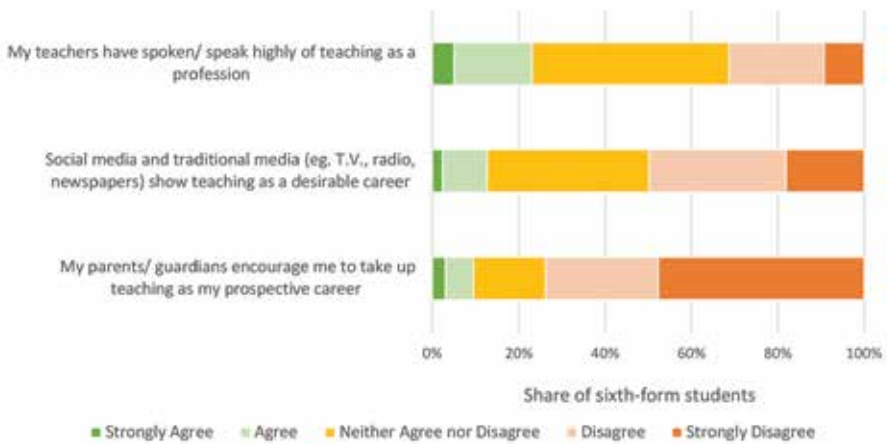


Figure 6

Likert Scale Results for External Influences on Perceptions of Teaching as a Career



External Influences on Perceptions of Teaching as a Career

The questionnaire inquired about three external influences: the way other teachers portray teaching as a profession, the effect of parents/guardians, and the effect of social and traditional media.

The results are shown in Figure 6. The results indicate that external influences being experienced by sixth-form students convey a negative impression of teaching as a career. Only 23.2% of sixth-form students said that teachers speak highly of the profession. Furthermore, only 12.8% of students feel that media depicts teaching as a desirable career. The online questionnaire was conducted close to the publicised resignation of a popular teacher in Malta, known for her Instagram handle @my_life_with_pixiedust (Galea, 2023), where she confessed that teaching had caused her physical and mental fatigue, and warned that drastic action needs to be taken to address the problems within the Maltese educational system. The media coverage to this resignation could have influenced the participants' perceptions. Furthermore, perhaps the most

revealing finding is that only 8.6% of students claim that their parents/guardians are encouraging them to take up teaching as a prospective career. Gore et al.'s (2015) meta-analysis on what influences young people when considering teaching as a career revealed that the influence of others affects the decision of young people. Bearing in mind the close emotional proximity with parents and guardians, their lack of encouragement to choose teaching as a future career could be conveying significant negative messages to young people.

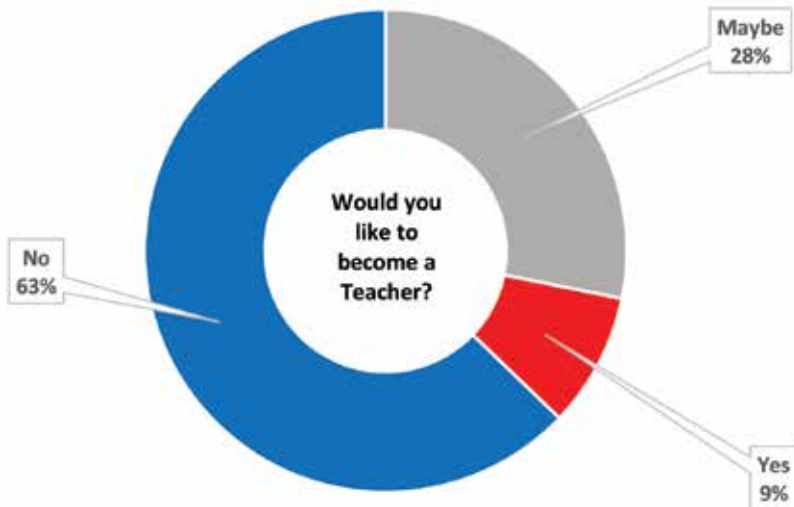
Teaching as a Personal Prospective Career

Only 9% of sixth-form students said that they would like to become a teacher. The rest replied 'no' or 'maybe'. The results are shown in Figure 7.

The percentage of students who would like to become teachers is similar to the percentage of education graduates in Malta in 2022, when there were 549 education graduates (National Statistics Office Malta, News Release 224/2023). This amounted to just under 10% of the total number of graduates

Figure 7

Percentage of Sixth-Form Students Who Would Like to Become Teachers



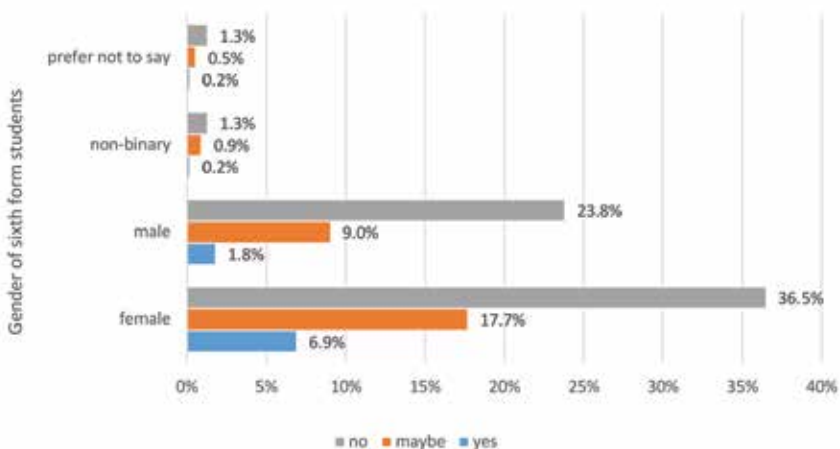
in 2022. This indicates that the sixth-form students' preferences seem to be following previous trends in career choice, although the 'maybe' cohort could further increase the number of education graduates in future.

More female students than male students said that they would like to become a teacher: 6.86% of female students said they would like to become a teacher and 17.7% said 'maybe', whereas only 1.81% of male students said they would like to become a teacher and 9.03% said 'maybe'. In the case of non-binary students and those who prefer not to say what their gender is, the percentage who would like to become a teacher is identical: 0.18%, while those who said 'maybe' are 0.54% and 0.90%, respectively. The results are shown in Figure 8.

For reasons that shall be explained below, the higher number of female students choosing teacher as a career is an expected outcome. In practice, teaching is predominantly a female career. As stated earlier, during the 2021/2022 scholastic year, 66.1% of teachers in Malta were female (National

Figure 8

Gender and Preference to Become a Teacher



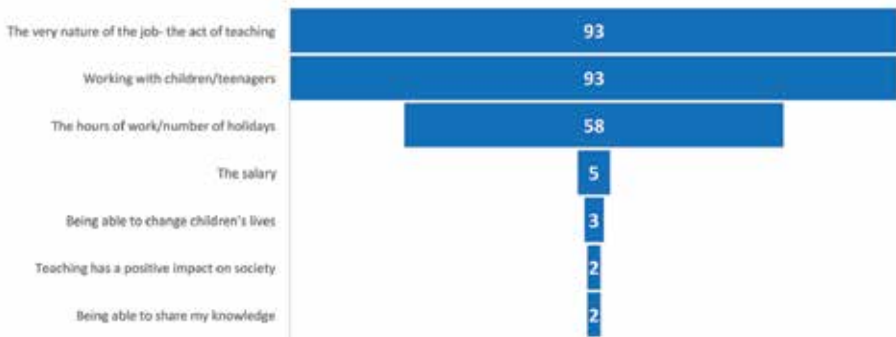
Statistics Office Malta, News Release 203/2023). This is not an exclusively local phenomenon. As referred to previously, in the UK during the 2022/23 scholastic year, female teachers made up 77% of the workforce (GOV.UK, 2023). In Malta, in 2022, there were four times more female education graduates than male education graduates (National Statistics Office Malta, News Release 224/2023). Zammit Marmara (2006) attributed this to the notion that teaching, especially elementary teaching, is usually related to caring aspects, and this tends to discourage males from choosing teaching as a career.

To find out whether having one or both parents or guardians as a teacher affects students' preference to become a teacher, a Chi-squared test was performed between the two variables: *Would you like to become a teacher?* And *Is one or both of your parents/guardians a teacher?* There was no statistically significant relationship between the variables. The calculated p-value of 0.696 was above the defined significance level of 5%, and so the Chi-squared test was therefore not significant. This means that having one or both parents or guardians as teachers has no statistically significant influence on sixth-form students when considering teaching as a career choice.

Sixth-form students who responded that they would like to or maybe would like to become a teacher were asked about the motivators influencing their choice. The strongest motivators were *Working with children/teenagers* and *The very nature of the job – the act of teaching*; both motivators garnered an identical response rate of 35.4%. The negative effect of the salary on teaching as a career choice is validated in the students' feedback. Only 1.9% of the students said that the salary is a motivator. The results are shown in Figure 9; 'Other' responses that had a frequency of more than one are also included in the diagram.

Figure 9

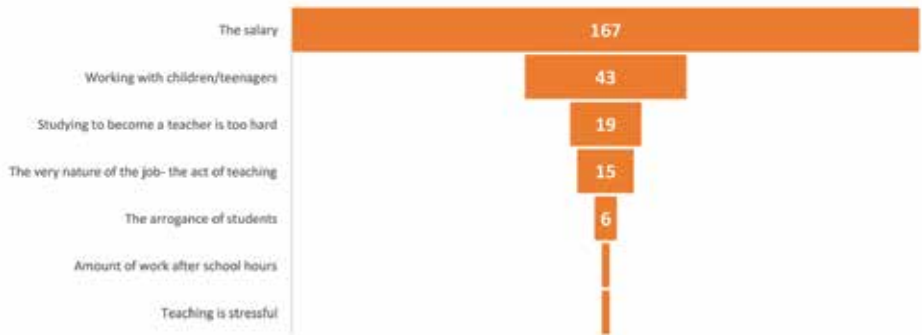
Frequency of Motivators for Sixth-form Students Who Would Like/ Maybe Would Like to Become a Teacher



For students who would like to become teachers or 'maybe' would like to become teachers, the strongest disincentive is the salary. This was confirmed by 64.5% of the participants. *Working with children/teenagers and The very nature of the job – the act of teaching* were cited by 16.6% and 5.8% of the students, respectively. On the other hand, 7.3% of students said that studying to become a teacher is too hard. The demotivators for choosing teaching as a personal career for sixth-form students who would like to become teachers or who 'maybe' would like to do so, are shown in Figure 10; 'Other' responses that had a frequency of more than one are also included in the diagram.

Figure 10

Frequency of Demotivators for Sixth-form Students Who Would Like/ Maybe Would Like to Become a Teacher



The students' feedback reiterates the fact that the salary of a teacher is a disincentive, further corroborating existing research (Attard Tonna & Calleja, 2018; Gorard et al., 2022).

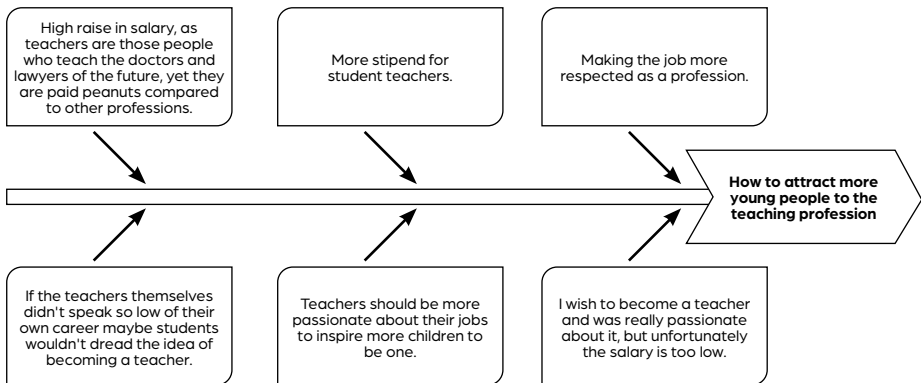
Sixth-Form Students' Ideas on How to Encourage More Young People to Become Teachers

In an open-ended question, students were asked for their opinion on what could be done to attract more young people to the teaching profession. The majority of suggestions focused on financial incentives. Nearly seven out of every 10 comments referred to a higher salary as the prime motivator to render teaching a desirable career choice. The other main categories generated from the students' feedback were:

- More respect should be shown towards teachers
- The teaching profession should be better promoted
- Teachers themselves should send positive messages about the profession
- The educational system should be improved
- There should be more discipline in schools
- There should be better care for teachers
- The studying path to become a teacher should be easier.

Figure 11

Verbatim Quotations from Students' Comments on How to Attract More Young People to the Teaching Profession



The coding of students' responses yielded two main concepts: the need for a higher salary and the need for more appreciation of the teaching profession.

To further comprehend the authentic sixth-form students' voice on the motivators and demotivators of teaching as a career choice, exemplars of direct quotations from the students' comments are presented in Figure 11. The students' voices on how to attract more young people to the teaching profession are captured in the verbatim quotations.

Out of the 554 students who answered the questionnaire, one student opposed the idea of attracting young people to the teaching profession. The student said,

We should not encourage more young people to become teachers because in current society, (sic) teachers are undervalued, underpaid, not treated with respect by students. We shouldn't try to lure young people to become teachers by telling them they get "three months free", and instead we should tell them the reality of being a teacher in Malta.

The dismal picture conveyed by the student highlights the urgency to understand the real issues that are rendering teaching an undesirable profession. The cause of the problem needs to be addressed before the symptomatic manifestation of a lack of interest in the teaching as a career choice by young people can be remedied. To this end, a set of recommendations emanating from the research conducted will be put forward.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are addressed to different sets of stakeholders and include recommendations for practice, policy and research:

- There is a dire need for teachers' salary to be improved.
- Through their actions and their work ethics, teachers should be ambassadors for their own profession. Teachers' interactions with students, parents, and colleagues should be professional and courteous.
- Further research conducted with teachers is needed to understand the challenges and burdens that teachers are currently facing in schools.
- Policymakers need to address the current problems in the teaching profession. At present, a vicious cycle is being generated where burdened teachers are conveying demoralising messages about their own profession, which, in turn, discourage young people from the profession.
- Policymakers need to be reminded that 'quick fixes' to solve the lack of teachers in might have detrimental long-term side effects.
- Social and traditional media have an important role to play in promoting the value of teachers in society and showcasing the positive aspects of teaching.

There could be a national campaign promoting the work conducted by teachers, for example, short video clips showing caring teachers interacting with their students, teachers talking about job satisfaction, parents showing their appreciation to teachers, ex-students praising their past teachers, and billboards reminding the general public about the important role of teachers in society and the need to be respectful towards teachers.

Conclusion

On World Teachers' Day 2023, a joint message from UNESCO, UNICEF, International Labour Organisation and Education International urged:

We call upon countries to ensure that teaching is transformed everywhere into a more attractive and valorised profession where teachers are valued, trusted, and adequately supported to meet the needs of every learner. Bold actions must be taken, if we are to reverse the current decline and successfully increase teacher numbers. (Azoulay et al., 2023, p. 2)

In the case of Malta, the "bold action" that must be taken is to remove the disincentive of a low salary. This research has shown that to attract young people to the teaching profession, there is an exigent need to offer an augmented salary to teachers. For educators' vision for tomorrow to be transformed into reality, young and talented blood needs to be attracted to the teaching profession. Sixth-form students have spoken on how this might be achieved; now the ball is in the policymakers' court.

Notes on Contributor

Angele Pulis is a full-time lecturer at the Institute for Education. Her research domains include educational leadership, pupil voice and mixed methods research. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Leicester, a Master of Philosophy from the University of Wales, and a postgraduate diploma in Educational Administration and Management, and a Bachelor in Education (Hons) from the University of Malta. Her career in schools has included various roles. She was a Head of a primary school and an Assistant Head of a sixth form and a secondary school. She has taught Integrated Science, Biology and Chemistry in various schools.

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