Exploring The Various Academic Pathways An Individual May Take

Posted on September 18, 2018

View this essay online:
https://academic-master.com/exploring-the-various-academic-pathways-an-individual-may-take/

Literature Review

This literature review will begin by exploring the various academic pathways an individual may take to gain qualified teacher status, comparing the initial entry requirements, as well as the financial implications that may affect an individual's decision. An analysis of relevant and up-to-date resources will try to establish any issues or emerging themes surrounding motivations to join or leave the profession.

In order to take on the role of a teacher, an individual is required to have an appropriate degree and must undergo the needed experience to gain a qualified teacher status (QTS), which can be accomplished in a multitude of ways, such as

'Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Undergraduate teaching degree, School Direct, School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT), Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), Future Teaching Scholars, Teach First, Premier Pathways, Now Teach, Researchers in Schools (RiS), Teaching without a degree (usually within a private school), Teaching in the further education sector' (Prospects, 2017a).

Among the notable routes, the most popular routes that are ideal and are currently taken have been identified to be School Direct, which has been recognized as being favored by individuals looking to change their careers. However, PGCE being one of the routes available too, is a preference for younger individuals (Independent School Council, 2017). Furthermore, it has been suggested that there are two main factors when making this decision: financial implications and readiness to manage a classroom (Edustaff, 2015). An individual must pay themselves by bank or government loan to study towards a PGCE through a university whereas, with School Direct, there is the opportunity to earn an unqualified teacher's salary as well as the possibility of a twenty to thirty thousand pound bursary (Department for education, 2017). However, there are some School Direct courses that present the option for an individual to take on courses, presenting them the opportunity to gain PGCE for an additional two thousand pounds. However, this fee is not eligible for a student loan, and as such, it cannot be granted to the individual (educate, 2017). The second factor is a readiness to manage a class, which involves the process of a PGCE student spending more time studying and less time in an actual classroom environment. This criterion is in opposition to School Direct dictated methodology and in denial of the fundamental training. Furthermore, it also suggests that there are

various programs listed that present an individual with an environment that offers limited work experience. This may cause the individual to have inadequate experience to perform better in classroom management skills (Baeten and Meeus, 2016).

Furthermore, it has been seen that some individuals who are ranging between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-five express a pressing concern towards the fact of neither having adequate experience nor were in agreement to teaching students who were merely five years younger than themselves. Among the other mentioned academic pathways, they present clear limitations in comparison to either PGCE or the School Direct method. The prominent factor in this is related to the amount of time spent by an individual before they become eligible to acquire QTS. Considering this factor, investigative analysis of Future Teaching Scholars, Premier Pathways, and RiS reveals the actual length of the courses to be well-spanned over a two-year program. This timeframe is relatively longer than that of a one-year PGCE and School Direct course (RiS, 2017; Future Teaching Scholars, 2017; Premier Pathways, 2017). Furthermore, it is a considerable fact that in between the three-year to six-year timeframe, an undergraduate individual has either the opportunity to acquire a bachelor's degree (B.Ed) or enroll in a master's study program. Aside from this, they also have the perfect opportunity to gain pedagogical knowledge, which may prove to be useful in the future (UCAS, 2018). Moreover, proving to be of great importance to an individual, these routes may benefit them along the lines of providing them with well-acquainted experience for their future careers. In addition to this, the courses of SCITT and GTP present a fundamental requirement for the individual to locate and arrange a placement for themselves in a school of their choice. In comparison, School Direct and PGCE facilitate the individual by organizing a placement for their applicant (London School of Economics and Political Science, 2017). However, this may result in two conditions, one being of lesser opportunities for individuals to avail from the local schools. Secondly, individuals may find themselves in an inescapable situation and may find themselves exhausted to call each and every school, to find a placement for themselves. Despite these conditions, the fact that most institutes may not provide the individual with a PGCE certification, known to be a well-recognised qualification around the globe, after their completion (Tes, 2016). Consequently, this may cause the individual to become bound to the employment opportunities present in the United Kingdom only (Ratcliffe, 2014). In a comparative analysis conducted, the findings reveal results of there is close to little or no difference between newly qualified teacher (NQT) satisfaction in comparison to preparedness on the basis of academic pathway (Gorard, 2017). Then Education Secretary Justine Greening announced an earlier teaching-apprenticeship proposal in 2017. England's current route structure has since changed: the Department for Education describes undergraduate, postgraduate fee-funded, employment-based and teacher degree apprenticeship routes, with the postgraduate teacher apprenticeship continuing as an employment-based option. This academic pathway was designed 'especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds who are deterred from studying a traditional full-time programme by high tuition fees and student debt' (Prospects, 2017b). Therefore, it could be argued that an individual's choices may be primarily limited by their financial situation. Secondly, the individual's personality and confidence may affect the academic route they take. Finally, pressure from family and peers may also have a bearing on the academic pathway an individual may take.

A research titled “Training to Teach: Motivating Factors and Implications for Recruitment” was carried out to examine why individuals opted for teaching as a profession (Moran, Kilpatrick, Abbott, Dallat & McClune, 2010). A sample of 466 Norwegian students was identified along with others who were from the United States, and the rest were from other places. The variance method was used as a means of analysis to compare the impact of different factors on the sub-groups that were present among the groups of teacher trainees. The analysis utilized questionnaires to gather the responses of the students who were participating in the teacher training programs. The results showed that the candidates who had been part of the training program had opted for teaching as a profession for intrinsic reasons, but there were extrinsic reasons as well, to a certain extent. The survey concluded that individuals were pursuing teaching as a profession due to the government’s teacher recruitment initiatives.

Research indicates that prior to making a decision on an academic pathway, an individual must first decide that they want to become a teacher (Richardson, Watt, 2005a). The decision criteria to take teaching as a professional career is quite unique with each individual. However, it is possible to classify these decisions into categories of intrinsic and extrinsic elements of motivation and investigate the trends associated with each. For some individual, it can be the time they spend with their family, while some may settle on the lucrative financial reward they may get out of it. Richardson and Watt (2005) developed the Factors Influencing Teaching (FIT) scale and used it to establish that more participants wanted to become teachers for intrinsic reasons, the most popular being prior consideration to join the profession. However, this was closely followed by two extrinsic factors: time for family and career fit, which the researchers believed to coincide with the high amount of female participants in their survey, ranging well over ninety percent. Verification of this was evident in the answers acquired after the interviews were conducted. The researchers classified these answers into three categories. The highest percentage among these answers indicated most candidates selecting teaching as a profession because they found it to be symbolic in terms of their families. The lowest scoring percentage indicated the candidates to whom teaching was more along the lines of comparing it to financial gains and professional status. This view reflects their opinion about the teaching profession being seen as a less rewarding profession from a financial view, and they considered their peers to be earning more with similar qualifications while being employed in the private sector. This data is further reflected by statistics from the Department for Education (2016), which reported that a quarter of all teachers in England are male and highlighted that only fifteen percent of primary teachers are male. Although, currently there is no evidence to suggest that this accounts for the high ratio of female to male teachers in the UK. However, this research may indicate why the UK government is giving bursaries from fifteen to thirty thousand pounds to individuals to train to become a teacher of core subjects (GOV.UK, 2015a).

Further research indicates that an individual who becomes a teacher for intrinsic reasons is more likely to be perceived as a better teacher than those who joined for extrinsic reasons (Bieg et al., 2011; Elieff, 2016; Hellsten and Prytula, n.d). This indicates that two-thirds of Richardson and Watts participants might not be as motivational or inspirational to their pupils as their peers. Although Jungert et al. (2014) conducted a larger scale study that collaborates that intrinsically driven teachers

are more motivational Additionally, their results found little difference between intrinsic and extrinsic rather highlighting a third less motivational factor: altruistic. However, these altruistic motives were included in Bieg et al. and Richardson and Watts extrinsic factors; therefore, if the same methodology was used from Jungert et al.'s study, it is likely to yield similar results. An ongoing study by Simonsz (2016) further corroborates that extrinsic factors such as time for family are not only low motivators themselves but also lead to less motivated teachers and students. Whereas, intrinsically motivated teachers who are passionate about their subject are perceived as more motivational by their students. However, there is some debate that there is only one intrinsic motivation that has a positive effect on the teacher-student dynamic: intrinsic career value (Den Brok et al., 2013; Burgueno et al., 2017). These studies asked the students about their perception of the teacher and compared these answers to the teacher's motivations. The study associated intrinsic motivators with the perception of a caring, supportive, and authoritative teacher in contrast to an extrinsically motivated teacher who was perceived as having no patience or control of the classroom. All of these researchers used the FIT scale or amended it slightly for their research, which may account for the consensual agreement in many areas.

However, a study by Zuzovsky and Donitsa-Schmidt (2014) applied their own open questions based on previous research by Coulthard and Kyriacou (2002). These studies both found that altruistic motivators, including interacting and caring for children as well as fulfilling a social duty, were the main factors contributing to a career change into teaching. Follow-up questionnaires to students of these trainee teachers established a positive perception similar to that of Den Brok et al. (2013) intrinsically motivated teachers. These findings are reflected within the research that also attributes altruistic and intrinsic motivations as the highest reason for a career change (Sharif et al. 2016; Thornton and Brichero n.d; Bauer et al. 2017). Although, no follow up data with students to capture their perceptions of these teachers is available. Furthermore, these study participants are mostly seeking to change careers as opposed to younger students, who may account for the differentiation in motivation. Additionally, by either not using or adapting the FIT scale, it has meant the researchers have categorised the motivations differently, which may explain the contrast in results. However, there is one motivational factor that correlates with every study: financial prospects, which comes last as opposed to the high extrinsic factor: job security. Further correlation between all these studies is seen between career changers and ongoing students, with the latter feeling less motivated by civic duty (Hunter-Johnson, 2015). This is specific to career changers as opposed to teaching assistants or volunteers who have decided to further their career in education, which is perceived as an extrinsic motivation.

Investigating the criteria that motivate an individual towards an academic pathway to acquire a qualification QTS and the elements of motivation may prove to enhance the understanding of the reasons for attrition. Furthermore, there are plenty of incentives that may present themselves to attract an individual to take on the profession, however, there are lesser financial incentives to retain a professional, within the field (Akarsu and Kariper, 2015). In consideration of the early statement, it is evident that the higher percentage seen from the research indicates that most individuals did not consider financial gain in the field of professional teaching as an element of motivation. Teacher

attrition in the UK is at an all-time high with figures showing thirty percent of teachers who joined the profession in 2010 have now left, in an attempt to fill the gap an average of 1400 unqualified teachers have been recruited each year since 2015 (NUT, 2017). Teacher attrition is not just subject to the UK, with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) estimating a shortage of sixty-eight million teachers worldwide, although Southern Africa and Southern Asia account for approximately three-quarters of these teachers (2016). Ingersoll et al. (2014) argue that an individual's original degree, institution attended, or certificate are not significant factors in beginner teacher attrition. Their research indicates that a lack of pedagogical understanding and preparation were significant reasons for NQTs leaving the profession. This can also be seen in statistics from the National College for Teaching and Leadership (2015), which found that eleven percent of the 7770 NQTs did not feel prepared following their ITT. Therefore, it could be suggested that individuals looking to change careers may be at higher risk, whereas those who have taken a degree in education or have previously worked in the sector may be better prepared. However, a lack of both training and exposure to challenging behavior may also account for attrition, as ITT is not usually performed in schools deemed inadequate or requiring improvement. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) cited in Marsh (2015) surveyed NQTs and trainee teachers and found that over half the participants felt they would not be in the profession in ten years. Three-quarters cited heavy and unnecessary workloads as the main reason, with nearly a quarter saying challenging behavior was time-consuming and felt unsupported by parents and the leadership team in this area. However, Clandinin et al. (2015) did not report that challenging behavior had affected their participant's drive to become a teacher; however, they agree that workload and lack of support are perceived areas of improvement by student teachers, although this study was on a much smaller scale with forty participants. Worth and Lazzari (2017) correlated their data by subject and noted that more teachers leave core subjects across both primary and secondary, perhaps due to extra workloads compared to their peers. Furthermore, they found that early-career teachers were more likely to leave than those who had been in the profession for five or more years. This has highlighted the requirement for retention as well as the recruitment of teachers, which is reflected in the House of Commons Education Committee (2017), who suggest long-term pay incentives rather than short-term bursaries.

This literature review establishes a factual analysis, explaining that both academic pathways and preparedness for teaching are not linked together in any manner. Many of the individuals taking up teaching as a profession may be motivated by intrinsic or altruistic factors, both of which are considered to be positive in this scenario. Furthermore, the literature review looks into the connection between the perception of a good teacher and the positive motivational elements that encourage them to join the professional field. Finally, the collective evidence provides suggestions based on the extrinsically motivated teachers and the individuals owning relatively less experience in pedagogical experience are seen to be less eager to continue their professional career and mostly leave it over the period of five years.

Furthermore, the literature review looks into the comparison between School Direct and PGCE courses and their capabilities towards preparing an individual for the actual job market. Investigating into the

features offered by School Direct (being one of the preferred options) it offers the option of letting the individual get paid while working. The method introduced by School Direct aims to provide the individual with job-paid training experience while in an actual classroom environment. PGCE offers a variety of options in this comparison. PGCE is focused more on preparing an individual for university-level-based education deliverance. However, there are several paid courses that an individual can take up, leading to PGCE eventually. The second most notable point can be related to the experience an individual gains after their education. School Direct offers the candidate direct hands-on experience, and as such, this can be seen as a benefit. Due to this, individuals who are immersed into the system early become well-prepared to face life as a professional teacher. PGCE however, takes a different route on this matter. The students taking the course of PGCE need to undergo lectures, and located in shorter placements. From the perspective of PGCE this criterion is necessary before evaluating a candidate to be ideally fit for the professional experience.

Although the method was introduced in terms of gaining an edge for professional experience, PGCE may come off as an ideal approach. In comparison to School Direct, candidates in PGCE are offered placements equivalent to two-thirds of the course's total duration. This offer translates into the candidates getting an option of easily switching their placement if the school is not suited for them. However, in the case of School Direct, the trainees are unable to switch their jobs this easily, and the only feasible option is to resign.

Methodology

This chapter will discuss the rationale for the chosen methodology; additionally, it will then explore the ethical limitations and how these were overcome.

The main purpose of the study included the task of sending out questionnaires (Appendix 1) along with the covering letter, which included the outlining rationale of the research, to as many schools as possible. The targeted sample of schools included infant, secondary, primary, independent and special educational needs (SEN) schools. Consideration of this sample will help further the investigation and establish a basic understanding of teachers from a broader perspective (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Preference to this sample size will establish an understanding of teachers from a multitude of backgrounds, including cultural, educational and social values. Their responses will assist in providing the research with both qualitative and quantitative analysis. It is quite likely that a higher percentage in this sample size will be hesitant to answer the survey questions. In consideration of this factor, the sample size was chosen to be relatively larger to accommodate the chances of this issue during the survey (Dudovskiy, 2016; Patten, 2016). The initial analysis included choosing ten schools and contacting them for participation in the survey, indicating a potentially higher return rate constituted over the anticipation of about two hundred and twenty-six teachers. However, after the request, most of the schools declined the request and refused to take part in the survey. In consideration of this, fifteen other schools were selected and contacted with an anticipation of four hundred and thirty-one teachers taking part in the survey. However, this survey sample also resulted

in thirteen schools declining the survey offer and refusing to answer the questions. The schools that agreed to take part in the survey held a positive edge, with sixteen teachers agreeing to take part in the survey, and this outcome held a total return rate of around four percent only.

Employing the use of questionnaires seemed relatively smarter since individual visitation to each school was not possible due to various time constraints and the factors of work and family commitments. Furthermore, the initial expectation associated with the results needed to at least have a ten percent response rate, providing results that may provide sufficient comparable data for analysis. In accordance with this, the questionnaire was created in a sense that will accommodate the respondents by providing them easy to easy-to-understand questions and limiting the number of questions to acquire maximum data from them (National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, 1999).

Richardson and Watt (2014b) modernized their FIT scale, and despite the fact that many researchers in this field have used a variant of this for their research, it was decided that including Likert scale questions may put off potential participants if the questionnaire was considered too large to complete (Bell, 1996). Additionally, it was considered that adding a Likert scale may add unrequired and unnecessary data to the study (Evans et al., 2011). Davies and Hughes (2014) recommend piloting questionnaires; therefore, peers filled in and assessed, which led to the re-evaluation of the questionnaire's design and layout, as well as amending the wording and removing two questions: age of the participant and gender, as the feedback was that this information was irrelevant. Furthermore, these pieces of information could be identified as personal and consequentially, the participant may feel uneasy answering these questions (Burgess, 2001). Making sure the individual feels comfortable when filling out the questionnaire should mean more participants and, therefore, more data (Kelley et al., 2003). Additionally, protecting the identity of the participants is a legal requirement under the Data Protection Act, as well as keeping the data stored securely once received (Gov.UK, 2015b). The accompanying letter outlined the right to withdraw, informed consent and how the participants' information would be kept private, secure and destroyed once this study was complete (BERA, 2011).

The pilot process, although repeated, bore better feedback, in which most of the feedback held a positive edge, along with the data sample holding a high percentage of relevance, and possible themes also became visible during the process. The questionnaire was structured to have ten questions in it. The ten questions were split into three questions being close ended while seven questions were open-ended. This method made it possible to acquire qualitative and quantitative data during the survey. However, some of the open questions did begin with the criteria of close-ended questions. For instance, some examples include questions such as "Do you feel as though you were completely prepared for your first term as NQT? If not, please state why?"

Making use of a multi-method approach is highly regarded by many researchers, and employing its use is considered to be a good practice. This method enables the research to identify and locate blind spots within a research. However, in scenarios of applying it in a proper fashion, this method can assist the researchers in complimenting others on their findings (LSE, 2016; Bryman, 2015; Casebeer

and Verhoef, 1997; Flick, 2014; Neuman, 2010; Hertz and Imber, 1995). In addition, more questions were added to assist in establishing any phenomenological or humanistic interactions. The use of this interpretive paradigm is often associated with the use of qualitative social studies (Thanh and Thanh, 2015). However, it seemed likely that sending out questionnaires to schools for acquiring data, may require an addition of interviews to better understand the data. Facilitating the respondents by adding more open-ended questions in the questionnaire may allow them to feel comfortable in providing answers while minimizing the need for an interview to expand on the data afterward (Brannen, 2017). The close ended questions, added in the survey, were designed in a way to provide segmentation in the questionnaire. This segmentation is aimed towards academic pathways, age ranges and specialist subjects. Furthermore, segmentation allowed for establishing the understanding of the relationship, if any, to be studied in the context of qualitative data. Cross-referencing the data in this way has the potential to indicate any themes related to the study question: does one academic pathway prepare an individual to become a teacher? Furthermore, by applying thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) it may highlight previously unrelated information as having underlying themes.

Findings And Analysis

This chapter will critically analyze the information gathered and highlight themes and possible issues arising. Any themes or issues will then be discussed in correlation with the previous literature review as well as new literature for any previously unknown themes. The thematic analysis will further enhance the criteria to build on and study the various trends seen in the teaching profession. This chapter will look into the trends displayed in the charted data, its reflection on the present teacher's professional setting, the impact it has on their personal growth in this field and the decisions they will likely take towards progressing their careers, if any.

To initiate the process of the analysis, each questionnaire needed to be fully read and numbered from one to sixteen. After this process, the tally method assisted with identifying the data to be classified as qualitative data. This data included the age range of pupils, the subject of the specialist, their original degree, the method through which they acquired QTS if the candidate were happy with the academic route they took, did they get the feeling of being prepared for it, they recommended the profession of teaching, and finally the condition of whether they will like to continue their job or will consider leaving it? These questions were compared with the answers the respondents provided in order to chart out a trend and correlate them. Further investigation into the qualitative data led to acquiring an understanding based on the information and categorizing it into altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic ideologies, which can then be analyzed further.

The process and layout of the questionnaire prepared, is relatively simple and easier for the respondent (Teachers). The questions are tailored out in a manner that carries a rhythm in them, creating a nice transition from question to question, with each question prepared to analyze the teacher's capabilities, their experience, their thoughts on teaching as a profession, and their opinion based on retaining or leaving their present career for something better.

To begin, it was established that the most popular academic route for the participants was PGCE, followed by a Bachelor's degree in Education, as illustrated in graph one below.

In consideration of The literature Review pointed out a prominent fact that indicated School Direct to be an optimal approach as an academic route, similar to PGCE. However, the study proved that PGCE to be three times more popular in comparison. The questions based on the participant's age were not included in the questionnaire, so it is impossible to conclude whether the participants were younger than their peers or not. In relation to this, the Literature review included a scenario where candidates felt hesitant towards going for teaching as a professional career since they found it less comforting to teach either because the pupils they were meant to teach were only five years younger than them or were not ready to take on teaching at all. However, the question aimed towards asking the respondent about their experience and time spent in the teaching experience may help build an assumption towards their age range. Analysis of the data provided highlights four of the PGCE-qualified teachers with experience of under five years of teaching, while one teacher responded with eight years of teaching experience and the last group of respondents with over twenty-three years of experience. However, observation of the answers related to questions such as "Why did you choose this route into teaching?" provides no justification for the age assumption for these participants. A comparison to the School Direct qualified teachers' data proved helpful in revealing that both participants from the surveys have also been NQTs for a short period of time, with one and two years, respectively. Analysis of the data did not reveal if the respondent showed any signs of eagerness towards changing their career any time in the future. This trend can only interrupt individuals belonging to a young age. This portion was not reflected in the literature review, stating that the School Direct course is only chosen by individuals in an older age group who are likely to change their careers sometime in the future. In comparison to the literature review, the analysis suggests that a significant amount of individuals will gain QTS with the completion of their B.Ed qualification. However, a further analysis comparing teachers who gained QTS via B.Ed. with how long the individuals had been qualified teachers presents opposing data to that of the PGCE. All four teachers who gained QTS via B.Ed. have been working in the profession for over five years, with responses of five, ten, twelve and twenty-nine, respectively. Perhaps this is because, historically, it was suggested that all future teachers and lecturers should take a B.Ed. (Robbins Report, 1963). Whereas, with shortages in the profession these days, individuals with varying degrees are encouraged to begin a career in teaching, as stated in the literature review.

The next question under analysis was aimed at asking the respondent, "Do you feel as though you were completely prepared for your first term as NQT? If not, please state why?" The responses to this question consisted of the respondents being split into two groups. Half of them said "yes," while the other replied with "no." A further investigation into the answers provided by the respondents provided insight into a diverse range of variations, as shown in graph two below.

Further investigation correlating the data from graphs one and two indicates that PGCE and B.Ed. Teachers were equally split in preparedness; graph three below. Whereas, none of the three teachers who gained QTS via SCITT felt prepared as opposed to the individual who took GTP (other) as well as

the two participants who took the School Direct route. This was not reflected in the literature review, as it was suggested that no one academic route prepares an individual more than another. However, this initial data would suggest that School Direct does prepare an individual more successfully than any other academic avenue, especially that of SCITT.

However, further analysis of the answers given by the SCITT teachers highlighted a reoccurring theme between all three; they all had previous careers prior to gaining QTS. Each individual had a different original degree; they have been teaching for different periods of time; they have different specialist subjects, teach different age groups and have previous careers. Additionally, two of the participants said they would recommend a career in teaching and have not considered leaving, whereas one has left and returned on a part-time basis and would not recommend a teaching career due to high levels of paperwork. Although, curiously, when asked if these individuals would have chosen a different academic route, they unanimously replied no. Each participant stated that SCITT was a great balance of class theory and work-based learning. Additional analysis of reasons why these teachers did not feel prepared established two correlations; participants six and eight stated they felt being without a mentor for support was a steep learning curve. Further correlations were found between participants five and eight, who felt they had a lack of experience dealing with challenging behavior. Participant Six also stated they felt unprepared for the responsibility of utilizing a teaching assistant, whereas Participant Five explained in depth the lack of legal knowledge of their responsibilities inside and outside of school. Finally, participant five felt they had not gained enough pedagogical knowledge from a one-year course. However, although all three teachers who gained QTS via SCITT said they felt unprepared for their first term, this is not reflected in their support for this academic pathway. Therefore, it should not be considered that SCITT does not prepare an individual for their first term. Rather, an individual's own perception and feelings affect this.

Comparing these findings to that of the PGCE-qualified teachers who felt they were unprepared for their first term as an NQT does highlight some differences. Firstly, participants three, eleven and sixteen all said they chose to do a PGCE because it was a one-year course and they all held a degree already, whereas the SCITT teachers stated they wanted more hands-on experience. Curiously, the length of both PGCE and SCITT are the same; furthermore, all the SCITT participants also already had degrees yet did not mention these factors when choosing their academic route. Similar to the SCITT-qualified teachers, all unprepared PGCE teachers would recommend the profession and have not considered leaving. However, participant three states they would change their academic route to one that paid more; this opinion is unique to the study. Further analysis of why they did not feel prepared did lead to correlating answers to those from unprepared SCITT NQTs. Teachers three and eleven stated they were unprepared for some challenging behaviors, identical to teachers five and eight. Furthermore, Respondent Sixteen mirrors the feelings of Participant Six, stating that utilizing a teaching assistant and not having a mentor meant a steep learning curve. Therefore, it could once again be argued that it is the individuals' feelings and perceptions and not the academic route that prepares an NQT for their first term.

Respondents two and fifteen gained QTS via B.Ed., and both felt unprepared for their first term,

although, similar to all previous participants, they would not have changed their academic route into teaching. Both teachers also stated that they have considered leaving the profession to pursue other careers, although both also later remark that they get a high level of job satisfaction. Similar to previous responses, Participant Fifteen also felt unprepared for challenging behaviors, whereas teacher two has broadly covered all aspects of becoming an NQT, stating nobody is prepared for their first term. Therefore, this study indicates that although some individuals may not have felt prepared for their first term as an NQT, there is no correlation between academic route and preparedness. However, a reoccurring theme of a lack of experiencing challenging behavior has been established.

After analyzing the respondents who did not feel prepared comparative examination of those who did feel prepared was required to establish any further trends. Firstly, the information from B.Ed. Qualified teachers were analyzed and compared to the previous findings. No relevant correlations were found when comparing the data, initially this could be interpreted as a positive result as any similarities may indicate inaccurate information or analysis. However, correlations between these respondents' answers were established. Firstly, both chose this academic route as they both knew they wanted to be teachers at an early age and wanted a degree specific to the profession. Secondly, both teachers have considered leaving the profession due to high levels of paperwork and stress. Furthermore, unlike previous respondents who would recommend a career in teaching, neither Participant 13 nor Fourteen would.

Secondly, the data from the PGCE teachers who felt prepared was compared and contrasted with the previous data. Respondents one and four gave unique answers when asked why they took this academic route. However, participant nines response was in line with the other PGCE-qualified teachers; it was a one-year course. All three participants were happy with their academic avenue, although teacher one elaborates further, explaining after speaking to peers that they would like to have tried the SCITT route as it was more hands-on (appendix 2). Furthermore, teachers one and four have not considered leaving the profession, whereas, similar to the prepared PGCE-qualified teachers, participant nine has considered leaving due to heavy workloads, additionally, as opposed to B.Ed. Prepared teachers all three PGCE teachers would recommend becoming a teacher.

Finally, the data from participants seven and ten, who gained QTS via School Direct, as well as respondent twelve, who gained QTS via GTP, was brought into analysis first. Upon investigation, all three respondents gave the same answers to several questions when asked, *"Why did you choose this route to teaching?"* they answered for a more hands-on experience, similar to the SCITT-qualified teachers. When asked if they felt prepared for their first term, happy with their academic pathway, and would recommend becoming a teacher, they all responded yes. Additionally, when asked if they would leave or have considered leaving the profession, they all answered no. However, the SCITT-qualified teachers also said they were happy with the academic route they took. Additionally, the GTP and School Direct teachers also stated they enjoyed the hands-on approach to learning, similar to that of SCITT. The two School Direct participants said they were prepared for their first term, although the GTP-qualified teacher stated that it was a steep learning curve without a mentor but still felt prepared. Therefore, this study would indicate that School Direct and GTP prepare an individual more

than PGCE, SCITT and B.Ed., which is not reflected in the literature review where it was implied that no one Academic Avenue prepares an individual more than another.

Furthermore, the literature review also emphasized that there was no correlation between an individual's original degree and their preparedness for becoming a teacher. This study cannot corroborate these findings either, as presented in graph four below the participants had a variety of original degrees prior to beginning their chosen academic route. Further analysis of the data discovered one trend relating to the teachers who hold a BA in Primary Education. It was found that all four respondents emphasized a lack of knowledge when dealing with challenging behavior; the other teacher who mirrored this sentiment holds a Youth and Childhood studies degree. In theory, these teachers should have more pedagogical knowledge than their peers who held degrees in Drama, Business and Personal, Sports Development and Computing; however, this study indicates the contrary. However, having knowledge of the theoretical concepts when dealing with challenging behavior and putting this into practice is not necessarily an easy task (McLaughlin, 2017).

Participants were also asked if they would consider leaving the profession and, if so, why; this information was analyzed further and split into a yes-no and charted out in the form of a tally chart. This data showed trends that teachers five and eleven had left and returned to teaching on a part-time basis, both citing heavy workloads, although no further correlations between these two teachers were found. The most popular response was that the teacher had not considered leaving the profession, with over half stating this. However, the remaining thirty-seven percent have considered leaving the profession with various answers, as illustrated in graph five below. Six main themes were established. However, challenging behavior and heavy workloads were perceived as the most prominent reasons. This information corresponds to the literature review, which indicated that these teachers may leave the profession within the next ten years.

The literature also indicated that teachers in the profession for ten years or less are more likely to leave due to rising workloads and challenging behavior. Of the ten teachers who cited heavy workloads and challenging behavior, only two have been in the profession for over ten years. This statistic could be perceived as worrying if the literature review is correct. Additionally, only one respondent said they would consider leaving for more money, this further corroborates that extrinsic motivators such as financial gain are not considered important factors when considering leaving teaching.

The majority of the participants wanted to join the profession for altruistic or intrinsic reasons, with three respondents giving extrinsic answers. Firstly, one cited that they had changed their career, whereas a further two wanted to spend more time with their family. Further dissection of this qualitative information established a further eight trends as illustrated below in graph six. However, no correlations were found between the academic route and these themes, indicating that this choice is unique to each individual. Furthermore, this indicates that these academic routes are all advertised and available equally.

This data could be perceived as positive if the literature review is correct in the correlation between positively motivated teachers and their student's motivation. Although, as no questionnaires were considered for students this study cannot corroborate these findings. Additionally, individuals who gave altruistic and intrinsic motivations to become teachers were considered less likely to consider leaving the profession. Whereas, contrary to the literature review this study's findings imply that any teacher may consider leaving the profession at any time. Furthermore, in accordance with the literature review, this study indicates that none of the participants wanted to join the profession for financial reward; however, the literature review established that the government is attempting to retain and recruit more teachers with financial incentives. These results can translate into the positive trend found in the candidate who were solely continuing their professional careers based on their preference for the career itself. In the literature review, it was noted that most of the candidates were likely to be affected by elements of motivation and demotivation prevailing in their environment. The data acquired from the survey paints a completely different picture in this perspective. Most of the trends analyzed display the candidates selecting and keeping their careers based on their preferences. The element of financial gain, as mentioned in the literature review, is not that effective in this criterion. The tally chart above clarifies the distinctive presentation in which most of the teachers part of the survey, responded with relatively higher response rates in terms of valuing education and enjoying their time teaching children. Teaching experience is another important factor that needs to be taken into consideration, and it was mentioned in the literature review as well. An insight into this point highlighted some key elements, but since the questions did not include anything relevant to asking the candidate's age, it was still left to build it up on the assumption.

Conclusion

This study primarily set out to establish if there was one academic avenue into teaching that prepares an individual more than another. The initial data would indicate that School Direct and GTP prepare a teacher for their first term as an NQT; however, upon further analysis, this study corroborates previous findings that there is not one academic route that prepares an NQT for their first term more than another. However, this study had minimal respondents, limiting the amount of comparable data; consequently, only five academic routes out of a possible twelve were examined. Therefore, this conclusion can only be based on the academic avenues that this study has examined.

In a further analysis, it has been suggested that there are two main factors when making this decision: financial implications and readiness to manage a classroom. However, there are some School Direct courses that present the option for an individual to take on courses, presenting them the opportunity to gain PGCE for an additional two thousand pounds. However, this fee is not eligible for a student loan, and as such, it cannot be granted to the individual. Moreover, proving to be of great importance to an individual, these routes may benefit them along the lines of providing them with well-acquainted experience for their future careers. In addition to this, the courses of SCITT and GTP present a fundamental requirement for the individual to locate and arrange a placement for themselves in a school of their choice. Then Education Secretary Justine Greening announced a

teaching-apprenticeship proposal in 2017. England's current route structure has since changed, and teacher degree apprenticeships now form part of the Department for Education's published routes into teaching. This academic pathway was designed 'especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds who are deterred from studying a traditional full-time programme by high tuition fees and student debt'. Decision criteria to take teaching as a professional career is quite unique with each individual.

Research indicates that prior to making a decision on an academic pathway, an individual must first decide that they want to become a teacher. The use of questionnaires seemed relatively smart, and the initial expectation associated with the results needed to at least have a ten percent response rate, providing results that may provide sufficient comparable data for analysis. The pilot process, although repeated, bore better feedback, in which most of the feedback held a positive edge, along with the data sample holding a high percentage of relevance, and possible themes also became visible during the process. The use of a multi-method approach is highly regarded by many researchers, and employing its use is considered to be a good practice. In the process of finding and analysis, it was revealed that the most popular academic route for the participants was PGCE, followed by a Bachelor's degree in Education. The questions based on the participant's age were not included in the questionnaire, so it is impossible to conclude whether the participants were younger than their peers or not. In relation to this, the Literature review included a scenario where candidates felt hesitant towards going for teaching as a professional career since they found it less comforting to teach either because the pupils they were meant to teach were only five years younger than them or were not ready to take on teaching at all.

The findings also indicate that satisfaction with the academic route and preparedness for the first term as an NQT is also unrelated. Rather, each individual's unique perception of preparedness affects this response as a result of using open questions as opposed to a Likert scale themes were established upon respondent's answers. Whereas, a Likert scale gathers data from a set of pre-determined questions to try to prove a trend exists. These themes suggest that approximately half of all NQTs will feel prepared following their ITT, whereas a quarter will feel the academic avenue into teaching they took did not expose them to enough challenging behavior. The likely reason these individuals feel this way is that ITT is conducted in schools Ofsted considers good or outstanding, limiting the trainee's interaction with challenging behavior, although without conducting follow-up interviews to confirm this is purely speculative. However, this suggests that it would be beneficial to expose trainee teachers to more challenging behavior prior to gaining QTS.

Furthermore, this research acknowledges previous findings that suggest that an individual's original degree has no bearing on how prepared to become a teacher they will be. However, this study highlighted a theme that participants with degrees in education and youth felt they had less experience with challenging behavior than their peers. These individuals later gained QTS via different establishments; therefore, the only correlating factor is the original degree. However, this may be purely coincidental as most degrees in education require work experience in the sector, which should expose these participants to some challenging behavior. Furthermore, most educational

degrees cover challenging behavior, equipping individuals with techniques and theories around conflict resolution and calming pupils. Additionally, as no follow-up interviews or questionnaires were used, no conclusion can be drawn from this correlation. However, this study would initially suggest that an individual's original degree has no bearing on their preparedness to become a teacher.

Finally, this research investigated the motivations for becoming a teacher and highlighted that most respondents answered altruistically and intrinsically, as suggested in the literature review. These motivational factors have been associated with good positive relationships and good role models for pupils; however, as no data was gathered from these teachers' pupils, this study cannot corroborate this. Although the literature review also implied that these teachers were less likely to consider leaving the profession, this study does not support this claim. This study proposes that any teacher may consider leaving the profession due to new stresses, such as challenging behavior and higher workloads.

Therefore, this study proposes that even though reoccurring themes appear throughout the qualitative and quantitative questions, an individual's perspective and personality have the most significance in their preparedness for their first term as an NQT, not the academic route they took to get there. However, in the ongoing debate of nature versus nurture, it could be argued that each respondent's academic route, including the original degree, had an effect on their personality.

Recommendations

The original methodology of this study seemed reasonable. However, it had multiple flaws, which, if amended, would have yielded much more comparable information. To begin the study should have been agreed with several schools prior to inception, this could have been done by visiting schools rather than telephoning them. This personal yet professional approach may have added some confidence to the head teachers that this study was serious enough to warrant participation; furthermore, at this point, possible follow-up interviews with teachers and students could have been discussed. Instead, schools were telephoned, and head teachers rarely had time to discuss this study. Consequentially, the questionnaires and cover letters were emailed to generic school email addresses. The lack of responses is likely as these emails were never actually read by the intended recipient.

The original question of the study was amended several times over several weeks leading to confusion and time being poorly managed. The original question focused more on an individual's original degree, their preparedness to teach and consideration for leaving the profession. Therefore, research around this topic began with the original hypothesis that a teacher with more pedagogical knowledge would likely stay in the profession; this study has proved the hypothesis to be wrong. This process took six weeks prior to commencement, which ended up being time wasted after the initial dissertation meeting agreed on the topic needed to be amended.

As a consequence of deviating from the original question, the format of the questionnaire design was amended from its original layout (appendix 3), taking a further eight weeks. Additionally, the original questionnaire had fewer questions and boxes for participants to put their answers. Following research, reflection and peer feedback led to the questionnaire being amended, although two questions were added, which were later regrettably removed. Initially, age and gender were asked but were considered to be too personal and possibly irrelevant to the study. However, this data would have also led to further comparisons to the literature review, such as the links between the age of the individual and QTS.

Additionally, a Head Teacher's questionnaire (appendix 4) was sent out to schools to try to establish if there was a preference for how a potential employee gained QTS. Other questions, such as was your ambition was originally to become a head teacher, would allow for further analysis. Furthermore, a comparison of the Head Teachers' answers to that of the teachers may have also discovered previously unknown themes.

Time management and preparation for this study were greatly underestimated, with double the amount of time being spent amending both the question and questionnaire. Consequentially, this caused the other aforementioned processes to be rushed, leading to oversights.

As this was a qualitative study, it would have also been interesting to ask the question: how can the government improve the teaching profession? To compare the answers of a teacher to government policies and regulations had the potential to highlight possible areas of change to help retain teachers. In addition to this, there are several other recommendations that can provide a positive outcome for individuals in the teaching profession. For instance, the factor of low income being a negative impact on most professionals, the government can provide a positive impact on the teaching profession by introducing positive elements such as training and support for the young individuals. These training and support workshops will enable the teachers to become more capable of addressing the needs of children with emotional and academic needs, providing them with better classroom environments to study and develop their educational skills.

An analysis of regional and national newspaper coverage based on teachers and the related issues arising in education reported around the timeline between the years 2003 and 2005. Some of the reported issues brought pressing matters to the surface, but eventually, none of these issues were strong enough from a social crisis perspective to make the front page. This brings about the question of whether education is getting the proper limelight that it should in the present social and economic structure. Media can prove to be a strong asset in building a better image based on the value of teachers, and as such, it can motivate the youth to invest their future in this profession without worrying about elements that will otherwise hold them back.

There are a number of methods through which teaching as a profession can be encouraged. Supportive elements such as providing them with workshops, raising the income for these teachers, training programs, and improving the overall teaching environment within schools and classrooms.

These methods can introduce positive feedback from children, enabling them to acquire more and, in the long run, deliver more to the community as future educated professionals offering their services in the job market. The present education system, as noted in the literature review, specifies the various fields of the teaching profession that are underdeveloped and need proper constructive support. The need to raise awareness for programs such as QTS and enable individuals to acquire a job position without giving them the hassle of locating one by themselves will result as a motivating factor for the education department.

The present research methodology helped in locating key areas of improvement. However, it still doesn't provide enough insight into the teaching profession, the impact of academic avenues on education and preparedness for individuals in the teaching profession. Numerous other questions can help provide feedback from the students as well to see if the teachers they study under are well prepared to teach them. Another factor that can be worked upon is having the schools present an open approach towards surveys. Since, in the first attempt, the schools in the first sample size rejected the survey. This translates into having a slightly biased sample analysis with a limited amount of schools and teachers being interviewed. The results could have shown a different analysis altogether if it was based on a much larger sample size but with restrictions such as time confinement and family commitment, only a few of the schools were chosen in the second attempt.