



**Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport**

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*Article*

## **Factors Driving Teacher Trainees at Phnom Penh Teacher Education College to Choose Teaching as Their Profession and Their Levels of Satisfaction with its Educational Program (12+4)**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was (1) to identify factors attracting students to choose teaching as a career and become teacher trainees at Phnom Penh Teacher Education College (PTEC) and (2) to investigate their levels of satisfaction toward the new educational program (12+4) at PTEC. Simple random sampling technique was deployed to conduct the study. The questionnaire was used as a tool to collect data, and was distributed in Google Form to the two cohorts of teacher trainees. And responded by 230 participants. Frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. The findings disclosed that teacher trainees were driven mostly by professional development, which seems to be the new trend in teaching profession as the majority of new teachers value and look for constant learning in their career. The following factors include individual motivation, career development, fringe benefits, and working conditions. On the other hand, trainees were highly satisfied with teaching staff at PTEC. They described their trainers as experienced, knowledgeable, skilled, and ethical. Majority of trainees also showed positive responses to the assessment, curriculum, and facilities and resources. The views on teaching have been improved if compared to the previous studies. It could be the results of the late and current reforms; however, several areas that stakeholders need to continue and start working on to enhance the profession and attract higher quality candidates into teaching.

**Keyword:** Teacher motivation; Driving factors; Satisfaction; Teaching Profession; Pre-service training

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## 1. Introduction

In Cambodia, the ideal status of teachers in the Sangkum Reastr Niyum regime has always been used as a baseline when speaking of the teaching profession (Prigent, 2016). The Khmer Rouge regime caused 80% of teacher and student depletion; therefore, the education and schooling were recovered almost from scratch (Klintworth, 1989, p. 90; UNICEF, 1990, p. 78; UNESCO, 1991, p.10; as cited in Stephen, D. J, 1996). During 1990s and 2000s, teacher reputation was negatively affected by their education background and low financial incomes (Prigent, 2016). Teachers were enlisted with the approach of those who knew more teach those who knew less as a recovery from genocide and war. Thus, the teaching force around that time, *kru jat-tang*, was known not any people from highly educated background. Prigent continued specifying the causes and effects of low salary as the other factor influencing public perceptions on teaching profession. According to Tandon and Fukao (2014), teacher's incomes were only 60% compared to that of other professions. An estimation of incomes in a family consisting of two married teachers and two children would be below the poverty line. Quality education was not the priority yet; thus, teacher's salary was relatively low. This financial status created a public perception of 'teachers are poor', while brought about informal payment including examination fees and extra class fees. According to Tandon and Fukao (2014), TTCs received a high number of applications; however, majority of applicants scored E from the grade 12 exam, while none scored A or B. Low quality candidates enrolled signified the popularity decline of teaching professions.

Policies around teacher education and quality management have been implemented and piloted to tackle several educational issues at the same time (MoEYS, 2015). Tremendous attention has been placed on increasing teachers' salaries The public budget spent on education increased from 12.6% (2010) to 15% (2017) of total public expenditures (World Bank, 2019). Teachers' salary kept increasing from 80USD in 2012 to 200USD in 2017 due to the major part of the budget were spending on teachers' salaries. According to The Phnom Penh Post

(2020), by 2020, the minimum salary of teachers was 300 USD. The other major reform is the transformation of Teacher Training Centers (12+2) to Teacher Education Colleges (12+4) to ensure rigorous and high-quality pre-serving teacher training with a bachelor's degree. According to the Teacher Policy Action Plan (2015), by 2020, the pilot of the reform had taken place for 2 years already in 2 training centers: Phnom Penh and Battambang province.

Attracting academically high performing and committed candidates into teaching profession, and equipping them with right knowledge and skills are crucial means to improve teacher training system and teacher's status to public (TPAP, 2015). With all the reform over the past years, the view of the status of the teaching profession is being questioned. In line with the new reform of pre-service teacher training,, two main questions were formed to project: (1) What are the factors that drive PTEC students to choose teaching as a career? (2) To What extent are teacher trainees at PTEC satisfied with its educational program (12+4)?

The findings of this study informed relevant institutions not only what has been done and effective, but also area for improvement from the teacher trainees' perceptions to prepare and adjust policies and implementation in terms of attracting better quality candidates into teaching profession. This study also took part in evaluating the effectiveness of newly reformed educational program leading to the possibilities of achieving MoEYS's goal of moving all the Teacher Training Centers across the country to Teacher Education Colleges.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Teacher policy in Cambodia**

#### **2.1.1. Teacher recruitment**

Teacher trainees are selected through entrance exam, which implies the academic competency to enter teacher training centers. The process involves submitting application and taking the exam. The launching of application is announced by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. Based on the Teacher Policy Action Plan (2015), the applications have been opened for candidates with disabilities. Furthermore, the entry was accessible for candidates up to the age of 30 holding a Bachelor's degree. Since 2015, one of the short-term interventions is automatically admitting grade A, B, and C holders of high school examination into TTCs. Last but not least, TTCs have been being upgraded to match with Teacher Education Provider Standards (TEPs). The other interventions continuing from the previously mentioned ones include piloting the 12+4 teacher training model in Phnom Penh and Battambang RTTCs, and transforming TTCs into TECs in the near future.

According to MoEYS (2019), candidates eligible for applying for lower-secondary-level teachers include fresh grade 12 graduates or equivalent degrees, and primary-level teachers with upper-secondary certificate or 5-year teaching experiences. No requirement related to scores/grade in candidate eligibility nor application. The entrance exam to 2-year training (12+2) includes general knowledge, first and second teaching subject test, while 4-year training (12+4) includes general knowledge, English and teaching subject. Applicants are also required to sign a contract of 10-year commitment working in education, and 5-year commitment teaching in their assigned school.

The passing rates of the training course at TTCs were reported to be as extremely high as 99% (Prigent, 2016). However, the academic performance in the last year of training influenced teacher trainees in several aspects. The highest scorers got to choose their desired teaching posts after the training course, while the lowest scorers got placed in the less desirable areas including remote areas with difficult living conditions.

### **2.1.3. Professional development**

In 2017, it is reported that there was no systematic and effective in-service teacher training in Cambodia yet (No & Heng, 2017). Majority of training was donor-driven, which was usually not based on teachers' needs, but rather on the organization goals or the project objectives. Those projects which were under the form of teacher professional development or teacher in-service training included Textbook Orientation Programs (TOP), subject-specific training programs (e.g., Science, Life Skills, Health, Hygiene, etc.), and policy dissemination (e.g., Child Friendly Schools, Cluster Schools, Education for All, etc.) (Prigent, 2016). Most recurrent topics for the in-service teacher training were teaching methods, subject specific upgrading and making teaching aids. Some teachers spent their own money to pursue higher degrees in some private higher educational institutions. The degree they got was not recognized by the ministry; therefore, they were not eligible for promotion and salary increment. Some strategies have been being implemented to promote professional development, involving all the key stakeholders and opening up for more public-private partnership (MoEYS, 2015).

The basic structure of the in-service teacher training in Cambodia was known as the "Cascade Model" (Prigent, 2016). The master trainers designed or adapted core concepts for workshops. The master trainers or core trainers were from the National Core Trainers (NCTs). Then, the Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops were held for groups of junior trainers. These co-trainers were from the National Institute of Education (NIE). These junior trainers would

go around and distribute the contents to province and district levels. Last but not least, mini workshops known as “echo workshops” were provided to school levels. Though responding to donors’ demands, there were three main departments which were responsible for in-service teacher training. Those departments included the Teacher Training Department, the Primary School Department, and the Secondary School Department.

One of the actions to enhance professional development was BA fast track program where 700 lower-secondary school teachers were trained to be upper-secondary school teachers at NIE (No & Heng, 2017). The World Bank has been in charge of upgrading approximately 2,200 lower-secondary school teachers, and around 310 school leaders through the Teacher Upgrading Program (TUP) and Leader Upgrading Program (LUP) (The World Bank, 2017).

#### **2.1.4. Career development**

Clear and officially stated career path for teachers and educational staff is nowhere to be found (MoEYS, 2015). Not knowing where they could go, some teachers ended up as teachers for many years, or the rest of their lives. Promoting teachers was still centralized. However, immediate attention was put into career development for teachers. According to the Teacher Policy Action Plan (2015), one of the short-term priorities was to develop a career pathway for teachers known as TCP (Teacher Career Pathway) from 2015 to 2017, and planned to share the documents and guidelines to all new teachers around 2018 to 2020.

#### **2.1.5. Working condition**

The pupil-teacher ratio in Cambodia was described as the highest of 46:1 among the ASEAN countries, whereas that of Thailand 16:1 and Vietnam 29:1 (Sothy et al., 2015). However, the pupil-teacher ratio has been improved to around 34:1 in 2021 (MoEYS, 2021).

### **2.2. Teacher policy in other countries**

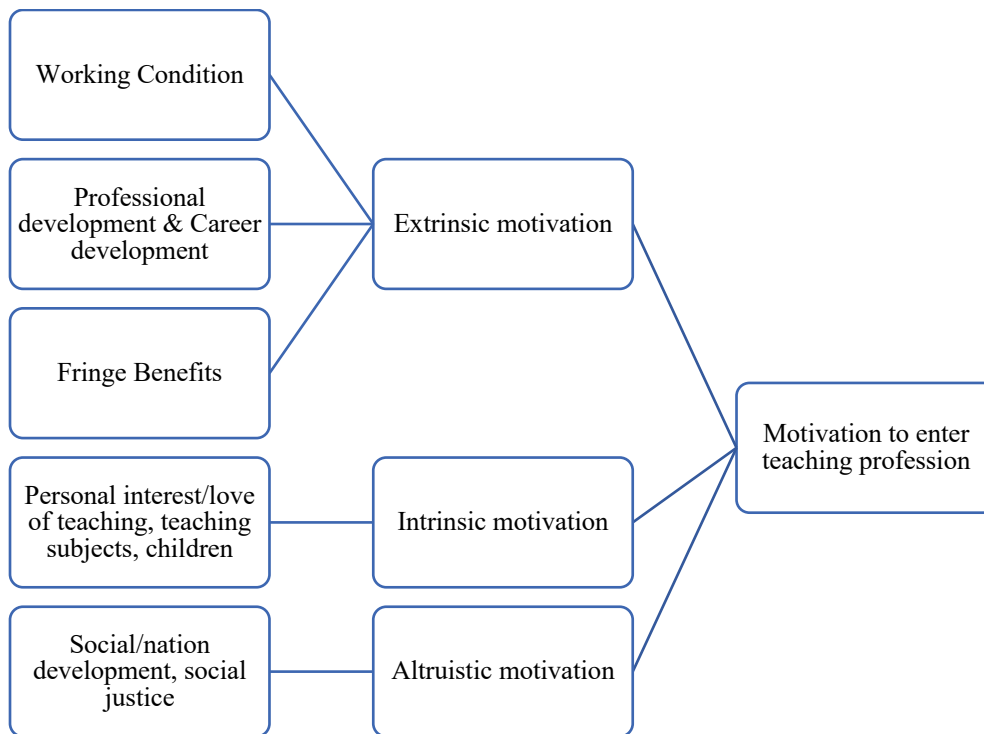
Teaching and learning quality is heavily influenced by the early teacher qualification (OECD, 2012). Many top schools around the world pay great attention to selecting teachers. OECD (2012) reported that school leaders in Singapore firmly believe in the potential of “select and train” more than “train and select”. Since recruiting high-quality graduates to join the teaching profession is challenging to any education system, policies have been implemented to attract high potential candidates to choose teaching as their career. Lavonen (2016) recaps some strategies to attract top talent into teaching that world’s top performing system shares in

common including salary during training, competitive salary, opportunity for professional growth, professional working condition, social status and efficacy.

Singapore is well-known for its interventions in selecting and supporting the right potentials to be teachers (OECD, 2012). High school students are early engaged and exposed to the teaching profession through the teaching internship opportunities. Additionally, the system in Singapore also makes mid-career entry in the teaching profession possible to bring hands-on experiences into the classrooms. The selection criteria, too, was redesigned to be more competitive, which include interviews, lesson planning preparation, and teaching demonstrations. The salary that teacher trainees receive is as competitive as that of other fresh graduates; however, with, at least, three years of teaching commitment in their school placement. According to Lavonen (2010), Singapore's talent strategy includes teachers' career paths (leadership track, teaching track and specialist track) in addition to their teaching hours. Teachers are required to attend approximately 100 hours of paid professional development per year. The performance bonus account for 10% to 30% of base salary. It is believed that the professional development, compensation and award raise the status of teaching profession and attract top talent into teaching.

In Finland, the selection process is extremely rigorous. Candidates go through a series of assessment including essay-based exam covering six to eight subjects, educational literature reading test, interviews and micro-teaching exam (Lavonen, 2010). Similar to Singapore, teacher trainees in Finland received living expenses during their training. However, Finland values teachers' autonomy and trust. There is no emphasis on career path, performance evaluation, and bonus. The only requirement is to pursue a master's degree and write research (OECD, 2012).

Teaching profession in South Korea, otherwise, is attractive in terms of job security, salary, vacation and social prestige in relation to deep cultural respect for teachers (OECD, 2012). The number of trainees recruited each year is under government's control to match the teacher demand, so that the graduates are guaranteed to have a job after training (Lavonen, 2010).



### 3. Methodology

The study aimed to capture one between the two TECs, which was in Phnom Penh. According to statistics from the report, by 2020, there were 680 teacher trainees in TEC Phnom Penh (JICA, 2017). If no barrier of social distancing, stratified sampling would be used to determine sample size of the research, which the population is divided by cohort of trainees and sex. Due to COVID-19, a convenience sampling was used to select sample size. The questionnaires were sent in Google Form to all students from the two cohorts at PTEC; nonetheless, only 230 participants responded which was equal 33.82% of the population. Limitation to this study was the representativeness of the voice of teacher trainees across the country since studying only one among the two reformed training centers, and the 24 training sites.

This study deployed a survey research design with 5-point Likert Scale and open-ended questions. The questionnaires were divided into three parts including the demographics, driving factors and satisfactions. The first two parts of the questionnaires were adapted from the relevant papers related to assessing teacher motivation and satisfaction in teaching as a career, potentially from No and Heng (2017). As participants, teacher trainees were asked to rate their levels of agreement with statements responding to the advantages of the teaching profession using five-points Likert Scales. The advantages of the teaching profession were divided into five parts including working conditions (WC), career development (CD),

professional development (PD), fringe benefits (FB), and motivation (M). Factors were computed from the respondents' rating on 5-point Likert Scales for each of the 34 items. Participants were also encouraged to provide their personal points of view at the end of each part in addition to the statements provided. The last part of the questionnaires, the levels of satisfactions, was adapted from the study on the levels of satisfactions of teacher trainees in the Teacher Upgrading Program (Sot, 2019). In addition to the 37 statements, the respondents were also offered to give their additional thoughts and insights in the form of open-ended questions at the end of each of the four parts. Teacher trainees were requested to elaborate their satisfactions about PTEC based on four areas including Curriculum (C), Teaching staff (TS), Assessment (A), and Facilities and Resources (FR). Mean and standard deviation were employed in analyzing the data. The questionnaires were piloted with one trainee from PTEC and 2 teaching fellows from Teach For Cambodia, and revised to ensure coherence, simplicity and relevance.

Primary source from the survey data collection was the main data source for this study. However, essential secondary data from relevant papers and documents were also used in the discussion and analysis. The previous papers mainly discussed in this study included the Teacher Education in Singapore: what motivates students to choose teaching as a career? (Goh & Lourdasamy, 2001), Motivations for choosing teaching as a career: a perspective of pre-service teachers from a Turkish context (Yüce et al., 2013), Improving Teacher Quality: maximizing returns on investment in teacher education in Cambodia (Prigent, 2016), and the Survey Report on Teachers and Teaching Profession in Cambodia (No & Heng, 2017).

#### **4. Findings**

The findings of the study are condensed as follows:

##### **4.1. Demographic characteristics**

Regarding the upper secondary school examination results (BacII), the data showed the academically diverse high school graduates enrolling in PTEC. The two highest groups held grade C (28.70%, n= 66) and D (28.30%, n= 65), followed by grade E holders (22.20%, n= 51) and Grade B holders (19.10%, n= 44). Among the 230 participants, there were only 4 trainees, equivalent to 1.70%, holding grade A as their upper secondary school examination results. Last but not least, teacher trainees were asked to give information about their educational background. 86.50% (n = 199) of the participants held a degree of upper secondary education,



whereas 13.10% (n = 30) stated to have a bachelor's degree. There was also one participant who claimed to hold an associate degree.

**Table 4.1**

*Upper Secondary Exam Grades  
of Intake to PTEC (N=230)*

Grade	Percentage
A	1.7%
B	19.1%
C	27.7%
D & E	50.5%
Total	100%

**PTEC, 2021**

*Upper Secondary Exam Grades  
of Year 1 Intake to PTTCs (N=405)*

Grade	Percentage
A	0%
B	6%
C	42%
D & E	52%
Total	100%

**Prigent, 2016**

Compared to the survey done with pre-service teacher trainees in 2016, the presence of grade A students, and the increase in the number of grade B students among the intakes to PTEC shows positive changes in how teaching profession is perceived.

## **4.2. Results of Analysis for research questions**

### **4.2.1. Findings of research question one: what are the factors driving ptec students to choose teaching as a career?**

Question one disclosed the degree to which parts of the advantages of the teaching profession attract people and guide their decisions to be teachers as perceived by teacher trainees who were receiving their pre-service training at PTEC.

**Table 4.2**

*Mean and Standard Deviation of advantages of teaching as a profession of the 5 factors driving teacher trainees to choose teaching*

<b>Advantages of Teaching as a Profession</b>		$\bar{x}$	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Level</b>
<b>Working Conditions</b>				
1	Teachers are paid enough for the job that they do.	3.57	0.926	High
2	Teachers are paid equally of what other professionals with similar education level and skills qualification are.	3.49	0.840	Moderate
3	I am satisfied with the improvement of financial and social benefits of teachers against those with similar qualifications to ensure that teachers' salaries are high.	4.04	0.829	High
4	Teachers have higher status in society these days than they used to have.	3.77	0.909	High
5	Teachers have greater autonomy at their workplaces than other professions.	3.74	0.837	High
6	Teachers are involved in policy making decisions at school level.	3.76	0.820	High
7	Teaching is a lifetime employment.	4.14	0.933	High
8	Teaching jobs are difficult to obtain even if you want to.	4.39	0.832	High
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.49</b>	<b>0.866</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
<b>Career Development</b>				
9	Teaching offers a lot of opportunities for promotion or career progression.	3.55	0.884	High
10	There is a Teacher Career Pathway (TCP) to lead professional growth and continued career progression.	3.80	0.702	High
11	There are a variety of new school roles and new positions for teachers.	3.53	0.885	High
12	The new positions come with the increase in salary.	3.57	0.917	High
13	The new roles come with high quality and effective training.	4.00	0.815	High
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.69</b>	<b>0.841</b>	<b>High</b>

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**Professional Development**

14	There is on-going professional development for teachers.	4.20	0.777	High
15	The on-going professional development for teachers is of their needs and practical.	4.06	0.739	High
16	The professional development for teachers is nationally recognized.	4.16	0.854	High
17	As a teacher, school is a place for learning and self-development.	4.24	0.902	High

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<b>Total</b>		<b>4.17</b>	<b>0.818</b>	<b>High</b>
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**Fringe Benefits**

18	Teachers have long vacations (2 - 3 months).	3.84	0.977	High
19	The teaching profession includes many fringe benefits (pension, sick leave)	4.15	0.861	High
20	As a teacher, I have time to earn extra income from other businesses.	3.31	0.956	Moderate
21	Teaching is less stressful than most other professions.	3.33	1.042	Moderate

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<b>Total</b>		<b>3.66</b>	<b>0.959</b>	<b>High</b>
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**Motivations**

22	When talking about careers, teaching is my first choice.	3.90	1.002	High
23	I love working with children.	3.91	0.849	High
24	I purely love teaching and learning.	4.23	0.829	High
25	I purely love the subject specific that I am going to teach.	4.24	0.776	High
26	I am inspired to be a teacher because of my family members.	4.27	0.904	High
27	I am inspired to be a teacher because of my relatives.	4.10	1.029	High
28	I am inspired to be a teacher because of my friends.	3.64	1.055	High
29	I am inspired to be a teacher because of the experiences with teachers who helped me.	3.97	0.911	High

30	I am inspired to change the narrative of a teacher because of the experiences with teachers who did not treat me well.	3.74	0.957	High
31	I am inspired to be a teacher because of my community.	3.64	1.034	High
32	Teachers make a difference in children's lives.	4.42	0.742	High
33	I believe teachers can make positive impacts in education.	4.36	0.801	High
34	I believe teachers can make positive impacts in society.	4.33	0.805	High
<b>Total</b>		<b>4.06</b>	<b>0.900</b>	<b>High</b>

With respect to the mean and standard deviation of the five categories of the driving factors as shown in Table 4.2, the data disclosed that the highest frequently looked on by the teacher trainees at PTEC was the Professional Development (PD) ( $\bar{x} = 4.17$ , S.D. = 0.818). Following that, Motivation (M) was the second highest recurrently resonant with ( $\bar{x} = 4.06$ , S.D. = 0.900). Career Development (CD), Fringe Benefits (FB), and Working Conditions (WC) were followed respectively ( $\bar{x} = 3.69$ , S.D. = 0.841), ( $\bar{x} = 3.66$ , S.D. = 0.959), and ( $\bar{x} = 3.49$ , S.D. = 0.866).

Quotations from participants can also feature trainees' motivation to enter teaching career. Those quotes include:

Teaching is a job that I love because it provides us a lot of knowledge to develop ourselves as well as the education sector. On the other hand, I love this profession because I want to transfer knowledge that I have to the younger generation so that they have the morality, knowledge and skills to work, and help developing the education sector in the future. (One of the participants)

Nowadays, the career as a teacher is very good (teachers are paid higher than before and more valued). (One of the participants)

There are some challenges and recommendation quoted by participants. These perspectives can elaborate their awareness of the profession while beginning their journey already.

Teachers are stressed while involving with parents and students, figuring out new ways to teach students effectively, and being pressured by surrounding stakeholders. One of the participants)

Teachers should be given opportunities to participate and get various roles, and pursue higher education. One of the participants)

#### **4.2.1. Findings of research question two: to what extent are teacher trainees at ptec satisfied with the education program?**

Question two investigated the levels of satisfactions of teacher trainees who were pursuing the bachelor degree of education at PTEC (12+4).

**Table 4.3**

*Mean and Standard Deviation of satisfactions of the education program at PTEC regarding the 4 areas*

<b>Satisfactions in the Educational Program PTEC</b>		<b><math>\bar{x}</math></b>	<b>S.D</b>	<b>Level</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>				
1	All subjects from the program were sequentially organized from basic to advanced.	4.11	0.844	High
2	All subjects from the program give students broad understanding.	4.08	0.738	High
3	All subjects were interesting.	3.93	0.804	High
4	All subjects provided good theories related to the major.	4.12	0.738	High
5	All subjects provided an opportunity to practice and apply theories.	3.97	0.817	High
6	All subjects help you develop a good attitude (industriousness, integrity and responsibility).	4.19	0.727	High
7	All subjects provided you with sufficient knowledge for the market in the teaching profession.	4.05	0.772	High
8	All subjects provided you with sufficient skills for the market in your field.	4.00	0.790	High
9	The program raised my awareness of ethics in the profession.	4.21	0.748	High
10	All subjects integrated local, regional and global contexts.	3.96	0.750	High
11	All subjects covered both current issues and developments in my field.	4.05	0.775	High

<b>Total</b>		<b>4.06</b>	<b>0.773</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Teaching Staff</b>				
12	Teaching staff held high qualifications (master or doctoral degrees).	4.21	0.798	High
13	Teaching staff had experience in the field.	4.26	0.680	High
14	Teaching staff were knowledgeable in the field.	4.26	0.700	High
15	Teaching staff had knowledge on current practices in teaching and learning.	4.21	0.748	High
16	Teaching staff had up to date knowledge on issues and developments in the field.	4.17	0.756	High
17	Teaching staff involved research and development activities.	4.23	0.748	High
18	Teaching staff possess good teaching methodology.	4.26	0.731	High
19	Teaching staff demonstrated creativity in teaching.	4.15	0.787	High
20	Teaching staff promoted critical thinking in their teaching.	4.16	0.762	High
21	Teaching staff integrated ICT in teaching and learning process.	4.26	0.777	High
22	Teaching staff had good interaction with students.	4.17	0.766	High
23	Teaching staff were available for help students.	3.83	0.812	High
24	Teaching staff showed ethical behaviors in dealing with students.	4.18	0.729	High
<b>Total</b>		<b>4.18</b>	<b>0.753</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Assessment</b>				
25	The program employed various kinds of assessment.	4.08	0.749	High
26	Assessments were used to help students learn.	4.12	0.714	High
27	Assessments were used to allow teachers to reflect on their teaching.	4.16	0.749	High
28	Assessments were closely linked to real practices in the field.	4.07	0.730	High
29	Criteria for assessment were clear and fair.	4.11	0.739	High

<b>Total</b>		<b>4.11</b>	<b>0.736</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Facilities and Resources</b>				
30	Class sizes (number of students) were appropriate for effective teaching and learning.	4.21	0.772	High
31	Classrooms were spacious, airy, and clean.	4.03	0.830	High
32	Library was accessible and useful.	3.88	0.871	High
33	Laboratories were accessible, useful and safe.	3.75	0.865	High
34	Conference halls were spacious, airy, clean and convenient.	3.81	0.808	High
35	Toilets were usable.	3.54	0.983	High
36	Parking lots were sufficient and safe.	3.57	0.963	High
37	Canteens were acceptable (price, taste and hygiene).	3.52	0.965	High
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.79</b>	<b>0.882</b>	<b>High</b>

With reference to the mean and standard deviation of the four classifications of the education program shown in Table 4.3, the data showed that the highest satisfaction was around the Teaching Staff (TS) ( $\bar{x} = 4.18$ , S.D. = 0.753), followed by Assessment (A) ( $\bar{x} = 4.11$ , S.D. = 0.736), Curriculum (C) ( $\bar{x} = 4.06$ , S.D. = 0.773), and Facilities and Resources (FR) ( $\bar{x} = 3.79$ , S.D. = 0.882) respectively.

It was 62.6% of participants were highly satisfied with the new educational program at PTEC as it met their expectations, while around 30% evaluated the program as beyond what they expected. Moreover, almost 70% expressed that they would definitely recommend others including their friends and relatives to choose the new educational program at PTEC.

## 5. Discussions

### 5.1. Discussion of question one: factors driving teacher trainees at ptec to choose teaching as their profession

Majority of new teachers expressed that they looked at teaching as constant learning itself, a career where they continually develop. The following factors include individual motivation (role in development), career development (new roles, training, lifetime salary), fringe benefits (pension, sick leave, long vacation), and working conditions (reforms on salary and social

benefits, value and respect). Benchmarking against Singapore, their study on pre-service teacher motivation also emphasized on promotion, long vacation, and the love of teaching and children (Goh & Lourdasamy, 2001). The slight difference is on the salary matter. In Singapore, salary was appreciated as one of the highest, while our trainees valued that teachers are paid for a lifetime. Still, trainees noticed that the salary had been much increased, which brought hope to the profession in the future. This shows the effectiveness regarding the reforms on financial and social benefits for teachers. A study in Turkey (Yüce et al., 2013) discussed that young people, especially in developing countries, were attracted by working condition, social status and financial benefits along with serving others and contributing in social development. The paper also highlighted that all the three types of motivation, extrinsic, intrinsic and altruistic motivation, are crucial in attracting people into teaching. Though young people can be convinced by the role in country development and doing or teaching what they love, the professional working condition and status perceived by society are often taken into consideration.

Looking back to the study in 2016 by Prigent, trainees mentioned that the low-cost and short pre-service training were some of the reasons for getting them into teaching. The other study on teacher motivation with the in-service teachers by No & Kreng (2017) revealed that the majority of the in-service teachers were not aware of career choices and opportunities. Teachers looked at teaching as something they were going to do for the rest of their working life. Furthermore, professional development or in-service training were seen as teachers' daily survival. The mindsets of constant learning and developing themselves professionally in relation to improving their teaching effectiveness or student learning was not much heard of. Therefore, trainees coming into the profession with the mindsets as lifelong learners and self-directed learners brings hope to many other reforms and solutions.

### ***5.1. Discussion of question two: the levels of satisfactions of teacher trainees at ptec toward its the education program (12+4)***

Trainees were highly satisfied with the teaching staff, and followed by the assessment, curriculum, and facilities and resources. Trainees emphasized on the quality of the trainers as experienced and knowledgeable. Not only the degrees that the trainers held had placed trust in teacher trainees, but also how trainers showed up and the quality of trainer-trainee relationship created meaningful experiences for trainees as pointed out. Nevertheless, trainees recognized the trainers' heavy workload and tight schedules. The courses, on the other hand, were appreciated for not only building knowledge, skills and mindsets, but also raising awareness



of ethics and attitude as a professional. An interesting shift in terms of the teacher trainees behaviors and perceptions towards the assessments was also brought up. Trainees viewed assessments as tools to improve and facilitate learning in addition to fairness and practicality. Last but not least, trainees were delighted with the facilities, especially the spacious, airy and clean classrooms.

## **6. Conclusion**

Based on the findings and discussion, the researcher concludes the following: (1) Trainees are attracted by the unique nature of the teaching career which enables teachers to continuously learn and improve themselves professionally, and obtains opportunities to upgrade their credentials resulting in better positions and incentives. Teachers' roles in country development, teaching as a lifetime career, and other fringe benefits for teachers are still captivating among Cambodian people despite the relatively low amount of salary compared to other professions with similar qualification and workload. Thus, increasing teachers' salary should not be the only solution to attract high potential candidates into the teaching profession. (2) With the expectations of what a teaching career would look like at its best, trainees are highly satisfied with the educational program at PTEC in all aspects, elaborated by their emerging insights on assessment and content, and the show of empathy towards trainers. Rigorous selection and training do not make teaching less attractive, but adds more value to teacher trainees and teaching as a profession by increasing credentials, skills and knowledge.

## **Recommendations**

With the findings above, the following recommendations are suggested to stakeholders to refine the teaching profession, and attract higher quality and more candidates into the teaching profession.

### ***MoEYS***

- Continue the reform on improving teacher salaries.
- Continue the reform on school infrastructures and facilities to upgrade the working environment for teachers as professionals.
- Ensure high quality training and support to well equip teachers to transition into the new roles

### ***PoE/DoE***

- Establish a system or community to support new teachers in school in terms of skills and teaching resources.
- Ensure high quality and relevant training for in-service teachers to improve teaching effectiveness and student outcomes.
- Institutionalize consistent and relevant professional development for in-service teachers to support their classroom teaching.
- Create local and abroad opportunities for teacher development and learning.

### ***Schools***

- Enable an environment for teachers to practice their creativity and autonomy in their profession to keep inspiring them that they are the agents of development.
- Establish a peer or community of teachers to learn from and support each other.
- Engage teachers in school management planning and evaluation to empower teachers as professionals and leaders.

### ***PTEC***

- Maintain the high standard of trainers in both recruitment and training.
- Increase in the number of high quality trainers to ensure sufficient energy and time for their trainees and action research.
- Increase in the number of high quality trainers specializing in each subject to expand the exposure and access to trainees.
- Ensure/maintain practicality in content and assessment.

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