

## CAREERS

# Career change?

People who switch from one career to another may do so because of the pay, job security, the need for a challenge, for personal or professional development, a quest for new experiences, to address a set of personal goals, or for a combination of these and other reasons.

Previous research into why people leave business-related careers to become teachers has suggested that the rewards of salary and career prestige are not a high priority and that they are mostly motivated by a desire to fulfil other goals, although researchers have not always sought to relate these to robust theoretical models for motivation.

Our 'FIT-Choice' (Factors Influencing Teaching Choice) research program is an exception in that it is founded on the comprehensive 'expectancy-value' motivational framework of Jacquelynne Eccles and her colleagues and we developed this framework within the specific context of teaching as a career choice.

Our study looks at 90 individuals who previously pursued business-related careers and who now work as primary or secondary school teachers. These people hold qualifications ranging from undergraduate degrees through to a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) and come from sectors such as banking, human resources and marketing.

Motivations for moving from business-related careers to teaching careers were measured using our 'FIT-Choice' scale. Some were motivated by dissatisfaction with aspects of their 'corporate world' – such as work-life balance – or their need to do something meaningful, fulfilling, satisfying, challenging and rewarding. Age and gender seemed to have little effect on their seeking a career switch.

The highest-rated motivations for choosing teaching included perceived teaching abilities, the intrinsic value of teaching, the desire to make a social contribution and to help shape the future. Not surprisingly, the refrain of liking and wanting to work with children and adolescents to help them understand themselves and their place in the world was an important reason for seeking a change to teaching.

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The lowest-rated motivation was choosing teaching as a 'fallback' career, followed by social influences of others' encouragement.

Participants perceived teaching as a highly demanding career and one that provided for low return in terms of salary and social status. Simultaneously they reported high levels of satisfaction with their choice of teaching as a career. The fact that these pre-service teachers rated highly the intrinsic value of teaching suggests that a teaching career may afford different types of rewards that are not always inherent in other occupations.

For example, teaching may provide a domain where individuals feel they can readily derive a sense of existential significance from their work. Because perceptions were assessed near the beginning of the participants' first year of teacher education, clearly they had chosen teaching as a career despite perceptions of teaching as high in demand and low in return, and despite experiences of others attempting to dissuade them from their choice.

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# Monash Business Review

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should be  
punished  
for acting  
in their own  
interests”*

Margin loan abuses show  
existing regulations don't work.