

Assessment of Prospective Teachers' Attitude Toward Teaching Profession in Funtua, Katsina State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Student teachers' attitudes toward the teaching profession significantly affect their future commitment, effectiveness, and retention. This study examined the perceptions of prospective teachers from six institutions in Funtua, Katsina State, using a descriptive survey and a 15-item Attitude Toward Teaching Profession (ATTP) scale. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVA, and multiple regression.

Findings showed that while many student teachers value the societal role of teaching, negative attitudes persist, caused by poor remuneration, heavy workload, and low professional recognition. This highlights a disconnect between their intrinsic motivation and the external realities of the profession, weakening long-term commitment. Regression analysis identified remuneration perception, social status, and teaching practice experience as key predictors of negative attitudes. Minor institutional differences reflected variations in support and supervision. The study underscores the need for policies that improve teacher welfare, elevate professional status, and enhance teacher education, offering vital insights to improve motivation, retention, and educational quality.

Keywords: Prospective teachers, Attitude; Teaching Profession; Funtua; Katsina State; Teacher Education; Professional Recognition.

1. Introduction

Education is the cornerstone of both personal and societal development, equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for meaningful participation in society [1]. Teachers are central to this process not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as mentors, role models, and agents of social transformation [2].

Student teachers those enrolled in teacher education programs in colleges and universities represent the future of the profession, undergoing rigorous training in pedagogy, classroom management, and subject-specific instruction [3]. The attitudes of prospective teachers are critical in shaping their professional commitment, instructional effectiveness, and long-term retention in the profession [4]. Positive attitudes are associated with greater motivation, engagement, and resilience, while negative attitudes often correlate with reduced performance, absenteeism, and early attrition [5]. In Funtua, Katsina State, however, the teaching profession faces systemic challenges such as low remuneration, limited professional recognition, heavy workloads, inadequate teaching resources, and diminished social status [6]. These unfavorable conditions frequently lead student teachers to perceive teaching as a fallback career rather than a purposeful vocation, thereby undermining their motivation during both training and practice [7].

This study is grounded in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) by [8] and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by [9]. SCT highlights how personal beliefs, behaviors, and environmental factors interact to influence learning and motivation. For student teachers, factors such as prior experiences, self-efficacy, and institutional context shape their perceptions of teaching. SDT adds depth by distinguishing between intrinsic motivation driven by internal satisfaction and extrinsic motivation, such as rewards or social approval. The interplay between these motivational forces provides a useful lens for understanding the complex attitudes student teachers hold toward the profession.

While previous studies in Nigeria have acknowledged intrinsic factors like "passion" or a sense of "calling," they often lack a clear theoretical basis or comparative scope. This study addresses that gap by applying SCT and SDT to assess the attitudes of prospective teachers from six tertiary institutions with students based in Funtua. It aims to identify key predictors of positive and negative dispositions and provide recommendations to enhance teacher motivation, retention, and educational quality.

2. Methodology

2.1. Description of the study area

Funtua Local Government Area (LGA) is one of the earliest LGAs established in Nigeria following the 1976 local government reforms. It serves as the headquarters of the Katsina South District, which consists of eleven LGAs: Bakori, Dandume, Faskari, Sabuwa, Kankara, Danja, Malumfashi, Kafur, Musawa, Matazu, and Funtua. The LGA covers an area of approximately 448 km² and had a population of 570,000 according to the 2006 National Population Commission (NPC) census, with a slight increase to 570,110 as estimated in 2016. Geographically, Funtua lies at latitude 11°32'N and longitude 7°19'E (Figure 1). It shares boundaries with Giwa LGA of Kaduna State to the south, Bakori to the east, Danja to the southwest, Faskari to the northwest, and Dandume to the west. The area is home to many educated and respected personalities from diverse fields, as well as notable institutions of higher learning, including Bala Abdullahi College of Administration, Abdullahi Aminchi College of Advanced Studies (affiliated to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria), the School of Basic and Remedial Studies, the National Teachers Institute Study Centre, Federal University Dutsin-Ma's study centres, and the newly established Federal University of Health Sciences, Funtua.

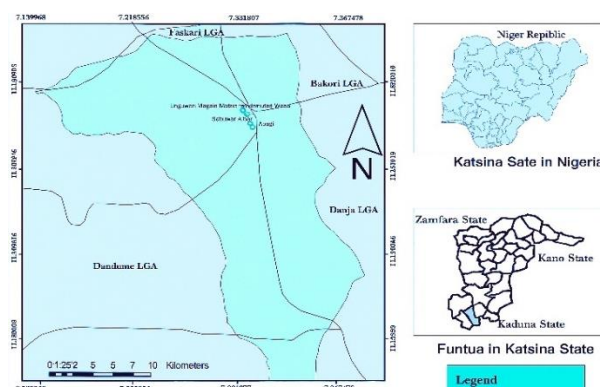


Fig. 1: Map of Funtua.

2.2. Research design

A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed [10].

2.3. Population and sample

The populations comprised student teachers enrolled in Isa Kaita College of Education, FCE Katsina, FCE Zaria, FUDMA, UMYUK, and ABU Zaria, all located in Katsina. A representative sample of 200 respondents was selected through stratified random sampling [11].

2.4. Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire was used:

Section A: Demographics – sex, age, institution, program, year of study, teaching practice experience.

Section B: 15-item ATTP scale, measuring positive and negative attitudes [12].

2.5. Data collection

The questionnaire was administered physically over six weeks, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation.

2.6. Data analysis

We analyzed the data using SPSS v26. Descriptive statistics summarized responses. T-tests and ANOVA examined differences by demographic and institutional variables. Multiple regression determined predictors of attitude ($p < 0.05$) (Cresswell and Cresswell, 2014). [10].

3. Results

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics (n = 200)

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Sex	Male	104	52
	Female	96	48
Age	18–22	72	36
	23–27	72	36
	28+56	28	
Institutions			
Isa Kaita COE	40		
FCE Katsina	32		
FCE Zaria	28	14	
FUDMA	32	16	
UMYUK	28	14	

ABU Zaria40	20
100 level 44	22
200 level 52	26
300+ level104	52

Table 2: Mean Positive and Negative Attitude Scores by Institution

Institution	Positive Mean (SD)	Negative Mean (SD)	Overall Mean (SD)
Isa Kaita COE	3.68 (0.85)	3.50 (0.88)	3.59 (0.87)Mixed
FCE Katsina	3.60 (0.86)	3.48 (0.90)	3.54 (0.88)Mixed
FCE Zaria	3.55 (0.88)	3.52 (0.89)	3.54 (0.88)Mixed
FUDMA	3.62 (0.87)	3.45 (0.91)	3.54 (0.89)Mixed
UMYUK	3.57 (0.86)	3.50 (0.88)	3.54 (0.87)Mixed
ABU Zaria	3.65 (0.85)	3.47 (0.89)	3.56 (0.87)Mixed

Table 3: Regression Predictors of Negative Attitudes

Predictor	β	t-value	Sig	($p < 0.05$)
Remuneration perception	0.42	5.21		0.001*
Social status perception	0.35	4.10		0.002*
Teaching practice experience	0.28	3.54		0.004*

Table 4: Regression Predictors of Negative Attitudes (Intrinsic Values)

Predictor	β	t-value	Sig	($p < 0.05$)
Personal interest in teaching	-0.38	-4.62		0.001*
Passion for working with children	-0.33	-4.10		0.003*
Belief in teaching as noble work	-0.29	-3.55	0.005*	
Desire for lifelong learning	-0.25	-3.12		0.009*
Commitment to educational change	-0.21	-2.78		0.012*

3.1. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that student teachers in Funtua exhibit mixed attitudes toward the teaching profession (Table 2), shaped by a combination of intrinsic motivation and external challenges. This pattern reflects earlier research conducted in Nigeria, which consistently highlighted the interplay between personal passion and systemic barriers—such as low professional status, inadequate incentives, and poor working conditions—in shaping teacher trainees' perceptions [12].

For instance, [13]. Found that teacher trainees in Lagos State often expressed both confidence and uncertainty during teaching practice, largely influenced by the quality of mentorship and supervision received. Similarly, [14] reported that student teachers in Minna showed varying attitudes toward teaching and learning, shaped by their perceptions of curriculum objectives, content, and evaluation. In contrast, [15] observed that poor remuneration, low social recognition, and poor working conditions discouraged both education and non-education undergraduates from pursuing teaching, with students at Ebonyi State University citing lack of motivation as a key concern [16]

Further evidence from other Nigerian institutions supports the significance of contextual and institutional factors. [17] reported generally positive attitudes among teacher trainees at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, although respondents emphasized the need for better incentives and societal recognition. In Katsina LGA, [18] found that job satisfaction and motivation significantly influenced attitudes, with gender-based differences emerging. Likewise, a study at Northwest University in Kano revealed predominantly favorable perceptions of teaching, although gender again appeared to be a moderating factor [19].

These national findings correspond with institutional variations observed in the present study (Table 2), where Isa Kaita College of Education and ABU Zaria recorded slightly higher mean attitude scores (3.59 and 3.56, respectively). This suggests that institutions are offer well-structured teaching-practice programs, supportive mentorship, and extensive classroom exposure are better positioned to foster positive professional attitudes among teacher trainees. This view is supported by [20], who noted that the modeling behavior of in-service teachers plays a crucial role in shaping students' professional outlook, with unethical practices acting as deterrents.

Internationally, similar trends are evident. In the United States, low pay, high workload, and burnout have long been recognized as major causes of declining teacher satisfaction and high turnover[21].[22] found that only one-third of American K–12 teachers were “very satisfied” with their jobs, with 77% experiencing frequent stress, and over half unwilling to recommend teaching as a career. In the United Kingdom,[23] documented that accountability pressures and heavy workloads contributed significantly to early exit from the profession. Likewise, in China, [24] reported that administrative overload undermined teacher motivation despite strong professional commitment. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, [1]emphasized that poor working conditions and limited career progression opportunities continue to weaken morale and retention.

3.2. Demographic influences

The demographic data from this study (Table 1) indicated that higher-level student teachers (300 level and above) constitute 52% of the sample and exhibit comparatively more negative attitudes toward the teaching profession. This trend is plausibly linked to their greater exposure to the practical realities of the classroom, such as overcrowded learning environments, limited teaching resources, and administrative burdens, all of which could erode initial enthusiasm and idealism.

This pattern is consistent with international evidence, which suggests that longer exposure to teaching environments, whether through years of service or advanced training stages, often correlates with declining professional attitudes.

In Australia, [25] reported that teachers with more classroom experience faced higher stress levels, reduced job satisfaction, and an increased intention to leave the profession. Similarly, in the United States, [21] found that only one-third of public K–12 teachers were very satisfied with their jobs, with job satisfaction decreasing among more experienced educators. A recent Canadian study by [26] revealed that teachers across three provinces reported high levels of emotional exhaustion (approximately 77%), largely attributed to workload, class size, and lack of institutional support.

In the United Kingdom, [23] observed that mid- to late-career teachers expressed significantly higher levels of stress than their early-career counterparts, attributing this to increasing workloads and accountability pressures. A broader European perspective, offered by [27],

showed a decline in perceived professional value with years of service—from 27.5% among early-career teachers to 15.5% among those with 11–15 years' experience. [28] Similarly found that only 22% of teachers regarded teaching as an “attractive” profession, with 68% citing workload as a major barrier to work–life balance.

In Asia, evidence from India highlights similar dynamics. [29] identified non-teaching duties, inadequate institutional support, and limited career growth as major sources of dissatisfaction for experienced teachers. [30] further noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers in low-income Indian schools experienced intensified stress because of hybrid teaching demands and a lack of systemic support. In Japan, [31] observed that teachers in schools serving lower socioeconomic populations reported significantly lower job satisfaction, with student behavior and self-efficacy mediating this effect. [32] observed that Japanese science teachers participating in TIMSS 2019 ranked among the lowest globally for job satisfaction, citing long working hours and parental pressure as key stressors.

In Latin America, [33] reported that only 11% of Brazilian upper secondary teachers felt their profession was valued. During the pandemic, 33.7% of teachers in Minas Gerais expressed job dissatisfaction, with longer tenure identified as a contributing factor [34].

African contexts reflect similar trends. In Ghana, [35] found that teacher job satisfaction was tightly linked to retention, with compensation and career integration serving as decisive factors. [36] found that longer-serving secondary school teachers in Kenya experienced declining morale primarily due to bureaucratic challenges, limited professional recognition, and increased administrative workload. [37] also emphasized that in Sub-Saharan Africa, teacher motivation tends to decline with length of service, primarily due to stagnant career prospects, weak professional development, and inadequate institutional support.

Even in Finland, a country often cited for high teacher well-being, stress levels among lower secondary teachers have increased, and intentions to change careers are rising [38].

These international trends validated the demographic pattern observed in the present study: student teachers at more advanced levels (300+), because of prolonged engagement with the educational system, are more likely to encounter the structural and emotional pressures of the profession. This richer exposure, while valuable in preparing them for real-world teaching, may also lead to greater disillusionment, explaining their relatively more negative professional attitudes.

3.3. Predictors of negative attitudes

Table 3 presents the results of a regression analysis examining the predictors of negative attitudes toward teaching. Three variables—remuneration perception, social status perception, and teaching practice experience—were found to significantly predict negative attitudes among the respondents.

3.4. Remuneration perception($\beta = 0.42$, $t = 5.21$, $p = 0.001$)

The data presented in Table 3 indicate that as teachers' perceptions of low or inadequate pay increase, their negative attitudes toward teaching also increase. The t-value of 5.21 and a highly significant p-value (0.001) confirmed that this relationship is statistically robust. Remuneration perception emerged as the strongest predictor of student teachers' attitudes in this study. This finding agreed with broader evidence from both Nigerian and international contexts, which consistently highlight the central role of compensation in shaping teacher satisfaction, motivation, and retention.

In Nigeria, several studies have underscored the negative impact of low salaries and delayed payments on teachers' morale. For instance, [17] reported that inadequate and inconsistent remuneration among secondary school teachers significantly contributed to job dissatisfaction and negative professional attitudes. Similarly, [39] found that the overall level of teacher compensation in Kwara State was low, with a positive relationship observed between compensation and school effectiveness. These findings suggest that poor remuneration not only demotivates teachers but may also compromise broader institutional outcomes.

Further illustrating the complexity of this issue, [40] in a study among primary school teachers in Oyo Metropolis, confirmed that prompt salary payment was important to job satisfaction. However, they found no significant difference in satisfaction based on income level alone. This indicates that while remuneration matters, other factors—such as salary regularity, workload, or working conditions may mediate its overall effect on satisfaction.

Across the African continent, similar dynamics have been observed. In Kenya's Molo Sub-County, [41] found that teacher remuneration had a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation with job satisfaction. Although teachers reported that their salaries provided decent living earnings, the authors noted that further improvements were still needed.

In Ghana, multiple studies confirmed these findings. [35] found that perceptions of inadequate remuneration were closely linked to low morale and intentions to leave the profession. A district-level survey in Atiwa, Eastern Region, by [42] similarly revealed that remuneration and conditions of service were the most influential factors in teachers' quit intentions. These findings underscore the role of compensation not only in satisfaction but also in long-term professional commitment.

However, contrasting evidence from Uganda complicated this narrative. A study conducted in Mbarara City (Kakoba subdivision) among private secondary school teachers reported that although 68.3% of respondents were dissatisfied with their salaries, the correlation between remuneration and job satisfaction was very low ($r = 0.117$) and statistically non-significant [43]. The authors concluded that salary levels alone did not significantly influence teacher performance, suggesting that in low-resource or private-school settings, other factors such as institutional culture, job security, or teaching autonomy may play a more dominant role.

Internationally, similar trends are evident. In Australia, perceived low financial rewards were found to reduce job satisfaction among teachers [44]. In the United States, compensation concerns were frequently cited as a key driver of teacher attrition, particularly in underfunded districts [45].

3.5. Social status perception

($\beta = 0.35$, $t = 4.10$, $p = 0.002$)

Teachers' perceptions of low social status or poor societal recognition of the profession are associated with more negative attitudes, as shown in Table 3. The positive beta value (0.35) indicates a moderate positive effect, suggesting that teachers who feel undervalued or disrespected are more likely to harbor negative feelings about their profession. The p-value (0.002) confirms that this effect is statistically significant.

Perceived social status of the teaching profession emerged as another significant predictor of negative attitudes among student teachers in this study. Evidence from both Nigerian and international contexts suggests that when teaching is viewed as a low-status occupation, teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and professional commitment tend to decline.

In Nigeria, [18] highlighted that low societal recognition of teachers contributes directly to diminished morale and declining motivation. Similarly, [46] found that students and parents in South-West Nigeria held significantly lower views of the teaching profession compared to teachers themselves, indicating a widespread societal undervaluation of the role.

Across the African continent, this pattern persists. In South Africa, [36] reported that teachers' perceived low social status negatively impacted both job commitment and morale. In Malawi, [47] found that teachers' social status strongly influenced both their initial motivation and sustained professional engagement, particularly in under-resourced contexts.

International findings mirror these trends. In the United Kingdom, [23] documented a strong association between perceived low societal value of teachers and increased burnout and attrition rates. In China, [24] noted that teachers who felt undervalued by society or their institutions were more likely to report job dissatisfaction and disengagement.

A broader perspective is provided by [48], which found substantial cross-national variation in the perceived professional status of teachers. In countries where teachers are regarded as highly competent and socially respected, satisfaction and retention tend to be higher. Conversely, in contexts where competence is acknowledged but social status remains low, motivation suffers.

Research from Turkey further illustrates this complexity. [49] found that while teachers perceived the profession as respectable, they held overall negative views of its social status, citing poor socio-economic conditions, flawed employment systems, and weak institutional support. Similarly, [50] identified remuneration, teacher education quality, and ministry relations as key factors shaping teachers' negative perceptions of their profession's social standing.

3.6. Teaching practice experience

($\beta = 0.28$, $t = 3.54$, $p = 0.004$)

Longer teaching practice experience is also associated with increased negative attitudes, though the effect size is smaller compared to remuneration and social status. The positive beta value (0.28) suggests that as teachers spend more time in practical teaching, exposure to challenges such as large classes, administrative burdens, and resource limitations contributes to negative attitudes (Table 3). This trend reflects a cumulative effect of prolonged exposure to classroom challenges, rather than merely the initial transition shock experienced by novice teachers.

In Nigeria, [51] found that student-teachers in their final years of training reported higher frustration and stress due to repeated exposure to overcrowded classrooms and limited teaching resources. Similarly, in Ethiopia, [52] observed that teachers with longer tenure had lower morale, citing bureaucratic obstacles and lack of recognition. [53] further reported that teachers' work motivation varied significantly by years of professional experience, as well as by contextual factors such as reward systems and working conditions. These findings align with the notion that chronic exposure to large class sizes, inadequate resources, heavy administrative demands, and limited professional growth opportunities can erode teacher morale over time.

International research supported this interpretation. In Australia, both the Australian [54] and [55] reported that mid- to late-career teachers experience declining motivation and job satisfaction, largely due to increased administrative responsibilities and ongoing classroom pressures. [56] found that mid-career teachers (6–12 years of service) and those with more than 12 years of experience reported significantly higher intentions to leave the profession, with career stage emerging as the strongest predictor of attrition. Complementing these quantitative findings, [57] presented qualitative data from Australian teacher exit interviews, revealing that educators with 11–15 years and even 21+ years of experience frequently express a desire for career change, often citing burnout, workload, and lack of institutional support as key drivers.

Thus, the observed association between greater teaching experience and higher negative attitudes in the present study is consistent with a broader body of empirical evidence from both local and international contexts. The findings suggest that extended time in the profession, without adequate systemic support, may gradually diminish professional satisfaction, motivation, and morale.

3.7. Personal interest in teaching ($\beta = -0.38$, $p = 0.001$)

Among all intrinsic predictors analyzed, personal interest in teaching exhibited the strongest negative relationship with negative professional attitudes. A significant beta coefficient of -0.38 ($p = 0.001$), as shown in Table 4, indicates that student teachers with a strong personal interest in teaching are substantially less likely to develop negative perceptions of the profession. This underscores the critical role of intrinsic motivation in shaping positive professional attitudes.

These findings are in line with Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which posits that internal motivations such as a sense of purpose, interest, or passion—foster higher satisfaction, persistence, and well-being. Many respondents in this study expressed a genuine interest in teaching, citing motivations such as a desire to help learners, an interest in child development, and a sense of calling—hallmarks of intrinsic drive. However, the study also revealed evidence of erosion in intrinsic motivation over time. Specifically, 300-level students were more likely to exhibit negative attitudes (Table 1), suggesting growing disillusionment as they encountered the realities of the profession, including poor working conditions, limited resources, and insufficient institutional support. This trend supports SDT's assertion that intrinsic motivation diminishes when basic psychological needs, competence, autonomy, and relatedness are not adequately met.

3.7.1. Comparative insights

Findings from other contexts reinforced this dynamic. In Nigeria, [58] found a strong positive correlation between intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers, $r = 0.632$ in rural areas and $r = 0.482$ in urban areas. These results highlight the role of contextual support, suggesting that intrinsic motivation is more sustainable in environments that are less demanding or more supportive. Similarly, [59] in a study of Turkish teacher candidates, found that intrinsic factors were significant in initial career choice. However, they emphasized that long-term commitment was shaped by institutional and environmental support.

Interestingly, [60] studied teachers in Nigeria's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) context, found that intrinsic motivation was not significantly associated with teacher performance, whereas extrinsic motivation was. This suggests that in resource-constrained or under-supported settings, personal interest alone may be insufficient to sustain engagement and effectiveness.

From an international perspective, [61] found that in China, intrinsic motivation positively influenced innovative teaching practices. However, this effect was mediated by teacher engagement, once again underscoring the importance of institutional and contextual factors in transforming motivation into meaningful professional outcomes.

In the present study, institutions such as Ahmadu Bello University (ABU Zaria) and Isa Kaita College of Education recorded slightly more favorable student attitudes (Table 2). This may be attributed to better supervision and mentorship during teaching practice—support mechanisms that reinforce the autonomy and competence essential for sustaining intrinsic motivation over time.

3.8. Passion for working with children ($\beta = -0.33$, $p = 0.003$)

This factor emerged as a strong negative predictor of negative professional attitudes, with a beta coefficient of -0.33 ($p = 0.003$), as observed in Table 4. The data indicated that individuals who genuinely enjoy working with children tend to hold more positive views of the teaching profession. This emotional connection and the intrinsic joy derived from student interactions likely serve as a protective factor against cynicism and dissatisfaction. In essence, a strong child-centered motivation appears to be protective against negative professional attitudes.

In the present study of student teachers in Funtua, this finding closely aligns with earlier results regarding personal interest in teaching. Respondents motivated by a passion for working with children were less inclined to negative perceptions of the profession. However, the decline in positive attitudes observed among 300-level students suggests that even this intrinsic passion may erode over time, particularly when structural barriers—such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate resources, and limited institutional support—impede the practical enactment of that passion.

3.8.1. Supporting evidence from Nigeria and beyond

Similar patterns have been documented in the Nigerian context. For instance, [62] in a study of primary education teachers in Idemili South LGA, Anambra State, identified intrinsic motivators—including “enjoying teaching children” and a sense of societal usefulness as significant contributors to teacher motivation and job satisfaction. Likewise, [63] found that teachers' motivation, while not exclusively child-centered, correlated positively with student academic outcomes, underscoring the broader value of teacher commitment.

International research further supports the importance of a passion for working with children in sustaining teacher well-being and performance. In Japan, [64] found that empathy-driven motivation toward children mediated the relationship between kindergarten teachers' mindsets and their experience of compassion fatigue, with more positive teacher–child relationships linked to reduced emotional exhaustion. However, evidence from Ethiopia indicates that passion alone may not be enough to protect educators from burnout. A study by [65] revealed high levels of burnout among kindergarten teachers working under poor conditions, such as low pay, limited resources, and weak institutional support. These systemic stressors significantly undermined teacher well-being, regardless of their intrinsic motivation. Similarly, a European study by [66] demonstrated that higher rates of burnout among early childhood educators were associated with lower quality teacher–child interactions. This suggests that while the joy of working with children may inspire educators initially, sustainable and supportive work environments are essential for maintaining both teacher well-being and high-quality educational interactions over time.

3.9. Belief in teaching as noble work ($\beta = -0.29$, $p = 0.005$)

This factor emerged as a significant negative predictor of negative attitudes toward the teaching profession, with a beta coefficient of -0.29 ($p = 0.005$), as presented in Table 4. Participants who perceived teaching as a noble and socially valuable profession were significantly less likely to exhibit negative attitudes. This suggests that ideological and moral framings such as viewing teaching as a calling, mission, or socially impactful vocation can foster resilience, job satisfaction, and a stronger professional identity [67].

Within the context of this study, student teachers in Funtua who held this belief appeared more resistant to disappointment even amid challenges such as poor remuneration, overcrowded classrooms, and limited resources. These findings aligned with the broader literature on vocational commitment, which highlights how a sense of purpose helps educators endure external pressures. However, the persistence of negative attitudes among some respondents suggests that belief in the profession's nobility alone is insufficient in the absence of structural support.

3.9.1. Comparative evidence

In Nigeria, [68] reported that secondary school teachers in Awka South LGA widely considered teaching a noble profession, despite expressing dissatisfaction with workload and low compensation. This duality, valuing the profession while feeling unsupported, mirrors the experiences of many respondents in this study.

Similarly, a study in India found that while teacher candidates often described teaching as “the noblest profession,” their attitudes were moderated by perceived low status and inadequate institutional support [69]. A national survey in Peru of over 28,000 teachers also found that the perceived social mission of teaching was strongly associated with professional commitment and job satisfaction [70].

In Indonesia, teacher candidates who viewed teaching as a “blessed duty” reported favorable attitudes; however, these were undermined by systemic burdens such as high workload and weak compensation [71]. Likewise, in Europe, qualitative research has shown that many teachers view teaching as a “calling” but become demoralized in the absence of institutional recognition [67].

Overall, participants who regarded teaching as a noble and socially valuable profession are significantly less likely to harbor negative attitudes. This finding reinforces the idea that the ideological and moral framing of teaching as a calling or mission contributes to professional resilience and satisfaction. Such beliefs may help teachers endure challenges by reinforcing a sense of purpose, but they must be supported by adequate structural and institutional conditions to be sustained.

4. Desire for Lifelong Learning ($\beta = -0.25$, $p = 0.009$)

This variable represents a significant negative predictor of negative professional attitudes, with a beta coefficient of -0.25 and a p -value of 0.009 , as presented in Table 4. Student teachers who exhibit a strong desire for lifelong learning, defined as intellectual curiosity, openness to new knowledge, and a commitment to continuous personal and professional growth, are less likely to express dissatisfaction with the teaching profession.

In the context of this study, student teachers in Funtua who were identified as lifelong learners reported more constructive and optimistic attitudes toward teaching. Their intrinsic passion for knowledge and development may foster classroom enthusiasm, adaptability, and long-

term resilience. Moreover, such individuals may be better equipped to respond to the evolving demands of the education sector, thereby buffering against frustration and professional fatigue.

Comparatively, International literature supports this finding. For example, a study of teacher candidates in Turkey found that lifelong learning tendencies were significantly correlated with both motivation to teach and positive professional attitudes [72]. Trainees who saw themselves as continuous learners also reported higher levels of intrinsic motivation and a greater sense of purpose within the profession. Similarly, a European policy brief emphasized that teachers who embody lifelong learning qualities such as curiosity, perseverance, and metacognitive awareness are more likely to stay motivated and adapt effectively to pedagogical and institutional changes [73]. These traits were also linked to a stronger professional identity and lower rates of stress.

Although comparable empirical studies from Nigeria remain limited, the pattern observed in this research agrees with these international findings. It suggests that fostering a culture of lifelong learning within teacher education programs could be essential to cultivating sustained positive attitudes and enhancing long-term professional resilience.

4.1. Commitment to educational change ($\beta = -0.21$, $p = 0.012$)

Although the smallest in magnitude among the intrinsic predictors, commitment to educational change remains a statistically significant factor. Student teachers who are motivated by a desire to improve or reform the education system tend to exhibit more positive attitudes toward the teaching profession. This suggests that adopting a change-oriented mindset that views obstacles as opportunities for innovation rather than deterrents can act as a protective factor against disappointment.

In the context of this study, student teachers in Funtua who saw themselves as agents of transformation reported fewer negative professional attitudes. However, the modest effect size also indicated that ideological commitment alone is insufficient to counteract the effects of systemic barriers such as large class sizes, limited mentorship, and inadequate resources.

4.1.1. Comparative evidence

United Arab Emirates: A large-scale study involving 737 teachers found that commitment to teaching—including change-oriented commitment—was often higher than organizational loyalty. However, it diminished when teachers faced excessive non-teaching duties, high workloads, or multiple subject assignments [74].

Turkey: Using the Integrative Model of Behavioral Prediction, [75] showed that attitudes toward change, perceived norms, and self-efficacy significantly predicted teachers' willingness to implement reforms.

Ghana: [76] found that supervisory styles influenced teacher commitment. Specifically, clinical inquiry-based supervision was positively associated with stronger commitment to change, highlighting the critical role of institutional support.

Indonesia: A study in vocational schools found that senior teachers exhibited significantly higher work commitment than junior teachers. Although change-orientation was not isolated, the findings suggest that professional experience may strengthen reformist tendencies over time [77].

Finland and Europe: A comparative study on school development showed that teachers' engagement in school transformation was directly linked to the presence of personal, structural, and institutional support mechanisms. Where such support was lacking, change-oriented engagement declined [78].

Variations in student attitudes across institutions in this study could be attributed to differences in environmental support structures—an observation consistent with Social Cognitive Theory. For example, institutions offering stronger supervision and guidance during teaching practice appeared to foster more positive professional attitudes, potentially reinforcing intrinsic motivation as posited by Self-Determination Theory.

4.2. Conclusion

Although student teachers in Funtua recognized the societal value of teaching, negative attitudes remain prevalent, primarily driven by poor remuneration, low professional recognition, and challenges during teaching practice.

The study highlights that intrinsic motivation alone is insufficient to sustain positive attitudes in the absence of adequate structural and societal support. Local socio-economic factors appear to exacerbate concerns about remuneration and social status among student teachers in Funtua.

"By applying both SCT and SDT, this study provides a nuanced understanding of student teachers' attitudes. While personal passion remains important, the socio-institutional context plays a pivotal role in either sustaining or undermining that motivation. Addressing both internal and external factors is therefore essential to cultivating a committed and resilient teaching workforce.

4.3. Recommendations

By addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, a committed, motivated, and effective future teaching workforce in Funtua can be cultivated.

Improvement of Remuneration and Benefits

Teachers' remuneration and benefits should be improved so that alignment is achieved with other professional careers, and the financial attractiveness of the profession is enhanced.

- Enhancement of Professional Recognition

Professional recognition should be enhanced through the establishment of career progression pathways, the introduction of awards, and the implementation of societal appreciation initiatives.

- Strengthening of Teacher Education Curricula

Teacher education curricula should be strengthened by ensuring that practical teaching experiences are integrated with mentorship and motivational support.

- Establishment of Institutional Support during Teaching Practice

Institutional support systems should be established during teaching practice so that negative perceptions associated with classroom challenges are mitigated and teacher confidence is built.

- Conduct of Further Research on Influencing Factors

Further research should be conducted to examine additional factors influencing teacher attitudes, such as the adequacy of teaching resources, the level of administrative support, and the perception of the profession within the community.

- Support for Intrinsic Motivation through Key Elements

Intrinsic motivation should be supported by fostering autonomy, competence, and relatedness through:

The adoption of student-centered pedagogy in teacher training institutions

The provision of meaningful feedback during teaching practice

The creation of opportunities for reflective teaching and self-directed learning

Recognition and Nurturing of Intrinsic Values

Intrinsic values in teacher candidates should be recognized and nurtured through the integration of motivational sessions, exposure to role models, and the use of impactful stories that reinforce teaching as a meaningful vocation, rather than a fallback career.

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