



Student Teachers' Motivation toward Participation in the Professional Development Programs

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Abstract

The twenty-first century is witnessing an increasing and clear interest in studying the relationship between student teachers' motivation and their participation in professional development programs. This study was designed to find out the student teachers' motivation toward participation in professional development programs and to identify the role of motivation in influencing the ambition, perseverance, and desire of student teachers to be effective and active in carrying out activities and tasks. The descriptive survey design was employed, 75 student teachers were chosen to participate, and data were collected using a developed instrument after ensuring its validity and reliability. The results of the study showed that the level of student teachers' motivation toward participation in professional development programs was very high and that they are aware of the fact that professional development programs are the most effective means for developing their ambition, perseverance, and desire to participate in activities and tasks. Based on these findings, a set of conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

Keywords:

Teacher Education; Motivation;
Professional Development;
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1- Introduction

The participation of student teachers in professional development programs is the central key to preparing effective teachers, as it helps them acquire and master the basic and innovative skills necessary for the teaching and learning process [1]. A literature review reported that student teachers should be trained by qualified trainers with outstanding experience in learning environments [1–3]. Therefore, professional education programs should contain rich and extensive training to equip student teachers with the competencies to become evaluative, creative, and innovative by integrating improved knowledge and essential skills for responsible entry into professional practice. On this basis, the current teacher education programs are expected to do more than previous training programs in terms of enabling student teachers to organize and establish their own instructional decisions and to take responsibility for developing the ways in which students can improve their learning [1, 4, 6].

To achieve the best practices in teacher education programs, many educators emphasized the importance of the role of those in charge of professional development programs in motivating student teachers to achieve the highest level of active participation in the training process. This is due to the importance of motivation as one of the greatest factors contributing to the effectiveness of professional training. In this context, educators referred to the effective and influential role of motivation in directing student teachers' instructional performance. Many researchers have emphasized that there is a very strong correlation between a teacher's motivation and her/his classroom performance [6, 7]. Besides, many

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previous studies confirmed that the teacher's weakness is not only reflected in her/his teaching performance but also in the poor quality of the learning process and the students' poor motivation to learn [8, 9]. Based on the previous discussion, the researcher concludes that all professional development programs must employ various methods of stimulating the motivation of student teachers, as this will enable them to be effective and influential in providing the finest and best learning environments capable of preparing young people for lifelong learning; this entails student teachers continuing to acquire innovative knowledge and skills throughout their entire profession [4, 5, 10, 11].

Educational and psychological researchers stress that paying attention to the motivation of student teachers to participate in professional development programs has great significance in raising the efficiency of future teachers because it activates teaching and learning practices towards achieving educational goals. Therefore, the student teacher can direct this activity towards better performance and work on its continuity and diversity in different learning situations [12, 13]. Al-Barakat et al. [14] emphasized that stimulating student teachers' interest and motivation to participate in professional development programs is one of the important factors used to achieve educational goals; in the same context, Al-Hassan et al. [15] stated that student teachers' motivation is considered to be a crucial factor in preparing teachers to be effective in their future profession. Rehman & Haider [5] reported that motivation to be a teacher is the basis of all teaching tasks because the teacher cannot achieve his goals without it. Therefore, if the teacher is motivated to participate in professional development, she/he will be able to achieve the best levels of educational performance in learning environments. According to Darling-Hammond et al. [16] and Desimone [17], student-teachers who have a high motivation to develop their teaching skills related to classroom environment management, using technology, and a variety of learning resources will be highly active and effective future teachers.

The high motivation of student teachers contributes effectively to developing their abilities to be involved in the development of self-regulated learning skills [18–21]. This clarifies that education institutions need to achieve excellence in teacher training programs and improve support structures to enhance and sustain positive motivation and behaviors during field training [22, 23]. In order to prepare teachers to be up-to-date with contemporary educational innovations, numerous studies [5, 24, 25] reported that it is difficult for the student teachers to prepare properly if they do not have the motivation and desire towards professional development to become properly prepared teachers. Therefore, the proper preparation of the student teacher requires that she/he be a practitioner of self-regulated learning skills. These skills are regarded as an approach to motivating student teachers to learn in professional development programs; by giving them more choices and responsibility, they will take a more active and involved approach at school [5, 26, 27].

More definitely, it is obvious that student teachers' motivation towards professional development programs is closely related to their trainers' ability to motivate them to possess self-regulated learning skills. Francom [26] and Al-Barakat et al. [28] stress that student trainers must focus on inculcating the principles of self-regulated learning as part of their preparation. Based on the above, the fact that self-regulated learning positively affects student teachers' motivation and their instructional performance in a learning environment must be emphasized. This depends on the effectiveness of training programs in encouraging and motivating student teachers to be active participants [29, 30]. Thus, student teachers' motivation towards professional training programs may vary from a country to another. Goller et al. [31] conducted a study aimed at exploring Finnish undergraduate students' motivations for selecting teaching as a profession and their perceptions of teaching as a profession in comparison to German student teachers. The findings revealed that motivation towards teaching and perceptions of the teaching profession reflected both differences and similarities between Finland and Germany. The study offered novel information on student teachers' motivational structures. Besides, the study revealed that despite the fact that motivation toward teaching seemed to be different in these two countries, the teachers' perceptions of teaching seemed to be more similar.

Hasan et al. [32] investigated student teachers' motivations toward the teaching profession and their views about professional development programs. The data for the study were collected from 302 student teachers using a questionnaire, and the subjects of the study expressed their motivation and interest in being teachers due to intrinsic and preferential tendencies. The findings showed that the main reason for the student teachers' motivation was the positive experiences and enthusiasm among student teachers during professional development. Simić et al. [33] assessed motivation towards the teaching profession in Serbia. The findings showed that school teachers scored higher on intrinsic motivation. In the same context, Stellmacher et al. [34] investigated the profession choice motivation of student teachers in the program of vocational education. A questionnaire was distributed to 79 student teachers. It was found that student teachers have the highest interest in and motivation toward their profession choice. In the same context, Gaber et al. [35] examined the contribution of the school principals in developing teachers' motivation. Data were collected from 40 teachers using a questionnaire on a 5-point scale. The results showed that the respondents to the study lack motivation, which negatively affects their teaching performance. The study recommended the need for school principals to raise the motivation of teachers to achieve the best performance in learning environments. Abonyi et al. [22] examined the motives of student teachers for selecting tutoring as a profession to teach in Ghanaian schools. The sample for the study consisted of 300 student teachers. Findings showed that student teachers select teaching as a job due to their desire to form the future of students, prior teaching and learning experiences, enhancing social equity, and perceived teaching ability.

Gaber's [35] study designed a training program to find out its effectiveness on student teachers' practice of decision-making skills and their motivation at the Egyptian Sohag University. The results of the study revealed the importance of professional training programs in developing student teachers' abilities to practice decision-making skills as well as motivating them to learn.

Kanyesigye et al. [36] assessed the influence of professional development on physics teachers' motivation to use active learning strategies such as problem-based learning (PBL). The findings showed that professional development greatly affected the motivation of physics teachers to employ the active learning approach in learning environments. Thus, numerous studies [37–39] stressed that professional development not only affects the motivation of student teachers but also contributes to empowering student teachers to develop the various skills to use knowledge in real learning situations, assess the effect of their performance, and review their plans based on the evidence they gather and explain. Hart et al. [1] investigated the relationship between preservice teachers' motivation and their self-efficacy to teach English. The sample for the study consisted of 94 student teachers. Data were collected using a Likert-type questionnaire. The results of the study showed that pre-service English language teachers had great external motivation to practice the teaching profession as well as a great level of self-efficacy in speaking English. Based on the above, the researcher concludes that involving student teachers in the professional development program at the University of Sharjah is very important. This participation may reflect their interest in choosing teaching as a career coupled with their teaching skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes.

The previous studies revealed the importance of motivating student teachers to participate in professional training programs to become able to achieve the best teaching performance inside and outside learning environments. Moreover, previous studies showed the role of teacher education institutions in making student teachers eager to participate in professional development programs, so that it becomes a real success story for them. Accordingly, it must be emphasized that raising the motivation of student teachers is one of the roles of professional development institutions, which must positively affect the performance of student teachers to be involved, integrated, and productive in the learning and teaching environments and their participation, stability, and productivity [7, 40].

Based on the foregoing, the current study differs from previous studies in its objective, sample, place, and time. More specifically, it was unique in dealing with student teachers' motivation towards participating in professional development programs in the Emirate of Sharjah, especially as the national trends in the UAE aim to spread participation in professional development programs as a prerequisite for working in schools. Despite the efforts made to achieve this goal, there is still a gap between theory and practice, so this study has emerged to fill this gap related to the lack of knowledge about the motivation of student teachers to participate in professional development programs in the Emirati environment represented by the Emirate of Sharjah.

2- Rational and Statement of the Study

Participation in professional development has become mandatory for all students and teachers pursuing a Bachelor of Education in their profession in the UAE. Professional development enables student-teachers a unique opportunity to apply academic skills to practical skills. This provides the student-teacher with the right environment to be able to interact, negotiate, collaborate, etc. with all persons in the educational process, such as principals, teachers, and students. In addition to knowing the curricula and official professional documents in the school, as well as knowing the mechanisms of teaching planning, implementation, and evaluation, which contributes to the development of the student-teacher's personality to become positive and interactive with his students.

Professional development programs earn the student teacher new knowledge, skills, and values that might support and assist in the acquisition of a positive attitude and high motivation towards the teaching profession. Therefore, students and teachers must prepare adequately for the practice of teaching through professional development programs. More precisely, it will help them increase and acquire the indispensable skills that will qualify them to be effective teachers.

The Ministry of Education in the United Arab Emirates has affirmed a strong commitment to promoting teacher motivation towards ensuring improvement in the quality of classroom practices. To achieve this, the Superior Education Authority in the Emirate of Sharjah has encouraged and motivated undergraduates to participate in professional development programs. Hence, various training programs have been allocated to be free, with incentives paid to the participants to enhance their motivation to become outstanding teachers capable of developing learning environments. This has stimulated the researchers' interest in investigating student-teachers' motivation during the field training phase at the University of Sharjah. Consequently, this contributed to revealing the motivation of student teachers towards participating in professional development programs and their role in arousing their perseverance, ambition, and desire to implement the tasks and activities of the professional development program. To achieve this, the following two questions were raised:

1. *What is the level of motivation of student teachers towards participating in professional development programs during the field training stage?*

2. What is the role of motivation in the perseverance, ambition and planning among student teachers during the field training stage?

3- The Objectives and Significance of the Study

The current study was conducted to examine the motivation formed by student-teachers during their participation in professional development programs during the field training stage and to reveal the role of motivation formed by student-teachers in directing them to be persistent, ambitious, and eager to plan the implementation of all activities related to professional development. Based on that, this study is seen as valuable to student teachers, training program leadership at the University of Sharjah, and the Ministry of Education. Consequently, this will determine the impact of the trends of the UAE Ministry of Education in pushing students to participate in professional development programs prior to being working teachers. This is an indication of the future desires of teachers, which in turn contributes to preparing a set of training courses and workshops for future teachers to make teaching and learning practices as practical as possible by being involved with numerous tasks and activities in learning environments.

4- Research Design

The current study used a descriptive survey design because it is suitable to find out people's attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, values, motivations, and so on [41–43]. The authors regarded the descriptive survey design as proper to find out the student teachers' motivation toward participation in professional development programs in the Emirati context. The flow of this research design is presented in Figure 1.

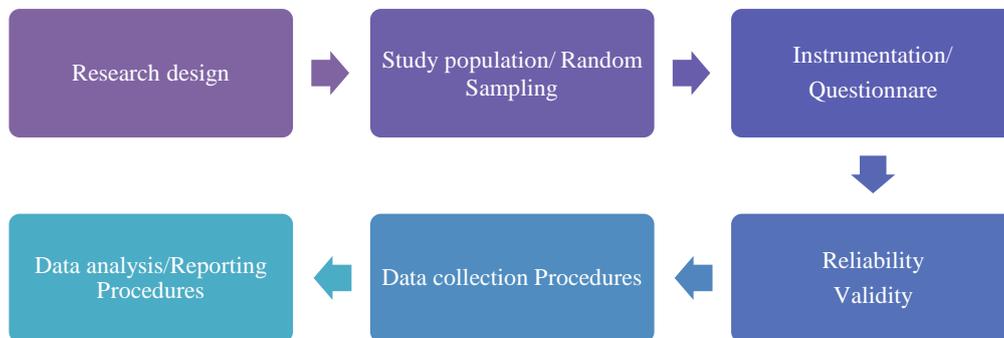


Figure 1. Research design

4-1-Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of all student teachers enrolled in teacher education programs in the last semester of their professional preparation at the Department of Education at the University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. This program was established in 1997 to be the first and main program in the Emirate of Sharjah for training preservice teachers at the primary and secondary education levels. In total, there were 100 student teachers in the professional training program. To attain a representative sample, 85 student teachers were invited to participate in the study through a random sampling technique. Out of 85 distributed questionnaires, 75 were fully completed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 88.23%.

More clearly, it must be mentioned that the study subjects were randomly selected from 40 schools. In addition, the study sample was selected from one area in the Emirate of Al-Sharjah with similar conditions. This means that all the subjects of the study are similar in academic qualifications, professional development, academic and teaching experiences, and economic and social conditions.

Considering ethical issues as a central clue in human research, permission was required from the Department of Education at the University of Sharjah to conduct the study in schools. This confirms that permission to conduct this study was approved. Furthermore, subjects to the study were informed that their involvement is voluntary and that they have the choice to withdraw from participating at any time without any impact. In addition, the participants were told that the information provided would be used for research purposes only and that their personalities would remain unspecified either through data analysis or when presenting the findings of the study in the research manuscript.

4-2-Instrument of the Study

The instrument was designed to measure the motivation of student teachers towards participating in professional development programs. It was developed according to a review of the literature and previous studies. In the first stage of the design, the instrument consisted of 43 items, five-choice, Likert-type. Response options ranged from 1 to 5 (*Strongly Agree* = 5, *Agree* = 4, *Undecided* = 3, *Disagree* = 2, *Strongly Disagree* = 1).

To guarantee the validity of the instrument, it was checked by a group of nine arbitrators (four members of the Curriculum and Instruction Department, two teachers, one member of measurement and evaluation, and two members of educational supervision). On the advice of the panel of arbitrators, the items in the questionnaire (Appendix I) were reduced to 39 to avoid ambiguity. The instrument was further validated by another panel, which confirmed the suitability of the instrument for collecting the data sought by the authors.

Regarding the reliability of the questionnaire and to ensure the internal consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated, reaching 0.96, which indicates that the questionnaire is suitable for achieving the purposes of the study. Moreover, and for reliability purposes too, the questionnaire was applied twice using a test-retest with an interval of two weeks between the two applications to an exploratory sample of 29 participants, who were excluded from the study sample, and then Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated, which amounted to 0.94.

4-3-Steps to Conduct the Study

The study was conducted through the following steps:

- Determine the statement of the study and write the introduction and theoretical background of the study.
- Preparing the data collection instrument, after assuring its validity and reliability.
- Selection of the study sample after obtaining the official approval of each respondent separately.
- Distributing the instrument to the respondents. The researchers made a personal visit to the schools to meet the subjects of the study and distribute the questionnaire. The subjects of the study were given three weeks to fill the questionnaire after which it was retrieved by the authors themselves.
- Processing the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. It was used to calculate the means and deviations for each item in the questionnaire. This was carried out in order to calculate the degree of student teachers' motivation towards participation in professional development programs.

5- Results of the Study

The results of the study can be illustrated in Figure 2.

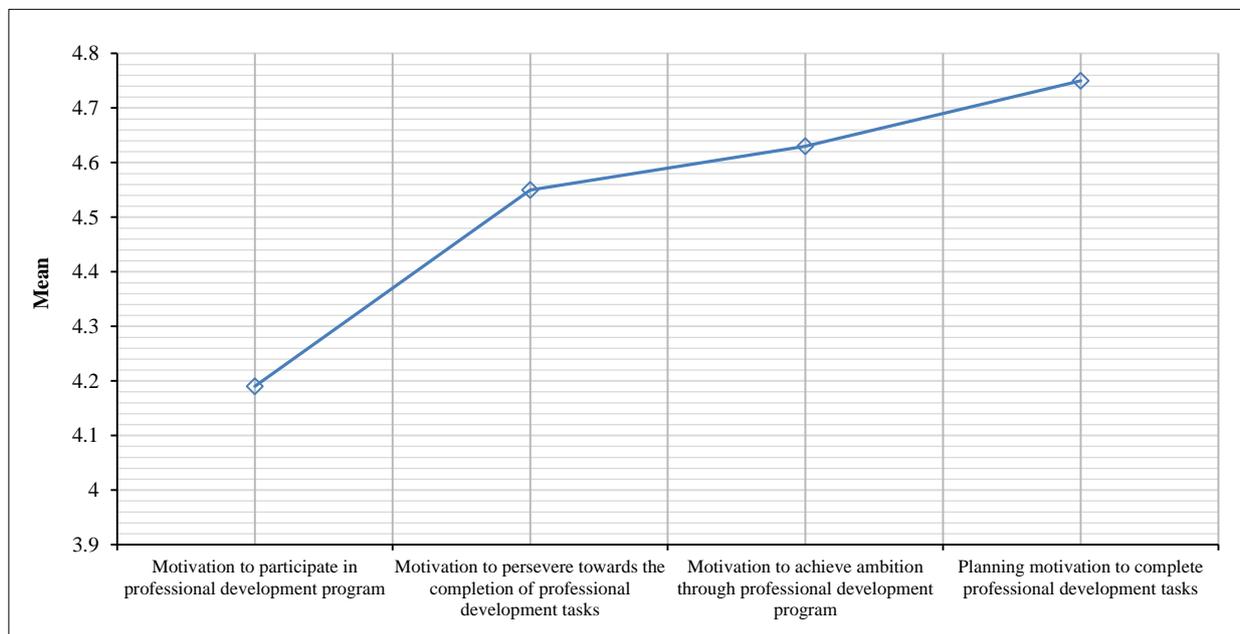


Figure 2. The nature of student teachers' motivation

The above figure shows the overall results of the study based on their arithmetic mean; it shows that the general motivation towards participating in professional development programs scored a mean of 4.19 out of 5.00. Moreover, Figure 2 shows that the achievement motivation of student teachers during participation in professional development programs was very high, as the dimension of motivation to persevere towards the completion of professional development tasks scored a mean of 4.55 and the dimension of motivation to achieve ambition through professional development programs scored a mean of 4.63. The dimension of planning motivation to complete professional development tasks also recorded the highest mean, reaching a dimension of 4.75. To present a complete idea of the results, they were presented in two parts, according to the study questions, as follows:

5-1-Part One: Results of the First Question

The first question of the study aimed to find out the level of motivation of student teachers towards participating in professional development programs during the field training stage. To achieve this, the means and standard deviations of each item were calculated. They are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. data analysis related to student teachers' motivation toward participating in professional development programs

No.	Items	Means	Standard deviation
1	I feel so happy when I hear about professional training programs being held.	4.56	0.504
2	I find that professional development programs have improved my thinking skills.	4.53	0.507
3	I believe that every teacher should participate in professional development programs.	4.52	0.508
4	I feel that my professional performance has improved my abilities to apply current teaching strategies	4.47	0.567
5	I find that professional development is beneficial to me.	4.45	0.723
6	I get pleasure when I present ideas to my colleagues in the field of professional development.	4.44	0.669
7	I feel happy and satisfied when participating in professional development programs.	4.43	0.665
8	I like to take responsibility in professional settings to develop my self-regulated learning skills.	4.42	0.712
9	I prefer to do profession development tasks by group work rather than do it alone	4.41	0.499
10	I enjoy participating in professional development programs; because they improve my professional performance.	4.38	0.554
11	I am serious when pursuing professional development topics.	4.37	0.609
12	I give professional development tasks too much attention.	4.36	0.660
13	I find that professional development activities have enabled me to practice reflective thinking.	4.28	0.634
14	I enjoy the new ideas that I learn from the Professional Development Program	4.27	0.683
15	I feel that professional development programs have become as a part of my professional priorities.	4.10	0.746
16	I see that working with colleagues in professional development programs helps me improve my professional performance.	4.04	0.798
17	I am pleased to promote outstanding performance in professional development programs.	4.03	1.068
18	I find professional development programs to be unhelpful.	1.50	0.950
19	I feel uncomfortable while doing professional development tasks with colleagues	1.03	0.897
Total		4.19	0.369

It is clear from Table 1 that the items (1–17) have scored high means. The total mean of all items scored 4.19. In addition, all items included in the study instrument were welcomed by the respondents. This was confirmed by the high means, where the means of the items (1–17) ranged between 4.56 and 4.03. Regarding items 18 and 19, they recorded the lowest means because they are negative items. It was included to verify the accuracy and reliability of the responses.

This finding underlies the fact that the subjects of the study were invited to indicate whether training to teach was their main motive for joining their teacher education program. The highest means (4.56-4.03) presented in Table 1 indicate that high motivation is the main reason that prompted student teachers to enroll in professional development programs to learn and develop their professional abilities to become effective teachers in the future.

5-2-Part Two: Result of the Second Question

The second question of the study attempted to find out the role of achievement motivation in perseverance, ambition, and planning among student teachers during the field training stage. To achieve this, the means and standard deviations of each item in the dimensions of the questionnaire were calculated. The results of each dimension can be presented separately as follows:

5-2-1-Dimension One: Perseverance in Accomplishing the Activities of the Professional Development

This dimension presents eight items related to the perseverance of the student teacher in accomplishing the activities of the professional development program at the University of Sharjah. These items are presented in descending order according to their means in Table 2.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations of the degree of motivation of student teachers in the dimension of perseverance in accomplishing the activities of the professional development

No.	Items	Means	Standard deviation
1	I make sure I master professional development assignments before I turn them in.	4.98	0.025
2	I repeat the solution when I have difficulty carrying out professional development tasks.	4.96	0.055
3	I am keen to complete the requirements of the professional development program on time.	4.87	0.254
4	I get excited when I participate in tasks that require effort and activity.	4.80	0.485
5	I am keen to complete all the tasks of the professional development program accurately, in order and mastery.	4.79	0.377
6	I do my best to fulfill the requirements to pass the Professional Development Program.	4.77	0.276
7	I feel lazy when I do professional development tasks.	1.01	0.290
8	I lose my enthusiasm when one of my colleagues beats me.	1.01	0.291
Total		4.55	0.443

It is obvious from the above table that the overall average of the items in the dimension of perseverance in accomplishing the activities of professional development recorded a high level of 4.55. This means that the achievement motivation of student teachers in the dimension of perseverance to accomplish professional development activities scored a considerable percentage of 91.00%. Regarding each item of the dimension, Table 1 shows that all the positive items (1-6) in this dimension recorded high means, as it was found that the first six items averaged between 4.98 and 4.77. This confirms that the perseverance to accomplish professional development activities has a high level of achievement motivation among student teachers. This gives empirical evidence that the student teachers have outstanding motivation and perseverance to accomplish the activities of the professional development program regarding the mastery of professional development assignments and completing the requirements of the professional development program accurately, in order, and masterfully. Moreover, item number 2 has scored the second rank with a mean of 4.96.

Returning to Table 2, the reader notes that the last two items (7 and 8) recorded the lowest means because they are negative items. These items scored the lowest, with an average of 1.01. These two paragraphs were included in the questionnaire to ensure the accuracy of the participants in expressing their responses. This provides further evidence showing that student teachers are active rather than lazy in carrying out professional development activities, and they have a high level of enthusiasm to participate in professional development activities.

5-2-2- Second Dimension: Achieving Ambition through Professional Development Programs

This dimension relates to Achieving ambition through professional development programs. It includes eleven items. These items are presented in descending order according to their means in Table 3.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of the degree of motivation of student teachers in the dimension of achieving ambition through professional development programs

No.	Items	Means	Standard deviation
1	I use all my abilities to do all my professional tasks.	4.89	0.501
2	I aspire to be at a high level of professional development.	4.85	0.567
3	I participate in all forums related to professional development.	4.82	0.528
4	I aspire to accomplish professional tasks that require accuracy and mastery.	4.81	0.612
5	I put on my agenda to be distinguished in achieving my professional ambitions.	4.79	0.456
6	I aspire to be an active member of professional development associations.	4.78	0.345
7	I participate in conferences and seminars related to professional development.	4.77	0.567
8	I do my best to accomplish professional tasks based on excellence.	4.68	0.543
9	I aspire to carry out all professional tasks that require high skills.	4.62	0.778
10	I feel happy when I complete professional tasks that require a high degree of excellence.	4.61	0.467
11	I use all my abilities to do all my work.	4.58	0.456
12	I prefer to accomplish difficult, not easy, professional tasks.	4.57	0.567
13	I feel happy that my professional skills are being challenged.	4.56	0.345
Total		4.63	0.432

Table 3 shows that the overall mean of this dimension is 4.63, which is equivalent to 92.60%. In terms of the arithmetic means of each item separately, Table 3 reveals that all the items recorded high averages that ranged between 4.89 and 4.56. These results confirm that the level of ambition among student teachers is high and that the student teachers' ambition stems from their achievement motivation. That is, these data show that a high level of ambition is one of the main factors in motivation toward achievement.

5-2-3- Third Dimension: Achievement Motivation towards Planning in Carrying Out Professional Development Tasks and Activities

This dimension includes nine items related to planning for professional development tasks and activities. These items are presented in descending order according to their means in Table 4.

Table 4. means and standard deviation related to achievement motivation towards planning in carrying out professional development tasks and activities

No.	Items	Means	Standard deviation
1	I enjoy when I plan professional assignments.	4.95	0.330
2	I continue to achieve my professional goals in all the toughest conditions.	4.93	0.564
3	I think critically when I plan professional assignments.	4.93	0.400
4	I plan my professional tasks so that I can grow professionally in the future.	4.80	0.453
5	I prepare an implementation plan for all my professional tasks.	4.80	0.612
6	I cannot do any professional tasks without prior planning.	4.79	0.345
7	I feel happy when I plan new professional skills.	4.75	0.301
8	I think reflectively when I plan professional activities.	4.70	0.405
9	I feel relieved when I complete my professional tasks.	4.56	0.259
Total		4.75	0.319

Table 4 shows that the overall mean of this dimension scored 4.75. Through the data in Table 4, it can be said that achievement motivation provoked student teachers to set and plan their goals to be distinguished in their professional performance during the field training phase. These results show that student teachers have the highest levels of happiness when planning and implementing professional development tasks. In addition, these findings reflect an outstanding performance in achievement motivation, which releases energy and stimulates activity through integrating external incentives with internal incentives in moving behavior and pushing it towards achieving specific goals, whether it is in the field of study or profession.

6- Discussion

The results of the study revealed a very high level of motivation among student teachers regarding participation in professional training programs. The findings seem to show that intrinsic motivation was regarded as the main justification that attracted the student teachers to enroll in professional training programs at the University of Sharjah. This underlines that student teachers are willing to become teachers as a first-choice profession option. Based on the highest means of the student teachers, the findings of the first question confirm that the high motivation of the respondents led them to express their happiness when they heard about professional training programs being held because these programs improve their abilities to apply current teaching strategies and practice thinking skills. The results of the first question consents with previous studies [29, 30, 44], which confirm that student teachers are happy to participate in professional development programs to be proficient, skilled, well qualified, and capable of their profession preparation process. This means that motivating student teachers is a primary attractive factor for their participation in professional development programs so that they become outstanding teachers in the future. This gives an indication that the intrinsic motivation to be a teacher was the main motive for choosing teaching as a career.

Moreover, the subjects of the study emphasized that they like to take responsibility in professional settings to develop their self-regulated learning skills. This finding is in line with previous studies [45], which revealed that self-regulated learning has an excellent effect on students' motivation.

Based on the regular observations of the authors and their discussions with student teachers, these findings could be attributed to the role of training programs in developing self-regulated learning skills among student teachers. This justification was underlined by the former studies, which found a very strong positive correlation between motivational components and self-regulated learning [46]. Similarly, several studies showed a significant correlation between self-regulated strategy and motivation in various contexts [29, 44, 47, 48].

Based on the very high motivation level of the respondents to the study, the findings of the first question emphasize the role of intrinsic motivation in directing student teachers to participate in professional development programs. This finding is in line with previous studies [49, 50], which confirmed that intrinsic motivation positively impacts student teachers' participation in professional development programs.

In general, student teachers' motivation to train as teachers could therefore be generally described as intrinsic rather than extrinsic or preferential. The results of the study in this context are not consistent with the results of previous studies, such as the study of Hart et al. [1], which showed that despite the high self-efficacy of student teachers, external motivation is dominant for them to teach English.

Similarly, a variety of previous studies [14, 21, 51–56] confirmed that the role of intrinsic motivation in stimulating student teachers and motivating them to develop their learning practices and performance through participation in training programs is due to their passion for the teaching profession rather than being influenced by any external incentives. Likewise, student teachers' motivation was not based on tangible foundations but rather was based on a preference to be persistent teachers to develop their instructional performance. This justification was maintained by other authors, who found that strong motivation is formed through a preference to perform the task, not self-interest [31, 57, 58].

Regarding the results of the second question, data analysis showed that each student teacher has a high level of perseverance, ambition, and a high desire to plan the implementation of professional development tasks and activities. This gives an indication that achievement motivation has played a significant role in increasing the level of perseverance of student teachers in carrying out professional development tasks and activities. Besides, it confirms that student teachers enjoy working on carrying out all professional tasks embedded in the training program. In this context, it can be said that the great perseverance in carrying out the professional tasks indicates the strength of the feelings resulting from the various motives offered to student teachers by the training institute. This imperative part of feelings of well-being among student teachers is related to motivation associated with student teacher success [59–62].

Moreover, the results showed that achievement motivation has a significant role in influencing the level of student-teacher ambition in carrying out professional development tasks and activities. This result can be attributed to the way in which student-teachers were trained to take a dynamic role in building their field experiences according to their professional needs. This is emphasized by researchers [63, 64], who mentioned that effective professional development in field experiences depends on the conditions of training environments at the practicum. In this context, Al-Barakat et al. [28] stressed that achievement motivation can be developed and improved through professional development programs by selecting trained and skilled mentors and directing a set of practices that contribute to developing field experiences and enhancing teaching skills.

Furthermore, the results revealed that achievement motivation significantly influences student teachers' performance in planning their teaching and learning practices according to predetermined goals. The high motivation among student teachers to plan for professional development tasks and activities can be attributed to the positive relationships between student teachers and their mentors. The strong relationship contributed to the holding of training workshops by the mentors related to the training of student-teachers on planning mechanisms. This gives empirical evidence that the student teachers were directed and trained to perform the best practices during their practicum by both the professional development program supervisors and mentors. This result is in line with previous studies [65–68], which clarified that the effective relationship between student teachers and mentors is regarded as one of the most influential factors in developing achievement motivation among student teachers to develop positive teaching and learning practices through a constructive collaborative process that takes place between student teachers and mentors during practical practicums. This constitutes an effective and influential professional construct in preparing student teachers from the emotional side [61, 69, 70–72, 73].

Based on the above, it can be noted that the predominance of high motivation and achievement among student teachers can be attributed to the nobility of the profession of school teaching and the sustainability of this profession because the UAE society always needs outstanding teachers. The Ministry of Education offers various incentives and awards to encourage excellence and creativity in teaching. Hence, most student teachers tend to achieve the highest degrees of achievement motivation in various professional fields. This provides empirical evidence that excellence in teaching is a motivator for many student teachers to participate in professional development programs. Therefore, it is apparent that the student teachers who have joined professional development during their field training are able to effectively improve and affect their motivation to be effective teachers in teaching and learning practices, especially since motivation positively affects the student teachers' ambition, perseverance, and desire to plan and execute professional activities and tasks.

7- Conclusions, Recommendations, and Limitations

The study was undertaken to address the student teachers' motivation to participate in professional development programs at the University of Sharjah. Two research aims were put forward: revealing the nature of student teachers' motivation towards participating in the training program and identifying the nature of achievement motivation among student teachers.

The findings of the study showed that student teachers have a very high level of motivation to take part in the professional development program, in addition to a high level of achievement motivation. This conclusion introduces clear evidence that there was high ambition, desire, and high perseverance among student teachers to achieve all professional development tasks and activities.

Through these results, the researcher concludes that the motivation of student teachers was intrinsic, this can be attributed to the nobility of the teaching job in the UAE, as the appointment in the Ministry of Education as a teacher is

considered a high-level job with a distinguished social position, in addition to the excellent income of a teacher's career. The results indicate the importance and necessity of increasing the period of practical training to prepare competent teachers who are capable of implementing the best classroom practices. In this context, international studies (68, 69, 70) revealed that professional development that exceeds 14 hours has positive and effective effects on the teaching performance of student teachers. Also, teacher training for a period of 49 hours contributes to an increase of the level of student achievement of 21%. This conclusion can contribute to emphasizing that participation in professional development programs inevitably leads to achieve the following:

First, improving the quality of teaching and learning practices, and the productivity of teachers.

Second, generating high levels of achievement motivation among student teachers in terms of planning, perseverance, and ambition to reach the best international learning practices.

The results of the study also contribute to stressing the importance of providing training opportunities for students as a starting point for their future careers. Thus, although most student teachers showed their motivation to train as teachers because of their love for the profession, their future aspirations showed that they needed more training courses to become outstanding teachers.

The study results provide evidence of the importance of considering the importance of the motivations of student teachers when designing training programs in a way that encourages creativity and innovation in learning environments. This result has implications for policy and future research, as policymakers in the UAE should take into consideration that student teachers have a high motivation to develop their professional skills. Hence, various training programs should be offered for student teachers. Teacher training programs should allocate incentives to attract prospective teachers into professional development programs, particularly prospective teachers who will train as teachers and remain in teaching.

Although the participation of student teachers in professional development programs in the UAE is mandatory, and participation in in-service training may be optional, it becomes important to conduct a survey to reveal the motivation of in-service student teachers to become lifelong learners and pursue their professional learning.

Further studies are needed to throw more light on the reflective practices of the student teachers, and their instructional performance in developing students' learning to be active learners.

There were limitations to this research, as it was applied to 75 participants from a single pre-service teacher training center at the university. Future studies should expand their population size to cover most professional training programs in the UAE and increase the generalizability of the findings. More studies covering in-service teachers may be needed, with the aim of reaching a clear perception about the motivation of in-service teachers in the Ministry of Education.

8- Declarations

8-1- Author Contributions

Conceptualization, A.A.A., B.A.A., S.M.A., A.F.E., J.F.A. and S.S.A.; methodology, A.A.A., B.A.A., S.M.A., A.F.E., J.F.A., and S.S.A; writing—original draft preparation, A.A.A., B.A.A., S.M.A., A.F.E., J.F.A., and S.S.A.; writing—review and editing, A.A.A., B.A.A., S.M.A., A.F.E., J.F.A., and S.S.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

8-2- Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author

8-3- Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

8-4- Acknowledgements

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8-5- Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

8-6- Informed Consent Statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Department of Education at University of Sharjah. The participants in the study provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

8-7- Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancies have been completely observed by the authors.

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Appendix I

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear participants,

We are researchers from the Department of Education at the University of Sharjah. The survey of our research entitled “*Student Teachers’ Motivation toward Participation in the Professional Development Program*“. We would like you to help us complete this questionnaire. We would greatly appreciate your time and confirm that your participation in this research is strictly confidential.

Thank you so much for your co-operation.

Please make a cross (X) in the appropriate boxes to indicate the degree of your agreement for each item, using the scales below.

No.	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I feel that professional development programs have become as a part of my professional priorities.					
2	I am pleased to promote outstanding performance in professional development programs.					
3	I see that working with colleagues in professional development programs helps me improve my professional performance.					
4	I feel happy and satisfied when participating in professional development programs.					
5	I find professional development programs to be unhelpful.					
6	I feel uncomfortable while doing professional development tasks with colleagues					
7	I enjoy the new ideas that I learn from the Professional Development Program					
8	I get pleasure when I present ideas to my colleagues in the field of professional development.					
9	I like to take responsibility in professional settings to develop my self-regulated learning skills.					
10	I give professional development tasks too much attention.					
11	I enjoy participating in professional development programs; because they improve my professional performance.					
12	I am serious when pursuing professional development topics.					
13	I prefer to do profession development tasks by group work rather than do it alone					
14	I find that professional development activities have enabled me to practice reflective thinking.					
15	I believe that every teacher should participate in professional development programs.					
16	I feel that my professional performance has improved my abilities to apply current teaching strategies					
17	I feel so happy when I hear about professional training programs being held.					
18	I find that professional development programs have improved my thinking skills.					
19	I find that professional development is beneficial to me.					