Teacher Recruitment and the Right Career Choice: Parents' Perceptions of the Teaching Profession in Oman

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Abstract. This study aimed to identify why students are reluctant to choose teaching as a career in the Sultanate of Oman from parents' perceptions. It also aimed to verify whether there were statistically significant gender differences in parents' perceptions of the teaching profession. Using a quantitative research design, the study applied a questionnaire to a sample of 2,519 parents, of whom 66.7% were males and 33.3% were females. The questionnaire results indicated that the reasons for reluctance in choosing to teach from parents' perceptions centred on the difficulty of the career, the lack of financial incentives compared to the workload, and teachers' low social status compared to other professions. The results also revealed gender differences in choosing teaching as a career in favour of females from the perspective of students' parents. It is recommended that parents should respect their children's choice of future professions and their desire to be teachers. In addition, the Ministry of Education in Oman must make significant efforts to make teaching an attractive career again.

Keywords: career choice; teaching profession; parents' perceptions; Oman; quantitative research

1. Introduction

The education sector plays a significant role in all developed and developing societies across various social, educational, cultural, political, and economic fields. Education is one of the most important sources of national income for many countries in the world. In Muslim countries, the Islamic religion values

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knowledge exceptionally highly. The first verse in the Qur'an is "Read". Islam offers teachers the maximum appreciation and respect, as the Messenger, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him, says, "I was only sent as a teacher" Ahmed (2029). Arab culture also emphasises the roles of scientific teachers. As the poet says, "Arise for the teacher and give him veneration, the teacher is almost a messenger". Therefore, teachers have gained a prestigious social status, and many graduates seek to join the teaching profession.

Despite the importance of the teaching profession to any society, students are reluctant to join the profession in many countries (Perryman & Calvert, 2020). Recent societal and cultural development in the Arab countries has led to the emergence of job opportunities with high social status, which have attracted young people's interest more than the teaching profession. This is exacerbated by the fact that teachers face many burdens. These challenges and responsibilities have sometimes led to diminished teaching competencies within the educational system.

Although it offers many advantages, the modern teaching profession is less popular than in the past. Some aspects of teaching have deteriorated, and there are insufficient numbers of teachers, despite their importance and direct impact on the education of young people and future generations (Al-Hamri, 2011; Al-Tisha et al., 2014). Students are reluctant to join the teaching profession due to many educational, functional, social, and material reasons, some of which are related to administrative and job satisfaction. However, it is unfair to reduce students' reluctance to join the teaching profession to material or functional returns (Ramos & Hughes, 2020).

There are many reasons why students are reluctant to enter the teaching profession, including the educational and moral burdens that teachers face. Countries' diverse cultural, social, economic, and political contexts impact these causes' specific natures (Räsänen et al., 2020). Males are particularly underrepresented in joining the profession. This creates a prominent issue.

In 2013, a World Bank report confirmed that female teachers accounted for about 90–99% of teachers in countries such as Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Italy. However, UK statistics showed that male teachers constituted only 13.7% of primary school teachers in 2018 (World Bank, 2013; Eurostat, 2021).

Despite this increase, the teaching profession still suffers from an imbalance between females and males. Statistics confirm that about 28% of primary schools have no qualified male teachers. Furthermore, the males in these schools are unqualified teachers who play supporting roles in learning and teaching (Pollitt & Oldfield, 2017).

2. Reasons for students' reluctance to pursue teaching as a career
Several studies have been conducted in many countries to explore why students are reluctant to enter the teaching profession. For example, studies have been conducted in Oman (Aisan et al., 2011; Shura Council, 2015; Al-Mahdi, 2015), Kuwait (Al- Tisha et al., 2014), Sudan (Al-Hamri, 2011), Jordan (Radwan, 2010), the UAE (Al-Shahiya, 2019), the UK, New Zealand, and Australia (Bacolod, 2007; Cushman, 2007; Lahelma, 2000; Mills et al. 2004). Aisan et al. (2011) found that the

most important reasons for students' reluctance were teachers' low job satisfaction, poor teacher professional preparation programs, limited internal competence in schools, laws and regulations related to the profession, social and family status, and teachers' health status. Furthermore, the results revealed some demographic variables that statistically significantly affected reluctance, including gender, experience, marital status, social status, and workplace.

Interestingly, a study conducted by the Omani Shura Council (2015) revealed many reasons behind the low levels of job satisfaction among Omani teachers. These included teachers' complaints about their social, psychological, and material conditions, especially the continued high cost of living, which forced them to search for additional income. Furthermore, Omani media depicts teachers negatively, laws restrict teachers' interaction with students and parents, and there is no legally defined list of teachers' rights.

Al-Mahdi et al. (2015) found a shortage of teachers in some subjects in Omani schools. They identified that the subject facing the most significant shortage was English language, where the number of foreign teachers reached 1,190 out of 1,856 teachers – twice the number of Omani teachers. Furthermore, the percentage of male Omani teachers in this subject was only 35.88%. Music also suffered from a shortage of male teachers, and only 11.41% of teachers were Omani. There was also a shortage of teachers in most majors; this was higher among males than females. The number of graduates from colleges of education was minimal compared to the size of the demand for teachers in public schools. The study highlighted that this is due to the mismatch between graduates and the labour market's needs in terms of numbers, gender, and subjects. There was a deficit in some subjects but a surplus in others. This reflects the lack of a clear vision and coordination between higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education.

Al-Amiri (2011) identified the reasons behind teachers' reluctance to work in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia. These were related to the teacher, the student, the curriculum, and the administrative organisation. Teacher-related reasons included the belief that pre-secondary stages are easier to teach and the psychological and physical stress of secondary school education. Student-related reasons surrounded the large number of students taught in a semester, secondary school students' frequent behavioural problems, students' low levels of achievement, and students' weak desire to study. The curriculum caused reluctance through the intensity of education courses at the secondary stage, the multiplicity of education materials, and the multiplicity of models required for exams, assignments, and lesson preparation. The most prevalent administrative factors influencing reluctance were a lack of teacher incentives in exchange for the effort they exert in teaching at the secondary level, the weakness of the powers granted to the teacher to combat students' misbehaviour, the weak leadership role of the high school principal in dealing with secondary students, and the lack of courses offered to secondary school teachers to improve their scientific and professional abilities.

Al-Hujairi (2015) identified that the most important reasons for primary school teachers' reluctance to teach in primary schools in Saudi Arabia were the increase

in the number of students in the classes and the lack of incentives for the effort spent in teaching these classes, which require unique methods and significant control. Furthermore, some teachers lack experience in implementing activities in these classes.

In Kuwait, Al-Rashidi (2016) showed that economic factors were the most important reasons that Kuwaiti teachers were reluctant to join the profession. This was followed by social, personal, and, educational reasons. There were statistically significant gender differences in the economic, social, and personal causes of reluctance in favour of males.

In Libya, Malouq (2016) highlighted eight reasons behind the reluctance of male students to join the teaching profession. First, they believed that teaching was arduous and tiring, requiring patience and not achieving many ambitions. Second, the profession lacks salaries, rewards, and incentives. Third, the number of female teachers far exceeds that of male teachers, making society perceive teaching as a female profession. Fourth, male students frequently misbehave toward teachers. Fifth, society views teachers as inferior and lacks appreciation for them. Sixth, school administrations have significant control over teachers. Seventh, teachers have limited opportunities for promotion. Eighth, teachers, especially males, face several responsibilities and pressures.

Ahmed & Al-Krasny (2010) distributed a questionnaire to 2,756 students enrolled in colleges of education in Sudanese universities. The study showed that reluctance to enter the teaching profession had many causes. Economic factors were the most significant, followed by social, psychological, and academic factors. The students suggested several ways to make colleges of education more attractive. They stated that the Higher Institute of Teachers should select outstanding students and motivate them to ensure quality in teacher preparation and education outcomes in the primary and secondary stages of education. Furthermore, priority should be given to graduates from the Faculties of Education, and opportunities should be created for further qualification and training in postgraduate education. Additionally, teachers' salaries and benefits should be improved, and teaching students should be provided with access to qualified people, libraries, and laboratories.

Many previous studies have also highlighted males' reluctance to join the teaching profession in developed countries. Szwed (2010) indicated that recruiting more male teachers to work in primary schools is a vital goal for many Western countries. Therefore, the British Schools Training and Development Agency launched a 10-year marketing campaign to increase the number of male teachers; however, it had limited success. The study attempted to analyse the causes of this failure, including the feminisation of the teaching profession, the low status of primary school teachers, and concerns related to child protection. The study also discussed how to increase the recruitment and retention of male teachers in primary schools. Similarly, Wilson (2011) conducted a study presenting the experiences of male teacher retention in Europe. The study showed that male teachers in early childhood education were viewed by society as unacceptable because they lack the necessary skills for childcare compared to female teachers.

These negative views and perceptions have contributed to males' reluctance to enter teaching, and many males have moved to administrative positions.

Weaver-Hightower (2011) considered the feminisation of primary school teaching and argued that many educational concerns surround male students' education quality. This study found that males are reluctant to enter teaching in many countries, especially at the primary stage. Despite public attempts and political movements to increase their numbers, male teachers faced many obstacles and challenges. This study revealed the challenges facing male employment and retention in teaching. It presented strategies that males used to deal with the challenges, including avoiding physical contact with children, using humour, and using public places to have individual conversations with students.

Pollitt and Oldfield (2017) investigated the challenges facing male primary school teachers in the UK, focusing on their motivations and their attitudes toward their profession. Interviews were conducted with male primary school teachers. They conducted objective data analysis on three topics related to potential challenges, including physical contact methods. Perceptions were negative about working in a female environment. The study recommended that teachers be trained at the primary level to reduce barriers and concerns related to the feminisation of the teaching profession. It also highlighted how to positively enhance motivations for joining the profession.

In Finland, Räsänen et al. (2020) identified the reasons behind young people's reluctance to join the teaching profession, a major global problem in education. It also explored the reasons behind teachers' intentions to leave the profession. Data were collected through a longitudinal survey of comprehensive school teachers over 2010 (n = 2,310) and 2016 (n = 1,450). The results showed that 50% of teachers intended to leave the profession, but their reasons differed significantly–the most widely cited reasons related to the school system and workload. The results also highlighted several aspects of the educational system that must be improved to increase teacher job satisfaction and retention.

Perryman & Calvert (2020) state that teacher retention is a long-term problem. Their study identified that in the UK, persistently large numbers of qualified teachers have left within five years of starting the profession. The study used data from a recent five-year survey and applied it to alumni of the UCL Institute of Education in London. It explored the factors that motivated them to teach, why they left the profession, or why they might consider leaving in the future. The results found that workload was the most frequent reason for leaving or considering leaving the profession. The most critical factors influencing leaving the profession were more negative experiences teaching than expected, the nature of the workload, and the performance and accountability evaluation system.

In the USA, Ramos & Hughes (2020) showed that schools nationwide had been losing teachers at an alarming rate for several years. However, this decline is reaching crisis levels across parts of the United States for various reasons. The literature on public education has identified financial constraints as the main reasons behind this shortage of teachers; however, research has recently begun to examine other factors, such as work conditions and personal satisfaction. The results of this study demonstrated that classroom conditions, particularly

students' discipline concerns, motivated teachers to consider leaving the profession. Therefore, the study recommended intensifying initiatives to improve schools, especially in combating teacher attrition. It suggested developing possible political decisions and modifications to professional practice, which would improve classroom climates and increase teacher recruitment and retention.

3. Gender differences in students' attitudes toward the teaching profession

Baoush (2012) found statistically significant differences in students' attitudes towards the teaching profession according to gender in favour of females. Reasons related to their more positive attitudes toward teaching than males due to society's acceptance of women working in the field of education. This was also influenced by society's perception of women's innate role of women in caring for and educating children.

In Kuwait, Al-Rashidi (2016) showed statistically significant gender differences in students' reluctance to choose teaching as a career. These were related to economic, social, and personal reasons in favour of males. Furthermore, there were statistically significant differences in the students' reluctance to choose teaching according to their educational qualifications in favour of high degree holders.

Mutshaeni et al. (2015) measured school students' attitudes towards the teaching profession. They highlighted that secondary school students perceive the teaching profession negatively. Data were collected using self-reported questionnaires and group interviews. The results revealed that these negative perceptions were influenced by teachers' low salaries, students' lack of respect for teachers, increasing violence in schools, the nature of teaching, stress from excessive workloads, the increased responsibilities that teachers face daily in schools, and the fact that teachers do not encourage students to choose teaching as a profession.

However, Holfve-Sabel (2006) compared the attitudes of students in Sweden toward the teaching profession with attitudes 35 years ago. The results identified a general improvement in students 'attitudes towards the profession. There were significant differences in students' attitudes toward the teaching profession related to teachers and teaching, work atmosphere, and social relations with classmates. Similarly, Mosha (2016) measured secondary school students' attitudes toward the teaching profession. Data were collected through interviews and a focus group discussion. The results revealed that high school students had both positive and negative attitudes. However, females had more positive attitudes toward the profession than males. Professions such as law, computer science, hotel management, and human resource management were ranked higher than the teaching profession. Students viewed teaching as a low-paying profession. Teachers were not good role models for the students because they complained and did not perform their duties satisfactorily. This can be explained by a lack of resources, large classes, poor teaching and learning environments, and low salaries. Egwu (2015) showed that students have a negative attitude towards the teaching profession. This was influenced by their perceptions of teaching as a difficult task and teachers' low pay compared to other professions.

4. Parents' and society's perceptions of the teaching profession

Limited previous studies have highlighted parental and societal perceptions of the teaching profession. Ambosaidi et al. (2018) identified the image of the Omani teacher in society. The study sample comprised 1,196 Omani community members from different sectors and Oman governorates. The results showed that society had a generally positive perception of Omani teachers. They appreciated Omani teachers as the basis for society's progress and growth, educators and message holders, and positive influences on their community's future. In Saudi Arabia, Al-Sulaimi (2016) stated that teachers' low status in Saudi society was due to several reasons. These included economic reasons, the policies of the Ministry of Education, social reasons, and reasons related to the individual teacher. Akashi (2014) found that teachers in Algerian society had an inferior social status. He suggested some solutions to this problem, including raising teachers' monthly salaries, providing them with housing, improving teacher-related social services, offering teachers opportunities to increase their educational attainment, holding seminars and scientific forums for teachers, and reducing the number of teachers. Other suggestions included reducing the number of students in classes, limiting working hours, providing necessary support services, improving teachers' professional relationships by improving teachers' morals, reviewing the content of academic programs, and improving the social standing of teachers by improving the social status of science and scholars in Algeria.

5. This study

As part of the National Education Strategy 2040, the Ministry of Education in Oman follows national standards for selecting teachers to ensure a high quality of education. New national standards have been introduced alongside adequate and efficient teacher training. Oman has established a specialised institute for teacher vocational training. The institute provides high-quality in-service training to improve teachers' competencies in their scientific subject and appropriate teaching methods and focuses on the principle of education for sustainable development. It aims to create a sense of belonging to the profession by implementing programs promoting the participation of experienced teachers and school principals from various educational governorates in Oman to develop training programs. This will strengthen professional learning networks by improving educational practices and research exchange to benefit policymakers. The Ministry has also prepared a document for the teaching profession under the Omani national framework, which aims to create a qualified teaching staff to carry out tasks in line with the professionalisation of education. It requires teachers to meet the professional licensing system's requirements. This framework also addresses challenges facing the profession, such as the reluctance of males to enter the teaching profession. It also seeks to create incentives for teachers and a career ladder for the teaching profession, like in many other professions (Oman Education Portal, 2020).

Despite the Ministry of Education's efforts to 'Omanize' the teaching profession, educational statistics indicate a reluctance to enter the teaching profession, especially in some subjects. Therefore, these subjects have been covered by foreign teachers. The number of foreign teachers has reached 8,674, of whom 5,056 were males and 3,618 were females. In some subjects, such as special education and

English language, the number of male teachers is less than females by 31% to 40%. The small number of male Omani teachers compared to females indicates males' reluctance to enter the teaching profession. Overall, the number of Omani teachers was 47,915, consisting of 13,364 males and 44,551 females (NCSI, 2019).

Young people's reluctance to join the teaching profession is a significant challenge for the Ministry of Education. It is one of the main obstacles to the Omanization of the teaching profession. It hinders the Ministry of Education's efforts to attract national teachers. The reluctance of males to enter the teaching profession has plagued administrators, officials, and decision-makers in ministries of education worldwide. Having insufficient numbers of teachers disrupts comprehensive development plans and negatively impacts education. Many studies have highlighted the importance of males joining the teaching profession, especially at the primary level, which suffers from a severe shortage of male teachers worldwide. Several studies have indicated that male teachers can fulfil parenting roles and be positive role models for pupils (e.g. McGrath & Sinclair, 2013; Bener et al., 2006). In addition, the presence of male teachers in primary schools improves children's social skills and helps them talk about sensitive issues related to male nature. Evidence confirms that male primary school teachers improve children's achievement and teach them vocational skills (Hjalmarsson & Löfdahl, 2014; Palmer et al., 2019).

In sum, despite the continuous efforts made by ministries and bodies that train teachers in Oman, the number of Omani teachers in some disciplines does not meet schools' needs. 5% to 10% of Omani teachers retire or leave service annually. The Ministry of Education must appoint replacements, meaning that many foreign teachers are currently employed in Oman. Drawing on these themes, this study seeks to achieve the following main goals:

- Identify reasons for young people's reluctance to choose teaching as a career in Oman from parents' perspectives.
- Verify any gender differences in young people's reluctance to choose teaching as a career in Oman from parents' perspectives.

6. Methods
This study used a descriptive and analytical method. It used a questionnaire to collect data from parents of students in grades 10 to 12 in government schools in Oman.

7. Participants
The study population consisted of all parents of school students in grades 10 to 12 enrolled in government schools in Oman during the academic year 2018/2019. This included 120,214 individuals, consisting of 59,947 males and 60,267 females (NCSI, 2019). The sample was chosen by a multi-stage random method. It reached 2,663 parents, of whom 1,777 were males and 886 were females. Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample members according to gender, age, and educational qualifications.

Table 1: Sample distribution according to gender, age, and educational qualifications (n = 2663)

Variable	Variable classes	N	Percent
Gender	Males	1,777	66.7
	Females	886	33.3
Age	Under than 30-years-old	159	6.0
	From 30 to 39-years-old	404	15.2
	From 40 to 49-years-old	1,514	56.8
	From 50 to 59-years-old	482	18.1
	60 years and over	104	3.9
Qualification	Less than high school	449	16.9
	High School	757	28.4
	Intermediate diploma	530	19.9
	BA	713	26.7
	MSc/PhD	214	8.1

8. Instruments

Questionnaire on parents' perspectives of the teaching profession. The questionnaire consisted of 7 items. It involved several tools, including a questionnaire about factors affecting the demand for the teaching profession (Richardson & Watt, 2005), a questionnaire about professional identity (Fisherman & Abbot, 1998), a questionnaire about job satisfaction (Spector, 1997), and a questionnaire about motivation to leave the teaching profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). The participants answered the questionnaire using Likert's pentagonal scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire's validity was verified by presenting it to educational arbitrators, who were asked about the appropriateness of the phrases to achieve the study objectives, clarity, and linguistic integrity. The questionnaire's stability was verified by calculating the internal consistency using the alpha Cronbach's coefficient, which reached 0.78.

9. Results

First, reasons for reluctance to enter the teaching profession from the perspective of students' parents were identified. The averages and standard deviations were calculated for the expressions and the whole questionnaire. These are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Averages and deviations for parenting polls about the teaching profession are arranged in descending order n= 2663

Items	Mean	SD	Impact level	Range
1. I believe that the teaching profession is a sacred and sublime profession, but I do not want my son/ daughter to join it.	2.83	1.28	Average	7
2. The teaching profession is devoid of material incentives and is a profession that does not achieve luxury living.	2.67	1.29	Average	6
3. I do not encourage my son/daughter to enter the teaching profession because it is a stressful profession for the body and mind.	2.50	1.25	Low	3

Items	Mean	SD	Impact level	Range
4. I do not want my son/ daughter to be a teacher. I know that he/she does not own/possess the attributes of a good teacher	2.30	1.27	Low	1
5. I feel that the teaching profession is not suitable for my son / daughter, as it is a profession devoid of innovation and creativity.	2.20	1.18	Low	2
6. I see the teaching profession as a profession for children who come from middle- or low-income families.	2.03	1.22	Low	4
7. The teaching profession is not appropriate for my son/daughter because it does not have a prominent social status.	1.93	1.16	Low	5
Overall average	2.35	0.82	Low	

Table 2 shows that the two highest average scores were for items 7 and 6. This shows that although parents believed in the prestige and sanctity of the teaching profession, they did not want their children to join it due to its limited financial incentives. Furthermore, the two lowest averages were for items 4 and 5. This suggests that parents encourage their children to pursue professions with a high salary and allow them to regularly advance to achieve job safety. These findings show that teaching is no longer considered a profession that offers the individual an elegant and distinguished social status. Instead, it is considered a tiring and arduous profession that does not achieve ambitions. In addition, even if students appreciate teaching and are aware of its role in children's development, a lack of encouragement from parents contributes to their unwillingness to become teachers, especially as other professions offer larger salaries and more privileges.

Second, research suggests that there are gender differences in students' reluctance to enter the teaching profession. Therefore, an independent sample t-test was conducted to identify whether there were gender differences among parents' reluctance for their children to enter the teaching profession. This is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Gender differences in the reluctance of the teaching profession from the perspective of students' parents

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	T	P
Males	1777	2.18	0.84	7.47	0.001
Females	886	2.43	0.73		

The results in Table 3 indicate a statistically significant gender difference in favour of females. This suggests that females perceive the teaching profession more positively than males. Mothers encourage their children to join the teaching profession more than fathers. This result can be explained by Omani society's view of teaching as inferior to other professions for many reasons, such as low salaries, a lack of promotions, delays, and limited privileges.

10. Discussion

This study's results highlight the convergence of parents' perceptions of the teaching profession. Their perceptions centred on the difficulty of the profession, its lack of financial incentives and rewards, and its low social status compared to other professions. Parents believed that the most important reasons for males' reluctance to join the teaching profession were low income and low social status compared to other professions. Salaries, bonuses, and incentives are not commensurate with the efforts of teachers. The teaching profession does not offer the distinguished social status it did in the past.

The results of the study are consistent with the results of many previous studies conducted in Saudi Arabia (e.g. Al-Hujairi, 2015; Al-Amiri, 2011), which revealed four critical reasons for young people's reluctance to become teachers: teachers, students, the curriculum, and the administrative organisation. These include the increase in the number of students in classrooms and the lack of incentives for teachers. It also corroborates previous studies conducted in Sudan (Ahmed & Al-Krasny, 2010; Al-Hamri, 2011), which found that several reasons influenced young people's reluctance to enter teaching. The most significant were economic factors, then social factors, and then psychological and academic factors. This study also corroborates many Jordanian studies (e.g. Al-Bashir et al., 2007; Radwan, 2010), which divided the causes of reluctance into technical, economic, social, and psychological causes. It also supports the results of some studies conducted in Iraq (Abd, 2011; Al-Rikabi & Mohammed, 2009), which revealed that the most important reasons for reluctance were related to seven main factors: education, economics, security, service, transport and communications, society, and psychology. It also partly corroborates the results of some previous studies conducted in Finland, Britain, New Zealand, and Australia (e.g. Cushman, 2005; Cushman, 2007; Johnson, 2008; Lahelma, 2000; Mills et al., 2004; Moran, 2008; Pollitt & Oldfield, 2017; Szwed, 2010; Weaver-Hightower, 2011) about males' reluctance to join the teaching profession. However, this study's results differ from these previous studies by determining the causes of reluctance from the teaching profession and ranking their importance. These studies focused on other factors, such as experiences, attitudes related to social standing, anxiety about working in a predominantly female environment, and anxiety about laws and legislation related to physical contact with children.

The results also found gender differences in reluctance to enter the teaching profession favouring males. The factors of interest in the teaching profession were statistically significant in favour of females. This result is consistent with the results of several studies conducted in many Arab countries, such as Kuwait (Al-Tisha et al., 2014), Sudan (Al-Hamri, 2011), Jordan (Radwan, 2010), the UAE (Al-Shahiya, 2019), and several developed countries, such as the UK, New Zealand, and Australia (Lahelma, 2000; Mills et al., 2004; Cushman, 2007; Bacolod, 2007).

There are social and cultural reasons and justifications behind parents' preference for their daughters to enter this profession rather than their sons. Prevailing cultural values in Omani society help define the features and nature of women's occupations. Teaching is perceived as a highly suitable profession for females. The Ministry of Education has also contributed to this by feminising the teaching

profession in primary schools, specifically in first to fourth grades, by restricting work to female teachers only.

11. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the authors conclude that low salaries for teachers and the deteriorating social status of the teaching profession are among the primary factors affecting parents' perception of teaching as a career choice. Socioeconomic factors play a vital role in influencing considerations of teaching as a career. Therefore, parents of students, and society in general, must correct social perceptions of the teaching profession. Currently, the profession is not measured by its economic status (teachers' salaries) but is also linked to the social and cultural status of the profession. In some countries, such as East Asian countries, the teaching profession has an even higher status than in some developed countries. Parents should avoid a materialistic perspective when directing their children to future professions. Instead, they should direct them to a career that suits their preferences and abilities and respect their desire to choose a teaching profession. Furthermore, teachers' social position and professional image should be improved. Parents should set an example for their children to respect teachers and appreciate their efforts.

Further questions about the reasons for teachers' low social status must be answered. Undoubtedly, Omani society's low appreciation for teachers' roles negatively affects male students' desire to join the teaching profession. The Ministry of Education in Oman should take action to restore this profession to its prestigious status.

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