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Factors related to Icelandic student teachers' prospective commitment to the teaching profession

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Factors related to Icelandic student teachers' prospective commitment to the teaching profession

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Abstract

Research indicates that prospective commitment to a vocation is important to sustaining good professional practices. The purpose of the study was to explore, among Icelandic student teachers, how student teacher experiences in field-based practice and those in university-based courses are related to the student teachers' prospective commitment to the teaching profession as well as their possible turnover intentions. This study investigated the experiences of student teachers in a five-year programme for compulsory schoolteachers at the University of Iceland. The data is based on results from a survey of 244 student teachers in all cohorts in the programme. In particular, we investigated connections between the attitudes of student teachers towards the teaching profession and their experiences during the university-based part of their teacher education and during the school-based teaching practice aspect. The data analysis indicates that the university-based part of teacher education positively influences student teachers' commitment to the teaching profession and negatively influences their turnover intentions, while the school-based component of their teacher education is positively related to their commitment to the teaching profession but is not related to their turnover intentions. The implications of the findings are discussed.

Keywords: Iceland, student teachers, teacher training, prospective commitment, turnover intention

Introduction

In all Nordic countries except Finland, dwindling numbers of applications for acceptance into teacher education programmes and the slow progress of students already enrolled in these programmes have led to teacher shortages (Rasmusen and Dorf, 2010). In Iceland, the shortage of qualified compulsory schoolteachers is a cause of great concern (Jóhannsdóttir and Björnsdóttir, 2018). The lack of sufficient numbers of teachers has resulted from too few student teachers finishing the requirements for their master's degree, which is necessary to qualify as a compulsory teacher, but also from teachers choosing to leave or choosing not to enter the profession. Statistics Iceland (2020) indicated that 100 new teachers are needed per year just to fill the positions expected to be vacated by teachers approaching retirement age; Statistics Iceland (2020) further reported that over 500 individuals, or around 10% of teachers in compulsory schools, are not certified (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2019). A recent study revealed that in 2011, 48.6% of those certified as compulsory schoolteachers who were below the required retirement age in Iceland were not working in the profession (Eyjólfsson and Jónsson, 2017). Low retention rates and slow progress during student teachers' academic studies are also matters of concern (Icelandic National Audit Office, 2017). The challenge, therefore, is both to educate new teachers and to ensure that they enter the profession after graduation. Therefore, identifying the factors that impact student teachers' academic progress and their retention in both the teaching programme and, after graduation, in the workforce, is especially important now because, as this study indicates, the age of the teaching workforce points to a retirement timebomb in the next few years. Indeed, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported that the average age of teachers is much higher in Iceland than the OECD average (OECD, 2019).

Thus, the country needs more student teachers to graduate from the teacher education programme and enter or re-enter the profession; otherwise, Iceland will face a serious problem in teacher supply. In 2018, school authorities began taking actions to ensure more compulsory schoolteachers are fully qualified to teach. In autumn 2019, student teacher programmes were revised to allow student teachers a full year to complete their final teaching internship on a half-time paid basis. Moreover, schools that hire fifth-year student teachers must support the learners and consider their need for time for complete their studies. Additionally, student teachers who have completed their master's thesis have been offered a premium, equivalent to four- to six-weeks beginning teachers' salary; the amount of the premium is expected to be high enough to impact the teacher candidate's decision to accept the position. However, for the many students who have finished all the obligatory courses in their teaching programme, completing the master's thesis seems to present a considerable barrier to graduation. They might, however, teach as unlicensed teachers in schools. Thus, in 2020, a new law (Act on the Education and Recruitment of Teachers and Administrators of Preschools, Compulsory Schools and Upper Secondary Schools, No. 95/2019) was enacted whereby completion of 120 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits towards a master's degree without a thesis qualifies students for teacher certification.

However, these efforts and increasing student teacher graduation rates alone may not fully resolve the problem, since not all student teachers are committed to entering the profession after graduation. For example, as noted previously, Eyjólfsson and Jónsson's (2017) recent study revealed that in 2011, 48.6% of those certified as compulsory schoolteachers who were below the required retirement age in Iceland were not working in the profession. Moreover, Eyjólfsson and Jónsson's (2017) results showed that while 65% of student teachers who graduated from 2002 to 2012 had begun working as teachers within five years of graduation, those graduates who had not begun teaching within five years of graduation were unlikely to become teachers. The participants in the study described the importance of getting formal support, either from a mentor teacher or from the principal, when they took their first steps as teachers as positively impacting retention; receiving this support enhanced their self-confidence and well-being and decreased the likelihood of their quitting the profession. Eyjólfsson and Jónsson (2017) investigated teachers who had graduated from a three-year teacher education programme, which had been the standard for obtaining a teaching licence until 2011. Since 2012, a five-year master's programme has been required. A survey was conducted in 2017 (Sigurjónsdóttir and Sigurðardóttir, 2017) in which all students in the first two cohorts who had graduated from the master's programme were contacted. Of those, 97% were teaching, 80% were committed to making teaching their future career and 70% felt their education had appropriately prepared them for the teaching profession.

While most of the new graduates in that study had become teachers, the number of students entering the five-year teacher education currently is too low to meet the expected need for new teachers following anticipated upcoming retirements. As in most Nordic countries, dropout during teacher training is also a problem in Iceland (Rasmussen and Dorf, 2010). In the three years prior to the master's degree requirement for compulsory schoolteacher qualification, on average, 274 student teachers graduated. This number decreased to 62 per year for the period 2014–2016, when a master's degree was required (Jóhannsdóttir and Björnsdóttir, 2018). The diminishing pool of graduates has highlighted the importance of identifying factors related to student teachers' prospective commitment to the teaching profession and their turnover intentions, as this knowledge can inform plans to attract candidates to teacher education and strengthen their motivation to enter and remain in the teaching profession. Therefore, more knowledge about student teachers' turnover intentions and their commitment to a future as a teacher as well as their experiences in teacher education programmes, both university-based studies and school-based practice teaching, is needed.

In this article, we use the phrase "prospective commitment" to refer to the emotional attachment a student teacher will have to the teaching profession after graduating (Day, 2013, p.24), which involves positive feelings about becoming a teacher and about entering the teaching profession. Research indicates that prospective commitment to a profession is an important factor in promoting good professional practices (Bartlett, 2001; Evans and Tribble, 1986). It can be expensive for society as well as for the individual student teacher when those who train for the teaching profession choose not to become teachers at the end of their programme or leave the profession after a few years.

The purpose of the present study was to explore how prospective commitment or intention to leave the teaching profession among Icelandic student teachers was related to their campus experiences and field experiences. Specifically, we explored the connections between student teachers' prospective commitment and intentions to leave the teaching profession and the university- and school-based parts of their experiences from teacher education. The aim was to gain insights on factors related to student teachers' prospective commitment or their decision to leave the teaching profession. More information about these factors may help identify appropriate measures to improve the teacher education programme in Iceland, so that the programme attracts and retains more students and better facilitates a sense of commitment to the profession, discouraging teachers from developing an intent to leave

Icelandic compulsory schools

In Iceland, compulsory education for students 6–16 years old is organised within a single structure; that is, primary and lower secondary schools form a unified compulsory school, a structure similar to those found in most Nordic countries. International studies have shown that in the Icelandic school system, equity is maintained across compulsory schools, with little difference in performance between schools, as compared, for example, to Denmark and Sweden (Hautamaki, Hautamaki and Kupiainen, 2009). In the first cycles of PISA, the Icelandic results were characterised by a few students scoring both low and high: the majority earned average scores (Sigurðardóttir, Guðjónsdóttir and Karlsdóttir, 2014). In PISA 2015 and 2018, the number of students scoring low increased, and average scores in general declined (Directorate of Education, 2017, 2019). This reflects a need to improve student performance. However, Icelandic students tend to score above the OECD average for well-being and for feeling positively towards school (OECD, 2013; Ombudsman for Children, 2010).

Teacher education for compulsory schoolteachers in Iceland

The University of Iceland is the larger of two teacher education institutions in Iceland. The current compulsory teacher education programme at the university dates back to a reform implemented in 2008, when the then three-year B.Ed. teacher education programme was extended to five years. The intention was to make teacher education more research-based and increase emphasis on practice teaching in collaboration with schools (Bjarnadóttir, 2012; Sigurðardóttir, Jóhannesson and Óskarsdóttir, 2018).

The integration of school-based practical experience and university-based theoretical underpinnings were emphasised to enhance student teachers' professional competence (Sigurðardóttir, 2010). A contract was made with compulsory schools to act as placement schools, where students would perform their practice teaching and observations (Sigurðardóttir, Geirsdóttir and Sigurgeirsson, 2009). Student teachers were assigned a practice supervisor, an experienced teacher working in the school who oversaw the student teacher's practice activities. The aim was to provide deeper and more focused training for student teachers in the workplace and to strengthen ties between academic study and practical work, with the intention that the receiving school would take greater responsibility for students' practical training, as the resident staff were well positioned to supervise individual students

(Sigurðardóttir et al., 2018, p. 148). In 2017 when the survey presented in this paper was conducted, it was assumed that student teachers would visit four schools to complete their practical work.

Characteristics of teacher education

In teacher education in Iceland, as in many other countries, the practicum is an important element, considered the core of the teacher training programme (Smith and Lev-Ari, 2005; Sigurðardóttir et al., 2009). The main actors in the practicum are student teachers, school supervisors and university-based teacher educators. As in other countries, Icelandic student teachers first observe lessons before taking responsibility for teaching all or part of a lesson. The lessons taught by the student teacher are supervised by the practice supervisor at the school. The practice supervisor, or a teacher educator from the university, observes and provides feedback on the student's teaching performance. Personalised supervision in teaching practice helps teachers learn to cope with challenges (Jónsdóttir, 2012; Zeichner, 2010). Such challenges can negatively impact teachers' and student teachers' intent to stay and/or commitment to profession. Therefore, when successful, the student teachers' field experiences should enhance their prospective commitment to the teaching profession.

Learning professional tasks may occur through an experience-based study of professional functions, such as by observing reactions to one's own practice teaching. The experience-based programme segment can consist of recasting elements from a declarative (explicit) learning format into a procedural learning format, (an automatic performed action) achieved through training in school practice (Anderson, 2005). The recasting process is important because professional teacher roles can be highly complex and diverse. For example, the student teacher has an academic agenda with learning objectives to meet while, at the same time, must be able to manage classroom activities and engage students in active learning (Doyle, 2013). When the teacher training is experienced as relevant, the student teacher will have a sense of coherency between theory and practice and academic subjects and pedagogic procedures in the classroom.

Commitment to the teaching profession and intention to leave

The quality of compulsory school education is certainly linked to the quality of teacher education. Arguments and empirical evidence support the existence of a positive relationship between teachers with adequate education and the opportunity for students to learn (Boyd, Grossman and Lankford, 2009; Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005; Feuer, Floden, Chudowsky and Ahn, 2013; Gansle, Noell and Burns, 2012); however, the evidence base for this claim is controversial and sometimes ambiguous (Mitchel and King, 2016). Ultimately, it is difficult to attain a good measurement of the quality of a teacher's performance, because the indicators of good teachers include both measures of student academic performance and student well-being.

The focus of this study resonates with others in initial teacher education around the world. Teacher retention and attrition are important to consider when developing the teaching workforce, and pre-service teachers' attitudes towards their work, particularly their commitments to that work and the strength of their intentions to continue in or leave the profession, are significant aspects of that consideration. As mentioned, this is especially important in the Icelandic society due to anticipated

opposing trends in available teaching positions and available teacher candidates for those positions in the coming years. A commitment to one's occupation is also important because employees should possess attitudes and motivation conducive to the purpose of their work (Bartlett, 2001; Khan, Ziauddin and Ramay, 2010). Because a teacher's performance is not susceptible to direct measurement, it is even more important for the teacher to have a favourable attitude and motivation. Prospective commitment is one factor in that attitude and motivation. A positive relationship with the school organisation, good feelings and dedication to teaching are attributes that relate to prospective commitment and collectively comprise a core premise for the quality of school practices. Evidence suggests that, to a varying degree, student teachers' prospective commitment to their future role as teachers can be enhanced (Christophersen, Elstad, Solhaug and Turmo, 2016), for instance, by having teachers as role models or by having close family or friends who are teachers. Prospective commitment among student teachers may be strengthened but, conversely, may also be weakened by experiences during teacher training, both in the university-based components of the course and during school-based teaching practice.

Several authors of the present article previously explored the antecedents of both commitment and turnover intention among student teachers in Norway. The analysis indicated commitment is more strongly associated with experiences (particularly from dialogues with school mentors) gained during and after teaching practice in schools than with the more campus-based elements of training. As an implication of this finding, it may justify a focus on improving the preparation of school mentors and points of contact between teacher educators and school mentors (Christophersen, Elstad, Solhaug and Turmo, 2016).

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 is that the perceived relevance of university-based experience in teacher education is positively related to Icelandic student teachers' prospective commitment to the teaching profession. Hypothesis 2 is that the perceived relevance of university-based experience in teacher education is negatively related to Icelandic student teachers' turnover intentions. There are grounds to believe that student teachers' experiences in practice teaching might nurture their prospective commitment, which is Hypothesis 3. Further, Hypothesis 4 states that the perceived relevance of school-based experience in teacher education is negatively related to Icelandic student teachers' turnover intentions.

This study

By its nature, teacher education is a complex course at the University of Iceland, as it is elsewhere. Two models of teacher training and of academic progression are involved: (1) academic degree courses followed by separate pedagogic courses and (2) integrated courses that encompass both pedagogy and academic subjects. The participants in the present study were enrolled in training based on the second model, which entails constantly alternating between academic study and pedagogic training during the various years of the programme. Thus, the five-year teacher education programme under study included school subject studies and pedagogical content knowledge integrated with general

pedagogy and practice teaching in schools that prepare student teachers for professional life in a school context (Sigurðardóttir et al., 2018).

Teacher education is made more complex by pedagogical education taking place in two distinct arenas: (1) on-campus teaching at the university and (2) observation and practice teaching in schools. Schoolteachers who supervise student teachers are called practice mentors.

Materials and methods

Sample and procedures

This study investigated the experiences of student teachers in a five-year programme for compulsory schoolteachers. The case study included students at the University of Iceland. Empirically, we focused on how student teachers' perceptions of the five-year teacher education programme (the campus pedagogy courses and subject matter didactics and the school-based practice) predicted their affective commitment or turnover intention. The reported analysis is part of a research project in which Icelandic student teachers' preferences are examined; the project is part of a larger research project for which data were collected in all Nordic countries.

A survey was carried out among 244 Icelandic student teachers in a five-year integrated teacher education programme. The participants were student teachers at the University of Iceland in all cohorts, and they were enrolled either in campus-based classes or in online learning with periodical face-to-face sessions. Around half of the student teachers at the University of Iceland are online students. The survey was designed such that students were asked to recall the extent to which they had experienced their studies as relevant during the practice period, the experiences they had with their practice supervisor and so forth.

Data were collected during the 2017 spring semester. The survey was introduced to students in lessons during on-campus sessions, where both student teachers in the online programme and campus-based student teachers were present, and a link to the survey was sent to the students' university email accounts.

Measurement instruments

A questionnaire was constructed based on both measurement instruments previously reported in the literature and on new developments (Haladyna and Rodriguez, 2013). The instruments of turnover intention reported by Kuvaas (2007) and affective commitment (Allen and Meyer, 1990) were used in the development of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was translated into Icelandic from Norwegian without any substantial changes. In the survey, the student teachers responded to items on a 7-point Likert scale, in which the middle option (4) represented a neutral midpoint. The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for each of the concepts was satisfactory, with the Cronbach's alpha values between .83 and .92 (see Table 1). The Cronbach's alpha values reported in the corresponding Norwegian analysis were between .80 and .91 (Christophersen et al., 2016).

Table 1. Overview of constructs, abbreviations and items, and two independent and two dependent variables

Independent variables:

Relevance of university-based experience in teacher education (pp) Cronbach's alpha = 0.92

- In the teaching of pedagogy, I am given practical examples from actual teaching (indicator no.35, denoted w35 in the figure 1)
- The connection between pedagogic theory and practice is made clear (indicator no.38)
- In the teaching of subject didactic theory, I am given practical examples from actual teaching (indicator no.39)
- In the teaching of subject didactic theory, I have become familiar with academic content that is relevant for the work of a teacher (indicator no.40)
- The connection between the subject didactic theory and practice is made clear (indicator no.42)

Relevance of school-based experience in teacher education (ss) Cronbach's alpha = 0.89

- Supervision meetings at the practice schools help me understand what I should do to improve as a teacher (indicator no.51)
- Supervisors at the practice schools give me clear and direct feedback about where I stand as a teacher (indicator no.53)
- Feedback from supervisors at the practice schools is in close accordance with what I have actually achieved (indicator no.54)
- Feedback from supervisors at the practice schools makes clear what is expected of me as a student teacher (indicator no.55)

Dependent variables:

Prospective commitment to work as a teacher (id) Cronbach's alpha = 0.83

- I feel attracted to the teaching profession (indicator no.3)
- It feels good to think that one day I will be a teacher (indicator no.4)
- I am looking forward to working as a teacher (indicator no.5)

Turnover intention (ti) Cronbach's alpha = 0.86

- If I find a well-paid job after teacher training, I will not work as a teacher (indicator no.56)
- I often think about career possibilities other than the teaching profession (indicator no.57)
- If I could go back and choose afresh, I would choose something other than teacher training (indicator no.58)
- Other jobs are more attractive to me than being a teacher (indicator no.59)

Analysis

Structural equation modelling was used to analyse the relationships between the variables, because it is suitable for a confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis. The assessments of fit between the model and data were based on the following indices: root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), normed fit index (NFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and comparative fit index (CFI).

RMSEA < .05 and NFI, GFI and CFI > .95 indicated a good fit, and RMSEA < .08 and NFI, GFI and CFI > .90 indicated an acceptable fit (Kline, 2005). The measurements and structural models were estimated using IBM SPSS Amos 22. The actual values reported in Figure 1 show an acceptable fit. The values noted in the following section indicate that the structural model partly approached the outer boundary of an acceptable fit. The RMSEA value of 0.065 indicated an acceptable fit. An NFI value of 0.917 indicated an acceptable fit, a GFI value of 0.894 indicated an acceptable fit and a CFI value of 0.963 indicated a good fit.

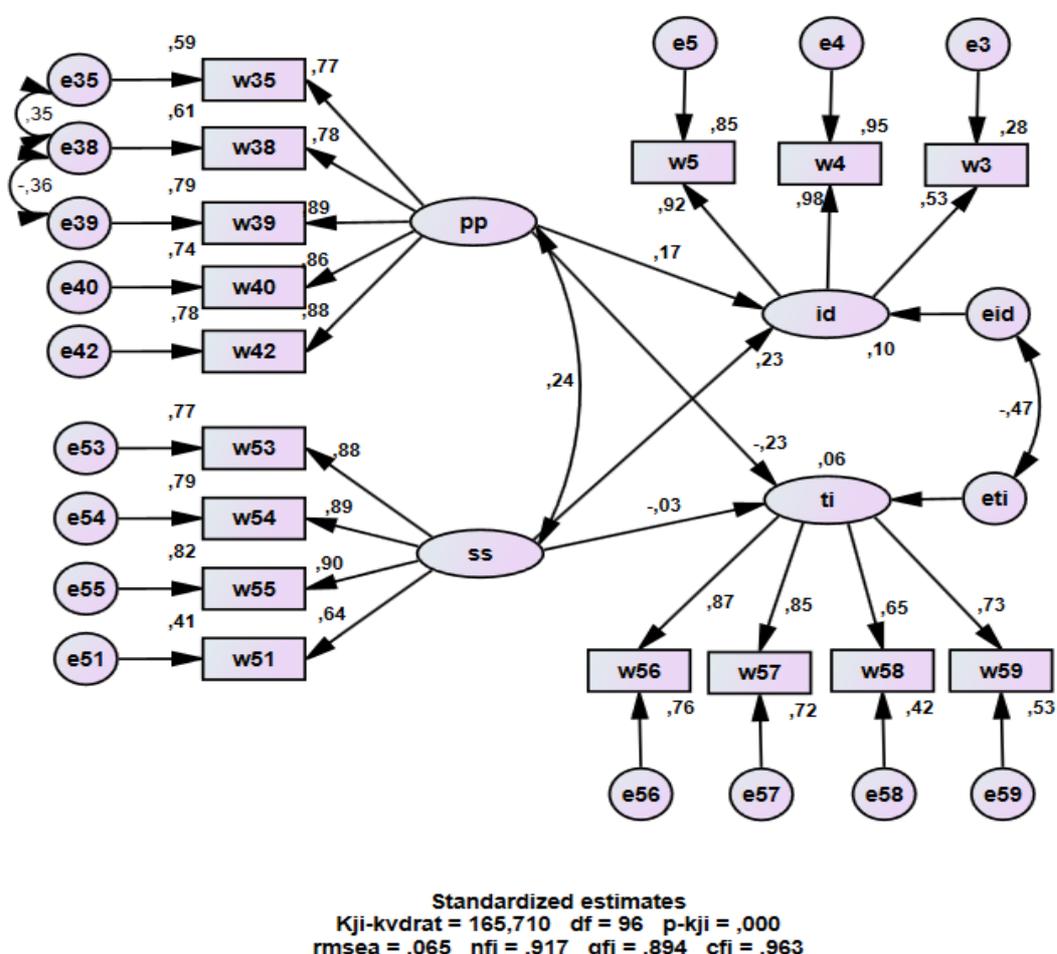


Figure 1. Structural equation model: relevance of university-based experience in teacher education is labelled *pp*, while relevance of school-based experience in teacher education is labelled *ss*. The endogenous variables are prospective commitment to work as a teacher (*id*) and turnover intention (*ti*). The *w*-numbers refer to the numbering of items in the questionnaire. Questionnaire item wording is presented in Table 1.

Results

Figure 1 shows the estimated structural models with commitment to the teaching profession and turnover intention as the dependent variables. The ellipses represent the latent variables, circles represent measurement errors and rectangles represent the observed measured variables. The structural models consist of terms with paths (arrows) between them. The path arrows indicate common theoretical causes, and the figures (standardised regression coefficients) reflect the measured strength of the connections, which increases with the numerical value.

The results indicate that the relevance of the university-based part of teacher education influenced both the commitment to the teaching profession and turnover intentions of participants. The university aspect was positively (0.17) related to commitment to the teaching profession, while it was negatively related to turnover intention (-0.23). The school-based practice segment of teacher education was positively related to commitment to the teaching profession (0.23) but not significantly related to turnover intention (-0.03).

Related to our hypotheses, these findings indicate the following:

Number	Wording	Results
H1	Perceived relevance of university-based experience in teacher education is positively related to Icelandic student teachers' prospective commitment to the teaching profession.	Supported
H2	Perceived relevance of university-based experience in teacher education is negatively related to Icelandic student teachers' turnover intentions.	Supported
H3	Perceived relevance of school-based experience in teacher education is positively related to Icelandic student teachers' prospective commitment to the teaching profession.	Supported
H4	Perceived relevance of school-based experience in teacher education is negatively related to Icelandic student teachers' turnover intentions.	Not supported

Discussion

Iceland faces a dramatic increase in its shortage of teachers in the coming years. The teaching profession has become more complicated, and at the same time, teacher education is encountering greater challenges than before. The Minister of Education, Science and Culture has responded to the serious problem of far too few teachers graduating in the last decade, partly stemming from the requirements within the five-year master's degree programme to qualify as a teacher at all school levels (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2019). The decision to make the fifth and last year of compulsory teacher education a paid internship has been one initiative implemented to address the

lack of qualified teachers. In this arrangement, student teachers fill teacher positions that otherwise would be served by unqualified teachers. This change is likely to affect the way in which student teachers experience their practicum, which may affect their commitment and turnover intentions. However, only time will tell if and how changes in legislation will remedy the teacher shortage problem and affect commitment to teaching. From this perspective, the factors related to Icelandic student teachers' prospective commitment to the teaching profession are important to explore. The purpose of the present study was to explore how prospective commitment or intention to leave the teaching profession among Icelandic student teachers are related to their campus experiences and field experiences. Three of our four hypotheses were supported. Firstly, the analysis shows that the relevance of the university-based part of teacher education positively influences commitment to the teaching profession and negatively affects turnover intentions. These associations illustrate the merits of teacher education programmes in Iceland. Secondly, the current study shows that the school-based part of teacher education is positively related to commitment to the teaching profession. This is also a promising result. However, the perceived relevance of the school-based part of teacher education is not related to turnover intention, which is how likely student teachers believe they will be to stay in the teaching profession. This result is surprising, and further research is needed to better understand the nature of field experiences in teacher education. Since there have been so many changes in the practice teaching structure in the last few years, there is a need to repeat this study to acquire knowledge about the current arrangements and to determine if or how the relationships with commitment and turnover intentions have changed. We do not claim causal relations between the explanans and the explananda, but these empirical relations are interesting and move us to believe that quality improvements in teacher education at the University of Iceland may impact teacher retention and attrition rates. However, this quality endeavour does not solve the whole problem of the approaching teacher shortages in Iceland.

Developing the literature on the effectiveness of teacher preparation and its potential link to commitment to the field could assist in both improving teacher preparation and reducing turnover costs for school districts (Schleicher, 2011). The high dropout rate from teacher education may indicate that society is wasting resources at the university but even more so by placing students in internships, which is costly. Research shows that prospective commitment to a profession is an important predictor of professionals' efforts to carry out their jobs (Bartlett, 2001; Evans and Tribble, 1986). With this in mind, this study contributes to our knowledge about quality aspects of teacher education at the University of Iceland.

Shortcomings and avenues for further research

The current study has shortcomings from a conceptual perspective (parsimonious modelling) and in terms of its methodological (cross-sectional) approach. We acknowledge these shortcomings and argue that they can serve as a point of departure for future research. We opted for a quantitative approach, because we explored the factors explaining the affective commitment of student teachers to their future teaching career and estimated the strength of the contributions from both the campus- and practicum-based elements of teacher education.

Several measures have been taken at the University of Iceland to reduce the teacher education programme dropout rate. One example is that the teachers try to offer the students a sense of being cared for and belonging in their studies. This is an interesting avenue for further research. Another strand of initiatives to support students teachers is the program implemented in collaboration with the teachers, in which the writing workshop facilitator organises special support for all first-year students, who receive individual counselling ('peer tutoring') about their written work. It would be especially interesting to investigate how the support given to students with a mother tongue other than Icelandic during the first semester might nurture commitment and diminish turnover intentions.

Another interesting follow-up study could be to investigate how the changes in teacher education, in accordance with the new laws that assume that students graduate as qualified teachers without a final thesis and a paid internship in the last year of studies, will affect student teachers' commitment to the profession and turnover intentions. An in-depth qualitative follow-up study could be interesting to gain insights into the underlying interactional processes of Icelandic student teachers, university teacher educators and school supervisors. This endeavour belongs to our future research.

Another interesting follow-up study is how perceptions of teacher status in Iceland influence students' interests of becoming teachers. In TALIS 2018, 85.4% of Icelandic teachers thought the positive aspects of being a teacher outweighed the negative, compared to 76% of teachers from the other countries participating in TALIS who indicated the same (Ólafsson, 2019). This illustrates teacher attitudes in Iceland are positive, and the results are in line with Hansen and Lárusdóttir's (2014) conclusion from a study of 20 compulsory schools, which showed that teachers generally rated school ethos as good. However, in TALIS 2018 teachers in Iceland reported their profession was not highly respected in Icelandic society, and only 10.1% believed that teaching was a valued profession in society, compared with the TALIS average of 25.8% (Ólafsson, 2019). In the last few decades, teachers in Iceland have expressed dissatisfaction with their salaries, and teacher strikes have been too common. One possible strategy might be to include student teachers' perceptions of how the teaching profession is valued in future research.

In future research we also want to compare fifth year students and first year students. This is an issue in terms of the findings. An interesting question is how the breakdown of traditional students versus online students may affect the findings.

Concluding remarks

Despite its limitations, the current study contributes to our understanding of the antecedents of prospective commitment and turnover intentions among student teachers at the University of Iceland. Our study suggests that both campus teaching and field experiences might nurture student teachers' commitment to the teaching profession, while only campus experiences are negatively related to turnover intentions. We believe that these findings can be used by Icelandic teacher education programmes to focus further on motivating all student teachers to strengthen their commitment to the teaching profession.

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