

## My Dream Career vs. My Real Career

### A Case of a Teaching Career from the Philosophical Dimensions of the Human Person

BY

\*Shadrack Ernest Mwakalinga and \*\*Neema Franklina Mbuta

*Jordan University College, P.O.Box. 1878, Morogoro*

#### Abstract

This paper gives an overview of individual's dream career and their real career, using the teaching profession as a case study. Through the use of Philosophical concepts of phenomenon and noumenon, one can see the difference which may be seen between that which appears to them and the thing in itself. The process of data collection involved qualitative approach whereby evidence from the philosophical anthropology literature, interview guides and review of literature were used as tools for gathering data. The study revealed that in the teaching profession there are mixture of teachers who had different dream carriers. For example some of them were dreaming to become: lawyers, doctors, soldiers, engineers, politicians and businessman. The study also identified factors which influenced them to be teachers these factors included: advice from parents, poor economic background, poor performance in science subjects at ordinary level of secondary education, and safety nature of the teaching professional. A person who appreciates education and enjoys imparting knowledge, for instance, could logically want to become a teacher because they see it as a profession that blends their natural skills with the demands of society. A deeper consideration of one's purpose and the moral implications of promoting human flourishing are part of this deliberative process, which goes beyond simple utilitarianism (Maslow, 1943). Individuals attempt to strike a balance between self-fulfillment and group duty by using reason to negotiate the conflict between their own aspirations and the needs of reality. Philosophical traditions emphasize that reason helps people choose jobs that advance their own and their community's well-being. One example of this is Aristotle's concept of Eudemonia, or flourishing (Aristotle, 2009). Therefore, choosing a job is not a single decision; rather, it is deeply rooted.

Key words: Dream Career and Real Career

#### 1.0 Introduction

A basic conflict between desire and reality is frequently reflected in the interaction between a person's ideal career and their actual career. The idealized view of one's work life, which is frequently shaped by one's own ambitions, social norms, and sense of purpose, is known as the "dream career." However, outside forces like market needs, financial limitations, and unforeseen obstacles can alter a career's reality and cause it to deviate from its initial goals. The divergence between what is idealised and what is feasible within the limitations of modern life is reflected in this dynamic, which is not only an individual struggle but also a larger cultural phenomenon (Duffy & Dik, 2013).

Essentially, a profession is an expression of one's vocation, which is the purpose or calling that a person believes is essential to their life. The philosophical view of the human person, which maintains that people are born with reason, free will, and inherent dignity, is the foundation of this idea of vocation. These characteristics result in the ability to make decisions for oneself, which enables people to choose professions that align with their moral obligations, passions, and core beliefs (Nussbaum, 2011). Humans are viewed as more than just biological creatures; they are also logical beings with an insatiable need for fulfillment and significance, which are frequently found in one's work.

In considering the human person, one should not elude the fact of socio-cultural influence. Human person is social and political animal, s/he is a religious being, is both an individual person and a product of family. As mentioned by Mondin Batista human being is an impossible project. (Mondin 1991)His/her identity is never static but always in move –dynamism. Despite the presence of all these dimensions which contribute in defining a human being,

Man/woman is responsible for attaining the fundamental option of his/her existence through the many proximate decisions.

Teaching, which is universally seen as a noble vocation, uniquely captures this conflict between aspiration and reality. People can completely embrace their passions for knowledge, self-improvement, and helping others in this vocation, which offers a lot of opportunities for self-actualization. Teachers often enter the profession with the goal of developing society, influencing youths' perspectives, and imparting information (Eisner, 2002).

This kind of work is in line with the philosophical view of the human being as someone who aspires to have a significant influence on the world. Though teaching as it is may be considered as proximate work aiming to the actualization of either serving humanity or popularity.

But teaching's lived reality comes with a complicated set of difficulties. These include handling a variety of classroom dynamics, negotiating administrative procedures, attending to students' emotional and psychological needs, and adjusting to educational settings with limited resources. These common difficulties frequently clash with the idealized view of teaching as a transformational and powerful profession, leaving many educators feeling frustrated or disillusioned (Hargreaves, 2000). This tension is further exacerbated by cultural expectations about the role of teachers as well as a lack of proper support and acknowledgement.

By contrasting the lived experiences of instructors with the intellectual foundations of the human person, this paper aims to investigate these processes. The study intends to shed light on how educators resolve the conflict between their career goals and the realities of their work life by

utilizing both theoretical viewpoints and empirical data. In order to promote a more sustainable and satisfying teaching profession, it has investigated the wider ramifications of this conflict for the creation of educational policy, teacher preparation programs, and support networks.

## 2.0 Methodology

The study used qualitative approach whereby interviews and document review were the tools of the data collection. The interviews were preferred due to its ability to get in-depth information about the phenomenon (dream career against real career).

## 3.0 Findings and discussion

The findings and discussion of the study are organized into two philosophical dimensions: One human person as aspiration being and two human person as a rational being.

### 3.1 The Human Person as an Aspirational Being

Aspirations are vital to the human experience because they represent a person's innermost wants, aspirations, and possibilities. They stand for the intrinsic drive to be happy, give back to the community, and leave a lasting legacy, according to Maslow (1943). These goals, which are based on the philosophical notion that people are aspirational creatures, frequently take the form of looking for work that fits with one's values, skills, and passions (Frankl, 1985).

In the interviews some of the participants declared that their dream careers were to be lawyers, doctors, soldiers, engineers, politicians and businessman. Finally they found themselves being teachers.

*Interview 6: I wanted to be a lawyer but my family did not supported, instead they advised me to undergo the training about the teaching profession, here I am now.....*

*Interview 1: My intention was to become a doctor or an engineer, but I did poorly in science subjects then I continued with social science subjects....*

*Interview 2: My plan was to become a soldier because I was influenced by my brother who was a soldier and was given full respect at home once he arrives and had no money problems. He was always supporting us but he was the one who discouraged me from being a soldier by saying "Being a soldier, death is very near" hahaha....*

*Interview 5: Mmmmh, I wanted to be among the government leaders or have my business which is internationally recognized. But when I grew up I discovered that it is not easy and doing business is very risk. My mother said teaching professional is not risk full as doing business and being a politician.*

This desire gives rise to the idea of a dream career, which captures a person's idealized sense of significance and meaning. The fulfillment of a greater sense of mission, where individual abilities and societal demands converge, is what a dream profession is all about. It is not just about obtaining financial stability or social standing. Since it provides a significant chance to influence lives, spur personal development, and strengthen the social fabric,

teaching is seen by many as embodying this ideal (Freire, 1970).

Navigating the realities and difficulties of the teaching profession, such as resource constraints, social expectations, and individual resilience, is necessary to make this alignment a reality. Teaching becomes a lifetime calling that reflects the fulfillment of one's fundamental purpose and the desire to have a lasting societal influence when one can reconcile one's aspirations with these realities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

### 3.2 The Human Person as a Rational Being

According to philosophers for example, Boethius defines human person as an individual substance with rational nature (Lombo and Russo 2017). Human beings are distinguished by their capacity for critical thought, deliberation, and reasoned decision-making as opposed to instinct or compulsion. Because of their reasoning nature, people are able to evaluate their surroundings, make plans, and imagine ways to realize their own desires and make significant contributions to society (Aristotle, 2009).

The two faculties of the soul that is the intellect and will are responsible for the actions of human being in as far as the search for knowledge (truth) and inclination toward the good are concerned (Lombo and Russo 2017)

As people examine their values, passions, and strengths and look for methods to match them with their potential effect on the world, career goals can arise as a manifestation of this logical assessment.

For example, someone who values education and enjoys sharing their knowledge might naturally desire to work as a teacher since they believe it combines their own abilities with the needs of the community. This deliberate process extends beyond basic utilitarianism and includes a more thorough examination of one's purpose and the moral ramifications of fostering human happiness (Maslow, 1943). People use reason to resolve the contradiction between their personal goals and the demands of reality in an effort to find a balance between self-fulfillment and group obligation.

In the interview some of the respondents declared that teaching profession is among the professions which are good for people to opt:

*Interview 3: You know people do argue that being a teacher you will die poor, to me that is not true because not all poor people are teachers. The teaching profession is among the good profession to opt. Also thinking of career development in the teaching profession is highly emphasized than other professions....*

*Interview 4: Becoming a teacher gives you a chance of knowing many things and have more chances of changing your position of service for example many government leaders are from the teaching profession this is an indicators that the teaching profession is a good profession. Think of J.K. Nyerere, Majaliwa Jenista and so many others were from the teaching profession*

According to philosophical traditions, people use reasons to select careers that improve their own and their communities' quality of life. This is exemplified by Aristotle's notion of

Eudemonia, which means flourishing (Aristotle, 2009). Choosing a job is therefore not a single choice; rather, it is thinking diverse and deciding based on opportunity cost. Thus through reasoning individuals may end up choosing a career with less inhibiting factors. In the interview the participants declared that economic factors, poor performance in science subjects, teaching being the professional with low risk, and parents guided their choice. Below are some of ancho examples:

*Interview 6: .....my family did not supported, instead they advised me to undergo the training about the teaching profession, here I am now.....*

*Interview 1:.....I did poorly in science subjects then I continued with social science subjects.....*

*Interview 5:..... But when I grew up I discovered that it is not easy and doing business is very risk. My mother said teaching professional is not risk full as doing business and being a politician.*

Furthermore, contacts with teachers, parents, and the larger community are all part of the relational character of teaching, which goes beyond the classroom. Teachers offer a comprehensive support system that fosters students' academic, emotional, and social growth by working together with various stakeholders (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Teaching therefore demonstrates the importance of meaningful interactions for both individual and group development, which is consistent with the philosophical understanding of the human person as a communal creature. There are ethical aspects to teaching as a relational vocation. In order to ensure that their interactions elevate and respect the dignity of every individual, educators must traverse the intricacies of various learner requirements, cultural contexts, and moral duties. This interpersonal interplay demonstrates how education has the capacity to change lives, not only as a job but also as a calling that reflects the interconnection of all things.

#### ***Human Being as an I-Thou Being***

One of the dimensions of the human person is that of inter-subjectivity. Man/woman cannot avoid living in connection and communication with the other. It is from the other that one defines himself and understands more about his weaknesses and abilities. The other serves as a mirror for one's self recognition and hence actualizing his/her identity. (Erez and Earley 1993)

Martin Buber's' philosophy of I-Thou relationship is emphasizing on the importance of relating with other human being not as an object but as a subject. This type of relationship shows the recognition of the based on his/her existence "to be" and not of any sort of "having"(Marcel 1949)

#### ***Human Person as a Spiritual Being***

Human person is a being who shared the two realm in his/her existence. The presence of the body allows human person to be identified for each has the body unique from the other, it is the body which helps human person to engage in worldly functions, it is in the surface of the body that the external senses are located which enable human being to

learn through seeing, hearing, touching and so forth. By the merit of soul which is the vital force in the human person man/woman is able to enter into the spiritual realm and to access the spiritual things which are intangible (Lombo and Russo 2017).

## **4.1 The Teaching Career: Opportunities and Challenges**

### **4.1.1 Opportunities**

#### **Contribution to Society:**

Teachers are essential in forming the next generation since they are the future's architects. They prepare pupils to handle difficult societal issues by encouraging critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities in them (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Instilling fundamental societal values like empathy, respect, discipline, and civic responsibility in addition to academic knowledge helps students become well-rounded people (Noddings, 2013). Teachers help create a culture that is more informed, compassionate, and progressive by encouraging these qualities. Their influence extends far beyond the classroom as students carry the lessons and values they have been taught into their daily lives, ultimately influencing families, communities, and the nation at large.

#### **Personal Growth:**

There are countless chances for personal development in the exciting field of teaching. To increase their efficacy, educators continuously pursue lifelong learning by keeping up with emerging approaches, tools, and subjects (Freire, 1970). Their knowledge base is expanded by this ongoing education, which also makes them more flexible and creative. Furthermore, the difficulties of managing classrooms and attending to the many requirements of students foster the growth of vital soft skills like perseverance, communication, and problem-solving (Brookfield, 2017). Teachers develop both professionally and personally by reflecting on their practice and learning about their own areas of strength and growth.

#### **Intrinsic Rewards:**

Many people refer to the great emotional and psychological fulfillment that comes with teaching as "intrinsic rewards." Teachers get a great feeling of fulfillment when they see their pupils achieve in their personal, intellectual, and social lives (Hattie, 2009). When their efforts are appreciated, whether by the student, their parents, or society at large, it strengthens their feeling of purpose. Moments of impact that leave a lasting impression and reinforce a teacher's commitment include encouraging a student to follow their aspirations or helping struggling student overcome obstacles. According to Noddings (2013), teaching is a very fulfilling and purpose-driven career because of these intrinsic rewards, which are based on meaningful interactions and positive outcomes and are among the most potent motivators in the fields. Intrinsic reward may be equated with the joy of serving humanity and that it is always good to serve rather than be served, to give and not always to receive.

### **4.1.2 Challenges**

#### **Economic Constraints:**

Teachers are claimed to have severe financial constraints since teaching is frequently not rewarded with salaries commensurate with its social significance. Teachers' financial stability is frequently hampered by low pay, lack of transport, lack of staff houses and remoteness of the area which makes it difficult for them to maintain their families and make investments in their professional development (Ingersoll, 2001). Teachers' financial struggles are made worse in certain areas by less paid salaries, a lack of perks, and insufficient retirement plans.

### Exhaustion Disorder

Teachers are frequently encountered by exhaustion disorder due to workloads, which contribute to high levels of stress and burnout especially in this era of the implementation free education policy where there is increased enrolment rate (Mwakalinga, 2024). Also activities like lesson planning and teaching, teachers are often given with administrative responsibilities, extracurricular supervision, and professional development obligations (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Managing large class sizes, addressing diverse student needs, and coping with behavioral issues further add to the strain. Over time, these demands can lead to physical and emotional exhaustion, reducing teachers' effectiveness and their overall well-being (Kyriacou, 2001). Without adequate support systems, such as mentorship programs, manageable workloads, and access to mental health resources, burnout remains a persistent challenge in the teaching profession.

### Societal Perception:

Teaching is often undervalued in society, despite its critical role in shaping future generations. Negative stereotypes and misconceptions about the profession can undermine teachers' morale and affect their professional identity (Van Houtte, 2014). For example, the perception that teaching is an "easy job" or that it is a fallback career diminishes its prestige. Furthermore, limited public appreciation and recognition for the complexities and impact of teaching can discourage talented individuals from entering or remaining in the field (Day, 2007). Enhancing societal perceptions of teaching requires concerted efforts, including public campaigns, policy reforms, and a shift in cultural attitudes to acknowledge and celebrate the vital contributions of educators.

## 4.2. Dream Career vs. Real Career in Teaching

### 4.2.1 The Gap between Idealism and Reality

Many people have grandiose dreams of inspiring and changing lives when they first start teaching. They frequently have a clear goal in mind and are keen to have a significant influence on the intellectual and personal development of their students. But the reality of teaching is frequently much more complicated, with structural constraints that might stifle early excitement. Large class sizes, out-of-date curricula, underfunded schools, and a lack of resources can all act as obstacles to teachers' capacity to provide high-quality instruction (Miller et al., 2018). Lack of resources or insufficient classroom assistance may make it difficult for teachers to meet the various demands of

their students. Since the limitations of the environment conflict with the aspirational goals of educators, these practical difficulties can be discouraging. The goal of involving every student in transformative learning may seem unattainable when educators contend with issues like packed classrooms, inadequate technology, or a shortage of essential instructional materials on a regular basis. Many educators who believe that structural flaws frequently impair their ability to realize their professional vision are frustrated by this disconnect between idealism and actuality.

It is in this respect that the existential questions may come in as to try to harmonize between the desired outcome and reality. The questions like who am I? For how long will I continue in this state? Is this real the purpose of my existence? What could be the end of my life in this world if this is what I am experiencing?(Darowski 2014)

### 4.2.2 Resilience and Adaptation

To guarantee that children continue to receive high-quality instruction in spite of these obstacles, many educators show incredible fortitude and inventive adaptation. In this sense, resilience is the capacity of educators to remain inspired and passionate about their work despite hardship (Glickman, 2002). A strong sense of purpose, dedication to their students, and a desire to improve society are just a few examples of the intrinsic motivation that teachers frequently rely on. Both official and informal support systems are crucial in assisting educators in overcoming these obstacles. In order to foster a collaborative environment that enhances resilience, coworkers, mentors, and school administration can offer resources, emotional support, and common problem-solving techniques (Hargreaves, 2003). Teachers are assisted in negotiating these difficult circumstances by the philosophical idea of the human person as resilient, able to overcome adversity and grow stronger through it. In addition to ensuring that educators continue to perform well in the face of limitations, flexibility promotes professional development as educators learn new techniques, expand their empathy, and improve their methods over time.

### 4.2.3 Bridging the Gap

Improving professional development, working conditions, and policies that elevate the stature and support of the teaching profession have been the main focuses of efforts to close the gap between idealism and the harsh reality of teaching. For instance, professional development programs seek to give educators the knowledge and abilities they need to adapt to changing pedagogical ideas, integrate new technologies, and handle a variety of classroom issues (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Additionally, many of the stressors that impair teachers' performance and well-being can be reduced by enhancing working circumstances, such as lowering class sizes, raising teacher compensation, and providing sufficient resources.

In order to change social beliefs and guarantee that educators are respected and valued for their contributions, policies that boost teaching's standing as a highly skilled and necessary profession can be helpful (Day, 2007). From a philosophical perspective, this endeavour entails developing settings that honor the goals and dignity of educators,

cultivating a culture that allows them to follow their passions while preserving a positive work-life balance. Every human person deserves respect, recognition, and the opportunity to realize their full potential, according to philosophy. Therefore, creating a framework that supports teachers' growth, enhances their wellbeing, and honors' their objectives is crucial to closing the gap between classroom ideals and reality.

### 5. Philosophical Implications for Career Fulfillment

Deep philosophical ramifications of career fulfillment, especially in teaching, relate to the essence of humanity and people's pursuit of meaning and purpose in their work. Only when the personal and professional spheres are in harmony can teaching, a career that requires both mental and emotional work, be genuinely gratifying. From a philosophical standpoint, teaching professional fulfillment entails integrating autonomy, teamwork, and the pursuit of excellence of which are strongly aligned with the principles of self-actualization, human dignity, and flourishing.

#### 5.1 Solidarity and Collaboration

Apart from independence, the teaching profession relies on teamwork and solidarity, highlighting the relational aspect of the human being. Humans are social creatures, according to philosophy, and their development and well-being are closely linked to the bonds they make in their communities (Aristotle, 1999). Teachers belong to a wider network of educators, parents, and community members who all strive towards the same objective of fostering students' growth rather than being lone individuals. In order to improve teachers' professional development and resilience, collaborative approaches including team teaching, peer support, and mentoring are essential. (Darowski 2014)

The ability to innovate and adjust to the always shifting demands of education is enhanced for educators who collaborate to exchange ideas, difficulties, and accomplishments. In addition to promoting a sense of community and belonging, these cooperative behaviors' are crucial for preventing professional burnout and sustaining motivation in the face of difficulties (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

#### 5.2 The Pursuit of Excellence

The pursuit of excellence is the concept of human philosophy, which is especially reflects to educational attainments. Like other professionals, teachers are motivated to continuously enhance and perfect their methods. The concept of "eudemonia" or flourishing, which refers to leading a life of virtue and realizing one's full potential, is frequently linked to excellence in philosophy (Aristotle, 1999). This quest for greatness in the classroom is demonstrated by a dedication to creating an atmosphere where teachers and children may flourish, a commitment to ongoing professional development, and the implementation of best practices.

Career happiness is influenced by policies that recognize and develop teachers' potential, reward quality in instruction, and offer opportunities for professional development. These rules could offer chances for leadership

positions, increased training, and recognition through tenure or reward systems. Teachers have higher work satisfaction and are more likely to stick with their career when they believe that their commitment to excellence is valued and supported. A positive school culture where high standards of practice and personal growth are encouraged is also a result of the pursuit of teaching excellence, which eventually benefits both teachers and students.

### 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the perspective of the philosophical aspects of the human being, the teaching profession, as a legitimate occupation, offers enormous potential for fulfillment. The function of an educator reflects the philosophical view of the human person as a relational, rational, and dignified entity. A teacher's capacity for critical thought, decision-making, and influencing the classroom is essential to their identity as a logical human being. A teacher's work is firmly anchored in their relationships and exchanges with students, coworkers, and the community because they are relational beings.

Finally, the intrinsic value of educators and the significant influence their job has on society are highlighted by the dignity of the human being. When viewed through these conceptual perspectives, teaching is seen as a vocation that speaks to both individual fulfillment and societal contribution, rather than just a career.

But the idealized vision of being a role model who influences the future frequently clashes with the realities of the teaching profession. Although the idea that education can be a transformational force is inspiring, structural obstacles including a lack of financing, poor resources, and little professional autonomy can prevent teachers from reaching their full potential. Teachers may experience dissatisfaction, fatigue, and disillusionment as a result of these obstacles as their goals and the limitations they face are not aligned. The distance between dream and reality is not solely a personal issue but a structural one, requiring a collective effort to address.

Systemic reforms are necessary to close this gap. Reforms that enhance teaching conditions, boost school financing, and give teachers the tools they need to create productive learning environments must be given top priority by policymakers and educational leaders. Reforms should additionally concentrate on establishing professional development routes, guaranteeing that educators have chances to advance in their careers, remain current with pedagogical advancements, and feel empowered to make choices that are consistent with their educational philosophies. In addition, teacher preparation programs ought to priorities the development of abilities linked to emotional intelligence, resilience, and community involvement in addition to subject knowledge, as these are all essential for preserving a sense of fulfillment in the work. Furthermore, promoting both professional fulfillment and wider social appreciation depends on society acknowledging the worth of the teaching profession. Since educators actively influence the moral, intellectual, and social fabric of society, teaching is philosophically consistent with the relational nature of the human being.

Accepting the philosophical principles of relationality, rationality, and dignity gives educators a foundation for overcoming the difficulties that come with their line of work. Teachers can fight against those who would undermine their value and find inspiration in the fundamental purpose of education if they acknowledge their own dignity and worth. As the ability to make logical decisions, rationality empowers educators to evaluate their work, adjust to shifting conditions, and persevere in the face of adversity. Finally, relationality emphasizes the value of teamwork, mentoring, and involvement in the community, enabling teachers to draw on support systems and build positive learning environments.

In the end, teaching can lead to significant career fulfillment, but this calls for institutional support, professional growth, and social acceptance. Teachers may continue to find meaning in their profession and contribute to the academic success of their students as well as the well-being of society at large when they are able to manage the difficulties they encounter through these lenses of relationality, reason, and dignity.

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