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## Why Teaching?: Factors Influencing Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Decisions to Become Teachers*

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate what factors affected pre-service EFL teachers' entry motivations into the teaching profession and whether they differed across their grades. In the study, which adopted a quantitative approach, data were collected from 212 pre-service EFL teachers at a state university through the FIT-Choice Scale. The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, Kruskal-Wallis test, and one-way ANOVA. The findings showed that what attracted pre-service EFL teachers to teaching was their desire to shape future generations and to contribute to the society as well as demands of teaching and their prior teaching and learning experiences. Another finding of the study was that there were statistically significant differences across grades in some of the factors including but not limited to perceived teaching abilities, intrinsic value, and social utility value. Findings of the study have considerable importance in view of the recent developments regarding teacher quality around the world.

Despite its elusive nature (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981), motivation has been amply studied in language learning and teaching. Motivation of students is given its rightful due in terms of the role it plays in successful language learning in the literature (Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 1985; O'Malley & Uhl Chamot, 1990; Williams & Burden, 1997), but it is questionable whether the literature on teacher motivation is up to par although "the two are inextricably linked" (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, as cited in Hiver, Kim & Kim,

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2018, p. 29). The existence of teacher motivation leads to better student motivation as a result of their dynamic interaction (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Hiver et al., 2018; Richardson &Watt, 2010); hence, it cannot be denied that "if a teacher is motivated to teach, there is a good chance that his or her students will be motivated to learn" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 158), but as Mercer (2018) points out, research literature on language teacher motivation is no different from general education in terms of the paucity of such studies, leaving a lot of uncharted territory to explore.

## 2. Literature Review

When compared to research on student motivation, research on teacher motivation is found to be "still in its infancy" (Urdan, 2014, p. 228); however, it would not be wrong to suggest that the latter has risen to prominence in recent years due to the credit it is given by various organizations such as The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in their widely known assessments and reports about education around the world. These organizations' concerns for quality education center around various aspects of education, including teachers. In reports spanning across years and different locations, the problems identified regarding teachers are the same: There are teacher shortages due to their aging and attrition, and countries tend to meet the need for quantity by sacrificing quality, in that they employ teachers who are not trained enough to provide quality education and who lack the right potential to become a teacher in the first place (OECD, 2005, 2015; UNESCO, 2014, 2015, 2021). So, there have been constant calls for the improvement of teacher education (OECD, 2015; UNESCO, 2015) as well as for the recruitment of the right candidates for the teaching profession since the picture the OECD (2018) data paints is not very optimistic: Teaching is not a very attractive career choice and the 15 year olds who are interested in choosing teaching as a career lack numeracy and literacy skills more than those who plan a career in other professions (OECD, 2018). Other OECD surveys focusing on teachers produced similar results;  except for a few of them, in most countries teachers "have poorer numeracy and literacy skills than individuals who work in other professions" (OECD, 2015, p. 3). Thus, as The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018 data, too, shows, there is a need for more high-achieving potential for teaching (OECD, 2019; Schleicher, 2020). "Selection of candidates with strong motivation" (Schleicher, 2020, p. 14) is one of the important requisites that warrant teacher retention, which should urge researchers to take a closer look into teacher motivation.

### 2.1. Teacher Motivation

As to what teacher motivation stands for, Sinclair (2008) provides a concise description stating that it determines "what attracts individuals to teaching, how long they remain in their initial teacher education courses and subsequently the teaching profession, and the extent to which they engage with their courses and the teaching profession" (p. 80). In the literature teacher motivation is viewed through various theoretical lenses such as achievement-goal theory (Butler, 2014), self-determination theory (Roth, 2014), self-efficacy theories (Woolfolk Hoy, 2008), expectancy-value theory (Watt & Richardson, 2015), and possible selves theory (Kubanyiova, 2009).

It would not be wrong to assert that among these theories expectancy-value theory holds a special place, for it is often employed in studies focusing on pre-service teacher education, which will be discussed in further detail later on.

*2.2. Research on Language Teacher Motivation*

The need for researching teacher motivation in teacher education emerges not only for reasons regarding educational policies, but also for initiating a change in teacher behavior, which is what teacher education aims for. As to this change, Korthagen (2017) posits that it would not be possible by delving deeper only into teacher thinking since teacher behavior is shaped by affect and as well. The field of second language teacher education (SLTE) shares the same need, and as Lamb and Wyatt (2019) , too, emphasize, SLTE should claim the responsibility for "protecting and enhancing" teacher motivation "because the nature of participants' motivation will determine whether they benefit from SLTE" (p. 523).

Despite such calls for more research on and interest in teacher motivation, it has not caught up with the trend very quickly until recently. There is now a growing interest in language teacher motivation, which revolves around two major questions: (1) What motivates teachers to enter the profession? (2) What (de)motivates them while teaching? The majority of studies conducted on language teacher motivation zero in on the first question, and there are some emergent themes in response to it such as intrinsic or altruistic factors (Alavi & Mehmandoust, 2011; Doyle & Kim, 1999; Erkaya, 2013; Karavas, 2010; Pandey, 2020; Stężycka&Etherington,2020; Tsutsumi, 2014), students' enthusiasm and success (Erkaya, 2013; Hettiarachchi, 2013; İpek & Kanatlar, 2018; Johnson, 2001; Kurtoğlu Eken, 2014; Ölmezer Öztürk; 2015; Pourtoussi, Ghanizadeh & Mousavi, 2018), job security (Dweik & Awajan, 2013), and positive working environment and administration (İpek & Kanatlar, 2018; Kurtoğlu Eken, 2014; Ng & Ng, 2015; Ölmezer Öztürk; 2015; Stężycka&Etherington,2020). The demotivating factors for English teachers were disclosed as problems related to curricula and materials (Aydın, 2012; Barın, Han & Sarı, 2018), physical conditions at schools (Christopher, 2012; Fattash, 2013; Hettiarachchi, 2013; Yaghoubinejad, Zarrinabadi & Nejadansari, 2016), heavy workloads (Kamstra, 2021; Thornburn, 2016), administration (Aydın, 2012; Barın et al., 2018; Kim & Kim, 2015; Yaghoubinejad et al., 2016). Overcrowded classes were another demotivating factor for English teachers (Fattash, 2013; Johnson, 2001; Yaghoubinejad et al., 2016) in addition to the lack of respect for the teaching profession (Kim & Kim, 2015; Yaghoubinejad et al., 2016).

When compared to the issue of de/motivating factors for English teachers, the question on what motivates individuals to become English teachers in the first place, in other words, what their entry motivations are, has not received as much attention. Even so, there are several studies which aimed to find an answer to this question with in-service teachers (Gao & Xu, 2014; Hayes, 2008; Igawa, 2009; Karavas, 2010; Kazerouni & Sadighi, 2014; Kim & Kim, 2015; Pandey, 2020). What these studies revealed is that entry motivations are not very different from what motivates English teachers in their teaching practice; that is, they choose to become teachers for intrinsic, i.e. love of English or teaching and altruistic reasons, i.e. contribution to society. There is, however, another group of participants whose entry motivations are of utmost importance for successful SLTE practices, and they are the pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers who are training in teacher education programs.

*2.2.1 Entry Motivations of Pre-service EFL Teachers*

Studying pre-service teachers' (PSTs) entry motivations has gained a great deal of importance since findings of such studies "can have a profound impact on their level of career satisfaction and plans to persist in the profession" (Richardson & Watt, 2010, p. 140), which eventually affects student outcomes. Additionally, exploring the motives behind PSTs' decisions to become teachers is beneficial for mapping how they will respond to their teacher education programs so that these programs can function better to keep the already motivated PSTs' motivation alive and to help those who are not as motivated to generate the right motivations to become teachers (Lamb & Wyatt, 2019).

There have been various attempts at unveiling entry motivations of pre-service EFL teachers across different contexts. For instance, Tustiawati (2012) investigated what motivated 140 PSTs to become English teachers in Indonesia and found out that they were more motivated by intrinsic and altruistic factors than extrinsic ones. Their belief in themselves about being a good teacher and being able to help younger generations were the triggering force behind their career decisions. In the Turkish context, Topkaya and Uztosun (2012), who adopted the 'Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) framework' designed by Richardson and Watt (2006) in their study, looked into 207 freshman and senior PSTs' career motivations and gender to inquire whether there was a relationship between them. The findings of the study revealed that PSTs were mostly motivated by social utility values, which stands for altruistic motivations, and they were followed by intrinsic values. PSTs' gender and grade level were not found to be related to their career motivations, though. In another study in Turkey, Erten (2014) looked into the concept of entry motivations of pre-service EFL teachers with 96 participants. In his qualitative work, there were intrinsic factors laced with extrinsic ones; the top scoring factor was 'liking teaching'. Lee and Yuan (2014) studied entry motivations with 6 PSTs in Hong Kong and focusing on their entry motivations as well as the changes in them. The study showed that half of the participants had mixed motivations (extrinsic and intrinsic), that the most prominent factor intrinsically motivating the PSTs in the study to become English teachers was their love of English. Another important finding of the study was that some PSTs' entry motivations remained the same, whereas some others changed in the direction of internalization, i.e. they have started to be motivated more by intrinsic factors. Kavanoz and Yüksel (2017) aimed to see whether PSTs' motivations to become an English teacher changed according to their grades, and they found that sophomores and seniors were mostly motivated by altruistic factors while juniors were motivated by extrinsic ones. Unlike other studies in the literature, intrinsic factors were the least motivating for PSTs. Yuan and Zhang (2017) examined the entry motivations of 10 PSTs in China and also found that they had mixed motivations, basically a concoction of their personal interest of English, their past experiences of learning English, and policy incentives in China. In another study structured with the FIT-Choice framework, Damar (2018) investigated the factors influencing PSTs' choice of career. The study yielded results in line with those of Topkaya and Uztosun (2010); social utility values were the highest-ranking factor that motivated PSTs to choose teaching as a career. Arfiandhani and Lestari (2019) studied the Indonesian context with 197 PSTs of English, inquiring whether there was a gender-based difference in terms of their entry motivations and found that there was no significant difference between female and male PSTs. Ekin, Yetkin and Öztürk (2021) also examined whether there is a difference between PSTs' career motivations according to their gender. Another variable they looked into was grade; in addition, they aimed to see what the predictors of their satisfaction were. Their study revealed that PSTs were mostly motivated by prior teaching and learning experiences when they made their career choices and that seniors in the program were motivated by intrinsic factors more than the freshmen, whereas it was the other way round with social influences. Also, the gender of PSTs did not make a difference in terms of their career motivations. The findings showed that the most prominent predictor of PSTs' satisfaction of their career choices was intrinsic career values. Finally, Başöz (2021) aimed to explore PSTs' motivational factors for choosing teaching as well as the possible effect of their grade level on their career motivations. Another question she posed in her study was whether PSTs' academic achievement can be predicted by their motivations. Similar to the other studies carried out in the field, it was found that pre-service EFL teachers were motivated with social utility values when they chose to become teachers and that grade level did not affect their career choices. As for the predictors of academic achievement, time for family, desire to work with children, intrinsic career values, and desire to make social contribution stood out in the findings of the study.

In addition to the valuable insights gained into the entry motivations of pre-service EFL teachers through these studies, validating and broadening more SLTE contexts is of key importance both for the sake

of macro-level requirements outlined by international organizations such as OECD and UNESCO and for ensuring the success of SLTE programs at the micro-level by getting to know the target audience, in other words, pre-service EFL teachers better.

To this end, this study sets out to answer the following questions:

1. What are the factors influencing pre-service EFL teachers' decision to become a teacher?
2. Do the factors influencing pre-service EFL teachers' decision to become a teacher differ across grades?

*3. Method*
*3.1. Research Design*

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design based on quantitative approach. The cross-sectional design fits the bill, for it "can examine current attitudes, beliefs, opinions, or practices" (Creswell, 2015, p. 380) and this study aims to examine a similar construct, namely motivation.

The study is theoretically based on the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) framework' designed by Richardson and Watt (2006), which stands out among the burgeoning number of studies carried out with this focus. Based on the expectancy-value theory of motivation and specifically crafted to explore PSTs' entry motivations, the FIT-Choice framework provides researchers with a solid theoretical structure to base the data collection and analysis on. The expectancy-value theory suggests that an individual is motivated by the value they attach to a certain task as a result of their belief in or expectancy of success (Bier, 2014; Hiver et al., 2018; Lamb & Wyatt, 2019; Watt & Richardson, 2015). Watt and Richardson (2015) state that the expectancy-value theory served the best among all the other motivation theories since they were particularly interested in finding out what led individuals to pursue a teaching career and other theories' scope did not meet such a need but worked on other levels such as the sense of achievement of teachers (achievement-goal theory) and an overall concept of human motivation (self-determination theory). The framework taps into altruistic motivations (social utility value) along with ability-related (self-perceptions), utilitarian (personal utility value), and intrinsic ones. Prior teaching and learning experiences, choice of teaching as a fallback career, demands and rewards of teaching, and career satisfaction are also included as the components of the framework (Richardson & Watt, 2010; Watt and Richardson, 2015). All dimensions of the framework can be seen in Figure 1.
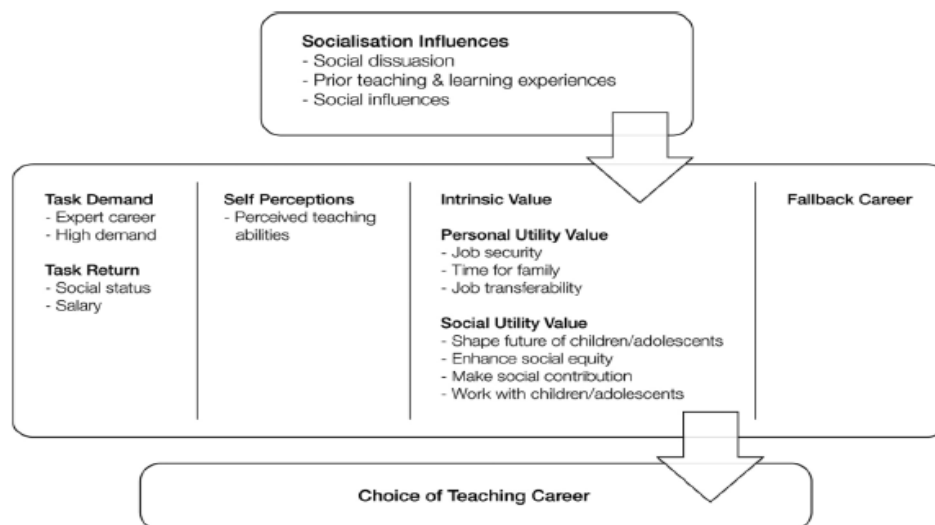


Figure 1
FIT-Choice Theoretical Model

Note. From "An Introduction to Teaching Motivations in Different Countries: Comparisons Using the FIT-Choice Scale", H.M.G. Watt & P. W. Richardson, 2012, Asia –Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 40 (3), p. 187. doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2012.700049 Copyright 2012 by HMG Watt & PW Richardson. Reprinted with permission.

*3.2. Setting and Participants*

The participants of the study were chosen through random sampling among the pre-service EFL teachers at an English Language Teaching Program in a large state university in Turkey. The institution is known for its supply of teachers mostly for state K-12 schools as well as tertiary-level institutions at a national level. There were a total of 212 PSTs (63 freshmen, 47 sophomores, 46 juniors and 56 seniors) participating in the study, which was carried out during the spring semester of the 2018-2019 academic year.

Following the curricula and guidelines issued by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE), the SLTE program the participants were enrolled in starts out with basic language skills courses designed to increase pre-service teachers' content knowledge in the freshman year (Güngör, 2020) with the percentage of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) courses increasing as PSTs progress in their studies. So, especially in the junior and senior years of their education, PSTs are expected to acquire English language teaching skills through courses such as teaching language skills, teaching English to young learners and special teaching methods.

*3.3. Data Collection Instrument*

The FIT-Choice Scale, named after the framework, it is based on, was used as the data collection instrument in the study The scale consists of three sections, i.e. influential factors (motivations for teaching), beliefs about teaching (perceptions about the program), decision to become a teacher (career choice satisfaction). A section to elicit the demographics of the participants was added to the beginning of the instrument.

A seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 'not at all important' to 'extremely important', the empirically validated scale (Watt & Richardson, 2007) comprises 18 factors based on the framework and 61 items designed to measure them (Richardson & Watt, 2006; Watt & Richardson, 2007). These factors are social dissuasion, prior teaching and learning experiences, social influences, satisfaction with choice, expert career, high demand, social status, salary, perceived teaching abilities, intrinsic value, job security, time for family, job transferability, shape future of children/adolescents, enhance social equity, make social contribution, work with children/adolescents, and fallback career. The scale was administered in its original format and language during the spring semester of the 2018-2019 academic year, and it was found reliable in this study with a Cronbach alpha score of ,93.

*3.4. Data Analysis*

SPSS 21 was used to analyze the data. In order to answer the first research question, descriptive statistics were applied to showcase pre-service EFL teachers' motivations for teaching, beliefs about teaching, and career choice satisfaction. Then, tests of normality, i.e. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk were run to determine the right statistical method that would display whether factors influencing teaching of PSTs differ across their grades in the English Language Teaching (ELT) program. These tests displayed that the distribution of data with 16 factors out of 18 was not normal, whereas with two of them

(social dissuasion and job transfer) the sample was distributed normally. Hence, as a non-parametric test, the Kruskal-Wallis was chosen for the former and one-way ANOVA for the latter.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the data collected from 212 pre-service EFL teachers with the FIT-Choice Scale yielded the following results in response to the two research questions posed previously.

*Research Question 1: What are the factors influencing pre-service EFL teachers' decision to become a teacher?*

The descriptive statistics of the data showed that what motivated pre-service EFL teachers to choose teaching as a career was desire to shape future of children/adolescents (M =6.01, SD =1.20). It was followed by expert career (M =5.91, SD =1.01), desire to make social contribution (M =5.78, SD =1.24), high demand (M =5.72, SD =1.00), prior teaching and learning experiences (M =5.49, SD =1.51) as the factors with highest mean scores. As Table 1 shows, factors belonging to the higher-order factor social utility value, namely shaping future of children/adolescents, making social contribution, enhancing social equity, and working with children/adolescents in the original FIT-Choice framework made it to the top ten factors that motivate PSTs to choose teaching in the first place. It can also be seen that in PSTs' regard, task demand factors, i.e. expert career and high demand, which refer to the demanding nature of teaching in terms of expertise and difficulty, were prominent in their career choices. Another factor influencing PSTs' choices was their prior teaching and learning experiences, potentially emphasizing the importance of apprenticeship of observation, which emerges here as a concept which individuals might build their future careers on. It was also found that PSTs saw teaching as the right fit for their abilities and their interest in and desire of teaching motivated them to choose it. Interestingly enough, salary and fallback career were not found to be the factors behind PSTs' career choices, which is contrary to the popular belief that teaching is usually chosen by individuals who do not have any other career options and/or who look for a shortcut to a monthly salary. The results of the factor social dissuasion, which is about the influence of other people around the pre-service EFL teachers on their career choices, are also promising for the sake of the teaching profession because according to their responses, PSTs were not dissuaded from choosing teaching by people around them, which might mean that teaching is still regarded as a respectable profession in the society.

Table 1.
Mean Values for Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

|  | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|
| Shape future of children/adolescents | 6.01 | 1.20 |
| Expert career | 5.91 | 1.01 |
| Make social contribution | 5.78 | 1.24 |
| High demand | 5.72 | 1.00 |
| Prior teaching & learning experiences | 5.49 | 1.51 |
| Satisfaction with choice | 5.20 | 1.54 |
| Enhance social equity | 5.18 | 1.33 |
| Perceived teaching abilities | 5.15 | 1.37 |
| Intrinsic value | 5.13 | 1.55 |
| Work with children/adolescents | 4.84 | 1.89 |
| Job transferability | 4.70 | 1.22 |
| Job security | 4.68 | 1.25 |
| Social influences | 4.52 | 1.70 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Time for family | 4.51 | 1.23 |
| Social status | 4.18 | 1.30 |
| Social dissuasion | 3.59 | 1.34 |
| Salary | 3.07 | 1.49 |
| Fallback career | 2.86 | 1.51 |

The findings of this study can be said to corroborate those of previous studies that sought out the influencing factors leading to career choices of pre-service EFL teachers in that altruistic factors such as contributing to younger generations' future or to the society were dominantly present among those factors (Başöz, 2021; Damar, 2018; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012; Tustiawati, 2012). The very same results, though, indicate a divergence from Erten's (2014) findings to some extent since altruistic factors were found to be the lowest-ranking ones in his study. Another similarity this study shares with others is that intrinsic factors such as PSTs' positive feelings toward the teaching profession as well as their prior teaching and learning experiences occupy a vital role in their career choices (Erten, 2014; Lee & Yuan; Ekin et al., 2021; Yuan & Zhang, 2017). Finally, fallback career was the least motivating factor for pre-service EFL teachers just as Topkaya and Uztosun (2012) and Başöz (2021) found in their research.

*Research Question 2: Do the factors influencing pre-service EFL teachers' decision to become a teacher differ across grades?*

The Kruskal-Wallis and one-way ANOVA tests that were run to detect whether there were any differences between the factors influencing PSTs' teaching choices across the grades they attended revealed that there was a statistically significant difference ($p<.05$) in some factors between freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, which are presented in Table 2 and Table 3 below. In addition to the significance levels, the mean ranks of the Kruskal-Wallis test showed that freshmen had the lowest mean scores in factors such as perceived teaching abilities (Mean rank=74.63), intrinsic value (Mean rank=78.40), desire to make social contribution (M=84.66), and satisfaction with choice (Mean rank=74.89), which might be expected due to their lack of exposure to PCK courses, thus ending up feeling not very close to the teaching profession in mind and at heart. Furthermore, when compared to freshmen (Mean rank=103.15) and sophomores (Mean rank=134.68), juniors (Mean rank=90.37), and seniors (Mean rank=95.78), had the lowest ones with the factor social status, which might imply that they did not think teaching is held in high esteem in the society and that the further they got in their training as teachers, the more pessimistic they became.

Table 2.
Test Statistics (Kruskal-Wallis Test)

| | Perceived teaching abilities | Intrinsic value | Make social contribution | Work with children/adolescents | Prior teaching & learning experiences | Satisfaction with choice |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chi-Square | 24.965 | 19.371 | 10.809 | 21.814 | 10.495 | 24.538 |
| Df | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Asymp. Sig. | .000 | ,000 | .013 | .000 | .015 | .000 |

Table 3.
One-Way ANOVA

|  |  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Job Transferability | Between Groups | 64.753 | 3 | 21.588 | 1.610 | 1.88 |
|  | Within Groups | 2775.275 | 207 | 13.407 |  |  |
|  | Total | 2840.038 | 210 |  |  |  |

Apart from the mean ranks of the factors indicating a statistically significant difference between grades, the factors that did not show a difference produced some striking results. For instance, when asked about the expertise the teaching profession requires in the factor expert career, the mean ranks of both freshmen and seniors were the lowest ones (Mean rank=93.42 and Mean rank=98.98 respectively), which might not be surprising for freshmen since, as mentioned before, they were not introduced to the PCK content yet and thus were not aware of what is expected of them in terms of expertise in their future career. However, responses of seniors, who had participated in at least a full semester of teaching practicum in addition to major PCK courses at the time of the data collection for this study, were surprising in their similarity to those of freshmen. Another noteworthy finding in the mean ranks of PSTs was about their responses to items related to fallback career. Seniors were the lowest scoring group (Mean rank=91.89), for this factor, which means they did not choose teaching as a last-resort career and they were sure about their decision to choose teaching back when they made it, hinting at motivated English teachers of the future on the cusp of a new stage in their professional lives. Freshmen, on the other hand, had the highest mean ranks (Mean rank=115.33) on this one, which was rather expected due to their responses outlined above.

One last striking finding of the study was that sophomores had the highest mean ranks for a number of factors such as desire to shape future of children/adolescents (Mean rank=120.91), desire to enhance social equity (Mean rank=113.97), desire to make social contribution (Mean rank=114.36), job security (Mean rank=116.52), social status (Mean rank=134.68), salary (Mean rank=125.07), expert career (Mean rank=120.34), and high demand (Mean rank=118.10). These responses can paint quite a picture of the sophomore PSTs that participated in this study in that they were motivated by the social utility value of the teaching profession, in other words, by altruistic reasons, but it did not mean that they did not grasp the realities of the profession such as its demand both in terms of expertise and workload. They were also attracted to teaching by some extrinsic factors such as salary and job security. When compared to the other groups, sophomores were distinctive in the factors that influenced their career choice.

When compared to the findings of other studies that looked into differences of factors influencing teaching choice of pre-service English teachers across different grades, this study yielded mostly different results from those of other studies (Başöz, 2021; Ekin et al., 2021; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). Analyses of the data indicated certain statistically significant differences across four grades in terms of social utility value (altruistic factors), intrinsic value, prior teaching and learning experiences, satisfaction with choice, and job transferability while Başöz's (2021) findings with a similar range of participants did not show any. Topkaya and Uztosun (2012) and Ekin et al. (2021) investigated such a difference between freshmen and seniors, and neither study reported a difference; however, there is a similar parallel between the findings of this study and those of Kavanoz and Yüksel (2017) in that they both detected differences in the factors influencing pre-service EFL teachers' career motivations.

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study aimed to explore what motivated pre-service EFL teachers to choose teaching as a profession and whether these motivating factors differed according to their being freshmen, sophomores, juniors and

seniors in their program. The study was carried out with 212 participants and data were collected through the FIT-Choice Scale. The analyses of the data showed that PSTs were mostly motivated by a desire to shape future of children/adolescents while the least influential factor in their career choice was fallback career. In other words, pre-service EFL teachers were attracted to the profession not because teaching served as a safety cushion for them, but because they wanted to play a role in shaping future generations, which also corroborates the TALIS 2018 findings to the letter in a larger perspective (OECD, 2019). Another finding of the study was that factors influencing PSTs' career choices differed depending on their seniority in their program. It would not be wrong to infer from the results that the more training pre-service EFL teachers receive, the more altruistically and intrinsically motivated they become; however, in this specific study, sophomores where can be said to have turned the tide since their ranking in motivations were very close to those of seniors. Freshmen were found to be on the 'clueless' side to some extent, for they were only exposed to content knowledge in their courses.

Although these findings open a door to the rather uncharted territory of teacher motivation in pre-service EFL teacher education, there are some limitations to this study. The data were gathered from a limited number for participants in a single context, which might make it harder to generalize the findings to a whole population of SLTE. Besides, the adoption of quantitative research methodology does not entirely let researchers delve deeper into the findings that stand out such as sophomores' astoundingly high motivation levels in this specific study. However, it should be pointed out that these limitations can pave the way for future research such as working with larger samples in various contexts of SLTE and introducing a qualitative component to explore the factors influencing pre-service EFL teachers' career choices in further detail. Moreover, examining teacher motivation over a certain period of time in longitudinal studies is what the field might be in need of at this stage since it is worth exploring whether it is unwavering or subject to change as a teacher progresses from pre-service teacher education to in-service teacher education settings.

All in all, studying language teacher motivation along these lines and hence furthering its conception in the field will not only maximize the impact of SLTE practices, but it will also facilitate the emergence of a response to the conundrum of quantity vs. quality in teacher recruitment in the long run.

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