| Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi|

"I've Decided to Become an English Teacher": Pre-service EFL Teachers' Reasons for Choosing Teaching as a Career

"İngilizce Öğretmeni Olmaya Karar Verdim": İngilizce Öğretmeni Adaylarının Öğretmenlik Mesleğini Seçme Nedenleri

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Abstract

Purpose: The present study aimed to probe pre-service EFL teachers' reasons for choosing teaching as a field of study and future career in the under-researched context of Turkey. The variance in their career motivations in terms of grade level was also examined in the study. Besides, the study aimed to explore whether any of the factors influencing their career motivations predict their academic achievement.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The Factors Influencing Teaching Choice Scale (Watt & Richardson, 2006) was administered to 155 pre-service EFL teachers enrolled in the English language teaching (ELT) department of a state university in Turkey. The emergent data were first descriptively analyzed to find out the career motivations of the participants. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was also performed to explore whether grade level significantly affects pre-service EFL teachers' career motivations. Lastly, a standard multiple regression analysis was used to investigate whether any causal relationships exist between the participants' career motivations and their achievement as represented by their GPA.

Findings: The results of descriptive statistics demonstrated that the participants had moderately high level of career motivations. Grade level did not have any significant impact on their career motivations. The findings of the multiple regression analysis demonstrated that, of the factors affecting teaching choice, only *time for family*, *desire to work with children*, *intrinsic career values*, and *desire to make social contribution* emerged as the predictors of GPA, explaining 47% of the variance in the pre-service EFL teachers' academic achievement.

Conclusion: In the process of teacher education, it is vital to acknowledge and incorporate the multiple motives of career choice that EFL student teachers hold. Organizing teacher education programs drawing on multiple motives might contribute significantly to completion of teacher education and teacher retention in future profession.

Öz

Çalışmanın amacı: Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngilizce öğretmeni adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğini seçme nedenlerini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Çalışmada İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının üniversitedeki sınıf düzeylerinin kariyer motivasyonlarında etkili olup olmadığı da incelenmektedir. Ek olarak, bu çalışma kariyer motivasyonlarının akademik başarı üzerindeki etkisini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Materyal ve Yöntem: Bir devlet üniversitesinin İngilizce Öğretmenliği programında öğrenim görmekte olan 155 İngilizce öğretmeni adayına demografik sorulardan ve Öğretmenlik Mesleğini Seçmeyi Etkileyen Faktörler (FIT-Choice) Ölçeğinden (Watt ve Richardson, 2006) oluşan bir anket uygulanmıştır. Katılımcıların kariyer motivasyonlarını ortaya çıkarmak için anketten elde edilen veriler ilk olarak betimsel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Sınıf düzeyinin kariyer motivasyonu üzerinde etkisi olup olmadığını belirlemek için çoklu varyans analizi (MANOVA) yapılmıştır. Son olarak, öğretmen adaylarının kariyer motivasyonlarının akademik başarıları üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koymak amacıyla standart çoklu regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır.

Bulgular: Betimsel analiz sonuçları, katılımcıların orta derecede yüksek kariyer motivasyonuna sahip olduklarını göstermiştir. Sınıf düzeyinin kariyer motivasyonları üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisi görülmemiştir. Çoklu regresyon analizi sonuçları ise öğretmenlik mesleğini seçmede etkili olan faktörlerden yalnızca *aileye ayrılan zaman, çocuklar ile çalışma arzusu, içsel kariyer değerleri* ve *sosyal katkıda bulunma arzusu* faktörlerinin İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının akademik başarılarındaki varyansın %47'sini açıklayarak akademik başarının yordayıcıları olduğunu göstermiştir.

Sonuç: İngilizce öğretmeni adaylarının bu mesleği seçmelerinde çok sayıda birbirinden farklı güdünün etkili olduğu görülmektedir. Öğretmen yetiştirme programlarının bu durumun göz önünde bulundurularak düzenlenmesi, öğretmen adaylarının programı tamamlayabilmelerine ve ileride de uzun süre bu meslekte kalmalarına önemli ölçüde katkı sağlayacaktır.

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INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that teachers exert a powerful influence on the improvement of societies and development of future generations (Richardson & Watt, 2006). Thus, it is vital to employ qualified and committed teachers in the profession. In addition to personal and professional characteristics of good teachers, understanding their motivation is of the utmost importance as teachers are considered to be the most significant factor affecting the level of learner motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). As stated by Dörnyei (2001), "If a teacher is motivated to teach, there is a good chance that his or her students will be motivated to learn" (p. 156). While amotivation of teachers has a negative effect on learners' motivation, enthusiasm on the part of the teacher exerts a positive influence on learners' motivation in classroom settings (Igawa, 2009). Thus, it is essential for teachers to possess a great degree of job satisfaction and motivation in order to create a classroom atmosphere that is conducive to the development of the learner (Griffin, 2010).

Since the 1960s, much research (e.g. Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Hennessy & Lynch, 2017; König & Rothland, 2012; Lestari & Arfiandhani, 2019; Shih, 2016; Watt & Richardson, 2008) has been devoted to probing teachers' motivations so as to find out the reasons behind individuals' choices to become a teacher. This increasing interest in investigating who chooses to teach and why they do so has been fueled by shortages of teachers worldwide and great levels of teacher attrition (OECD, 2009). All around the world, it has become more and more challenging to stimulate young individuals to choose the teaching profession and retaining them in the job (Watt & Richardson, 2007) although the case is not the same in Turkey in which a surplus of nearly 700000 teachers has been reported (Türk Eğitim Sen, 2020). Therefore, it is crystal clear that the extent of teacher shortages and teaching career motivations tend to vary from country to country (Zumwalt & Craig, 2008).

In teacher education literature, the reasons for choosing teaching as a career have been categorized into three groups: intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motives (Moran, Kilpatrick, Abbot, Dallat, & McClune, 2001; Kyriacou, Hultgren, & Stephens, 1999). *Intrinsic* motives involve inherent aspects concerning the love of teaching, a desire to use their expertise, and a desire to work with children whereas extrinsic motives encompass such facets of the occupation that are not inherent in the job itself as salary, social status, and long holidays. As for altruistic motives, they are concerned with perceiving teaching as a valuable profession to contribute to the growth of people and the improvement of the society (Chong & Low, 2009; Erten, 2014; Moran et al., 2001).

In addition to this tripartite framework (Moran et al., 2001; Kyriacou et al., 1999), some theories concerning career choice have also been proposed. Self-concept theory developed by Super (1953), for instance, suggests that the self-perception of an individual exerts a strong impact on career choice. Another taxonomy of teaching motivation is the FIT-Choice model (Watt & Richardson, 2007), which draws upon the expectancy-value theory. The theory accounts for how expectancies for success and values have a direct or indirect effect on a variety of task-related choices including career choice, performance, effort, and persistence (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).
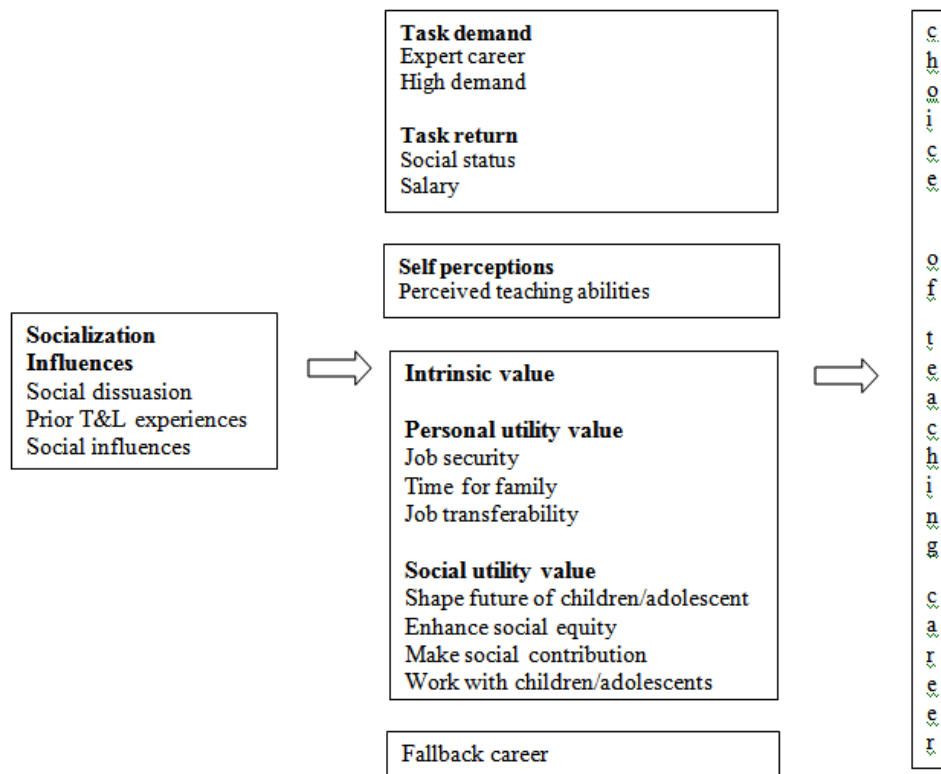
| Task demand |
| Expert career |
| High demand |

| Task return |
| Social status |
| Salary |

| Self perceptions |
| Perceived teaching abilities |

| Socialization Influences |
| Social dissuasion |
| Prior T&L experiences |
| Social influences |

| Intrinsic value |

| Personal utility value |
| Job security |
| Time for family |
| Job transferability |

| Social utility value |
| Shape future of children/adolescent |
| Enhance social equity |
| Make social contribution |
| Work with children/adolescents |

| Fallback career |

choice of teaching career

Figure 1. The Fit-Choice model (Watt & Richardson, 2007, p.176)

As can be seen in Figure 1, even though different terms are used in the FIT-Choice framework, they represent intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic motives which are also stated in the tripartite framework (Watt & Richardson, 2007). Ability and intrinsic career value are similar to satisfaction gained from the pleasure of teaching. Factors in the social utility value section correspond to altruism since they put emphasis on making a difference and assisting other people to improve. In a similar way, factors in the personal utility value are in agreement with extrinsic motives. However, the FIT-Choice framework seems to deal with teaching motivations in a more detailed way compared to the tripartite framework, as it covers broader categories, identifies further key factors which have not mentioned before, and considers the impacts of prior teaching and learning experiences, and social influences on an individual's career choice (Low, Ng, Hui, & Cai, 2017).

Much research has been conducted to scrutinize pre-service teachers' motives for choosing teaching profession across subject disciplines and in a variety of contexts, e.g. North America (Kyriacou & Benmansour, 1999; Sinclair, 2008), Australia (Richardson & Watt, 2006; Watt & Richardson, 2007), the Netherlands (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010), Germany (Hennessy & Lynch, 2017; König & Rothland, 2012; Rothland, 2014), Turkey (Akar, 2012; Damar, 2018; Erten, 2014; Kılınç, Watt, & Richardson, 2012; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012), Indonesia (Lestari & Arfiandhani, 2019), Taiwan (Shih, 2016; Wang, 2004), and Finland (Goller, Ursin, Vähäsantanen, Festner, & Harteis, 2019). From the tripartite model perspective, previous studies have generally indicated that intrinsic motivations tend to dominate (Igawa, 2009; Kassabgy, Boraie, & Schmidt, 2001; König & Rothland, 2012; Pizarro & Laborda, 2017; Saban, 2003; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). As Gagne and Deci (2005) claims, pre-service teachers who have intrinsic motivations seem to be more involved in their jobs, demonstrate greater interest and enthusiasm in their work and perform their tasks more effectively. Altruistic reasons have also been commonly reported among student teachers in most cultures (Spear, Gould, & Lee, 2000; Saban, 2003; Balyer & Özcan, K., 2014). It is suggested that teachers who start their career with high levels of intrinsic and altruistic motivation are more likely to be committed to their job (Bakar, Mohamed, Suhid, & Hamzah, 2014) whereas a high level of extrinsic motivation may result in negatively influencing prospective teachers' long-term commitment to teaching profession (Yong, 1995).

From the FIT-Choice perspective, earlier research (e.g. Kılınç et al., 2012; Lin, Shi, Wang, Zhang, & Hui, 2012; Rothland, 2014) has revealed that social utility value, which can be regarded as altruistic motivation, is the most significant factor affecting teaching choice. Socialization influences have also been found to be among the factors influencing pre-service teachers' career choices (Andrews & Hatch, 2002; Lin et al., 2012). Perceived teaching ability has been reported as another reason for selecting a teaching profession (Fokkens-Bruisma & Canrinus, 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2007). In line with the findings gained from the global literature, research results of the studies carried out in Turkey (e.g. Balyer & Özcan, 2014; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012) have shown that the altruistic motive of social utility value and intrinsic reasons dominate as the influential factors for choosing teaching profession. Besides, the extrinsic motive of job security has been reported as a key factor influencing Turkish student teachers' teaching choices in several research studies (e.g. Gürbüz & Sülün, 2004; Kılınç et al., 2012; Saban, 2003).

When the related literature within the field of English Language Teaching has been examined, it is seen that the issue of choosing teaching as a career has not attracted the attention of researchers in Turkey so far, with only a few exceptions (Damar, 2018; Erten, 2014; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). Topkaya and Uztosun (2012) suggested that social utility values, intrinsic values, and perceived teaching abilities are the main career motivations among pre-service EFL teachers. They also reported no significant difference between freshmen and seniors' career motivations. The study of Erten (2014) revealed that student teachers are generally intrinsically motivated rather than being extrinsically motivated, with altruistic reasons being fewer than other kinds of reasons. In another study (Damar, 2018), prior learning experiences and social utility values were reported as the major motivation factors for pre-service EFL teachers. Given that those socio-cultural factors have a key role in teaching motivations (Goller et al., 2019), more investigations are needed to further our understanding of the reasons underlying Turkish student teachers' desire to become an English teacher. Understanding their motives to become EFL teachers may help gain insights on motivating elements within teacher education programs. These insights, in turn, are expected to enable teacher education policy makers and practitioners to maintain and improve these elements. With these considerations in mind, the main purpose of the present study, which addresses an evident gap in the literature regarding career motivations of EFL student teachers, is to find out the reasons behind pre-service Turkish EFL teachers' choices of teaching profession. The study also aims to investigate whether grade level affects pre-service EFL teachers' career motivations. The study further aims to delve into the interactions between EFL student teachers' academic achievement and their career motivations. Depending on these concerns, the study has the following research questions:

1. What are the motivational factors that influence pre-service EFL teachers' choice of teaching as a career?

2. Does grade level significantly affect pre-service EFL teachers' career motivations?

3. Is it possible to predict pre-service EFL teachers' academic achievement by means of their career motivations? If so, what are the best predictors?

METHOD

Setting and Participants

The quantitative research design, which is defined as "data collection procedures that result primarily in numerical data which is then analyzed primarily by statistical methods" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 24), was used in this study as it makes it easier for the researcher to generalize findings and arrive at conclusions about a phenomenon (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The study employed a convenience sample of 155 pre-service EFL teachers majoring in English Language Teaching at a state university in Turkey. The participants had a mean age of 20.87 (SD = 2.71, minimum = 18; maximum = 42). 103 (66.5%) of them were female while 52 (33.5%) of them were male. Of the participants, 45 (29%) were first-year learners, 40 (25.8%) were second-year learners, 40 (25.8%) were third-year learners, and 30 (19.4%) were fourth-year learners.

Instruments

A two-part questionnaire was used to collect the data. The first part consisted of some demographic questions about the participants' age, gender, and grade. The second part included an adapted version of Watt and Richardson's (2007) Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) Scale. As it was not specifically designed to find out the career motivations of EFL teachers, the terms "language" and "language teacher" were added to the items wherever suitable.

The 61-item scale with a 7-point Likert type was composed of three sections developed to elicit data about teaching motivations (*Influential Factors*), perceptions about the profession (*Beliefs about Teaching*) and career choice satisfaction (*Your Decision to Become a Teacher*) (Watt and Richardson, 2007). The FIT-Choice Scale, which was developed and empirically validated by Watt and Richardson in a series of studies conducted in Australia (Richardson & Watt, 2006; Watt & Richardson, 2007, 2008), indicated high internal consistency, with reliability coefficients ranging from .90 to .97 (α). In this study, the internal consistency values of each section were found as the following: Influential Factors (40 items, α=.95), Beliefs about Teaching (15 items, α=.94) and Your Decision to Become a Teacher (6 items, α=.92). In the Turkish context, the scale was also reported to show high construct validity according to fit indices yielded by confirmatory factor analyses (Kılınç et al., 2012). The students' grade point averages (GPAs) were also obtained through a self-report question in the questionnaire.

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

Before collecting data, permission was gained from Balıkesir University Ethics Committee (Document number: 19928322-302.08.01-E.34888 Date: 07/09/2020). The data were collected in the fall term of the 2020-2021 academic year through Google Forms application. The participants chose answers from a 7-point Likert scale varying from "not at all important" to "extremely important". The data analysis was carried out using SPSS, version 21. Descriptive statistics were computed to find an answer to

the first research question. Multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were performed to explore whether grade level significantly affects pre-service EFL teachers' career motivations.

The researcher used a standard multiple regression analysis to investigate if there is any causal relationship between the student teachers' career motivations and their academic achievement (i.e. GPA). Effects of 18 factors were checked for their predictive property of academic achievement. In this study with 18 independent variables, a minimum 194 participants would be sufficient to meet the required number of participants (Pallant, 2010). However, the sample size (n= 155) was not perfectly adequate for regression analysis. Therefore, rather than the normal R Square value, the adjusted R square value was taken into consideration in the study in order to obtain a better estimate of the true population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What are the Motivational Factors that Influence Pre-service EFL Teachers' Choice of Teaching as a Career?

To explore career motivations of the participants, descriptive statistics were employed. Means and standard deviations were calculated. The data analysis demonstrated that the student teachers had moderately high level of career motivations (M = 4.63, SD = 1.50). It can be seen from the mean values for each item in Table 1 that nine factors were rated above 5 on a 7-point Likert scale, including *desire to shape future of children/adolescent* (M = 5.83, SD = 1.29), *expert career* (M = 5.75, SD = 1.26), *desire to make social contribution* (M = 5.63, SD = 1.34), *intrinsic career values* (M = 5.43, SD = 1.68), *satisfaction with choice* (M = 5.37, SD = 1.64), *prior teaching and learning experiences* (M = 5.30, SD = 1.63), *high demand* (M = 5.25, SD = 1.39), *desire to work with children* (M = 5.07, SD = 1.74), and *ability of teaching* (M = 5.05, SD = 1.50), indicating that these factors were perceived as important influences on the participants' decision of becoming a teacher.

Table 1. Mean values for factors affecting teaching choice

Career Motivations	Mean	SD
Shape future of children/adolescent	5.83	1.29
Expert career	5.75	1.26
Make social contribution	5.63	1.34
Intrinsic career values	5.43	1.68
Satisfaction with choice	5.37	1.64
Prior teaching and learning experiences	5.30	1.63
High demand	5.25	1.39
Work with children	5.07	1.74
Ability of teaching	5.05	1.50
Time for family	4.90	1.61
Job security	4.90	1.58
Enhance social equity	4.83	1.55
Job transferability	4.81	1.72
Social influence	4.61	1.95
Social status	4.55	1.61
Social dissuasion	3.80	1.92
Salary	3.20	1.60
Fallback career	3.03	1.96

Six other factors, such as *time for family* (M = 4.90, SD = 1.61), *job security* (M = 4.90, SD = 1.58), *desire to enhance social equity* (M = 4.83, SD = 1.55), *job transferability* (M = 4.81, SD = 1.72), *social influence* (M = 4.61, SD = 1.95), and *social status* (M = 4.55, SD = 1.61) were rated above four but below five, showing that they were considered as having relatively less important influences on preference for teaching profession. The least influential factor that has an impact on their career choice was *choosing teaching as a fallback career* (M = 3.03, SD = 1.96), which was followed by *salary* (M = 3.20, SD = 1.60) and social dissuasion (M = 3.80, SD = 1.92). In brief, while *desire to shape the future of children/adolescents* was the highest rated factor affecting career choice, the lowest rated one was *choosing teaching as a fallback career.*

Does Grade Level Significantly Affect Pre-service EFL Teachers' Career Motivations?

A one-way between-groups multivariate analysis of variance (one-way MANOVA) was performed to scrutinize if grade level significantly affected pre-service EFL teachers' career motivations. No violation of normality assumption was detected. Before presenting the findings emerged from one-way MANOVA, it is meaningful to provide the results of the descriptive statistics (see further Table 2) which portray the pre-service EFL teachers' career motivations in terms of grade level.

Table 2. The results of the descriptive statistics (MANOVA)

Variable		Motivations for teaching		Perceptions about the profession		Career choice satisfaction	
Grade	N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1	45	196.37	37.24	69.73	10.94	27.28	7.21
2	40	197.17	35.29	73.05	10.37	27.40	7.29
3	40	199.87	31.29	72.97	13.40	27.62	6.97
4	30	205.03	27.84	75.16	9.96	28.03	4.27

As it is illustrated in Table 3, there was no statistically significant difference among four grade levels on the combined dependent variables, $F (9,362) = .572$, $p= .820$; Wilks' Lambda = .966; partial eta squared= .01. In other words, when grade level was considered, no significant difference was observed in the participants' career motivations.

Table 3. MANOVA: The effect of grade level

Effect	Wilk's Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial eta squared
Grade	.966	.572	9.000	362.000	.820	.01

Is it Possible to Predict Pre-service EFL Teachers' Academic Achievement by Means of their Career Motivations? If So, What are the Best Predictors?

A multiple standard regression analysis was carried out to understand if any of the factors affecting teaching choice predict the participants' academic achievement. No assumptions were violated as the multivariate outliers were not deemed to be of concern in terms of normality. The findings of the multiple regression analysis suggested that, of the factors affecting teaching choice, only *time for family*, *desire to work with children*, *intrinsic career values*, and *desire to make social contribution* emerged as the predictors of academic achievement, explaining extensively larger unique variation in student teachers' GPA than other factors. The general regression model was significant ($F = 7.581$, $p < .01$) and the amount of variation explained by the factors influencing teaching choice was large (adjusted $R^2 = .47$). The model explained 47% of the variance in academic achievement (see further Table 4).

Table 4. Regression analysis: Predictors of achievement

Predictors	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Zero order	Partial	Part
				Correlations		
Time for family	**-.720**	**-2.550**	**.012**	**-.043**	**-.216**	**-.149**
Work with children	**-.661**	**-2.496**	**.014**	**.029**	**-.212**	**-.146**
Intrinsic career values	**-.551**	**-2.198**	**.030**	**.091**	**-.187**	**-.129**
Make social contribution	**-.425**	**-2.147**	**.034**	**.076**	**-.183**	**-.126**
Satisfaction with choice	-.103	-.830	.408	.064	-.072	-.049
Prior teaching and learning experiences	-.349	-1.714	.089	-.007	-.147	-.100
High demand	-.012	-.068	.946	-.103	-.006	-.004
Expert career	.225	1.338	.183	.119	.115	.078
Ability of teaching	-.261	-1.197	.233	.106	-.103	-.070
Shape future of children/adolescents	-.033	-.151	.880	.112	-.013	-.009
Job security	-.237	-1.241	.217	.106	-.107	-.073
Enhance social equity	-.313	-1.512	.133	.083	-.130	-.088
Job transferability	-.322	-1.661	.099	.122	-.143	-.097
Social influence	-.307	-1.329	.186	.109	-.115	-.078
Social status	.282	.775	.440	-.054	.067	.045
Social dissuasion	.003	.046	.963	.021	.004	.003
Salary	.210	1.289	.200	.043	.111	.075
Fallback career	-.472	-1.961	.052	-.114	-.168	-.115

Note: adjusted R^2 for the model = .473.

Having a close look at the findings of the study, it can be readily understood that the pre-service EFL teachers had a moderately high level of career motivations, which is in line with the findings of the study of Topkaya and Uztosun (2012). It can therefore be assumed that with regard to occupational motivations they showed enthusiasm for entering a teacher education program. The current study also showed that pre-service EFL teachers accord great importance to their *desire to shape the future of children/adolescents* more than the other reasons, which suggests that they are more altruistically motivated in their career preference. Nevertheless, the subsequent highly rated factors are *expert career, desire to make social contribution, intrinsic career values* and *satisfaction with choice*, which are related to intrinsic and altruistic motivations. These results are in accord with previous studies (e.g. Balyer & Özcan, 2014; Lestari & Arfiandhani, 2019; Lin et al., 2012; Pizarro & Laborda, 2017; Rothland, 2014; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012) indicating that the altruistic motive of social utility value and intrinsic reasons dominate as the influential factors for choosing teaching profession. The reason why the pre-service EFL teachers rated the highest on the altruistic social utility value may be attributed to Turkish culture's collectivist nature, which attaches great significance to group goals rather than individual aims and interests (Kılınç et al., 2012).

In the present study, it was also revealed that *choosing teaching as a fallback career* is the least influential reason for the participants' career preference. This result corroborates the findings of a great deal of the previous study (e.g. Erten, 2014; Goller et al., 2019; Lee, Kang, & Park, 2019; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012), which suggested that student teachers did not prefer teaching as a last resort career whereas it is contrary to those of Kılınç and associates (2012), and Klassen and associates (2011) showing that they chose teaching profession since they did not have better choice or failed in other areas of study. Therefore, the combination of findings provides some support for the fact that many of the participants were bound and determined to become EFL teachers. Another finding was that grade level did not make any significant difference in the pre-service EFL teachers' career motivations, which is in agreement with Topkaya and Uztosun's (2012) finding. This implies that training that they received during their teacher education did not have any effects on their perceptions about their choice of being an EFL teacher. Besides, in the current study, of the factors affecting teaching choice, only *time for family*, *desire to work with children*, *intrinsic career values*, and *desire to make social contribution* were found as the predictors of GPA, explaining 47% of the variance in the participants' academic achievement. A possible explanation for this might be that prospective teachers' choice of teaching profession due to such reasons as *time for family*, *desire to work with children*, *intrinsic career values*, and *desire to make social contribution* exerts influence on their success in teacher education programs. This result is promising for pre-service EFL teachers' future careers because a clear association between the willing choice of teaching and academic achievement was noted (Özgüngör, 2008).

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this research was to scrutinize pre-service EFL teachers' reasons for choosing teaching as a future career in the under-researched context of Turkey. The second aim of the study was to explore the impact of grade level on their career motivations. Besides, the study attempted to explore whether any of the factors influencing their career motivations predict their academic achievement. This study has shown that the student teachers had a moderately high level of career motivations. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that the highest-rated factor affecting career choice was *desire* to shape the future of children/adolescents whereas the lowest rated one was choosing teaching as a fallback career. Grade level made no significant difference to their career motivations. Additionally, only time for family, desire to work with children, intrinsic career values, and desire to make social contributions emerged as reliable predictors of academic achievement.

Some tentative conclusions and pedagogical implications can be drawn from the findings of the study. First of all, pre-service EFL teachers manifest more altruistic and intrinsic reasons for becoming an EFL teacher with very few of them reporting that they preferred this profession as a fallback career. This can be seen as a valuable asset for the training of future student teachers as altruistic and intrinsic motivations are commonly characterized by higher levels of success and zeal in the practice of teaching. It can therefore be assumed that teaching is generally a career of choice for pre-service EFL teachers rather than something that they fall back on when their other choices are not realized. However, as Topkaya and Uztosun (2012) assert, more investigations should be undertaken to provide information about how and why student teachers with high level of motivation lose their zeal for teaching. It is essential to understand what affects teacher motivation negatively or positively in different phases of their professional development (Erten, 2014). Secondly, in the current research, grade level did not have any significant impact on English teacher candidates' career motivations, which implies that their four-year teacher education had no impact on their career motivations. Nevertheless, observing them all through their years of teacher education might enable us to arrive at more definite and more reliable conclusions. Lastly, prospective teachers' career motivations were revealed to exert influence on their success in teacher education programs. This is promising for prospective English teachers' future careers since there exists a direct link between eagerly choosing teaching and academic achievement (Özgüngör, 2008). All in all, it is advisable for teacher education institutions to endeavour to point out to student teachers that teaching is about altruism and self-devotion. In the process of teacher education, it is vital to acknowledge and incorporate the multiple motives of career choice that EFL student teachers hold. Organizing teacher education programs drawing on multiple motives might contribute significantly to completion of teacher education and teacher retention in future professions.

This study has certain limitations. The major limitation of this study is that it probed career motivations of the prospective teachers of English majoring in English Language Teaching at a particular state university in Turkey. Thus, the findings cannot be generalized across universities or across countries. Further research might be conducted with different participants from different ELT departments. Another limitation lies in the fact that the study used only quantitative methods to collect data. Future studies that involve data triangulation by means of employing both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods need to be carried out. In spite of its limitations, the study certainly adds to our understanding of the career motivations of prospective teachers of English.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Statements of publication ethics

I hereby declare that the study has no unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

Author's Contributions

There is only one author of this article. Tutku Başöz is responsible for all of the work done for this article.

Ethics Committee Approval Information

The ethics committee approval was obtained from Balıkesir University with a document number of 19928322-302.08.01-E.34888 on 07/09/2020. All participants provided written informed consent prior to enrolment and data collection in this study.

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