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## Motivations of Turkish Pre-service Teachers to Choose Teaching as a Career

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*Abstract: This study was conducted to investigate the motivations of 974 Turkish pre-service teachers for choosing teaching as a career and to examine their perceptions about the teaching profession. Correlations, t test, ANCOVAs and MANCOVAs were used to explore the relationships among participants' motivations and perceptions, and to make comparisons according to different characteristics such as gender, different specialism, number of times participants had entered the university entrance examination, and rank of their preference of teaching as a profession. The results showed that the social and personal utility value and prior teaching and learning experiences were the highly rated motivation factors. The findings also revealed how the general image of teaching as a career held in the social-cultural context of Turkish society shaped participants' motivations and perceptions.*

### Introduction

Different ways to improve the quality of teaching profession have been explored in many countries with similar concerns about the development and maintenance of an informed citizenry (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010; Krecic & Grmek, 2005; Kyriacou & Benmansour, 1999; Kyriacou, Hultgren, & Stephens, 1999; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Sinclair, Dowson, & McInerney, 2006; Yakuub, 1990; Younger, Brindley, Pedder, & Haggard, 2004; Wang & Fwu, 2001). The need to attract talented and motivated people to the teaching profession has been stressed in policy documents (OECD, 2005). Yet teacher shortage has interfered with these efforts in many OECD countries due to difficulty in attracting new recruits to teacher education, the resignation of qualified teachers, ageing and retirement of an ongoing teacher labor force (Richardson & Watt, 2006; Sinclair, 2008; Williams & Forgasz, 2009).

A substantial amount of research on what initially motivates people to become teachers reported findings mostly situated within the North American context (Richardson & Watt, 2007; Sinclair, 2008). Current research on motivations to choose teaching profession is rigorously reporting findings from the New Zealand and Australian context (Anthony & Ord, 2008; Nuttall, Murray, Seddon & Mitchell, 2006; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Sinclair, 2008; Williams & Forgasz, 2009). Besides, there is a call for large-scale, cross-cultural and longitudinal studies due to possible presence of commonalities, inadequacy and/or irrelevancy of explanations in different contexts (Nuttall, Murray, Seddon & Mitchell, 2006; Richardson & Watt, 2006). Yet, an integrative theoretical framework is lacking to guide the selection, organization and comparison of influential factors. *Rebus sie stantibus*, the FIT-Choice (Factors Influencing Teaching Choice) framework (Richardson & Watt, 2006) provides a comprehensive and coherent model to guide systematic investigation into why people choose teaching careers (Anthony & Ord, 2008; Richardson & Watt, 2006).

In this regard, this study is an attempt to investigate motivations of pre-service teachers for choosing teaching as a career and to examine their perceptions about teaching profession by applying FIT-Choice scale in a Turkish university. Research into Turkish preservice teachers' motivation and perceptions with FIT-Choice Scale not only broadens the knowledge base of what motivates individuals in a developing country, but also facilitates comparison of findings between different contexts.

This study also compares participants' motivation and perceptions as regards their different characteristics i.e. specialism, the number of times they had entered the university entrance examination, the rank of their preference of teaching as a profession, and gender. It was expected that participants in different groups of specialism and gender, who entered the university entrance exam for once or more, and who ranked teaching profession differently in this exam would vary in their motivations for choosing a teaching career and perceptions of the profession. Identification of these two factors, in addition to exploring the influences of their different characteristics on their motivations and perceptions help to identify why teaching attracts students, and how social and cultural context influence their decisions. The findings will also contribute to the teacher education and recruitment efforts in Turkey, where teacher education has been going through a comprehensive change since 1998 (Eşme, 2009; Grossman, Onkol, Sands, 2007), yet teacher shortages and retention problems persist.

#### **FIT-Choice Framework**

FIT–Choice framework is a valid and reliable model to guide the investigation of the question “why people choose a teaching career”, (Richardson & Watt, 2006). Richardson and Watt ground their framework on the expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) which explains that future goals play a motivational role in individuals' present steps as a function of their expectancies and values that are linked to those goals (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Watt and Richardson (2007) draw together recurring themes from the teacher education literature alongside ability related beliefs emphasized in the career-choice literature and locate these themes within the expectancy-value framework i.e. “*Prior Teaching and Learning Experiences*” and “*Social Influences*” emphasize the positive influences of prior teaching and learning experiences as well as the influences of significant others such as family members, friends and colleagues. Another construct “*Social Dissuasion*” is used to determine the extent to which others have dissuaded individuals from a teaching career. These are followed by more proximal influences of “*Task Perceptions*”, “*Self Perceptions*”, “*Values*” and “*Fallback Career*”. “*Task perceptions*” explore individuals' perceptions of teaching as a highly demanding career, social status, teacher morale, and salary. “*Self-perceptions of ability*” explore individuals' perceptions of their own teaching abilities. “*Values*” comprise “*intrinsic career value*”, “*personal utility value*” (job security, time for family, job transferability) and “*social utility value*” (Shaping future of children/adolescents). “*Fallback career*” refers to the possibility of people who reluctantly have chosen teaching. They may have chosen teaching for reasons relating to not being accepted to their major program of choice or being unsure of the actual career they wished to pursue.

The FIT-Choice scale consists of 18 factors i.e. 12 motivation factors, 5 beliefs about the profession factors, and 1 career choice satisfaction factor (Watt & Richardson, 2007). The motivation factors are ability, intrinsic career value, fallback career, job security, time for family, job transferability, shaping future of children/adolescents, enhancing social equity, making social contribution, working with children/adolescents, prior teaching and learning experiences, and social influences. All the motivation factors contain 3 items each, except the

time for family factor, which contains 5 items. Seven-point Likert type response format is used i.e. 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important). 'I chose to become a teacher because....' is the preface to all motivation items. The beliefs about teaching factors are expertise (3 items), difficulty (3 items), social status (6 items), salary (2 items), and social dissuasion (3 items) with possible responses from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely). Career choice satisfaction factor contains 3 items with possible responses ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely). FIT-Choice Scale also includes an initial open-ended question of "what are your main reasons for choosing to become a teacher".

## Conceptual Framework

Since the early 1990s, research on motivations for teaching has been underpinned by different theoretical bases and used a variety of research methods, such as interviews, questionnaires and case studies. Similar but not identical motivations synthesized from these studies include a "love" of or desire to work with and be beneficial for students, altruism or aiming to make a difference in communities and society, and the influence of others including family members, past teachers or members of the wider community. Perceived benefits, and/or convenience of teaching such as work schedules, work hours, vacations, career security and salary, a "calling" to teach and a love of teaching or particular subject, or a desire to impart knowledge are also among the major motivations to choose teaching as a profession. The nature of teaching work, the perceived ease of entry into initial teacher education courses, and the status teaching provides are also identified in the previous research as reasons to choose this career (Sinclair, 2008).

Sinclair's (2008) research with 211 Australian student teachers extends the findings of earlier studies that teaching attracts people because it provides an opportunity for working with children. Teaching also provides intellectual stimulation, personal and professional development. The nature of teaching work, perceived working conditions and life-fit are other attractors of teaching as a profession. Williams and Forgasz's (2009) findings from a study of motivations of 375 career change students support the research that people chose teaching as a career primarily for intrinsic or altruistic reasons rather than for extrinsic rewards such as pay, working conditions, career opportunities or status.

Manuel and Hughes (2006) reported the quest for personal fulfillment, the desire to work with young people to make a difference in their lives, and the opportunity to continue meaningful engagement with the subject of their choice as fundamental reasons for people to choose teaching at the end of research with 79 secondary teacher education students in Australia. Anthony and Ord (2008) report push and pull factors, family experiences, values and task expectancies as the reasons of 68 participants to pursue teaching in New Zealand. Bruinsma and Jansen (2010) extend the concept of motivation to become a teacher by making a distinction between adaptive and maladaptive motives based on research into achievement motivation and the studies by Sinclair, Dowson and McInerney (2006) and Martin (2006).

Recent studies which have explored Turkish pre-service teachers' motivations for teaching show that intrinsic career value, salary, social status, social influences, working with children/adolescents, and making a social contribution are major reasons for choosing teaching as a career (Boz & Boz, 2008). Ok and Önkol (2007) also listed love of the subject area, having good job opportunities, helping others, working with children, and perceived personal suitability. Aksu, Engin-Demir, Daloğlu, Yıldırım and Kiraz (2010) reported that more than half of the 18,226 pre service teachers from 51 Faculties of Education in their study had willingly chosen teaching. The other reasons listed were flexible working hours, holidays and the possibility of engaging in secondary employment. Low university entrance

exam scores (29%), opportunity to find a job easily (25%) and good working conditions (21%) were also nominated by pre-service teachers as reasons to choose teaching as a profession (Aksu et al., 2010). Aksu et al. (2010) reported that only 9% of the pre service teachers mentioned the status of teaching profession in the Turkish society as a reason on their choice.

Job security has been identified as another significant reason for increased demand for teacher education programs in the Turkish context (Aksu et al., 2010; Aydın & Baskan, 2005). Scholarships provided by the Ministry of National Education to those selecting teaching programs is yet another reason for the considerable increases in numbers selecting teaching in recent years (Semerci & Taşpınar, 2003). However, Gürbüzürk (2004) and Özbek (2007) reported that pre-service teachers' personal reasons for choosing the profession, such as regarding teaching as an ideal or sacred, and respected profession, and love of children, were stronger influences than economic and social reasons on their choice.

The examination system also plays a significant role in the choice of teaching as a profession (Semerci & Taşpınar, 2003). Although some students willingly choose teacher education, a considerable number of teacher candidates enroll on programs because of their low university entrance exam scores. These teacher candidates are said to be less motivated because teaching was not their primary career choice, and they would have chosen a different faculty had their exam scores been higher (Aksu et al., 2010).

### **Teacher Shortage and Retention**

Periodic teacher shortages have been experienced in Turkey due to a demographic pressure on the teacher education system (Yıldırım & Ok, 2002). Teacher shortage was a problem at the lower and upper secondary school levels in the 1960s, and there were subject area teacher shortages in the 1970s. The lengthening of teacher education programs in the early 1980s also resulted in a teacher shortage, and the large-scale retirement among teachers due to an early retirement law added to the problem of shortages in the early 1990s (Yıldırım & Ok, 2002). Furthermore, the introduction of eight years of compulsory primary education in 1997 also resulted in teacher shortage (Güven, 2008).

During the periods of teacher shortages, graduates of other educational organizations were hired as teachers. Teacher education and recruitment policies ignored quality requirements to overcome teacher shortage. Most recently in 1998, the Ministry of Education recruited more than 20,000 university graduates, either with or without a teaching certificate, at elementary schools to meet the teacher demand. Student numbers in Education Faculties rapidly increased and the teacher education system became overloaded in the early 2000s. These short term attempts in turn led to teacher demoralization (Güven, 2008), damaged the social status of teaching profession in the Turkish society, and fostered a view of teaching as the profession of those who were not able to find other jobs (Semerci & Taşpınar, 2003). Today, teacher shortages and retention are still major problems in Eastern Turkey and village schools. New graduates who do not want to serve in these economically underdeveloped places, which do not offer much of a social life for teachers, request a reassignment after one year of teaching (Yıldırım & Ok, 2002).

## Method

### Sample and Setting

The study was conducted in a state university established in 1992. There are 9 departments in the Education Faculty; Computer Education and Instructional Technology, Educational Sciences, Elementary Education, English Language Teaching, Secondary Science and Mathematics Education, Secondary Social Sciences Education, Turkish Language Teaching, Art Education and Special Education. The sample consisted of 974 students from Elementary Education, English Language Teaching, and Art Teaching. A few from the secondary school science and mathematics teaching also participated. As seen in Table 1, majority of the participants were female, younger than the age of 20 and had entered the university entrance examination only once. The teaching profession had been the first preference for 16.1% of participants.

		%	N
Gender	Female	72.8	689
	Male	27.2	258
Department	EE Science Teaching	14.5	137
	EE Social Sciences Teaching	14.5	137
	EE Mathematics Teaching	17	161
	EE School teaching	27.3	258
	English Language Teaching	17.9	169
	Art Teaching	5.1	48
	EE Preschool teaching	2.9	27
	SS Science-Mathematics Teaching	0.9	9
Age	<20 years old	64.1	605
	21-25 years old	34.2	323
	>26	1.7	16
Number of times university entrance exam sat	Once	53.5	503
	Twice	34.3	323
	Three times	8.5	80
	Four times and more	3.7	35
Teaching as a career	First choice	16.1	148
	2-5 <sup>th</sup> choice	30.5	280
	6-10 <sup>th</sup> choice	23	211
	11-15 <sup>th</sup> choice	10.1	93
	16 <sup>th</sup> and higher	20.2	185

**Table 1: Summary of Participant Characteristics**

### Procedure and Materials

Based on the survey method, FIT-Choice scale was used to assess the factors influencing participants' choice of the teaching profession. The translation-back-translation of the original FIT-Choice scale, and meaning check was done by a team of four involving the researcher, a native English speaker and two bilingual English language teachers. FIT-Choice scale was administered by the researcher with informed consent of chairpersons of the departments in the Fall semester of 2010-2011. Through convenience sampling, 1147 pre-service teachers in class groups were invited to participate in the study in which the response

rate was 85% in total. The participants were informed about the study and were requested to indicate their age, gender, and department, rank of their preference of teaching as a profession, and specify how many times they had entered the university entrance examination. The sample represents 25% of all students enrolled in the Faculty. Including the initial open-ended question of “what are your main reasons for choosing to become a teacher”, the FIT-Choice Scale employed in this study contained 63 items (See Table 2 for all factors and items from Watt and Richardson (2007)).

### Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (means and percentages), and inferential statistics (factor analysis, Pearson correlations, T-test, ANCOVA and MANCOVA) were used to examine pre-service teachers' motivations for choosing teaching as a career and differences as regards gender, specialism, number of times university entrance exam sat and ranking of teaching as a career choice in this exam. Qualitative data were included to make additional inferences about participants' motivation in choosing teaching.

Two separate Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) were conducted by using LISREL 8.30 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999) to check if the 18-factor FIT-Choice model with 12 motivation factors, 5 perception factors and one career choice satisfaction factor would be confirmed in the present sample i.e. if FIT-Choice scale yields reliable and valid scores in the Turkish context. In order to assess the data fit,  $X^2/df$  ratio ( $\leq 5$ ), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) ( $\leq .08$ ), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) ( $\geq .90$ ) were used (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993; Kline, 2005).

Mean scores on each factor were used to conclude about the participants' motivations for choosing teaching as a career, perceptions about the teaching profession and career choice satisfaction. It was expected that participants who scored higher in motivations for teaching would also score higher in perceptions about the profession (Hypothesis 1a). It is also expected that the participants' scores of motivation for teaching and perceptions about profession correlate with the number of times they entered the university entrance exam and rank of teaching in their list of profession (Hypothesis 1b). Therefore, Pearson correlations among motivations, perceptions, number of times the university examination was sat, and ranking of teaching as a profession in this exam were computed.

It is also expected that male participants would score higher on social dissuasion than female participants (Hypothesis 2) as teaching is perceived to be the most suitable profession for women in the Turkish society (Güven, 2008). Independent sample T-test tested for statistically significant differences by participants' gender.

Factor means as regards different specialism were compared using MANCOVAs to see the possible effects of participant characteristics (specialism, number of times the university examination was sat, and ranking of teaching as a profession in this exam) on the FIT-Choice subscales. It was expected that participants enrolled in different teaching programs would have different scores of motivation for teaching and perception about the profession, and the number of times they entered the university entrance exam and the rank of teaching in their list of profession would influence these scores (Hypothesis 3). Pre-service teachers' specialism was entered as an independent variable whereas the number of times the university examination was sat, and ranking of teaching as a profession in this exam were entered as covariates and their motivation for teaching and perceptions about the profession were entered as dependent variable. A series of univariate analyses were also conducted to investigate the univariate effects of specialism on the motivations for teaching and perceptions about the profession after MANCOVAs. Partial  $\eta^2$  coefficients were used to

examine the results i.e. partial eta squares less than and equal to .06 were treated as small and unimportant coefficients to explain the dependence of participants' motivation and perceptions about the teaching profession on their specialism.

Content analysis of the participants' responses to the initial open ended question was conducted by a team of two involving the researcher and a research assistant through the coding and thematizing of the raw data, generating matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994), identification and grouping of similarities and differences in responses, development of invariant themes (Patton, 1990), drawing a pattern of responses, and making inferences and generalizations where inter-coder reliability was 90%.

## Results

### Preliminary analyses

#### *CFA of Theoretical and Analytical Model*

Results of the first CFA for the 12 motivation factors demonstrated acceptable fit to the data  $X^2/df=4.65$ ;  $RMSEA=0.063$ ;  $CFI=0.88$ . Internal reliability of the subscales ranged from 0.55 to 0.89. The results of the second CFA for the 6 perception factors had no fit to the data  $X^2/df>5$ ;  $RMSEA=0.12$ ;  $CFI=0.83$ . When the items C7 "Do you think teaching is emotionally demanding?", D1 "How carefully have you thought about becoming a teacher?" and D2 "Were you encouraged to pursue careers other than teaching" were excluded from the analysis, that they did not fit with the other items of the "Difficulty", "Dissuasion" and "Satisfaction with Choice" subscales; thus fit indices improved ( $X^2/df=5.49$ ;  $RMSEA=0.068$ ;  $CFI=0.916$ ). Internal reliability of the factors, items and their parameter estimations are presented in Table 2. Standardized parameter estimations ranged from .27 to .92, which showed that the items were significantly predicted by their factors in the FIT-Choice Scale.

Factors	P.E.	S.E.	E.M.E.
<i>Ability</i> ( $\alpha=.83$ ; Item mean=5.12)			
B 34 Teaching is a career suited to my abilities	.80	.27	.70
B 18 I have good teaching skills	.76	.35	.62
B 5 I have the qualities of a good teacher	.74	.35	.59
<i>Intrinsic career value</i> ( $\alpha=.86$ , Item mean=5.10)			
B 1 I am interested in teaching	.83	.20	.78
B 12 I like teaching	.82	.19	.78
B 7 I have always wanted to be a teacher	.77	.32	.65
<i>Fallback career</i> ( $\alpha=.62$ , Item mean=2.73)			
B 48 I chose teaching as a last resort career	.63	.32	.55
B 35 I was not accepted to my first-choice career	.51	.52	.33
B 11 I was unsure of what career I wanted	.44	.65	.23
<i>Job security</i> ( $\alpha=.64$ , Item mean=4.99)			
B 38 Teaching will be a secure job	.75	.33	.62
B 27 Teaching will provide a reliable income	.73	.38	.58
B 14 Teaching will offer a steady career path	.43	.75	.20
<i>Time for family</i> ( $\alpha=.81$ , Item mean=5.14)			
B 29 School holidays will fit in with family commitments	.77	.28	.68
B 18 As a teacher I will have a short working day	.71	.43	.54
B 16 Teaching hours will fit with the responsibilities of having a family	.64	.47	.47
B 4 As a teacher I will have lengthy holidays	.63	.51	.44



B2 Part-time teaching could allow more family time	.55	.60	.33
<i>Job transferability</i> ( $\alpha=.55$ , Item mean=5.11)			
B 45A teaching job will allow me to choose where I wish to live	.40	.75	.18
B22 A teaching qualification is recognised everywhere	.54	.63	.31
B8 Teaching will be a useful job for me to have when travelling	.61	.49	.43
<i>Shape future of children/adolescents</i> ( $\alpha=.73$ , Item mean=5.82)			
B 9 Teaching will allow me to shape child/adolescent values	.61	.50	.42
B 53 Teaching will allow me to have an impact on children/adolescents	.70	.40	.55
B 23 Teaching will allow me to influence the next generation	.63	.39	.51
<i>Enhance social equity</i> ( $\alpha=.74$ , Item mean=5.21)			
B 54 Teaching will allow me to work against social disadvantage	.76	.32	.65
B 36 Teaching will allow me to raise the ambitions of underprivileged youth	.59	.56	.38
B 49 Teaching will allow me to benefit the socially disadvantaged	.66	.50	.47
<i>Make social contribution</i> ( $\alpha=.79$ , Item mean=6.23)			
B 31 Teaching enables me to 'give back' to society	.75	.23	.71
B 6 Teaching allows me to provide a service to society	.64	.36	.53
B 20 Teachers make a worthwhile social contribution	.60	.37	.49
<i>Work with children/adolescents</i> ( $\alpha=.89$ , Item mean=4.85)			
B 26 I want to work in a child/adolescent centred environment	.85	.20	.78
B 37 I like working with children/adolescents	.83	.23	.75
B 13 I want a job that involves working with children/adolescents	.80	.29	.69
<i>Prior teaching and learning experiences</i> ( $\alpha=.74$ , Item mean=5.11)			
B 30 I have had good teachers as role-models	.84	.17	.81
B 17 I have had inspirational teachers	.78	.29	.67
B 39 I have had positive learning experiences	.42	.74	.19
<i>Social influences</i> ( $\alpha=.79$ , Item mean=4.39)			
B 40 People I've worked with think I should become a teacher	.87	.17	.81
B 3 My friends think I should become a teacher	.70	.41	.54
B 24 My family think I should become a teacher	.56	.58	.36
<i>Salary</i> ( $\alpha=.76$ , Item mean=2.70)			
C 1 Do you think teaching is well paid?	.78	.07	.10
C 3 Do you think teachers earn a good salary?	.78	.07	.10
<i>Social status</i> ( $\alpha=.82$ , Item mean=4.44)			
C 12 Do you believe teaching is a well-respected career?	.75	.07	.09
C 9 Do you think teachers feel valued by society?	.77	.07	.10
C 13 Do you think teachers feel their occupation has high social status?	.71	.08	.09
C 5 Do you think teachers have high morale?	.51	.09	.06
C 4 Do you believe teachers are perceived as professionals?	.27	.10	.07
C 8 Do you believe teaching is perceived as a high-status occupation?	.51	.09	.10
<i>Expertise</i> ( $\alpha=.82$ , Item mean=5.47)			
C 15 Do you think teachers need highly specialised knowledge?	.85	.05	.10

C 14 Do you think teachers need high levels of technical knowledge?	.84	.05	.09
C 10 Do you think teaching requires high levels of expert knowledge?	.66	.06	.07
<i>Difficulty</i> ( $\alpha=.61$ , Item mean=5.51)			
C 2 Do you think teachers have a heavy workload?	.54	.15	.07
C 11 Do you think teaching is hard work?	.83	.17	.10
<i>Satisfaction</i> ( $\alpha=.89$ , Item mean=5.25)			
D 5 How happy are you with your decision to become a teacher?	.87	.09	.10
D 3 How satisfied are you with your choice of becoming a teacher?	.92	.12	.10
<i>Social dissuasion</i> ( $\alpha=.41$ , Item mean=4.27)			
D 6 Did others influence you to consider careers other than teaching?	.53	.19	.10
D 4 Did others tell you teaching was not a good career choice	.49	.20	.10
Note: P.E.: Parameter Estimations, S.E.: Standard Error, E.M.E.: Estimated Measurement Error			

**Table 2: Summary of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice Subscales**

### Correlation Analysis

Table 3 presents the relationships among all factors. Confirming Hypothesis 1a, relationships among one of the motivation factors and career choice satisfaction factor i.e. intrinsic career value and career choice satisfaction ( $r=.77$ ), and two perception factors i.e. difficulty and expertise ( $r=.70$ ) were strong. Relationships among motivation factors were moderate to strong on the basis of  $\geq .30$  criterion such as the relationships between intrinsic career value and ability ( $r=.64$ ), enhancing social equity and shaping the future of children and adolescents ( $r=.62$ ), and fallback career and intrinsic career value ( $r=.52$ ), (See Table 3 for the correlations among all factors). On the other hand, the findings did not confirm Hypothesis 1b. The relationships of less than .30 suggested that the number of times participants had entered the university entrance examination and ranking of their preference of teaching as a profession in this exam did not considerably relate to their motivation in choosing teaching and perceptions about the profession.

Variable	M(SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Ability	5.12 (1.31)	-																				
Intrinsic career value	5.10 (1.56)	0.64	-																			
Fallback career	2.73 (1.66)	-	0.30	0.52	-																	
Job security	4.99 (1.31)	0.37	0.33	-0.09	-																	
Time for family	5.14 (1.30)	0.15	0.03	0.12	0.48	-																
Job transferability	5.11 (1.28)	0.39	0.40	-0.17	0.54	0.31	-															
Shape future of c/a	5.82 (1.07)	0.46	0.46	-0.26	0.33	0.18	0.45	-														
Enhance social equity	5.21 (1.27)	0.38	0.34	-0.11	0.38	0.19	0.41	0.62	-													
Make social contribution	6.23 (0.98)	0.47	0.49	-0.27	0.32	0.17	0.40	0.69	0.55	-												
Work with children/adolescents	4.85 (1.62)	0.54	0.64	-0.29	0.37	0.04	0.38	0.59	0.46	0.50	-											
Prior t/learning experiences	5.11 (1.52)	0.45	0.48	-0.23	0.33	0.12	0.33	0.41	0.33	0.41	0.38	-										
Social influences	4.39 (1.70)	0.40	0.36	-0.01	0.37	0.26	0.34	0.31	0.29	0.33	0.38	0.34	-									
Expertise	5.47 (1.32)	0.27	0.21	-0.02	0.22	0.01	0.19	0.29	0.32	0.24	0.27	0.18	0.15	-								
Difficulty	5.49 (1.06)	0.22	0.16	-0.05	0.15	0.00	0.15	0.31	0.31	0.26	0.27	0.17	0.15	0.70	-							
Social status	4.44 (1.26)	0.29	0.35	-0.16	0.43	0.12	0.40	0.34	0.31	0.33	0.36	0.33	0.22	0.25	0.17	-						
Salary	2.70 (1.45)	0.02	0.08	-0.01	0.23	0.01	0.14	0.00	0.08	0.04	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.06	-0.02	0.40	-					
Social dissuasion	4.38 (1.03)	-0.02	-0.06	-0.03	0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.01	0.05	0.01	-0.08	-0.07	-0.04	-0.06	-0.06	0.00	0.05	-				
Satisfaction with choice	5.15 (1.55)	0.59	0.77	-0.53	0.35	0.03	0.42	0.47	0.35	0.48	0.60	0.46	0.32	0.26	0.25	0.42	0.12	-0.05	-			
Age	1.38 (0.52)	0.11	0.07	-0.06	-0.03	-0.07	-0.01	-0.06	-0.09	-0.04	0.01	0.00	-0.04	0.07	0.06	-0.09	-0.04	-0.05	0.03	-		
Choice	2.88 (1.36)	-0.02	-0.03	0.13	0.00	0.04	-0.01	-0.04	0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.05	0.06	-0.02	-0.06	-0.02	-0.02	-0.03	-0.07	-0.12	-	
Number of times uni.ex. sat	1.62 (0.79)	0.02	-0.01	0.06	0.02	-0.05	-0.01	-0.10	-0.09	-0.07	-0.05	-0.02	0.03	0.00	-0.01	-0.04	-0.04	-0.07	-0.02	0.45	0.00	-

Note: Observed factor scores were used to calculate correlation coefficients.

**Table 3: Correlations and Descriptives**

### Motivations for Teaching

Responses of the participants showed that their highest rated motivation for choosing teaching was the “*social utility value*” of the teaching profession (i.e., making a social contribution, shaping the future of children/adolescents, enhancing social equity) (see Tables 4 and 5). *Personal utility value* of the teaching profession (i.e. time for family, job transferability, and job security), and prior teaching and learning experiences were the following most rated motivations. The participants (26.28%) also listed their personal abilities and skills as a major reason to choose teaching in their qualitative responses. “*Work with children/adolescents*” was the following most frequently mentioned motivation of the participants both in their quantitative and qualitative responses.

	M	SD	N
Make social contribution	6.23	.98	956
Shape future of children/adolescents	5.82	1.07	959
Enhance social equity	5.21	1.27	948
Time for family	5.14	1.30	918
Ability	5.12	1.31	947
Job transferability	5.11	1.28	936
Prior teaching and learning experiences	5.11	1.52	956
Intrinsic career value	5.10	1.56	955
Job security	4.99	1.31	950
Work with children/adolescents	4.85	1.62	953
Social influences	4.39	1.70	957
Fallback career	2.73	1.66	891

Note: Response options range from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important)

**Table 4: Mean Scores of Motivation Factors**

Qualitative data revealed that, 25.15% of participants nominated the secondary school system and the university entrance exam as their reason for choosing teaching as a career supporting the findings of previous research (Aksu et al., 2010; Semerci & Taşpınar, 2003). (See Table 5).

	N	%
Contributing to the society and influencing the next generation	310	31.82
Characteristics of the teaching profession i.e. social security and working conditions. working hours. long holidays	304	31.21
Personal characteristics i.e. abilities and skills are suitable to teaching profession. and teaching meet the personal needs and expectations	256	26.28
Love of children and adolescents and working with them	250	25.67
Secondary school system and university entrance exam	245	25.15
Love of the teaching profession	238	24.43
Being a teacher was a childhood dream	78	8.01
Social influences of parents and friends	179	18.38
Having family members as teachers	23	2.36
Love of the teaching act	144	14.78
Prior teaching and learning experiences	112	11.49
Teaching is the most suitable job for women	91	9.34
Status of teaching profession in the society	86	8.83
Love of the subject area	39	4.00

Note: Participants (N=974) nominated multiple responses

**Table 5: Motivations for Teaching**

The qualitative responses also revealed that the characteristics of the teaching profession such as social security and working conditions (resonant with *personal utility value* in the FIT-Choice framework), love of the teaching profession and love of teaching itself (resonant with *intrinsic career value* in the FIT-Choice framework), were the other attractors of teaching profession for the participants. “*Social influences*” was the other significant reason for the participants’ choice of teaching as a career, with a mean score above the scale point (M=4.39, SD=1.70). Participants’ qualitative responses helped to highlight societal influences in their career choice where 18.38% mentioned social influences of parents and friends, and 11.49% mentioned prior teaching and learning experiences as their reasons to choose the teaching profession. Supporting the common view about teaching profession in Turkish society, 9.34% stated that they had chosen teaching because “teaching is the most suitable job for women”. The status of teaching in the Turkish society was also

influential in the decisions of 8.83% of participants. Love of the subject area (4%) was another reason listed by the participants to choose teaching.

MANCOVA results revealed that (See Table 6) the pre-service teachers' specialism was significantly important on their motivations for teaching ( $\eta^2 > .06$ ). Yet, follow up univariate analysis showed that the partial  $\eta^2$  was not significant to explain the dependence of participants' motivation on their specialism. Thus Hypothesis 3 was not confirmed.

Factor	F Value	p	Partial $\epsilon^2$
Ability	F(4. 679)=5.46	<.05	.03
Intrinsic career value	F(4. 679)=11.84	<.05	.06
Fallback career	F(4. 679)=21.34	<.05	.11
Shape future of children/adolescents	F(4. 679)=9.16	<.05	.04
Make social contribution	F(4. 679)=7.05	<.05	.03
Prior teaching and learning experiences	F(4. 679)=8.22	<.05	.05
Job security	F(4. 679)=4.30	<.05	.02
Job transferability	F(4. 679)=4.32	<.05	.02
Enhance social equity	F(4. 679)=3.67	<.05	.02
Work with children/adolescents	F(4. 679)=4.25	<.05	.02
Social status	F(4.792)=7.11	<.05	.03
Social dissuasion	F(4.792)=4.39	<.05	.02
Satisfaction with choice	F(4.792)=8.70	<.05	.04

**Table 6: Summary of the MANCOVA**

**Perceptions about the Profession**

Participants' responses showed that (see Table 7) they perceived teaching as an emotionally demanding and highly skillful occupation, requiring hard work and high levels of expert technical and specialized knowledge. They also perceived that teachers have a heavy workload but they are not well paid. This finding is similar to Watt and Richardson (2007) who reported that teaching was perceived as a career high in demand and low in return.

	M	SD	N
Difficulty	5.51	1.18	968
Expertise	5.47	1.32	957
Social status	4.44	1.26	942
Salary	2.70	1.45	961

**Table 7: Mean Scores of Perceptions about the Profession Factors**

Similar to the motivations for teaching, MANCOVA results revealed that (See Table 7) the pre-service teachers' specialism was not significantly important on their perceptions about teaching profession i.e. social status ( $\eta^2 = .03$ ), social dissuasion ( $\eta^2 = .02$ ), and satisfaction with choice ( $\eta^2 = .04$ ) (Hypothesis 3 was not confirmed).

**Career Choice Satisfaction.**

Participants' mean scores of the satisfaction with their choice of teaching as a career were relatively high (M=5.25, SD=1.66). Their responses show that they are satisfied with their decision to become a teacher. However, participants' responses showed they had had relatively strong experiences of social dissuasion (M=4.27, SD=1.66) from teaching as a career (see Table 8).

	M	SD.	N
Satisfaction with choice	5.25	1.66	956
Social dissuasion	4.27	1.66	957

**Table 8: Mean Scores of Satisfaction With Career Choice**

There was a statistically significant difference between male ( $M= 4.23$ ,  $SD= 1.05$ ) and female ( $M= 4.42$ ,  $SD= 1.02$ ) participants' experiences of social dissuasion. Males reported significantly more social dissuasion ( $t(927)= 2.61$ ,  $p=0.009$ ), supporting the common view about teaching in Turkish society being a job more suitable for women (Hypothesis 2 was confirmed).

## Discussion

Although developed in a different cultural context, confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the FIT-Choice framework was also valid and reliable in the Turkish context. Correlation analysis showed that the participants' specialism, number of times they had entered the university entrance examination and ranking of their preference on their motivation and perceptions about the teaching profession was negligible. Yet, the moderate to strong correlation among motivation subscales supported the claim that 12 motivation factors concurrently influenced their decisions in choosing teaching as a profession. Similar to the previous research (Eren & Tezel, 2010; Watt & Richardson, 2007), social utility value, personal utility value and prior teaching and learning experiences were the highly rated motivation factors.

Parallel to Watt and Richardson's research (2007), findings revealed that the participants perceived teaching profession as one which is emotionally demanding and highly skillful, requiring hard work and high levels of expert technical and specialized knowledge. Adding to the strong correlations among *intrinsic career value* and *career satisfaction* subscales, and *difficulty* and *expertise* subscales, participants valued making a social contribution and shaping the future of children/adolescents more than job security, spending time with family, and job transferability. Contrasting the sedentary societal tendency to accept teaching as a profession anyone can do to have job security, these findings could be interpreted as outcomes of the comprehensive change of the teacher education system in Turkey since 1998 (Eşme, 2009; Grossman, Onkol & Sands, 2007), which involved attempts to improve the quality of teaching profession and make it a more prestigious career choice. However, the participants' socially situated expectations in becoming a teacher by making a social contribution and shaping the future of children/adolescents when provided with a list of reasons to choose from (Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Anthony & Ord, 2008) might have also influenced their responses. Thus, this study will hopefully contribute to publicizing the issue and attracting young people to the teaching profession by providing a consequent overwhelming focus on opportunities to make a social contribution by disregarding other motivations (Richardson & Watt, 2006; Anthony & Ord, 2008) since teaching was perceived as a fallback career for one quarter of the participants in this study.

The association between the "*fallback career*" construct of the FIT-Choice framework and participants' nomination of the secondary school system and the university entrance exam as their reason for choosing teaching as a career was important in making an evaluation of the Turkish teacher education system. Contrary to the findings of Richardson and Watt (2006), one quarter of participants in this study stated that they would have chosen a different career if their university entrance exam scores had been higher. Such differences between admission requirements of the teacher education programs and recruitment policies

might have caused this discrepancy between Turkish and Australian findings. Despite being a standardized test, university entrance examination is the only criterion in the acceptance of pupils to teacher education programs in Turkey; however in Australia entry requirements are based on students' performance in secondary school i.e. an amalgam of marks attained on assessments and examinations of the final year of secondary schooling. Although, in Australia, each university when deciding on its own cut scores for acceptance with more competitive programs set higher cut scores than less competitive programs (Wang, Coleman, Coley & Phleps, 2003), teacher education programs in Turkey have generally low admission requirements. Thus, Turkish students who only have access to teaching departments because of poor secondary school performance or ones who do not have better alternatives when they graduate from secondary school can enrol in teacher education programs as identified in this study.

Although identified as a low status profession in both contexts (Aksu et al., 2010; Anthony & Ord, 2008; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Sinclair, 2008), the differences between the status of teaching profession in Turkey and Australia such as the salary and validity of the teaching certificate also highlight the discrepancies between Turkish and Australian findings in this regard. For instance, while teachers earn less when compared to other professions in Turkey, teacher salaries in Australia are higher than those of similarly educated professionals in the country. Though Australian teachers have to have a specified length of teaching experience as a prerequisite for a permanent license (Wang, Coleman, Coley & Phleps, 2003), Turkish teachers obtain a life-long teaching certificate which is valid from the moment they graduate. Thus, low admission requirements, low salary and a life-long valid certificate give rise to teaching to be perceived as a fallback career not only by society but also by the pre-service teachers themselves as identified in the current study. Participant responses also asserted that prospective teachers who see teaching as a fallback career would have low professional commitment in turn. Such background characteristics, thus, counteract the attempts to increase the quality of Turkish educational system and cause retention which hinders the initiatives to mitigate teacher shortages. This inference calls attention of policy makers to take into consideration the negative influences of low admission requirements and consequent low professional commitment during the policy development and teacher recruitment processes. The motivation, commitment, and quality of teachers who fill these positions are as important as the supply and demand for teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Policy initiatives should focus on concerted efforts to raise the profile and standards of teaching, to enhance the status of the profession, and to attract more attention to teacher education (Feng, 2011). Fwu and Wang (2002) and Wang (2011) suggest that a handsome package of remuneration and benefits, and a provision of a tuition-free pre-service education requiring five years of teaching in return would help to recruit and retain high-quality teachers into teaching.

In addition to the perceptions and status of teaching profession in the Turkish society, findings also revealed the strong influence of social and cultural contexts on how participants developed their motivation in choosing teaching. For instance, the influences of significant others and the way they encouraged participants towards teaching influenced both the participants' perceptions and their choice of teaching as a profession. Considering the socioeconomic and cultural context of Turkish society, a collectivist culture where individuals are encouraged toward conformity by their parents, family and larger social groups, obtaining such contrasting results with Richardson & Watt (2006) and Sinclair (2008) is not surprising. That is because both of these works by Richardson & Watt (2006) and Sinclair (2008) were conducted in individualistic cultures where emotional independence, assertiveness, autonomy, and the need for privacy are encouraged (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede & McCrae, 2004). Although social influences exerted a relatively weak influence on the

choice of teaching as a career because of the current low status of the teaching profession in Australia (Richardson & Watt, 2006; Sinclair, 2008); significant others, families and close relatives in particular, encourage young people to choose teaching for reasons of job security in Turkey.

The dominating presence of female participants in the sample and gender difference in responses considering social dissuasion subscale also supported a widely held view in Turkish society that teaching is a very suitable job for women. This finding also helps to explain why male participants were more dissuaded from teaching and why their female peers had been influenced to choose the career. However, within the wider context, similar observations have been made in the Dutch, Australian and Chinese teacher education programs, in which pre-service teachers are predominantly female and females are more likely to be attracted to teaching (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010; Feng, 2011; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Sinclair, 2008). Teaching is identified as the least desirable career option by the Chinese male secondary school graduates (Feng, 2011), as the number of men in Australian teacher education programs was reported to decrease by 9% since 1979 (Richardson & Watt, 2006). Prevailing ideas concerning the teaching profession as better suited for women also complicates attracting men to teacher training programs (Richardson & Watt, 2006). More studies from different parts of the world would help to draw supportive conclusions that teaching is considered a feminine profession worldwide.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study summarizes the factors that affect Turkish pre-service teachers' decisions to choose teaching as a profession, and identifies the relations between participants' perceptions of teaching profession and their reasons to enroll in a teacher education program. The study also presents the status quo of teacher education system in Turkey. In an international context, the findings help to illustrate the problems of retention and low attraction of teaching as a profession in a developing country where teaching has a low status. The utilization of a previously validated Australian scale helps to highlight the salient differences in collectivist and individualistic cultural contexts. Instead of transferring Western knowledge to formulate teacher education policies in Turkey, such an approach should be used to address unique issues in the Turkish context and to help build a relevant and specific knowledge base for educational policies and practices. Interpretation of the findings through an international framework also shows that the persistent problems of teacher shortages and retention in Turkey cannot be attributed to a single reason. It is necessary to investigate the characteristics of the human resources of the teacher education system such as entrants' motivation and perceptions about the teaching profession and/or if they are suitably qualified for the profession.

Among the limited comprehensive research on pre-service teachers' motivation for choosing teaching in Turkey, this study drew a profile of one Education Faculty. Similar studies should be conducted to test the generalizability of the findings, to explore why certain teaching motivations predominate in the Turkish context, and to draw a national profile of the Education Faculties. Apart from the generalizability issue, poor subscale reliabilities are acknowledged as limiting the strength of this study. Therefore, a national profile would help to better identify the influence of social, economic, and cultural contexts on how pupils develop their motivation to become teachers, and would contribute to the formulation and implementation of more relevant and specific teacher education policies. Targeting the range of motivations that attracts people to the teaching profession would in turn help to improve recruitment efforts (Richardson & Watt, 2006).



Future research should also focus on the other aspects of teacher education in Turkey, such as admission requirements, curriculum, the profile of pre-service teachers, their job entrance, induction, and retention. Similar to the Australian teacher education research basis, a strong research basis is needed to improve not only teacher education but also the recruitment efforts, and teacher education policies in Turkey.

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