

# Choosing Teaching as a Career: Importance of the Type of Motivation in Career Choices

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**Abstract:** This research looks into what are Extrinsic, Intrinsic and Altruistic motives and their importance when students are choosing their career. The study involved 324 teacher trainees in their first year of bachelor studies. The types of motivation when choosing teaching career were studied by SMVUP2-S (Teaching Career Choice Scale). The model of motivation types was supplemented by subscales: Influence by other, Career growth and Alternative choice. Objective of the study was to show the relationship between these variables. Results from the research showed that influence by other and alternative choice of teaching career were in a negative relation with interest and skills/experience that this career requires and students should have.

**Keywords:** career choice, teaching profession, motivation, influence.

## 1. Introduction

Understanding and establishing the types of motivation when choosing a career are important, especially when recruiting students for teaching studies or work [1]. It is probable that the types of motivation lead them to choose teaching as a career which will subsequently affect their professional engagement and manners they will use when teaching their students [1]. The decision to choose teaching as a career is multi-factorally conditioned,

as it is empirically shown in many studies [2], [3], [4] that the most important motives of a teaching career choice are interest and competences.

The aim of this study is to find out to what extent extrinsic (benefits, social status, lack of interest, forced choice) and altruistic motives (pro-sociality, work with children and youth) correlate with intrinsic motives of teaching (interest, competence, career growth).

## 2. Theoretical background

We registered three types of motivation within pedagogical literature: intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic. The motivation model of choosing teaching as a career presumes existence of various social factors in personality that is subsequently a decisive factor in career choice [5]. This construct shows different psychological mechanisms that are involved when choosing teaching as a career. All parts of the model affect an individual's decision [5].

Intrinsic motivation impulse comes from the inner personality structures. Therefore, it is more durable and effective than other types of motivation [6]. Intrinsic motives are the most frequent when choosing teaching as a career. They are considered the most important because they are directly related to the content of career [1], and they are predominately a good professional engagement in this field [7]. Therefore, intrinsic motives represent "the key to success" in teaching career [5]. Intrinsic personality motives include motives of competence, enthusiasm and interest [3], [8].

Altruistic motivation plays an important role when choosing teaching as a career. Altruistic motive may be understood as the desire to improve well-being of others [6]. It is connected with the concept of pro-sociality and it covers doing things intentionally to help the another person or group of people [5]. Altruistic motives are closely related to intrinsic motives because they correspond with the career content [9], [10], [11]. Altruistic motives of career

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choice include motive to work with children and youth [1], and motive of pro-sociality [6].

Motives that are connected to this issue also occur in pedagogical and psychological literature. Although higher performance might be achieved via extrinsic motivation, it is only for a short term. The worst relation is also between motivation and specific activity [6]. Extrinsic motives in teaching career are undesirable because dissatisfaction in performance may be shown in the teacher's workplace, as well as in his/her doings [7], [12]. We registered these following extrinsic motives in pedagogical and psychological literature: desire to have steady income [11], occupation after studies [13], holidays [10], job security [4], more time for family and children [14], and teaching career prestige in society [15].

There are many factors that influence motivation of choosing teaching as a career (eg. gender, idols, social and cultural background, age, socioeconomic background, demography, etc). This research [3] is aimed at the issue of professional orientation in teaching career which was carried out by Porubská (from 1990 to 1993). It was made on the sample N = 302 - perspective teachers of the first grade at a primary school. Porubská [3] found that social background had a influence on choosing teaching as a career (up to 42.8% of participants had a teacher in their family).

Kasáčová [8] also pointed out the significant influence of parents on their children's career choices. Based on this perspective of future teachers sample (N = 130), the author found out that the most common career choice motives were *interest* (44.6% of participants desired to become a teacher from their childhood) and *influence by others* (15.4% of participants were formed by a parental idol).

Havlík also pointed out the influence of social background or parents on this career choice [2]. The author states that those candidates who already have some experience in working with children and youth, show the strongest interest. Based on the research [2], the author states the following generalizations: females prefer a teaching career more than males, future teachers mostly come from smaller towns and there are strong family traditions of a teaching career (influencing factor).

Apart from Slovak and Czech authors, there are also other foreign authors who point out the influence of family. For instance, Schutz, Crowder & White [16], Watt [17] or Chivore [18]. Schutz, Crowder & White [16] carried out the research in

which they analysed the "life story" of practicing teachers. Based on those analyses they found that there are four main sources of influence that formulate candidate's attitude towards choosing teaching as a career. Those were influences by family, parents, teachers, peers, and experiences from school. Participants in this research of Schutz et al. [16], mentions solid motives which lead them to choosing teaching as a career. These were altruism (20%), past experiences (19%), teachers (18%), family and parents (10%), interest in subject (4%) and own parenthood (3%).

The objective of our research was to identify relation among the different types of motivation. We added three variables (influence by others, alternative choices, and career growth) to the model of types of motivation when choosing a teaching career (interest, motives, working with children and youth, extrinsic motives, benefits, income and social status). We presume that students who are not interested in studying teaching will not be interested in a teaching career at all. On the other hand, we presume that students who choose this career as their first option are interested in this profession and are not influenced by their choice. Instead they choose it according to their inner beliefs.

From the results mentioned above we can expect the following correlations:

-*Interest* will positively correlate with *career growth* and negatively with *influence and alternative choice of a teaching career*.

-*Competences* will positively correlate with *career growth* and negatively with *influence and alternative choice of a teaching career*.

-*Working with children and youth* will positively correlate with *career growth* and negatively with *influence and alternative choice of a teaching career*.

### 3. Research sample

Research sample consisted of students from Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (N = 255) and students from University in Prešov (N = 69). There were 324 students in total from the first year of bachelor studies. Out of the total number, 53 were males and 271 were females. The average age was 20.67. Because motivation is dynamic trait, research sample consisted exclusively of first year students. Primary motivation of students of higher grades might be modified due to other factors.

### 3.1 Methods

Motivation scale (SMVUP2-S) was inspired by FIT-Choice scale which is used highly and broadly, and whose authors are Watt and Richardson [14], [19], [20]. The types of motivation in this scale are based on theoretical and empirical findings. The existing research on motivation in choosing teaching as a career, indicates the existence of eight types of motivation of choosing a teaching career on the scale. Those are competence, enthusiasm, family, benefits, income, social status, pro-sociality, working with children, and youth. Each sub-scale consists of three or four items. The minimum score a respondent can reach is 3 to 4 points depending on the number of items. The maximum score that a respondent can reach is 15 to 20 points. A high score represents a higher level of motivation [21]. Motivation scale of choosing teaching as a career consists of 29 items that are answered by Linkert-type scale (1-5). Cronbach's alpha of the whole scale is  $\alpha = 0.861$ . The original and revised version of the motivation scale was made and verified by the author of this paper [21], [22].

*Influence by others* [1], [14]: Three item indicators on 5 points Likert-type scale measured the influence by others. Reliability measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient in this sub-scale is  $\alpha = 0.795$ .

*Career growth* [5]: The interest to make a career in an education sector. Reliability measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this sub-scale is  $\alpha = 0.760$  (four item indicators on 5 points Likert-type).

*Alternative choice* [11], [14]: The information of whether a teaching career was the student's first or last "option". Questions in sub-scale are negatively formulated. The respondents answered via the Linkert-type scale that consisted of five stages. Reliability measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient is  $\alpha = 0.730$ .

### 4. Results

The results from the statistics analysis are presented in Tables 1 and 2. The analyses were done in statistic program IBM SPSS 20. To determine the relation between questionnaire variables SMVUP2-S, and research variables, such as influence, career growth, alternative choice, their descriptions were used as methods of descriptive statistics (number, mean, standard deviation, kurtosis, skewness, minimum, maximum) and inference statistic methods (Kolmogorov-Smirnov R coefficient, Pearson correlation coefficient).

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of research set.

Factor	N	M	SD	Min	Max
Interest (4)	322	12.86	4.55	4	20
Competences (4)	322	14.64	3.07	4	20
Social status (4)	320	11.57	3.55	4	20
Benefits (4)	322	12.71	3.00	4	20
Income (3)	322	7.97	2.59	3	14
Prosocial attitude (4)	321	15.18	2.39	8	20
Work with children (3)	322	10.83	2.60	3	15
Work with youth (3)	321	11.84	2.80	3	15
Influence by others (3)	324	7.54	3.39	3	15
Career growth (4)	324	15.23	2.81	4	20
Alternative choice (4)	320	5.81	3.92	4	20

*\*Note:* The numbers in the tables represent the number of items of an individual sub-scale.

*\*Legend:* N- count; M- mean; SD- Standard deviation, Min- minimum score, Max- maximum score.

Table 1 indicates the intensity data of the constituent motivation factors. From observing most of the variables, score is above arithmetic average (M = 9.00 for 3 item sub-scales resp. M = 12 for 4 item sub-scales). From observing the average values of the constituent variables, it is clear that the most frequent motives for choosing a teaching career are *competences* (M = 14.64), *pro-social behavior* (M = 15.18), *career growth* (15.23), and *working with children and youth* (M = 10.83; M = 11.84).

The methods used to obtain symmetry data were skewness, kurtosis (Table 1), and Kolmogorov-Smirnov coefficient. Skewness for the entire data set is SK = -0.181, while on level of constituent scales ranges from SK = -0.786 to SK = 0.578. Skewness for the whole data set is KU = 0.122, while on level of constituent scales ranges were from KU = 1.098 to KU = 0.776. We confirmed the symmetry of data set using Kolmogorov-Smirnov R coefficient (R = 0.768; p = 0.597). Based on the facts, we used the parametric tests for the following analysis.

Table 2 Correlations among constituent motives of choosing teaching as a career.

Factor	Influence by other	Career growth	Alternative choice
Interest	-.301**	.174*	-.512**
Competences	-.330**	.439**	-.451**
Social status	-.184*	.178*	-.258**
Benefits	.059	.038	.062
Income	-.071	.180*	-.221**
Prosocial behavior	-.163*	.501**	-.210**
Work with children	-.213**	.380**	-.252**
Work with youth	-.252**	.261**	-.350**
Influence by other	1	-.172*	.464**
Career growth	-.172*	1	-.190**
Alternative choice	.464**	-.190**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on statistical analysis using Pearson's correlation coefficient were found following significant correlations (on level 0.01; Table 2): *influence* was in negative relation with *interest* ( $r = -0.301$ ), *competences* ( $r = -0.330$ ) and with *interest to working with children* ( $r = -0.213$ ) and *youth* ( $r = -0.252$ ). *Influence by others* positively correlated with *alternative choice of career* ( $r = 0.464$ ).

Desire to make teaching career highly correlated with competences of students ( $r = 0.439$ ), pro-social behavior ( $r = 0.501$ ), and with *interest to working with children* ( $r = 0.380$ ) and *youth* ( $r = 0.261$ ). Negative relation was with *alternative choice of teaching as a career* ( $r = -0.190$ ).

Last variable *Alternative choice* of teaching career negatively correlated with all types of motivation. Specifically, with *interest* ( $r = -0.512$ ), *competences* ( $r = -0.451$ ), *social status* ( $r = -0.258$ ), *income* ( $r = 0.221$ ), *pro-social behavior* ( $r = -0.210$ ), *interest to working with children* ( $r = -0.252$ ) and *youth* ( $r = -0.350$ ) and *career growth* ( $r = -0.190$ ). Positive relation of this variable was only with variable *influence by others* ( $r = 0.464$ ; Table 2).

## 5. Discussion

The results obtained in our study confirm all the expected facts. Students who are interested in studying and have some pedagogical experience plan to pursue a teaching career. Students, who do pursue this career, are highly interested in working with children and youth [1], [2], [3], [7], [9], [10], [11], [12].

However, students who choose this career under the pressure of other people or they consider studying at university as their last resort, do not have any competences and interest that would correspond with the content of teaching career.

The choice of career under the influence of another person or people means choosing a career according to his/her peers, teachers, relatives and parents [1], [13], [23], [24], [25].

As it can be seen from many studies [2], [3], [11], parents have a huge influence when choosing a career. Specifically, parents whose scope of work is in education, have huge influence in career choice. Studies confirmed that 18% to 40% of students who study teaching have one relative who is a teacher. These influences might not have negative character though.

Choice of career is a very important decision that influences the future of an individual [7]. Personality is structured as one with all its typical attributes. These attributes are organized in a unique manner and are typical for certain groups of individuals. These facts are supported by many theories which deal with personality structures. They confirm strong relation between career and structural elements of personality. For instance, according to psychoanalysts choosing teaching as a career reflects on the personality of an individual. Identification development of defense mechanisms and sublimation reflect on the choices of a career. The theory of needs states that personal needs, either on conscious or subconscious levels, are main determinants that influence a career choice [26]. Theory of needs assumes that hierarchy of needs shapes personal interests that are one of the main primary motives in choosing a career. Furthermore, the concept of theory of self conception assumes that a career choice is an attempt of an individual to implement his/ her personality concept [26]. Each person tries to express his/her sense. People try to implement their hopes, dreams, desires and personal values through their work. In this case, if that work corresponds with the person's self-concept, an individual will be highly satisfied with his/her work. However, if these works involve doing things that are not in harmony with his/her self-concept, a person's satisfaction with work will be very low [27]. This might be reflected on the teacher's engagement at work, interest in school and extra curricular activities and in educational manner. In that case, teachers might choose a lax or too superior and authoritative educational style, which has a number of negatives.

The reason why we put so much emphasis on motives for choosing teaching as a career, is that unlike other professions, teachers work with children, youths and different people from all cultures and ages. Teachers teach students in a long term or even years through educational methods.

Teachers form and teach in all aspects of biological, psychological and social networks. Thus, it is essential that the educator is capable to practice all of

these aspects on a professional level and approach it with altruism and with interest.

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