

Research Article

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Motives that Drive Young People to Pursue a Teaching Career: Case of Albania Using the Fit Choice Scale

Desara Agaj¹

Senada Tufina²

Lekë Pepkolaj³

Mónica Arnal-Palacián⁴

Elindë Dibra⁵

¹Rectorate, University of Tirana,
Sheshi "Nënë Tereza",
Tiranë, Albania
²Lecturer, Albanian University,
Blv. Zogu I, Tiranë, Albania
³Lecturer, University College "Qiriazi",
Rruga Taulantët, Tiranë, Albania
⁴Prof. Assoc., University of Zaragoza,
Pedro Gerbura 12, Zaragoza, Spain
⁵Lecturer, University "Luigj Gurakuqi",
Sheshi "2 Prilli", Shkodër, Albania

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Abstract

Nowadays, a good teacher is crucial for the education of the young generation and all the society. But what drives people to pursue a teaching career in Albania, despite changes in the law that have occurred during these years? In this article, we try to discover the motives driving students to pursue a teaching career. Part of this study was 201 students, following a teacher study program in public and non-public higher education institutions in Albania. For the first time in Albania, we applied the Fit Choice Scale instrument (Wat & Richardson, 2007). Results show us that the FIT Choice Scale is well adapted to Albanian contexts and the most dominant motives to pursue a teaching career in Albania are linked with factors such as the subjective perception to perform well as a teacher and to influence the upcoming generation through teaching. But also, in the Albanian context, the profession of a teacher is seen as hard work, with a heavy workload, that requires emotionally demanding. Also, this study shows us gender, and birthplace differences according to motives that drive students to pursue a teaching career in Albania.

Keywords: FIT-Choice scale, motivation, teaching career, Albania

1. Introduction

A lot of studies suggest that the quality of education that students receive largely depends on their teacher's quality. In fact, the quality of the entire educational system of a country can be linked to the quality of its teachers. So, providing high-quality education is essential for the development of any society, and this begins with the proper preparation and training of teachers.

Lots of studies have emphasized the importance of teacher's quality and training in ensuring high-quality education for the next generation, including works by Hattie (2009), Sahlberg (2011), and Goller et al., (2019).

In Albania, referring to the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Albania no. 80/2015 for "Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania" initial teacher education is subjected to public and private higher education institutions. Study programs preparing teachers for preschool and primary education are structured in two cycles: a) Bachelor study program which educates teachers for preschool education; b) Professional Master study program which prepares teachers for primary education. Study programs preparing teachers for lower and upper secondary education are offered as Master study programs of the second cycle with 120 credits. (Initial education for teachers working in early childhood and school education | Eurydice (europa.eu).

To become a teacher in Albania is necessary to have a second-cycle university diploma, perform professional practice, and take the state exam, to obtain a regulated program in the field of teaching. So, after completion of the bachelor's and master's studies, candidate teachers must pass the state exam for teacher certification to be employed as a teacher. The Centre for Educational Services (former Agency of National Exams) manages this exam. The test is conducted by computer at the CES headquarters in Tirana twice yearly, in July and November/December.

Different public and private higher education institutions in Albania provide the initial teacher training. Public universities at Shkodër, Durrës, Elbasan, Gjirokastër, Korça, and Vlora prepare elementary school teachers and lower secondary school teachers. Meanwhile, University of Tirana, university of Shkodër, Gjirokastër and Korça prepare upper secondary school teachers. Sports University of Tirana prepares teachers in the field of physical education. Also, there are 13 private universities that offer 16 programs at different levels of teachers' education. (Initial education for teachers working in early childhood and school education | Eurydice (europa.eu).

With the conditions of the educational system changing and the increase in the requirements to become a teacher in Albania, the study of the motives that encourage young people to follow the teacher's career has aroused special interest.

2. Literature Review

According to Cekani (2016), although many people may consider teaching an easy profession, researchers view it as one of the most challenging occupations, on par with other difficult professions such as doctors, police officers, and other social service professionals (Johnson et al., 2005).

In contemporary societies, teachers are entrusted with the crucial task of passing knowledge on to the next generation, making teaching one of the most complex and challenging professions that involve imparting knowledge. Despite its difficulties, many young people still choose to pursue a career as a teacher. The question arises, what inspires and drives them toward this career path?

Research has shown that teachers derive job satisfaction from a variety of factors, including their interactions with students, the intellectual challenges of teaching, the ability to implement new ideas and participate in decision-making and reforms, the development of social relations with colleagues, and opportunities for professional growth. According to Greenglass and Burke (2003), teaching is generally considered one of the most rewarding professions in terms of job satisfaction. Onyefulu et al. (2022) also found some factors that motivates teachers to stay in the profession such as, the sense of vocation, job satisfaction, desire to teach, desire to make a positive impact on

students' lives, and all the rewards related to teaching profession.

According to Onyefulu et al. (2022), being motivated to become a teacher is a crucial and effective factor for entering and remaining in the profession. Goller et al. (2019) cited research that shows that motivations for becoming a teacher often fall into three categories: extrinsic, intrinsic, and altruistic. However, the latter two, which involve personal fulfillment and a desire to help others, tend to be the primary reasons for pursuing a career in teaching.

The FIT-Choice framework is a comprehensive model that considers the various factors that drive individuals to choose teaching as a career. By considering these diverse motivations, the framework allows for cross-cultural comparisons. While extrinsic, intrinsic, and altruistic reasons are commonly cited as motivations for pursuing a career in teaching across many cultures, it is important to note that the specific context may also play a role in shaping an individual's decision.

The topic of why people choose teaching as a profession and how their decision-making process is influenced by individual, school, and societal factors have been extensively studied through various theoretical and empirical analyses. Eccles et al. (1983) proposed that there are three types of motivation that drive individuals to become teachers: extrinsic, intrinsic, and altruistic. Others, such as Wigfield and Eccles (2000), have suggested that these motivations stem from utilitarian values like personal fulfillment and a desire for success. However, research has shown that additional factors, such as the specific school environment and societal context, may also significantly impact an individual's decision to pursue teaching as a career (Watt & Richardson, 2007; Goller et al., 2019).

Watt and Richardson (2007), as cited by Goller et al. (2019) outlined various motivations for choosing teaching as a career, including: (a) self-perceived teaching abilities, (b) the intrinsic value of teaching, (c) personal values such as job security, work-life balance, and transferability, (d) social values such as shaping the future of children and adolescents, promoting social equity, making a social contribution, and working with children and adolescents, (e) the less positive motivation of choosing teaching as a "fallback" career, (f) previous teaching and learning experiences, and (g) social influences.

According to Goller et., al. (2019), the FIT- Choice scale has been used and validated in different countries, such as in Australia by Watt & Richardson (2007), in Croatia by Jugovic, et., al., (2012), in Germany by Konig & Rothland (2012), in the Netherlands by Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus (2012), in Turkey by Akar (2012), by Kilinc et., al (2012), in Ireland by Hennessy & Lynch (2017), in Ghana by Salifu et., al. (2017), in Norway and China by Lin et al. (2012). And recently Fit Choice Scale is used in Spain and Estonia by Watt et al., (2017), in Finland and Germany by Goller et.al, (2019) to understand motives that drives young people to pursue a teaching career.

In the Serbian context is used the fit choice scale by Simic et., al (2021).

Goller et al. (2019) noted that while various studies have supported the structure of the FIT-Choice scale, some research has also revealed differences in motivational structures across different cultural contexts.

The purpose of this article was to investigate Albanian undergraduate students' reasons for choosing teaching as a profession, using the FIT Choice Scale. This study aimed to validate an Albanian version of the FIT-Choice Scale and to enter deep into the motives that lead students in Albania to choose teaching as a profession, including any potential variations in rural and urban areas as well as differences based on gender. This is the first study in Albania to apply the FIT-Choice Scale to examine student motivations for pursuing a career in teaching.

3. Research Questions:

RQ1: Can the FIT-Choice Scale be adapted in Albanian contexts?

RQ2: Is there any difference between rural and urban students in teacher education motivation to become a teacher?

RQ3: Is there any gender differences in teacher education motivation to become a teacher?

4. Methodology

4.1 Sample

The sample participating in the study are (n=201) students of the Bachelor and Master cycle in the field of teaching. 86% of the sample are females and 14% are males. This evidence is explained by the gender distribution in the national populations of Albania and especially by the gender preferences to pursue a teaching career. The data was collected from the application of the FIT Choice Scale, in several public Higher Education Institutions in Albania, specifically at the University of Tirana, "Luigj Gurakuqi" University in Shkodër, "Aleksandër Moisiu" University in Durrës, "Aleksandër Xhuvani" University in Elbasan, etc., and also in some of the nonpublic ones.

4.2 Instrument

The Fit Choice scale was translated from English to Albanian by three fluent English individuals. Then a certified English language expert translated the Albanian version into English and compared it with the original. Initially, the pilot phase of the study was carried out in a sample of 12 individuals and focus groups with teacher educators. The Fit Choice Scale consists of 50 statements. One item was excluded from the analyses. For each statement, the participants could answer according to the Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 meant Not at all important and 5 - extremely important. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability test was performed and the result obtained was r = 0.824.

4.3 Procedures

The questionnaire was applied online after the students had been informed in advance by their lecturers as well as by the president of the student council about its completion. Participation in the study was voluntary, and ethical considerations, such as confidentiality and anonymity, were emphasized during the presentation.

4.4 Analyses

Data analyses are conducted with SPSS, version 25. First, is calculated the reliability coefficient to see if the FIT Choice Scale instrument fits in the Albanian culture. Then, descriptive data, correlations, and Mann-Whitey test are performed.

5. Results

5.1 Analyses of the Results

First of all, a descriptive analysis was performed to determine the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of each of the variables of the Fit Choice Scale (table 1). Then a correlation of the variables gender and birthplace analysis is conducted. If all of them are dichotomous variables the Mann-Whitney test has been used.

Table 1: The minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of each of the variables of the Fit Choice Scale

Factor	Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD
	I have the qualities of a good teacher	2	5	4.42	,612
Perceived teaching abilities	I have good teaching skills	3	5	4.38	,630
	Teaching is a career suited to my abilities	2	5	4.47	,656
	I am interested in teaching	2	5	4.66	,545
Intrinsic value	I have always wanted to be a teacher	2	5	4.24	.890
	I like teaching	3	5	4.62	,545

Factor	Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD
	Teaching will offer a steady career path	1	5	3.84	1,067
Job security	Teaching will provide a reliable income	1	5	3.41	1,176
	Teaching will be a secure job	1	5	3.94	1,005
	Part-time teaching could allow more family time	1	5	3,78	1,129
	Teaching hours will fit with the responsibilities of having a family	1	5	4.28	,879
Time for family	School holidays will fit in with family commitments	1	5	4.27	,915
	As a teacher, I will have lengthy holidays	1	5	3.71	1,042
	As a teacher, I will have a short working day	1	5	3.00	1,190
	Teaching will allow me to shape child/adolescent values	2	5	4.64	,531
Shape future of children/adolescents	Teaching will allow me to influence the next generation	2	5	4.61	,564
Enhance social equity	Teaching will allow me to raise the ambition of under- privileged youth	2	5	4.43	,630
zimunee social equity	Teaching will allow me to benefit the socially disadvantaged	2	5	4.31	,659
	Teaching will allow me to provide a service to society	2	5	4.47	,600
Make social contribution	Teachers make a worthwhile social contribution	3	5	4.67	,531
	Teaching enables me to give back to society	3	5	4.62	,553
	I want to help children and adolescents learn	3	5	4.69	,494
	I want a job that involves working with children and				
Work with children/adolescents	adolescents	2	5	4.50	,633
	I want to work in a child/adolescent-centered environment	3	5	4.53	,584
	I like working with children/adolescents	3	5	4.55	,528
	I was unsure of what career I wanted	1	5	2.69	1,394
Fallback career	I was not accepted into my first-choice career	1	5	1.99	1,398
	I chose teaching as a last-resort career	1	5	1.65	1,174
Prior teaching and learning	I have had inspirational teachers	1	5	4.26	1,045
experiences	I have had good teachers as a role model	1	5	4.37	,925
experiences	I have had positive learning experiences	1	5	4.33	,820
	My friends think I should become a teacher	1	5	3.79	1,118
Social influences	My family thinks I should become a teacher	1	5	4.11	1,033
	People I have worked with think I should become a teacher	1	5	3.89	1,087
	Do you think teachers have a heavy workload	1	5	4.37	,797
High demand	Do you think teaching is emotionally demanding	2	5	4.26	,803
	Do you think teaching is hard work	1	5	4.08	,893
Expert career	Do you think teaching requires high levels of expert knowledge?	2	5	4.70	,550
	Do you think teachers need high levels of technical knowledge?	2	5	4.42	,725
	Do you believe teachers are perceived as professionals?	2	5	4.15	,944
	Do you believe teaching is perceived as a high-status occupation?	1	5	3.72	1,133
Social status	Do you believe teaching is a well-respected career?	1	5	3.70	1,137
	Do you think teachers feel valued by society?	1	5	3.20	1.109
	Do you think teachers feel their occupation has high social status?	1	3.37	1,193	
	Do you think teaching is well-paid?	1	5	2,37	1,116
Salary	Do you think teachers earn a good salary?	1	5	2.35	1,174
	Were you encouraged to pursue careers other than teaching?	1	5	3.35	1,228
	Did others tell you teaching was not a good career choice?	1	5	3.12	1,220
Social dissuasion	Did others influence you to consider careers other than teaching?	1	5	3.36	1,278

Comparative in relation to gender: After the descriptive analysis, we focus on finding the gender differences in terms of the student's motivation to become a teacher, using the Mann-Whitney test to see if the two samples are likely to derive from the same population. So, only questions such as "Teaching is a career suited to my abilities (sig.oo₃)", "I have always wanted to be a teacher (sig.o₃2)", "I was unsure of what career I wanted (sig.o₃3)", "I chose teaching as a last-resort career (sig.oo₈8)", "People I have worked with think I should become a teacher (sig.oo₂)" resulted in a significant difference regarding gender.

Below in table 2, we can see the gender differences for each of these items. In every case, they are females that believe that teaching is a career suited to their abilities. They always wanted to be a teacher and some of the people they work with believe that teaching is a career suitable for them. Females were very sure about the career that they wanted, and they didn't choose teaching as a last-resort career.

Table 2: Gender differences for each

Item	Gender	Mean	SD	N
Teaching is a career suited to my abilities	Male	4.07	.585	28
reaching is a career suited to my admittes	Female	4.45	.613	173
I have always wanted to be a teacher	Male	3.38	1.124	28
I have always wanted to be a teacher	Female	4.31	.831	173
I was unsure of what career I wanted	Male	3.21	1.371	28
I was unsure of what career I wanted	Female	2.26	1.384	173
Labora touching as a last resout saveau	Male	2.18	1.467	28
I chose teaching as a last-resort career	Female	1.57	1,101	173
D1- I b		3.32	1.090	28
People I have worked with think I should become a teacher	Female	3.98	1.062	173

Comparative in relation to place of birth: Regarding the birthplace differences in terms of students' motivation to become a teacher we also used the Mann-Whitney test to see if the two samples are likely to derive from the same population. Only items such as "Teaching will allow me to shape child/adolescent values (Sig.024)", "I was not accepted into my first-choice career (Sig.006)", "I chose teaching as a last-resort career (Sig.012)", "Do you believe teaching is a well-respected career (Sig.026)" and "Do you think teachers feel valued by society (Sig.013)", resulted in a significant difference regarding birthplace. So, students from rural areas believe that teaching will allow them to shape the future of children/adolescents, shape values in them, and influence their education for the future. Students from urban areas choose teaching as a last resort career, and they were not accepted into their first-choice career. Also, students from urban areas believe that teachers feel valued by society and teaching is a well-respected profession.

Table 3: Comparative in relation to place of birth

Item	Birthplace	Mean	SD	N
Teaching will allow me to shape child/adolescent values	Rural area	4.75	.470	71
reaching will allow life to shape child/addolescent values	Urban area	4.58	-555	130
I was not accepted into my first-choice career	Rural area	1.61	1.102	71
I was not accepted into my mist-choice career	Urban area	2.19	1.500	130
I chose teaching as a last-resort career	Rural area	1.39	.948	71
i chose teaching as a last-resort career	Urban area	1.79	1.262	130
Do you believe teaching is a well-respected career	Rural area	3.42	1.261	71
Do you believe teaching is a wen-respected career	Urban area	3.85	1.038	130
D 41.1 . 1 . 6 . 1 . 1 . 1	Rural area	2.96	1,212	71
Do you think teachers feel valued by society	Urban area	3.33	1.030	130

Table 4: Descriptive Analyses for Factors Influencing Students to Choose a teaching career

Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Perceiving teaching abilities	3.00	5.00	4.4212	,51155
Intrinsic values	2.67	5.00	4.5041	,55589
Job security	1.33	5.00	3.7264	,92663
Time for family	1.00	5.00	3.8060	,73045
Shape future	3.00	5.00	4.6244	,47640
Social equity	2.00	5.00	4.3706	,57069
Social contribution	3.00	5.00	4.5871	,46817
Work children	3.00	5.00	4.5672	,47285
Fallback	1.00	5.00	2.1095	1,01004
Prior teaching	1.00	5.00	4,3201	,81775

Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Social influences	1.00	5.00	3.9270	,903192.00
High demand	2.00	5.00	4.2405	,55797
Expert career	3.00	5.00	4.5597	,51373
Social status	1.40	5.00	3.6269	,85292
Salary	1.00	5.00	2.3607	1,10363
Social dissuasion	1.00	5.00	3.2769	,99058

Comparative in relation to gender: Regarding the gender differences in terms of students' motivation to become a teacher, we also used the Mann-Whitney test to see if the two samples are likely to derive from the same population. As can be seen in the figure below, only in variables such as "Perceiving teaching abilities (Sig. 0.21)", "Intrinsic Values (Sig. 0.43)" "Fallback (Sig. 0.49)" and "Social Influences (Sig. 0.12)" there are significative differences regarding gender. Females are more likely to choose teaching as a profession in Albania and they are motivated more according to their perceiving teaching abilities, so their expectation to perform well as a teacher and intrinsic values, which refers to enjoyment and interest in working as a teacher. Also, females express that they had social influences in choosing teaching as a career. Their family and friends always believed in their abilities to become a teacher.

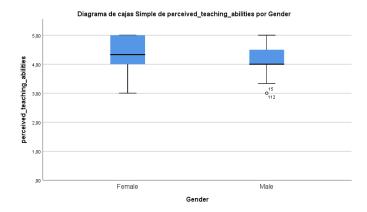


Figure 1: Perceiving teaching abilities according to gender

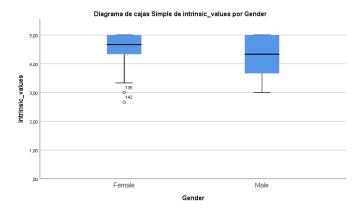


Figure 2: Intrinsic values according to gender

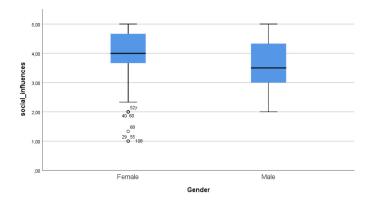


Figure 3: Social influences according to gender

Comparative in relation to birthplace: Regarding the birthplace differences in terms of students' motivation to become a teacher, we also tried to reveal if the two samples are likely to derive from the same population. So, only in variables such as, "Shape future (Sig. 0.24)" and "Social status (Sig. 0.32)" there are significant differences regarding birthplace. Students from the rural area believed that a teaching career would allow them to contribute to the shaping career of children/adolescents and to have an impact on their future. Meanwhile, students from urban areas saw teaching as a profession with social status.

Table 5: Comparative in relation to birthplace

Item	Gender	Mean	SD	N
Shape future	Rural area	4,7113	,47556	71
Shape juture	Urban area	4,5769	,47193	130
Ci-1 -4-4	Rural area	3,4310	,96608	71
Social status	Urban area	3,7338	,76731	130

6. Conclusions

According to the results of this study, students in Albania follow teaching programs because they believe that they have the good abilities to become a teacher. They believe they have good teaching skills, and they believe they have the qualities to become a teacher because they like a lot this kind of profession and most of them always wanted to become a teacher. They also have had a good role model. The dominant factors that influence a student to become a teacher are related to subjective expectations to perform well as a teacher, to make a positive social contribution through the teaching process, and desire to affect children's or adolescent life so they can influence the upcoming generation through teaching. But also in the Albanian context, the profession of a teacher is seen as hard work, with a heavy workload, that requires emotionally demanding.

In this case, there are gender differences. All the above factors that influence young people to pursue a teaching career are more linked with females than males in Albania. Females who participated in this study were very sure about the career that they wanted, and they didn't choose teaching as a last–resort career. And this is also explained by the high number of females that pursue a teaching career in Albania. Students in Albania believe that they have the qualities of a good teacher, but the profession of a teacher in Albania is not well-paid.

According to birthplace differences, students from rural areas believe that teaching will allow them to shape the future of children/adolescents, and shape values in them. With this profession,

they can influence children/adolescents' education for the future. Meanwhile, students from urban areas believe that teachers feel valued by society and that teaching is a well-respected profession, but they choose teaching as a last resort career, and they were not accepted into their first–choice career.

The Fit - Choice Scale, implemented for the first time in Albania, suited very well in the Albanian context.

We suggest that further studies should be done in this field and maybe in the future, we should explore the factors that contribute to or motivate teachers to stay in the profession and do some comparisons with other countries near Albania.

Appendix: Pearson Correlation between factors that influence students in Albania to follow a teaching career

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1.Perceiving teaching abilities	1															
2. Intrinsic value		1	.172	.064	.417	.249	.324	.427	378	.317	.422	026	.066	.044	.053	093
3.Job security			1	.380	.223	.279	.212	.104	074	.038	.329	255	043	,569	-539	141
4.Time for family				1	.195	.152	.140	066	.057	006	.307	-106	042	.313	.293	129
5.Shape future of children/adolescents					1	.620	.586	.523	139	.295	.234	.116	.215	.173	.104	066
6.Enhance social equity						1	.635	.463	061	.245	.276	.177	.201	.268	.172	.027
7.Make social contribution							1	.476	080	.289	.227	.184	.245	.197	.125	.081
8.Work with children/adolescents								1	090	.274	.171	.133	.187	.139	.138	.065
9.Fallback career									1	057	287	.194	.010	.022	035	.294
10.Prior teaching and learning experiences										1	.282	.047	.184	.153	.015	-069
11.Social Influences											1	015	.015	.228	.211	188
12.High demand												1	.299	154	148	.187
13. Expert career													1	041	080	.095
14. Social status														1	.534	154
15. Salary															1	090
16. Social dissuasion																1

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