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## *From the Editor: Celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!*

In 2012, the first issue of *The Excellence in Education Journal* was published online with the goal of promoting and disseminating international scholarly writing about excellent practices in all aspects of education. I had just returned from trips to China and Kenya and was moved by the limited access to hard copies of educational writing in both countries. Yet, even in remote areas, educators had cell phones and were using their devices to access information online.

I was also struck by the tremendous politics that were present in the book and article publishing business. It appeared that, at times, quality writing that could have a significantly positive influence in education was being denied from publication. Even more so, writing with meritorious methods, findings and recommendations that had flaws in English grammar was being systematically rejected from publication, even though such grammar errors are quite easy to correct.

*The Excellence in Education Journal* began an independent, online journal---one that could be accessed free online anywhere in the world. Online journals were a bit rare in 2012 as most ‘quality’ journals were published in hard copy. Today, online, open access journals are much more common. Independently published journals continue to be a rare even now in 2022.

Since 2012, *The Excellence in Education Journal* has had many achievements including being granted an ISSN number from the United States Library of Congress, receiving a contract from the United States Department of Education to list all articles full text in the ERIC database, and receiving a contract from EBSCOhost to list all articles full text. There are 20 reviewers from eight different countries and authors represent 50 institutions worldwide. Annual circulation exceeds 20,000 downloads.

The COVID-19 pandemic slowed the reviewing and publishing process significantly as those involved with the journal suffered loss of their and their loved ones’ health. Gradually now, in the spring of 2022, production is getting back to a more normal pace.

Submissions continue to be double-blind, peer reviewed and are accepted year-round with publication occurring twice annually. There are no fees to submit or publish manuscripts so that cost will never be a barrier. Typeset and graphics are intentionally simple in order that the journal can be more easily accessed on a variety of devices worldwide to fulfill the mission of the journal.

I hope that the practices discussed in this journal will be helpful to you, our readers.

In gratitude and celebration for our 10 years of publication,

Ann C. Gaudino, Ed.D., Founder and Editor-in-Chief  
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**Students' Basic Psychological Needs in Learning Science:  
The Role of Teacher Autonomy Support and Classmate Support**

**Gülşen Koçak, Yasemin Tas, and Sundus Yerdelen**

**Abstract**

This study examined the predictive effect of students' perceptions of science teacher's autonomy support and classmates' support on their basic psychological needs (i.e., relatedness, autonomy, and competence) in science. 1,018 middle school students from 9 public schools in Turkey completed self-report surveys. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses showed that while controlling for students' gender and previous achievement, both teachers' autonomy support and classmates' support positively predicted students' basic psychological needs and teacher autonomy support emerged as a better predictor than classmates' support. The amount of explained variance was .41, .38, and .33 in the relatedness, autonomy, and competence aspects, respectively. It can be concluded that students tend to feel more autonomous, related, and competent in science classes where science teachers consider their ideas, encourages them ask questions, and give opportunity to make choices about the lesson and where classmates pay attention to them, treat them nicely, and spend time with them.

**Keywords:** science education, teacher autonomy support, classmate support

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The word “motivation” originated from the Latin verb of “movere” (to move); which is defined as “the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained” (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002, p. 5). There have been a lot of theories put forward to better understand the concept of motivation. Self-determination theory emerged in the 1970s, and early studies first conducted by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan are another representative of this theory. It is related to experiencing a sense of choice of the individuals in initializing and organizing their own behaviors (Deci et al., 1989). Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985a; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2008) is a theory built on the basic psychological needs of people and also it is one of the detailed and well-studied theories (Evelein et al., 2008). It was found that basic psychological needs are closely related to many student outcomes such as motivation (e.g., Dincer, 2014; Lavigne et al., 2007; Zhou et al., 2019), subjective well-being (e.g., Balaguer et al., 2012; Su et al., 2021; Tian et al., 2016), student engagement (e.g., Authors, 2018; Zhou et al., 2019), and achievement (e.g., Wang et al., 2019).

There have been studies conducted with a view to dealing with the roles of different social factors such as the family (parents), teacher and friends, regarding the meeting of basic psychological needs of individuals (e.g., Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007; Grolnick et al., 1991; Zhou et al., 2009; Zhou et al., 2019). In those studies, especially the importance of teacher’s autonomy support stands out (e.g., Kiefer & Pennington, 2017; Maulana et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2014). However, there are few studies dealing with the effects of friends on students’ motivation (Núñez & Jaime León, 2015). It was found that perceived peer support in middle school is positively associated with school satisfaction in high school (Muscarà et al., 2018). Considering the power of teacher and peer supports especially in middle school years, investigating the effects of those supports on student motivation is quite important (Wentzel et



al., 2010). In this study, the predictive effect of middle school students' perceptions of autonomy support of the teacher and support of classmates on their basic psychological needs in science class will be investigated.

### **Basic Psychological Needs**

Basic psychological needs in the theory of self-determination consist of three components: competence, relatedness and autonomy. Competence is defined as the self-infusion of the fact that the person has the factors of skills, power and knowledge required to achieve a certain task (Deci & Ryan, 1985a). Individuals having a high level of competence can interact with the people around them and also have the tendency to influence those people and to display their own capacities (Kowal & Fortier, 1999; Ryan & La Guardia, 2000; Vlachopoulos & Michailidou, 2006). The second factor, relatedness, is defined to be the state of having a connection between oneself and his/her social circle and also having supportive relationships with them (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It also encompasses the meanings of sensitivity, warmth, sentimentality and acceptance (Andersen et al., 2000). Skinner and Edge (2002) stated that the removal of the need of relatedness would lead to some dangerous situations such as withdrawal and depression (as cited in., Evelein et al., 2008). The last sub-dimension of the basic psychological needs is autonomy. It is defined as the initialization of an individual's own actions, organization of his/her own behaviors and experiences, self-check of his/her own decisions and making choices (Deci & Ryan, 1987; Ibarra-Rovillard & Kuiper, 2010; La Guardia & Patrick, 2008). In other words, it is the self-feeling of the individual at the center of his/her actions (Kowal & Fortier, 1999). Since autonomy is the concrete state of the theory of self-determination, autonomy has special importance in terms of representation of the theory of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985b).

### ***Teacher Autonomy Support***

The most important channels for the sense of autonomy are autonomy supportive attitudes of social environment such as the family, teacher and friends. Namely, if the environment in which the individual exists and perceives behaves in an autonomy supportive manner, then this situation leads to a satisfaction of basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985b). Alongside with autonomy, social support is also important for the satisfaction of other two components of basic psychological needs (Calp & Bacanlı, 2016). Teachers and classmates are important sources of social support for the students. (Tian et al., 2016).

According to the theory of self-determination, for a healthy development of individuals, it is important to meet the psychological needs. Learning environments in which the students are supported by their teachers and peers contribute to satisfaction of those needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). If a teacher provides autonomy support to his/her students, then he/she gives importance to the interests, desires, choices and preferences of the students, tries to understand their feelings towards learning activities, and motivates them continually so that the intrinsic motivation of the students is supported (Cai et al., 2002; Reeve et al., 1999). When the teacher behaves in an autonomy supportive manner, he/she considers students' opinions and provides them choices (Patall et al., 2013). Thus, a teacher providing autonomy, can help meet the basic psychological needs of the students (Liu et al., 2020). Instead of supporting autonomy, contrarily, if a teacher begins controlling the students' behaviors, then the students might feel pressured to change their behaviors and start questioning their abilities. They might feel refused or disliked by the teacher and thus they might experience disappointment in terms of autonomy, competence and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985a; Haerens et al., 2015).

### ***Classmates' Support***

Another social agent in science learning environment discussed in this study is classmate (or peer) support based on the perceptions of the students. Contemporary adolescent teens spend more time in peer groups, compared to teens in the past. Any peer group plays a very important role in the psychological development of adolescent teens, independent of its structure and norms (Küdür-Çırpan & Çınar, 2013). Social support provided by classmates contributes to formation of close peer relationships (Tian et al., 2016). Classmates provide a sense of confidence in students (e.g. Hamm & Faircloth, 2005), a sense of belonging to school (Kiefer et al., 2015) and a higher school satisfaction (Epstein, 1981). Earlier studies have demonstrated that the support of teachers and classmates is related with many variables such as academic achievement (Chambers et al., 2006; Ghaith, 2002), student engagement (Jang et al., 2010), self- esteem and depression (Ibarra-Rovillard & Kuiper, 2011; Siyez, 2008).

### ***Relationships between Social Agents and Basic Psychological Needs***

In the literature, there are some studies that investigate the effect of different social supports such as family, teacher and friends on student motivation from the perspective of self-determination theory (e.g., Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007; Chirkov & Ryan, 2001; Grolnick et al., 1991; Zhou et al., 2009; Zhou et al., 2019). In these studies, basic psychological needs of students were generally examined in relation to the family support (e.g., Kurt, 2016; Marbell & Grolnick, 2013; Ratelle et al., 2005; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2005) and teacher autonomy support (e.g., Cox & Williams, 2008; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2005). For instance, Authors (2018) found that parents' educational aspiration, parental communication, parents' participation, and parental autonomy support positively predicted middle school students' basic

psychological needs in science. However, there is need to investigate the effects of other social supports just like the peer support in the studies.

Another study (Zhou et al., 2009), which was conducted with children in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades in rural China showed that autonomy support of parents, friends and teachers positively predicted the students' basic psychological needs. As for the students with a higher level of basic psychological needs, it showed that their level of motivation and engagements were higher. The findings of the study supported that autonomy was very important in collectivist societies in the east such as China and also in individualistic cultures in the west. In their study with high school students (n= 1476), Tian et al. (2016) examined the relationships among school related support as measured by teacher support and classmate support, basic psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, relatedness and competence), and school-related subjective well-being. They found that basic psychological needs mediate the relationship between school related support and school-related subjective well-being. In the literature, there are some studies investigating the social support factors such as the family, teachers and friends altogether (Zhou et al., 2019; Ricard & Pelletier, 2016), while some studies address them one by one; such as teacher or coach autonomy support (Adie et al., 2008) and family support (Grolnick, 2009). For instance, Lavigne et al. (2007) focused on teacher autonomy support and they investigated the relationships among teacher autonomy support, perceptions of competence, perceptions of autonomy, science motivation and intentions to pursue science education in a group of high school students (n= 728). Structural equation modeling analysis showed that teacher autonomy support is positively linked to perceptions of competence and autonomy, which in turn positively predicts science motivation. Additionally, perceptions of competence and autonomy and science motivation all positively predict students' intentions to pursue science education. However, research has

focused truly little on the effect of peers on student motivation (Núñez & Jaime León, 2015). In a transition study, it was found that the relationship between affective involvement in middle school and school satisfaction in high school was mediated by the perceived peer support in middle school (Muscarà et al., 2018). Considering the power of different effects of teacher and peer support especially in middle school years, it is important to examine the interactive effects of teacher and peer support together on student motivation (Wentzel et al., 2010). Moreover, there have been very few studies investigating the common effects of autonomy support from teachers, parents and peers on the student motivation and learning activities, within the framework of theory of self-determination (Zhou et al., 2019).

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aimed to investigate the predictive effect of middle school students' perceptions of science teacher autonomy support and classmates' support on their basic psychological needs in learning of science. Because the earlier studies revealed that gender and prior achievement factors are connected with students' basic psychological needs (e.g., Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007; Brown et al., 1995; Harvey & Retter, 2002; Navarro-Patón, 2018; Tian et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2019), the effect of these variables will be controlled in statistical analyses. Therefore, the research question of the study is:

Do middle school students' perceptions of teacher's autonomy support and peers' support predict their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, after controlling for the effect of gender and prior achievement?

## **Method**

### **Design**

This is a cross-sectional quantitative study which aims to investigate the relationship between students' perceptions of teachers' autonomy support and classmates' support in science learning environment and their basic psychological needs in science learning. In this study, correlational research method was utilized and data were collected through self-report questionnaires. Before launching the questionnaire, information about the study was given to the participants and it was declared that data would be anonymized and not shared at the individual level. Also, due measures were taken to make sure that the classmates would not see each other's codifications. Students took part in this research on a basis of volunteering and it took about 20 minutes to fill in the scales.

### **Sample**

In the study, convenience sampling was used and the sample included 1,018 students in nine middle schools located in one of the biggest cities in eastern Turkey. In terms of the age of participants, 33.8% were 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 36.4% were 7<sup>th</sup> graders and 29.8% were 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 51.1% were boys and 47.6% were girls. Fifteen students did not answer for their genders. Science lesson average mark of the participants for the previous year was 4.37 out of 5 ( $SD = .78$ ) and average age is 12.75 ( $SD = .99$ ).

### **Instruments**

#### ***Basic Psychological Needs***

“Basic psychological needs scale” developed by Gagné (2003) was used to measure the basic psychological needs of the students. The scale was adapted to Turkish aiming at mathematics by Durmaz (2012) and there has been some findings indicating that the Turkish

version of the scale is a valid and reliable tool to measure the basic psychological needs of Turkish high school students. Durmaz (2012) reduced it to 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree) from a 7-point Likert, considering the age range of the participants in the research. In this version of the scale, there are six items for relatedness, eight items for competence and seven items for autonomy. In the study carried out by Durmaz (2012), Cronbach alpha's internal consistency reliability coefficients were found to be .72 for autonomy, .72 for relatedness, and .65 for competence. Later on, Authors (2018) also used the Turkish version of the scale for measuring the basic psychological need of middle school students in science lessons. The following are the sample items for the sub-dimensions of the basic psychological needs: Sample item for relatedness: "I really like the people I interact with in science class", for competence: "I have been able to learn interesting new skills recently in science class", and for autonomy: "I generally feel free to express my ideas and opinions in science class" (Authors, 2018, p. 186). In the present study, Cronbach alpha coefficients were calculated .66 for autonomy, .70 for competence and .72 for relatedness.

### ***Teacher Autonomy Support***

In order to measure the teachers' autonomy support, Learning Climate Questionnaire developed by Williams and Deci (1996) was used. In this unidimensional scale, there are 15 items regarding the relationships of students with their teachers. A sample item is as follows: "I feel that my teacher provides me choices and options." The scale has a 5-point response ranging between "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree". The scale's adaptation to Turkish and its reliability and validity studies were carried out by Dincer (2014) who decided to remove one item from the scale as a result of factor analysis. Cronbach alpha coefficient for the remaining 14

items was calculated as .95. In the present study, Cronbach alpha was calculated as .94, indicating high internal consistency of the scores obtained from the instrument.

### ***Classmates' Support***

Classmates subscale of Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (Malecki & Demaray, 2002) was used. This subscale consists of 12 items and one sample item is as follows: "My classmates treat me nicely." Frequency gradation of the scale is arranged in 6-point Likert form as follows: never (1), almost never (2), sometimes (3), most of the times (4), almost always (5) always (6). Cirik (2010) made the adaptation of the scale into Turkish. In the Turkish adaptation study, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders were participants and Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the sub-dimension of classmates was calculated as .96 (Cirik, 2010). In the present study, Cronbach alpha coefficient for classmates' support was calculated as .94.

## **Results**

Descriptive statistics were conducted to examine the level of students' perception of their science teacher's autonomy support, and classmates' support, as well as their basic psychological needs (see Table 1). Results showed that mean values for students' perceptions of autonomy support from science teacher ( $M= 3.89, SD= .89$ ), classmates' support ( $M= 4.23, SD= 1.27$ ), and basic psychological needs components of relatedness ( $M= 3.77, SD= .74$ ), competence ( $M= 3.66, SD= .81$ ), and autonomy ( $M= 3.70, SD= .72$ ) were above mid points of the scales. Furthermore, students' perceptions of both teacher autonomy support and classmates' support were positively and significantly related to all aspects of basic psychological needs.



**Table 1***Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Possible range	Classmates' support	Relatedness	Competence	Autonomy
Teacher's autonomy support	3.89	.89	1-5	.42**	.59**	.50**	.56**
Classmates' support	4.23	1.27	1-6		.41**	.28**	.30**
Relatedness	3.77	.74	1-5			.65**	.71**
Competence	3.66	.81	1-5				.68**
Autonomy	3.70	.72	1-5				

Note: \*\*  $p < .01$

In order to examine whether students' perceptions of teacher autonomy support and classmate support predict their basic psychological needs, three hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted by using each component of basic psychological needs as criterion variables. Assumptions of no multicollinearity and outliers, and normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of residuals were met. As the first step of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis, gender and prior science achievement were included in the model in order to control for their effects. Afterwards, as the second step, teacher's autonomy support and classmates' support were included (see Table 2).

The first model was set by defining the relatedness as outcome variable. Results of the first step of this analysis showed that both gender ( $\beta = .08$ ) and previous year science grade ( $\beta = .28$ ) emerged as significant predictors of relatedness. Girls and students with higher previous science grade reported higher levels of relatedness than boys and lower achievers. In the second step of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis, students' perceptions of the science learning

environment as measured by teacher's autonomy support and classmates' support were entered into the model. Both teacher's autonomy support ( $\beta = .46$ ) and classmates' support ( $\beta = .20$ ) positively predicted the outcome variable. The explained variance in the relatedness was found to be 40.8%.

In the second model, autonomy was the dependent variable. Both, gender ( $\beta = .13$ ) and prior achievement ( $\beta = .35$ ) were found to be significant and positive predictors of autonomy. Girls and students with high prior achievement reported feeling more autonomous than boys and students with low prior achievement, respectively. In the second step, both teacher's autonomy support ( $\beta = .46$ ) and classmates' support ( $\beta = .08$ ) emerged as significant and positive predictors of autonomy. The predictor variables together explained 38.3% of the variance in the autonomy.

The third model was built by using competence as the outcome variable. In the first step, only previous year science grade ( $\beta = .38$ ) was found to be a significant predictor of competence while gender ( $\beta = .02$ ) was a non-significant predictor. Students with higher previous science grade reported higher levels of competence than lower achievers. In the second step of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis, both teacher's autonomy support ( $\beta = .41$ ) and classmates' support ( $\beta = .07$ ) positively predicted the outcome variable. These predictors explained 33.4% of the total variance in the competence variable.

Results showed that the  $R^2$  change from step 1 to step 2 was statistically significant for each model, indicating that the models were improved at the second stages of the analyses. Accordingly, teacher's autonomy support and classmates' support are important predictors of students' basic psychological needs. Based on the standardized coefficients ( $\beta$ ), it can be said that teachers' autonomy support is a better predictor of basic psychological needs than classmates' support.

**Table 2***Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Basic Psychological Needs*

	Relatedness			Autonomy			Competence		
	B	SE B	<i>B</i>	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$
Step 1									
Constant	2.54	.13		2.20	.13		1.94	.14	
Gender	.12	.05	.08**	.19	.04	.13***	.03	.05	.02
Prior achievement	.27	.03	.28***	.32	.03	.35***	.39	.03	.38***
R <sup>2</sup>			.09			.14			.14
Step 2									
Constant	1.05	.13		.99	.13		.71	.15	
Gender	.05	.04	.03	.12	.04	.09***	-.03	.04	-.02
Prior achievement	.16	.02	.17***	.23	.02	.25***	.30	.03	.29***
Teacher's autonomy support	.38	.02	.46***	.38	.02	.46***	.38	.03	.41***
Classmates' support	.12	.02	.20***	.04	.02	.08**	.05	.02	.07*
R <sup>2</sup>			.41			.38			.33
$\Delta R^2$			.32***			.24***			.19***

Note: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Gender coded 0= Boy, 1= Girl.

## Discussion

In this study, after controlling for prior achievements and genders of the students, predictive effect of teacher's autonomy support and classmates' support on the basic psychological needs of the students were tested. According to hierarchical multiple regression analysis, results conducted for each basic psychological need, teacher autonomy support in science lesson positively predicts all of the basic psychological need components (i.e. relatedness, competence and autonomy). These results indicate that the students who receive an autonomy support from the teacher of the science lesson, tend to experience a feeling of self-sufficiency and successfulness during the class. They also get on well with the people in their interaction circle and enjoy a feeling of affinity towards them and feel a freedom in expressing their opinions and views and in deciding how to study. Consequently, teacher's regardfulness of students' points of view and offering them options, are apparently important for satisfying their basic psychological needs.

Results of similar studies are in compliance with the result that there is a positive relationship between the teacher autonomy support and basic psychological needs (e.g., Adie et al., 2008; Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007; Lavigne et al., 2007; Reeve et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2014). For instance, Lavigne et al. (2007) found that teachers' autonomy support positively predicts high school students' perceptions of autonomy and competence which in turn positively predict students' motivation in science and intentions to pursue science education. When students receive a sufficient autonomy support from their teachers, they are more interested in the course (Tsai et al., 2008) and they conduct their studies in their own ways (Jang et al., 2016). On the other hand, when the students are pressured by the teacher in a way to make them think, feel or behave in the direction determined by the teacher, they might tend to be less autonomous,

less competent and less related (Reeve, 2009). Reeve (2006) summarized the features of a teacher who provides autonomy support during class, in nine items as follows: (1) attentive listening; (2) creating opportunities for the students to study; (3) providing speaking opportunities to students; (4) arranging learning materials and creating learning mediums for the students enabling them to manipulate the objects and speeches, rather than rendering them passive listeners and onlookers; (5) encouraging effort and sustainability; (6) extolling their improvements and proficiency; (7) providing them clues when they are in dire need; (8) responding to their questions and comments; (9) providing a clear feedback to their points of view. In this way, the teacher may support the inner motivational resources of the students (Reeve, 2006).

Another result obtained in this study is that, classmates' support positively predicts the basic psychological needs. Thereby, the students who are cared about, who are supported by better relationships and whose feelings and views are liked by their friends tend to have a higher level of autonomy, relatedness and competence. It has been considered that the students who think that they are being cared about by their classmates and being liked by them (Goodenow, 1993), and also who have close and nurturing relationships with their classmates, have a sense of school belonging (De Wit et al., 2010). Moreover, peer influence gains more importance beginning from late childhood (Ntoumanis et al., 2012). The finding of positive association between support of classmates and the basic psychological needs of the students seems to be consistent with the results of similar studies (e.g., Ricard & Pelletier, 2016; Tian et al., 2016; Zhou et al., 2019). For example, Zhou et al. (2019) conducted a study regarding the support offered by classmates to the students, and showed that this support positively predicted the psychological needs of 3<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

The findings obtained in this study support the fact that both teacher autonomy support and classmates' support undertake important roles in predicting the basic psychological needs of the students. However, according to the results obtained in this study, teacher's autonomy support is a stronger predictor on the basic psychological needs, compared to classmates' support. Likewise, Ricard and Pelletier (2016) showed that, for the basic psychological needs, teacher support is more predictive than classmate support. Besides, they also stated that class friendships play an important role in predicting the academic motivation, but teacher support has more important effects in terms of meeting the students' basic psychological needs. This might be explained by the fact that in school students primarily place the figure of a teacher as the first important other person and also the teacher may even have an influence on the class environment, daily student affairs and peer relations. (Tian et al., 2016) Moreover, when a student receives consent from his/her teacher due to his/her ideas, feelings and behavior (Reeve, 2009), and also feels that he/she is loved by their teachers (Wentzel & Asher, 1995), this could be effective in explaining why these factors are important predictors in students' intrinsic motivations. However, besides the fact that teacher support is very necessary, it does not suffice on its own for the school development of the student. It is recommended that it must be considered together with other types of social supports such as classmate support and parent support (Rosenfeld et al., 2000).

Despite the fact that the variance values explained by teacher autonomy support and classmate support in the components of basic psychological needs (varying between .33 and .41) are close to each other, the considered learning environment variables explain the variance mostly in the variable of relatedness among the components of basic psychological needs. This finding complies with most of the studies in the literature, (Adie et al., 2008; Standage et al.,

2006; Wu et al., 2014; Zhou et al., 2019), however, in some other studies teacher autonomy support predicts autonomy the strongest (Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007; Tian et al., 2016). For example, Tian et al. (2016) found in their study that while the best predictor of autonomy was teacher autonomy support, the best predictor of relatedness variable was classmate support.

### **Limitations of this Study and Suggestions for Future Studies**

There are some limitations in this study that must be mentioned. First of all, this study is based on cross-sectional data and is a correlational study which restrains the causality claims. In future studies, it might be possible to establish cause and effect relations between the learning environment and basic psychological needs by using longitudinal and experimental designs. Next, in the present study, the perceived science learning environment is limited by the teacher's autonomy support and classmates' support. In future studies, it could be possible to investigate the effect of features of different science learning environments on basic psychological needs of students. Moreover, in order to put forward more details, together with self-report questionnaires, classroom observations focusing on the interactions between students-teacher and students-students, and interviews with students and teacher can be included in data collection methods. Another limitation is about the certain age range of the sample. The obtained results can be generalized to groups having similar features. Because of the fact that students from different age ranges might have different developmental features, for example they might have different levels of being influenced by their teachers and friends, in future studies, students from different age ranges can be selected as sampling and relationships among the variables can be compared.

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## **Student Perceptions of Various Types of Study Abroad Service Providers in the United States**

**Sherrie Klee**

### **Abstract**

Study abroad programs and the need for multicultural education is becoming more popular in United States higher education institutions. These multicultural programs can include various types of programming such as faculty-led, university international center sponsored, third-party providers, or a combination thereof. Understanding the perceptions of participants can influence the type of programs needed within an institution. This study examined the perceptions of students participating in a study abroad, faculty-led program sponsored by the university with the assistance of a third-party provider. The results suggest students are not fully aware of the complexity of organizing study abroad opportunities and hold faculty most responsible. Additionally, qualitative data analysis demonstrated that students find language issues as the most challenging aspect of their study abroad experience. Conversely, making new relationships and experiencing new cultures was found to be the most rewarding.

***Keywords:*** study abroad, intercultural competence, student perceptions

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With the growing popularity of study abroad programs at United States higher education institutions, more information as to why students seek these experiences, what benefits are gained, and their satisfaction with the outcomes is needed. By the year 2006, over 90% of all colleges and universities offered study abroad within their curriculum (Hoffa & DePaul, 2010). Data released by the Institute of International Education in 2019 reports a recent increase in United States students who studied abroad (Institute of International Education, 2019). This is a trend that has consistently presented itself in a pre-COVID era. Advocacy for study abroad is increasing with support coming from government institutions, private donations, and publicly visible figures.

This study examines the perceptions of students participating in study abroad experiences at the university level. The students providing data for analysis were asked to provide feedback on the three levels of service providers within the study abroad experience; faculty, international office personnel, and third-party providers. Identifying how students perceive those responsible for the experience can lead to the creation of effective, meaningful study abroad experiences. The resulting data from this study also identifies the areas students find most difficult and most rewarding while participating in a study abroad experience and how these areas link to the responsible provider.

### **Literature Review**

Intercultural competence has fostered many different definitions and foci for study. Diller & Moule (2005) defined the term as a, “set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professional and enable that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (p.12). Trubmall and Pacheco (2005) defined it as, “the ability to recognize differences based on culture, language,

race, ethnicity, and other aspects of individual identity and to respond to those differences positively and constructively”(p.4). Mitu et al. (2021) expand this notion by including, “elements of cognitive, affective, attitudinal nature, that determine(s) a person’s identity, includes behaviors values manifests at an intrapersonal but also interpersonal level”(p. 135). Regardless of the exact definition, the intent is clear; the need for culturally competent individuals is crucial to increasing understanding and acceptance across cultures. And in this current era of increased global relations, the need is even more critical. Many reasons serve in perpetuating the popularity and desire to internationalize students by studying abroad in preparation for a more global environment. Literature lends proof that students become more globally aware when studying abroad (Clarke, et al., 2009). Haas (2018) reports studying abroad has a definite effect on students’ cultural awareness. Doppen and An (2014) support that students who participate in a study abroad experience exhibit personal and professional growth based on their experiences. Baecher and Chung (2020) speak to the increased awareness of study abroad candidates in recognizing the cultural differences of others after a study abroad experience. Raby, et al. (2021) found studying abroad led students to self-disclose their discovery of cultural differences and their heightened sensitivity to how one’s own cultural can impact how they view others. Some employers prefer hiring candidates with strong global competencies like those found from studying abroad (Tarrant, 2010). Clark, et al. (2009) echo these thoughts by suggesting students who participate in a study abroad experience possess enhanced ability to work well with individuals in cross-cultural settings.

Study abroad opportunities have proven to enhance intercultural competence and in turn contribute to competent global citizenship (Bennett, 2009). According to Wickline et al. (2020), the world has, “become increasingly interconnected, the concept of intercultural competence

(ICC) becomes even more important and relevant”(p. 128). The authors go on to label ICC as “crucial for communities to grow and thrive”(p. 129). Median and Kiefel (2021) note, “a study abroad program fits the definition of internationalizing the curriculum”(p. 63). As the history of study abroad has evolved, so too has the purpose and meaning in creating culturally competent citizens.

In this increasing era of study abroad as part of a student’s education at higher learning institutions, various providers become part of the process. Stebleton et al. (2013) proposed that a student’s intercultural competence development can be linked directly to their expectations and structure of the study abroad experience. The authors concluded the more structured and well-planned the study abroad experience, the more intercultural growth was developed in students. Although much controversy surrounds the notion of length of a program in regard to the level of learning, authors such as Chiocca (2021) suggest, “the type of intervention might be more significant for intercultural competence and sensitivity development than the length of the program itself”(p. 38). To that end, examining the type of experience and provider used in university programs is needed to predict the degree of intercultural learning in students.

The most common framework used to provide study abroad experiences to students at the university level is a faculty-led program developed by an individual college or university. These programs are often short-term and are, “frequently conducted by university faculty based on their specific areas of expertise” (Meyer, et al., 2019, p. 94). Doyle, et.al (2010) concluded having faculty members lead study abroad contributed to increased participation long term. The developing institution sets the criteria for participation including destination, housing, activities, grades, cost of programming, etc. Although some challenges may arise within the institution and the coordination of the experience (Raby et al., 2021), students most often learn to navigate the

system successfully. A sponsoring institution may seek the assistance of a host institution or individual third-party entity to assist with the logistics of the program, but the overarching control still rests with the individual institution.

In a similar fashion, a consortium of colleges or universities may be created. A consortium approach allows for the pooling of resources and shared administration of study abroad programming. Usually, the consortium sets the parameters for participation in terms of destination, housing, activities, costs, etc. but will often find the academic criteria remains individual to the institution. Grades and/or credits can be decided by the individual institution. This provides the convenience of offering students a pre-determined program negating the need for an individual institution to use their own resources by way of faculty. Most universities find any financial requirement for belonging to these types of consortiums justified by the savings found in providing their own personnel resources (faculty to lead a study abroad program). In a comparable approach, some colleges or universities may allow students to participate in programs offered as individual faculty-led programs by partner universities with a method of transferring credits or paying fees for students to take advantage of programs not offered at their home institution.

An additional method for offering students opportunities to study abroad can be found using third-party providers. These providers may operate as a nongovernmental, not-for-profit organization such as CIEE (Council on International Educational Exchange), which operates over 175 study abroad programs world-wide. There are also numerous for-profit providers such as CEA (Cultural Experiences Abroad). These third-party providers offer students opportunities to study abroad but without the responsibility of the colleges or universities needing to use their own resources to facilitate them. This allows colleges and universities to offer a wider variety of



programs without incurring the costs of development, facilitation, and maintenance of the programs. To that end, third-party providers are generally less cost effective for students. They may also require more flexibility from the university or college when equating course equivalencies or the ability to control the curriculum delivered during the experience. A caution to consider when using a third-party provider is the inability to control the logistics and curriculum of the program. Some programs may perpetuate “negative impacts in both students and host communities”(Vann Nabi & Estes Brewer, 2021, p.18). Considering this issue requires additional vetting and oversight by universities to ensure positive experiences for students. Even with this concern, between the years 2000 and 2007 approximately 25% of students studying abroad did so through a third-party provider (Redden, 2007).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the three major prongs of service rendered to students during a study abroad experience. Analyzing will look to identify trends of experience and perceptions of student participants. This study is unique in that it explores the trilogy of services provided and compares the perceptions of all three prongs in a single study. The three prongs are comprised of the faculty advisor, the local third-party service provider in Spain, and the International Center. The logistics aspects of the study, including promotion, are handled by the International Center within the university. The data collected will be used to better understand the student’s perceptions of those involved in organizing and delivering a six-week study abroad experience to Northern Spain. Each individual represented by the three prongs has unique responsibilities and relies on each of the members to provide a quality experience. By better understanding the student’s perceptions, continued improvements may be made to the total experience.

## **Research Design**

This study was a mixed method approach, using data of both a qualitative and quantitative nature. Collecting both quantitative and qualitative data increased the validity of the results by allowing for triangulation of the data. Data was collected through a census of participants as all students participating in the study abroad experience were surveyed. The study was approved by the university Human Subjects in Review Board, including all data collection methods. The data was collected through a 25 question survey designed by the researchers with open-ended responses as well. Qualitative data was collected by way of written narratives and open-ended question responses provided by students within the survey. Qualitative remarks were analyzed for themes to determine patterns emerging from student remarks. Included in the survey were statements, which the students were asked to rank from “strongly agree” to strongly disagree.” The answers were then assigned a numeric value, five being “strongly agree” and one being “strongly disagree.” This allowed the data to be analyzed through a quantitative lens to increase the reliability by triangulating data. Questions asking specifically about each area of service will serve as the key variable for that prong. Questions regarding experiences indirectly relating to each prong of service will serve as sub-variables for each area of service.

## **Participants**

The participants in this study were undergraduate students at a mid-west university of approximately 25,000 students. Data was collected for two consecutive years with two different types of study abroad experiences used for data collection. The first study abroad experience consisted of 12 students enrolled for fall semester in the College of Education. The study abroad experience contributed to their pre-service teaching field experience. Students chose to participate in a six-week study/teach abroad experience to Northern Spain and be placed in local

schools for approximately 20 hours per week in addition to participating in cultural activities and exploration embedded within the program. Students participated in all aspects of the classroom on a daily basis. Additional data was collected from 10 students participating in a study abroad experience the following spring. These students were general education students seeking a study abroad experience. Students were enrolled in a cultural exploration course and a general studies course in the foundations of education.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The survey was distributed through an electronic link, from which students could either print, complete and physically hand-in, or digitally complete and return to a third-party individual to protect the anonymous nature of the survey. Students were asked to complete the survey within two weeks after the completion of the program. Data was collected over two consecutive years of study abroad experiences. Over the two semesters of study abroad, a total of 16 surveys were completed from the 22 students who participated in the program; 14 participants participated in the first year and 8 in next.

Data was collected with each survey analyzed for repetitive words and phrases to establish themes and patterns within the qualitative remarks. Like words and phrases were grouped to identify the themes noted in the data analysis section. Data was also collected in a quantitative manner to allow for triangulation of findings. This was intended to lend validity of the qualitative data collected.

Surveys with the quantitative data were entered into an Excel file. Due to the small quantity of surveys, the data in the Excel file were manually checked for accuracy. Frequencies of the data values were also produced in SAS, and advanced statistical processing software, to explore any unusual values. Variables were created for each ranked question from the survey.

Each quantitative question from the survey was a qualitative, ordinal variable and was answered as “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Neutral”, “Disagree”, or “Strongly Disagree”. These rankings were translated into numeric values, with five being “Strongly Agree” and one being “Strongly Disagree”. This allowed for the reporting of quantitative descriptive statistics. There were no outliers in the data, likely because there was a set range of possible values for each variable. The key variables for this analysis came from survey questions six, eight, and ten, regarding the faculty director, the local third-party service provider, and The International Center, respectively. The initial analysis included descriptive statistics regarding only these three key variables.

### **Findings**

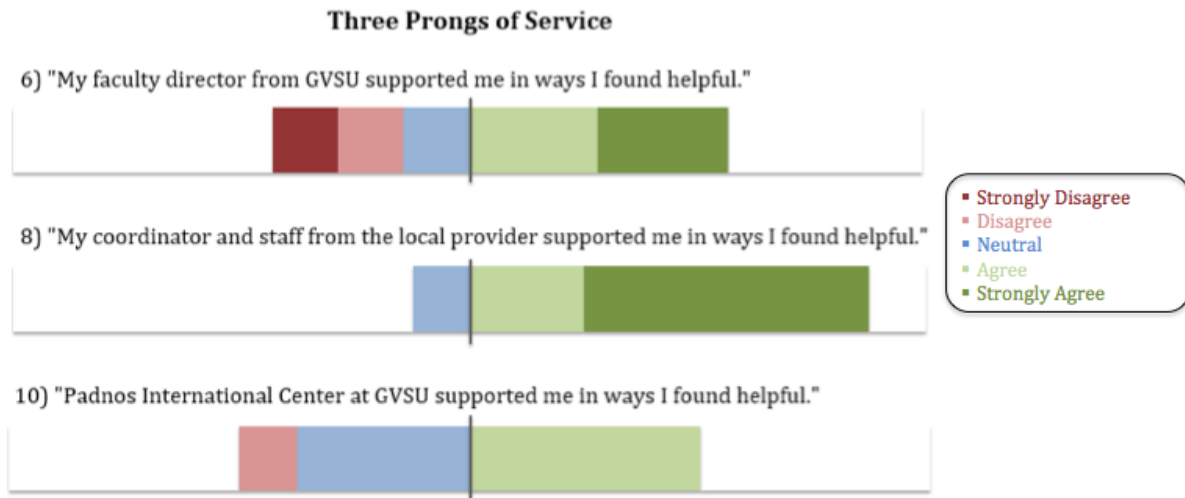
When analyzing the qualitative remarks for common themes, the most noted discussion involved the description of ‘helpful’. The word ‘helpful’ appeared 16 times in various questions and in various contexts. The perceptions of helpful identified a pattern of students expecting help to be equated to problem solving for the student and not with the student. Most positive comments identified under the helpful theme were directed at the local provider, with the most negative comments identified under the helpful theme directed at the faculty advisor. Comments such as, “I expected her to be more helpful and take care of more of my issues” exemplifies the expectations of students wanting a more controlled experience. This was countered with comments such as, “she helped me when I asked, but didn’t involve herself unless I initiated contact.” This leads to the assumption students perceive the concept of help as arranging and managing aspects of the experience without expectations of student using their own problem-solving skills.

A similar theme found in the qualitative remarks was that of support. The pattern of remarks indicated students equate support to the concept of managing rather than assisting.

These remarks were most often associated with the faculty advisor. Much like with the concept of helping, supporting was perceived as arranging all aspects of the student’s experiences, rather than assisting them. This suggests students are not prepared to problem-solve or make decisions when participating in a study abroad. Figure 1 depicts a visual representation of the concepts of helpful and supportive.

**Figure 1**

*Response Distribution for Three Key Variables*



The qualitative data also revealed what students perceived as their biggest challenge. The theme of language was noted by 16 of the 22 participants as their biggest challenge. Although English was the language spoken within their assigned classrooms, students commented on the difficulties of interacting with others outside the classroom as most frustrating. “I had a hard time ordering food since menus were all in Spanish” exemplifies a common theme found in the data. Issues relating to experiencing every day needs such as food and shopping were most prevalent. “...I wanted to buy things but was too afraid because I couldn’t communicate well” and “I would have liked to go out more but I got tense when I couldn’t figure out how to order things”

are examples of how students perceived their lack of language proficiency and how it hindered their satisfaction with the overall experience. Several students linked the language barrier to the faculty coordinator by expressing the idea that faculty should have better prepared them as to the language barrier and how specifically to navigate it.

The third-party provider was credited with providing the most satisfying experience according to student qualitative responses. The most enjoyable experience was identified as making new friends and establishing relationships. Nineteen of the 22 surveys identified this category as their most satisfying factor of the experience. Phrases such as “life-long connections,” finding a “new family” and “I will treasure the people I met for a lifetime” are examples from the qualitative responses that establish the importance of relationships for students. Students perceived the third-party provider as providing these relationship opportunities and credited the provider with making “great matches” for students and homestays. Almost all students identified their home-stay experiences as providing the greatest opportunities to establish meaningful relationships with local citizens.

Students also identified the importance of learning about a new culture and cultural norms as a common theme. “I never knew what I didn’t know about other cultures” supports the notion of students learning from and of others to increase their cultural competence while participating in a study abroad program. Another student shared, “I never thought about how alike we (US citizens) are to other cultures. I now believe people are people no matter where you go. I also believe it is my job to remember this and strive to share my culture while learning a new one.” This comment shows the growth mind set of this student in reference to becoming a culturally competent citizen who embraces other cultures as well as her own. This concept was reinforced with the comment from another student, “I wish every college student could study

abroad, I think it would make the world a smaller place with people who understand and respect each other.” Students mostly identified the International Center as the entity most responsible for providing the opportunity for students to study abroad and participate in culturally conscious activities that provided growth. Students credited the faculty coordinator at almost the same degree and used phrases like, “I’m glad she does this and gave me the opportunity to go” or “my coordinator made this possible and I hope she continues to give others the same opportunity.”

When analyzing the quantitative data for added validity, there was a wide range of response, with most students saying they agree the faculty director supported them in ways they found helpful. However, none of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the similar statement regarding the local service provider. In fact, most students strongly agreed that the local, third-party provider supported them in ways they found helpful. Most students agreed that the International Center supported them in ways they found helpful as indicated in Table 1 below.

**Table 1***Frequency of Responses for Key Variables*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Ranking Score</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<i>faculty</i>	Strongly Disagree	1	12.5%
	Disagree	2	12.5%
	Neutral	3	12.5%
	Agree	4	37.5%
	Strongly Agree	5	25.0%
<i>coordinator</i>	Strongly Disagree	1	0.0%
	Disagree	2	0.0%
	Neutral	3	12.5%
	Agree	4	25.0%
	Strongly Agree	5	62.5%
<i>International Center</i>	Strongly Disagree	1	0.0%
	Disagree	2	12.5%
	Neutral	3	37.5%
	Agree	4	50.0%
	Strongly Agree	5	0.0%

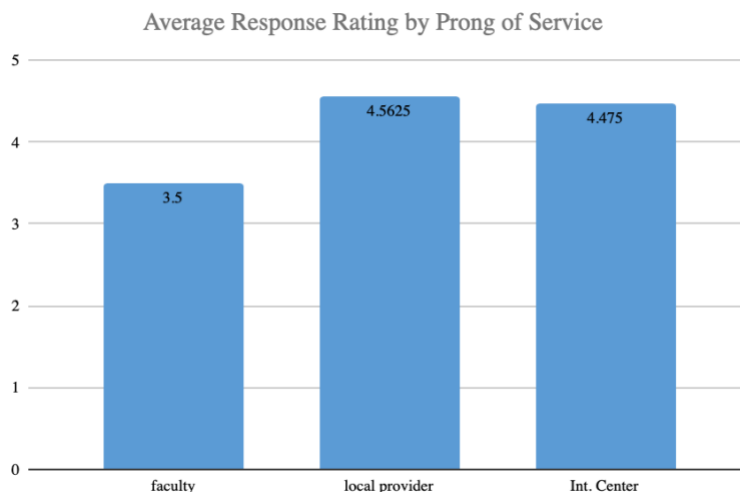
It appears that most of the questions had a very high mean rating out of the maximum score of five. Questions six and 10, regarding the support of the faculty director and support of



the International Center both had lower mean ratings than the other survey questions. While each question pertained to a different aspect of the study abroad experience, each question can be grouped into one of the three prongs of service that contributed to the study abroad experience: the faculty director, the local service provider, and the International Center as noted below. The average ratings for each prong of service analyzed is identified in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2**

*Average Response Rating by Prong of Service*



As noted in Figure 2, the analysis suggests the local service provider is perceived as the most supportive prong of service by the students with a 4.5625 average response rating by students. Comments from students included, “the staff in Ourense was beyond helpful.” Another student commented, “Very helpful and willing to help with whatever problems or situations I may have been in...”. “They were always willing to help us out! We could always count on them if needed.” Several students commented on the need to provide timely and accurate information concerning field trips and school placements. It is interesting to note more positive comments were noted in the second year of data with the smaller number of participants (8).

Students were generally less happy with their experience in the first year as opposed to the second year.

The next provider to analyze is the International Center with a 4.475 rating by students. One student commented, “The international center was helpful in doing what they needed to do for me on this trip.” It is noteworthy to mention that most students did not provide any qualitative remarks when analyzing their experience with the International Center. Those who did comment provided such information as, “I never really interacted with them. However, I am sure they would have been very helpful.” Or comments such as, “I don’t have any direct examples of when they were helpful or not.”

The final prong of service analyzed was the faculty member. The question asking for qualitative data provided the most comments from students of all service providers. The faculty member received 3.5 average ratings from students with the students participating in the first year offering a lower overall rating than the second year. Some students were positive in their comments such as, “I never once felt unsafe in her care especially when traveling to Spain initially.” The student went on to add, “She was always available via text or email, and responded promptly to both.” Another student commented, “...her communication was very poor.” Yet another suggested, “I feel like the trip could have been more prepared with a detailed outline of all possible events that were potentially happening, such as travel plans and weekly meetings.” Perhaps the most telling of comments may be found in one student’s evaluation of performance, “She did a good job of helping us be independent, but also helping us out when we needed it.”

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

The most apparent limitation of this study is the number of participants. Since the purpose of the study was to analyze the service provided by a specific program, the number of possible subjects was limited. Comparison of similar programs across the university or in similar universities could add insight into the results. Additionally, extending the study to include more years of service could add additional data for analysis.

Student perceptions of service and university providers suggests they lack understanding of how the study abroad experience is organized. The findings clearly indicate students perceive the faculty member as the provider most responsible for the experience. An assumption that helping or supporting a student equates to managing all aspects of the experience without the input of the students emerged from the qualitative remarks. The question regarding service provided by the faculty member resulting in the most qualitative comments of all areas of service. It also represented the most range of quantitative responses. Students were more decisive about having a positive or negative experience with the faculty member than any other provider type. Additionally, students were more positive about their experience with the faculty member with less students participating in the experience. This would lead to the belief that study abroad experiences with fewer students leads to a more positive experience with faculty members. Furthermore, ratings for the performance of the faculty member were greater the second year of the experience suggesting longevity by a faculty member leads to a more positive experience for students.

Language represented the biggest challenge for students when studying abroad. Participants linked many perceived problems and frustrations with the inability to communicate effectively in the native language. This suggests universities and advisors need to do more to

compensate for language deficits of participants before and during the study abroad experience. In lieu of formal language courses, informal conversational instruction should be included in pre-departure training. Making students aware and providing the basic phrases of common conversations could help alleviate frustrations from students.

Additionally, the findings of this study reinforced the large pool of research crediting study abroad in aiding the development of cultural competency in young adults. Students identified forming relationships and discovering the nuances of the culture of others as helping them feel more worldly and connected to others. This emphasizes the importance of maintaining study abroad opportunities at higher education institutions. Resources need to be provided to support these programs. Work needs to be done to support and value study abroad by all stakeholders at the higher education level.

Upon analysis of all service providers, faculty, coordinator, and university center suggests students are more aware of service provided by faculty. This may be contributed to the direct amount of time faculty is in contact with students. Service coordinators have limited contact with students as most of the preparation for the experience is coordinated with the faculty member. Students are in personal contact with the university center even less. Yet it is the work and dedication of these two entities that allow for the existence of the experience. It is apparent that students are unaware of how a study abroad experience is created and base their perceptions on the person(s) they interact with daily. Helping students understand the complexities of creating the entire experience may be helpful in their perceptions of the entire experience.

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**Teacher Perceptions of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Newcomer Parents:  
Shifting the Paradigm from Deficit Perspectives to Asset-Based Approaches**

Johnny Nikolovski

**Abstract**

This study explores teacher perceptions of newcomer parents and investigates how a small sample of teachers are making the shift from deficit to asset-based approaches to working with newcomer parents. This research uses one-on-one semi-structured interviews with three Toronto District School Board high school teachers to examine their perceptions of newcomer families living in Toronto, Ontario. Critical race theory is used as the theoretical framework for this study to critically analyze teachers' conceptualization of asset-based approaches. Research findings reveal specific strategies used by the participants in incorporating asset-based approaches to working with newcomer parents and their children. This study also provides critical reflection opportunities for teachers who wish to engage in asset-based work in and beyond their multicultural classroom.

**Keywords:** parental involvement, newcomers, deficit ideologies, asset-based approaches, critical race theory, multiculturalism, social justice

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For several decades, research has shown that parental involvement positively affects the academic and behavioural outcomes of students from various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds (Antony-Newman, 2019; Auerbach, 2007; Lareau, 2011; Panferov, 2010; Reynolds et al., 2015). Parental involvement in education is commonly defined as parents' participation in their children's schooling, including communicating with school staff, volunteering, attending school events, and facilitating learning at home (Aurini et al., 2016; Epstein, 2010; Ladky & Peterson, 2007). These activities are shown to impact students' academic and social development (Aurini et al., 2016). Although a great deal is known about the positive effects of parental involvement on students' outcomes, systemic barriers to parental involvement, including long work schedules (Baker et al., 2016), economic constraints (Waanders et al., 2007), and lack of social and linguistic capital (Peterson & Heywood, 2007), are magnified among culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) newcomer parents (Hands, 2013; Panferov, 2010).

Although studies continue to support the fundamental role of parents in students' schooling success, teachers generally receive limited training for working with newcomer parents (Antony-Newman, 2019; Chen et al., 2008; Hoover et al., 2002). Additionally, research on newcomer parental involvement has reported that some teachers typically perceive immigrant parents through a deficit lens (Antony-Newman, 2019; Crozier & Davis, 2007; Guo, 2011; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002). Deficit perspectives focus on newcomer parents' weaknesses, such as their inability to speak English sufficiently when communicating with school staff, their unfamiliarity with the school system, and lack of participation in school-based events (Chen et al., 2008; Guo, 2011). According to Antony-Newman (2019), "no other group of parents experiences more misunderstanding regarding their role in students' learning than immigrant parents" (p. 362). Moreover, some teachers in Ontario identify immigrant parents as "hard to

reach” and “uncaring” of their children because of their lack of involvement in their children’s schools, despite their engagement at home (Antony-Newman, 2019; Auerbach, 2007; Lightfoot, 2004).

In light of this, the purpose of this study is to further explore teacher perceptions on newcomer parents and, more specifically, to investigate how some teachers are working to challenge deficit perspectives of newcomer parents and, instead, enact asset-based approaches. An asset-based approach, in this context, emphasizes the strengths newcomer families have and views diversity as a positive trait. To ensure newcomer parents are supported and empowered by the Ontario education system, this study seeks responses to the following main research question: How are Ontario high school teachers conceptualizing asset-based approaches to working in collaboration with newcomer parents? Sub questions included: (1) What motivates these teachers to enact asset-based approaches to working with newcomer parents? (2) What range of factors and resources support these teachers in this work? Findings from this research may have significant implications for teachers who wish to advance newcomer students’ adjustment by means of meaningful collaboration with their parents.

### **A Note on Language: Conceptualizing Immigrant Parents**

Throughout this study, the terms “immigrants” and “newcomers” are used interchangeably. This is because newcomers also fall under immigrant status; however, these terms are not synonymous. To eliminate confusion, the demographic this study focuses on are recent newcomers who have immigrated to Toronto in the last five years. Specifically, this study focuses on newcomer racial and linguistic minority families. Compared to white and/or English-speaking immigrants, these parents typically endure additional overlaying systemic barriers

based on race, ethnicity, language, and social class. This study endeavors to address and interrogate these barriers by learning from teachers' perspectives on CLD newcomer parents.

## **Literature Review**

### **Contextualizing Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement can be broadly contextualized into school-based activities, such as volunteering, attending parent-teacher interviews, and serving on parent councils; and family-based activities, including setting educational expectations, monitoring child's progress, helping with homework, and discussing school matters (Antony-Newman, 2019). The conventional model of parental involvement in North America primarily focuses on the involvement of parents in school-based activities and events (Guo, 2011). According to Andrews (2013), North American teachers typically view school-based activities as "more legitimate" forms of parental involvement as opposed to home-based involvement for academic achievement.

This narrow view of parental involvement is problematic for two key reasons. Firstly, parental involvement at home, such as setting educational expectations and providing academic support, brings the most improvement in academic achievement and social well-being among students (Harris & Goodall, 2007; Jeynes, 2003). Secondly, if the emphasis is placed solely on school-based involvement, it mainly benefits the dominant social group (i.e., in Ontario, this would be white, Canadian-born, and middle-class families) who more likely to feel comfortable participating at the school (Stitt & Brooks, 2014). Consequently, if home-based involvement is glossed over on the policy level, immigrant, working-class, and visible minority parents who prefer home-based involvement will be perceived by teachers and school administrators as "uninvolved," "invisible," or "hard to reach" (Crozier & Davis, 2007).

Researchers in the field of sociology of education also point out the idea that parents from dominant backgrounds typically possess social and cultural capital valued by the school and feel more confident participating in school-based involvement (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Lareau, 2011). Even when parents from nondominant backgrounds practice similar activities at home as do parents from dominant backgrounds, it is the latter group of parents who benefit from this involvement (Antony-Newman, 2019). This is because teachers in Ontario generally value school-based participation from parents, and when immigrant parents' voices are not heard, teachers might set lower expectations for immigrant parents and their children (Antony-Newman, 2019).

### **Shifting the Paradigm from Deficit Perspectives to Asset-Based Approaches**

The knowledge, strengths, and skills immigrant parents have is often unknown by Canadian educational systems (Antony-Newman, 2019, 2020; Auerbach, 2007; Crozier & Davis, 2007; Guo, 2012; Peterson & Ladky, 2007). In their analysis of mainstream teachers' perspectives on immigrant parents, Guo (2012) argued that "rather than drawing on different cultural groups as sources of alternative strengths, experiences, knowledge, and perspectives, teachers may ignore diversity, minimize it, or perceive it as an obstacle to the learning process" (p. 6). However, contrary to some teachers' beliefs, immigrant parents' knowledge has vital implications for Canadian school systems, especially in the multicultural city of Toronto (Chen et al., 2008; Guo, 2012; Panferov, 2010; Patte, 2011). The values, languages, traditions, and educational backgrounds acquired by immigrant parents enrich children's educational experiences. Recognizing and valuing immigrant parents' cultural, social and educational backgrounds can help teachers better connect and build more meaningful relationships with them.

Guo (2012) identified three types of parent knowledge that are traditionally passed down to their children: first language, cultural, and religious knowledge. During Guo's (2012) interviews, the parent participants emphasized the importance of first language acquisition in their children's learning, as it allowed them to stay connected to familial relationships, cultural values, and identities of their home countries. Other parents believed that acquiring more than one language would be useful for future employment in the globalized world. Others realized that the first language is an important learning tool for transferring concepts from first to second language education. For example, English language learner (ELL) students who speak the same language can assist each other with classwork that one may not have understood but the other did.

In terms of culture and religion, teachers can learn from ELL students and their parents about their cultural and religious beliefs and practices. This could be especially helpful when learning about cultural misunderstandings and ways to mitigate them. When interacting with immigrant families, teachers can think more critically about their own positionality and challenge themselves on what they think is considered a "cultural norm" (Doucet, 2011). Due to their limited knowledge of different cultures and religions, many teachers could rely on simplified and erroneous stereotypes, which may instigate classroom conflict and disengagement (Guo, 2012). Therefore, there is a need to move from viewing difference as a deficit to understanding and appreciating diversity as a positive attribute to society (Abdi et al., 2012).

### **Socio-Political Barriers: Devaluation of Difference**

Schools in Ontario reflect the societal and political outlook towards immigrant families living in Canada (Lehmann, 2016). Although Canada has been lauded as a nation of 'grand cultural acceptance,' it has been criticized by social justice scholars, activists, and marginalized

communities for not acknowledging differences as valid and valuable expressions of human experience (Guo, 2009). According to Guo (2009), “While certain forms of knowledge are legitimized as valid, the learning and work experience of foreign-trained professionals are often treated with suspicion and as inferior” (p. 38). Despite Canada’s preference for highly skilled immigrants and the recognition that immigrant professionals contribute significant human capital to the Canadian economy and society, the non-recognition of foreign credentials and prior work experience is the “central immigration issue of the new century not only in Canada, but in all post-industrial societies receiving immigrants” (Wanner, 2001, p. 417).

Linking Canada’s policy on the non-recognition or devaluation of foreign credentials with the deficiency model imposed in the Ontario education system in many ways resemble similar views on immigrant families (Guo, 2009). The misperceptions of cultural difference and knowledge lead to a belief that the knowledge of immigrant families, particularly from the “Global South”, are deficient, inferior, and invalid. Although policymakers and teachers in Ontario are able to acknowledge diversity in our multicultural society, they often remain silent about issues of class and racial inequality that occur in the school and the broader society. Therefore, it is essential for various organizations and educational institutions to dismantle barriers and develop an inclusive framework that validates all human knowledge and experiences, no matter where they emerge from. Otherwise, immigrants will remain excluded from becoming productive citizens of the receiving societies, regardless of their educational and professional expertise.

## **Methodology**

### **Study Design**

To explore the lived, nuanced experiences of teachers engaging in asset-based work, this research used one-on-one qualitative interviews to investigate and understand teacher perceptions of CLD newcomer families living in Toronto. Qualitative research is frequently used as a way to explore answers to a given problem by investigating various social settings and the groups or individuals that exist within them (Berg & Lune, 2017). This research focused on how educators conceptualize asset-based approaches to working with CLD newcomer families; thus, a qualitative research method was used to explore this question in depth.

### **Researcher Positionality**

As a white, second-generation Canadian, raised by a single father who emigrated from former Yugoslavia in the mid-1990s, I have been able to experience three national identities. Speaking Serbian and Macedonian at home and English at school was a normal part of growing up. At home, my dad used to read to me and my siblings in English, Serbian and Macedonian, and made our learning experience genuinely entertaining and meaningful. Although my siblings and I sometimes poked fun of our dad's English accent, his ability to understand and articulate complex historical and current societal issues, do quick mathematical computations, and share his knowledge about the world has always amazed us.

Throughout my K–12 schooling experience, I was fortunate that my dad was actively involved in my academic and social development. He would chaperone our sporting events, attend parent-teacher interviews, and assist in our at-home learning. Most of my elementary and high school teachers remember my dad and his hard work to be involved in our education. In

addition to his hard work, he would sometimes sacrifice his work time just so that my siblings and I would be able to attend extra-curricular events in and outside the school.

As a researcher trying to navigate the complexities of immigrant parental involvement, I must recognize that my lived experiences may be different than other students' of immigrant backgrounds. Depending on their social identities, families provide unique ways of raising their children and guiding them along their educational trajectories. Although my dad, being a white immigrant, was able and willing to attend school-based activities, other families might not be able to or decide not to due to personal or cultural reasons, or socioeconomic constraints. Therefore, it is important for me to recognize my family background and positionality when researching ethnic and linguistic minority newcomer families and how they view parental involvement. Addressing how various immigrant families may be read along axes of ethnicity, race and class is essential to understanding how Toronto mainstream teachers view and work with particular immigrant parents.

### **Data Collection**

Participants of this study were interviewed using a semi-structured format to allow for flexibility within the interview process. All interviews followed the same list of questions and lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Participants were interviewed via Zoom where only the audio has been recorded. Before proceeding with the interviews, participants were assured of their confidentiality, asked to carefully read and sign the consent form outlining the interview protocol, and were reminded that they may withdraw from the study at any time. In addition, participants were briefed concerning the scope of the study I was conducting, and the ultimate goals of the research. The data was securely stored on a password-protected computer and was only shared with the course instructor.



## **Participant Biographies**

Three educators were interviewed in this qualitative research study, all of whom work as Ontario Intermediate/Senior teachers, have experience teaching and interacting with newcomer families, and advocate for equitable spaces for CLD newcomer students and their parents. Each participant was given a pseudonym to protect their identity. To protect the confidentiality of the school, I have changed the name to 'Toronto High'.

Linda is a Chinese female immigrant who immigrated to Canada at the age of three. She had been teaching for 30 years and had held a range of duties from student support to leadership roles. At the time of this research, she was working as a math and geography high school teacher at Toronto High.

Anderson is a white, Canadian-born male, semi-retired English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher with almost 40 years of teaching experience. He has also done two exchanges to Melbourne, Australia, and has taught law and physical education at Toronto High. At the time of data collection, he was working as a literacy assessor for the Toronto District School Board (TDSB).

Phil is a white, Canadian-born teacher who lived in a multilingual household and, at the time of this study, was an assistant curriculum leader for the geography department at Toronto High and had been teaching for almost 30 years.

Having a diverse sample of participants with different cultural backgrounds, positionalities, and upbringings provided nuance in their perceptions of immigrant parental involvement.

Participants were recruited via email using a snowball sampling method. This method is appropriate when the members of a special population are difficult to locate (Babbie & Roberts,

2018) such as teachers who claim to demonstrate commitment to and/or leadership in the area of asset-based approaches to working with newcomer parents. These participants have been colleagues at Toronto High for approximately 30 years.

### **Data Analysis**

The theoretical framework used in this study stems from the work of critical race theory (CRT). According to Delgado (1995), CRT is based upon the acknowledgement that racism is deep-rooted in North American society. Critical race theorists aim to eliminate racism by exposing and problematizing the deeply ingrained racial hegemonic structures conserved in North American culture (Ladson-Billings, 1998). The essence of CRT, according to Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998), is in the understanding that “race [still] matters” (p. 8) in shaping people’s lived experiences in society. By exploring the data collected through the lens of CRT, researchers and educators can begin to grapple with how teachers are challenging and/or reproducing explicit or implicit racist ideologies and practices within a CLD classroom.

Interviews were transcribed using Otter.ai and checked for accuracy. The interviews were then analyzed to identify themes according to the sub-questions guiding this research study, as well as themes that aligned with CRT. Using thematic analysis to draw out patterns within the interviews helped to code the interviews into prominent, overarching themes (Berg & Lune, 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013) that aligned with the CRT analysis used in this study.

### **Findings and Discussion**

The findings reported here reflect the responses of the participants when discussing their conceptualization of asset-based approaches, motivation for enacting an asset-based approach to working with newcomer parents, and the range of factors and resources that support teachers in

this work. This section of the paper reports seven themes, draws on data to illustrate them, and situates the findings within the existing literature. CRT was used as a theoretical framework throughout the study to critically analyze teachers' conceptualization of asset-based approaches, as well as their perceptions of newcomer families.

### **Theme #1: Teachers Are Gradually Recognizing and Validating the Value of Home-Based Parental Involvement**

The results from this study indicated that educators are making a slight renewed focus on home-based involvement, which disrupts dominant and deficit discourses of “good” parental involvement (Antony-Newman, 2019; Huntsinger & Jose, 2009; Jeynes, 2003, 2012). When asked “What does parental involvement look like to you?” there were mixed responses from the participants, ranging from mostly school-centric to home-based involvement. For example, during Anderson’s interview, he stated: “...the parents who attend parent-teacher interviews; the parents who reach out...they tend to be the families where education is highly valued.” While it may be the case that parents who attend parent-teacher interviews and “reach out” to teachers are an indication that they place a high value on their children’s education, it dismisses the hidden involvement at home.

Although, when asked about Linda’s thoughts on what she thinks parenting should look like, she stated, “What parenting looks like depends on your situation. But I think they should know what their kids are doing in school, who their kids’ friends are, and who their kids’ teachers are.” Based on Linda’s perception of parental involvement, she offered a more inclusive picture of what parenting should entail, whilst moving away from emphasizing school-based involvement. Linda’s belief of parental involvement is more inclusive of immigrant parents who do not attend school functions. While some aspects of her definition include school-based

information (e.g., knowing what children are doing at *school*, and knowing who the *teacher* is), she did not allude to parent-teacher interviews or other school activities and events as did Anderson and Phil.

Linda further expressed how parental involvement matters at all levels of a child's lifespan development, from pre-K to adulthood. While school boards mainly focus on the benefits of parental involvement in elementary school, Linda believed that parents matter at all times, in and beyond the school, in nurturing children's social skills, educational and professional interests, and a "sense of wonder" about the world. Both Linda and Anderson highlighted the importance of parental involvement in adolescent years during the rising age of social media. Facilitating healthy usage of social media content was perceived to be a critical component of "good" parental involvement by the participants. Linda stressed the idea that while parents may not always have the "right answers" for their children's social and/or academic development, parents have the ability to provide a wealth of cultural knowledge to their children in order to help them navigate our increasingly complex society.

The teachers in this study were also cognizant of the cultural reasons why some immigrant parents may choose not to attend schools. As expressed in the literature and by the participants, newcomer parents coming from high-context cultures (i.e.: cultures that typically place heavy emphasis on power-distance values) tend to stray away from interacting with the school, believing it is a disrespectful way on monitoring school teachers and personnel (Guo, 2011; Dyson, 2001; Li, 2006; Yao, 1988). Additionally, when asked about incorporating asset-based perspectives on newcomer parents, Linda stated:

I don't think [teachers] should be saying, 'Hey, you're a newcomer; let's make you that token newcomer parent and be on this committee'... I don't think that's what they want. I think, culturally, a lot of these newcomers don't think it is their position to come into my classroom. Like, 'You're the teacher. You teach'.

The intercultural awareness regarding the perceptions of parental involvement is important to challenging the conventional North American model of "good" parental involvement. What was interesting in many of Linda's responses was how she tried to think through ways she could bring in newcomer parents into her classroom to discuss their "success stories" living in Canada. Although inviting newcomer parents as guest speakers on relevant course topics could be one way of empowering newcomer families, there is an erroneous assumption that inviting parents in the classroom fulfills as an asset-based approach to interacting with CLD newcomer families. Should teachers choose to include newcomer parents into their classrooms, the intention must be meaningful, rather than a symbolic effort to seem "inclusive." It is important to recognize the assets these parents have at the home and beyond that enable CLD students to succeed academically and socially, as well as navigate the complexities of our globalized society.

**Theme #2: Participating Teachers Believed That Asset-Based Approaches to Working with Newcomer Families Need to Involve Challenging Stereotypes That Reinforce Deficit Ideologies**

One aspect of social justice work revolves around problematizing harmful and inaccurate stereotypes and essentialist views on social groups, especially towards marginalized communities (Adams et al., 2007). Participants in this study believed that challenging

stereotypes among CLD newcomer families was one avenue for enacting an asset-based approach. For example, Linda stated:

There are a lot of stereotypes that these newcomer parents are poor, uneducated, fleeing for their lives, or they're leaving a terrible situation. Although, a lot of them are educated, wealthy people back home and are coming for other reasons.

Deficit ideologies on newcomer parents typically portray them as perpetually “poor,” “uneducated,” and “needing to be saved.” Over her years of teaching ESL courses, Linda learned that she cannot make assumptions about newcomer families, even if these assumptions are perceived to be “positive.” She continued by saying: “You can’t say like, ‘Oh, these kids came from China; therefore, they are great students.’ No, because sometimes they're not great students.”

Recognizing each student on their merit, rather than assuming their abilities based on their racial identity/ies was a common theme during Linda’s interview. Studies on stereotype threat and lift (McGee, 2018) reflect Linda’s idea that, contrary to the dominant narrative, there are stressful side effects of the two stereotypes, as they disrupt learning and participation in and outside the classroom. As an example, McGee (2018) showed that high-achieving Black students seek to resist racial stereotypes of intellectual inferiority while Asian students attempt to maintain the stereotype about their intellectual superiority; yet, both racial groups undergo extra labour in their education as a result of being stereotyped and marginalized. Therefore, educators need to reflect on their implicit biases regarding stereotype lift and threat, which have been shaped by the forces of racism. Combating these stereotypes may allow students and their parents to demonstrate their knowledge and skills without the pressure of upholding or defying these simplified and often erroneous assumptions.

While negative stereotypes about immigrants are relatively easy to spot, positive ones are more complex and, to some extent, just as pernicious (Kay et al., 2013). During my interviews with Linda, Anderson, and Phil, I have noticed that their perceptions of newcomer families were often characterized as “hardworking” and “heroic”. The following section will explain in depth about the hardworking and heroic newcomer narrative and how this may, inadvertently, reinscribe essentialist and racist perspectives of newcomer families.

**Theme #3: Teachers Understood Asset-Based Approaches as Involving Recognition of What They Perceived to be Positive Attributes Shared by All Newcomer Parents (e.g., Hardworking and Heroic)**

Teachers in this study often viewed and complemented newcomer families as hardworking and heroic. Literature also depicts newcomer parents as hardworking and instilling high educational aspirations and expectations for their children as a way to advance the socio-economic ladder (Aurini et al., 2016). However, the heroic newcomer narrative has not been rigorously documented and critiqued in scholarly sources, which this study intends to further interrogate. Teachers in this study mentioned how courageous these newcomer families are, and the challenges they have persevered as they have adapted to the host country.

On the surface, these perceptions seem positive as it depicts newcomers as fulfilling the “Canadian Dream”, whilst simultaneously moving away from deficit sentiments of newcomers as being poor, uneducated, lacking linguistic and social capital, living precariously, and so on. However, delving beneath the surface, the “role-up-your-sleeves” attitude and heroic perception projected onto newcomer parents, which stems from discourses in meritocracy, acts as an illusion of equality and fairness within our society (Markovits, 2019). Meritocracy places significant emphasis on what the individual does rather than the social factors that enable or

disable one's ability to advance in the socio-economic ladder. If the individual fails to achieve their desired goal, the blame is mainly directed towards them without taking into consideration the systemic barriers that impede their success.

Linda strongly believed in the idea of meritocracy. Growing up in a Chinese household in a predominately white, rural farming region, she and her family experienced explicit forms of racism. The only way to seek "refuge" from race-based discrimination, according to Linda, was to "do well academically". She further opened up about her experience assimilating to the Canadian culture, as she described being "white-washed" at an early age. As our conversation progressed from her schooling experience to her perceptions of newcomer families, an interesting finding emerged. When Linda was discussing how she was able to connect with her CLD students by understanding their hardships related to racism, she took a long pause and said:

I don't know how to say it... When there are groups of kids that their default when they are finding the material hard, or when it takes a bit of effort to be successful, they'd always be like, 'Oh, you're just a racist. Oh, you're just picking on me because you're racist.' And I'll go like, 'You don't know what racism is until you actually grow up where I grew up. You're in a school and city where other students look like you. So, don't go there as an easy copout. Let's put in the work.'

Although Linda's statement seemed "well-intentioned" (i.e., expressing how she encouraged her CLD students to 'work hard for success'), there were three problematic claims made in her assertion that warrant critical attention. Firstly, Linda's understanding of racism seemed narrowly defined to single acts of discrimination rather than a broader systemic issue. Based on her response, she viewed racism as explicit and intentional malice acts, by stating: "You don't know what racism is until you actually grow up where I grew up." Although racism



could at times be clearly visible, there are also implicit biases that can unintentionally drive racist behaviours. According to DiAngelo (2018), “All people hold prejudices, especially across racial lines in a society deeply divided by race” (p. 72). As such, the simplistic notion that racism is limited to individual, intentional acts committed by unkind people can serve as the basis of all defensiveness of the topic of racism. Linda’s conceptualization of racism obscures the structural nature of it and makes it difficult to see, understand, and dismantle.

Secondly, Linda’s belief that being in a location where people “look like you” indicates an absence of racism is inaccurate. Although cultural diversity and representation within a place may promote a sense of belonging among various social groups, systemic racism exists in virtually all social institutions (DiAngelo, 2018, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Moreover, racism can be subtle and undetectable to those who perpetrate it. It is important to understand that racism is embedded within our social structure rather than focusing on the micro-interactions diverse students have with their peers and teachers. Constant reflection from all teachers is necessary to unpack racist ideologies that have been transmitted and evolved throughout society.

Third, the statement, “Don’t go there as an easy copout” reinforces negative stereotypes of laziness and victim-blaming among people who are racially marginalized. Little is known about Linda’s interaction with students who have claimed she is “racist”; therefore, assumptions cannot be made about her teaching practice that may reinforce racist behaviour. However, her perception of CLD students who call out on racist behaviour or attitudes might unintentionally uphold racism, especially if it dismisses their lived experiences within a racist society. As many critical race theorists and scholars in the field of sociology of education argue, schools are not independent of society (Lehmann, 2016); thus, it cannot be neutral on issues of racism.

The teachers in this study seemed to admire CLD families by mentioning how hardworking and heroic they are. While the participants intended to praise newcomer families for their triumphs amid adversity, which was perceived by the participants to be an asset-based approach to working with CLD families, it is likewise important to recognize how racist ideologies can play an integral role in these teachers' perceptions of newcomer families. Although seemingly "well-intentioned," the hardworking and heroic narrative depicted on newcomer families will continue to perpetuate racism, if it functions to overlook the structural barriers that inhibit equal opportunities for upward mobility.

**Theme #4: A Central Motivating Factor Informing These Teachers' Practice of Asset-Based Approaches to Working with Newcomer Parents is Their Recognition and Valuing of Diversity as an Asset to Student Learning and Well-Being**

Rather than viewing diversity as a deficit, the participants in this study viewed diversity as an asset that can be used in and beyond the classroom. Teaching and interacting with students and parents from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds enabled participants to learn different cultural perspectives and build their intercultural competence. Throughout his ESL teaching career, Anderson noticed that students tended to learn their best when they were paired with peers who came from diverse cultural backgrounds and had varying linguistic repertoires.

Providing opportunities for students to work together to achieve a shared goal, such as learning the English language, seemed to be a common practice in Anderson's teaching career. What is unknown is whether or not Anderson allowed students to use their first language to communicate ideas and demonstrate their learning process of course material. The *Many Roots Many Voices* (2006) document, which was established by the Ontario Ministry of Education, indicated that there are many academic and personal advantages for promoting the use and

development of ELL's first languages in the classroom. This idea was also expressed by Ernst-Slavit (1997) who noted studies that drew attention to the numerous benefits of "additive" multilingual approaches that allow ELL students to develop their second language learning while simultaneously encouraging the development of first language acquisition. Although it might sound counterintuitive, providing opportunities for translanguaging (i.e., the process whereby multilinguals use different languages to convey information) to occur in the classroom allows ELL students to maximize their communicative potential.

During Phil's interview, he also stated that he valued diversity in his ESL geography classes because it promoted a learning environment that was "rich in cross-cultural understanding." He was also able to incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy by designing lessons and assessments that allowed CLD students to share their cultural background via storytelling while also learning about fundamental geographical terms. Therefore, contrary to Guo's (2012) argument that mainstream teachers in Canada ignore diversity, minimize it, or perceive it as an obstacle to the learning process of CLD students, these teachers drew on different cultural groups as sources of strengths, experiences, knowledge, and worldviews.

It is essential that teachers recognize that immigrants bring values, languages, traditions, and educational backgrounds to our schools; thus, enriching our educational environments. Recognizing and valuing immigrant children and their parents' cultural and linguistic diversity can help teachers build effective and meaningful relationships with diverse families.

**Theme #5: Motivating Factors Informing These Teachers' Belief in the Importance of Asset-Based Approaches to Working with Newcomer Parents Include Personal Lived Experience in Multilingual Households and Teaching Abroad**

Each participant shared unique stories that inspired them to use asset-based approaches to working with CLD newcomer families. In my interview with Linda, she mentioned that she was able to connect with her CLD students as she was also a newcomer. She endured many barriers, including experiencing violent forms of racism, not being able to speak or understand the English language, and living in a low-income household. Whenever her CLD students felt isolated, frustrated, or needed support, Linda would try to motivate them by representing herself as a role model to them who had fulfilled the so-called “Canadian Dream”. She stated:

When I taught ESL, I would always say, ‘Guys, you could be me’ ha-ha! ‘You could also be a teacher’! But then [the students] would say, ‘No, my English is not that good,’ and I go like, ‘oh, trust me, during my first day of school, I had no idea what the teacher was saying and yet here I am.’ So, I think I was able to connect because of that.

Based on Linda’s story, it could be argued that she wanted to instill a growth mindset for her CLD students by letting them know they can improve their learning if they work hard and ask for help. In other words, Linda was going by the motto: “If I can do it, you can too!” Helping students build confidence and recognize their agency and strengths can maximize their full learning potential and social wellbeing. It is likewise important to take into consideration of the external barriers that are beyond students’ and parents’ control and providing them with the necessary support to enable them to succeed academically and personally.

Similar to Linda’s life experience as a newcomer, Phil was also raised in a multilingual household. His father immigrated to Canada from Germany and his mother was born and raised in Canada. When asked about his experience working in a CLD classroom/school, Paul stated:

I enjoy it! For me, it's very comfortable. I grew up in a multilingual household. My dad and grandparents spoke multiple languages and so, for me, it was always entertaining to hear other languages. So, understanding new Canadian students was never an issue for me.

It was interesting to note that Phil felt "comfortable" working with CLD students.

Contrastingly, research showed that Ontario teachers felt unprepared to work in such a diverse learning environment (Antony-Newman, 2019; Panferov, 2010; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002). Phil's experience learning various languages at home enabled him to feel confident with interacting with CLD students in his ESL geography classes. He also expressed how "fun" it is being an ESL teacher and that it is "entertaining" to listen to people speaking in multiple languages. It could be argued that Phil's perception of language learning followed an asset-based approach, in that he viewed this process as something that is fun and worth exploring, rather than perceiving it as intimidating and a deterrent to students' learning.

Growing up in a multicultural city, Anderson also gravitated to learning from different cultures and languages from CLD newcomer families living in Toronto and abroad. He elaborated on how his experience attending a multicultural school had "enriched" his understanding of diverse cultures, which had motivated him to pursue a teaching career in ESL. Anderson also mentioned that he was fortunate to teach abroad in Australia, which has informed his approach and "sensitivity" to different cultures. He continued by mentioning that when teachers teach a certain language, they are also transmitting cultural values, which was also mentioned by Guo (2009) in their argument about how language is a reflection of culture. Moreover, Anderson had expressed how he valued Canada's multiculturalism. He stated:

Canada doesn't have a specific or, at least in my view, doesn't have a dominant identity.

In fact, if there is an identity to Canada, it's multicultural...I'm old enough to remember

Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who was a champion of multiculturalism and bilingualism.

Although Canada is indeed a multicultural society, especially Toronto, the belief about Canada not having a dominant identity is misleading. Critical race theorists would argue that the dominant culture in North America are white settlers, stemming from Canada's colonial history (St. Denis, 2011). Although multiculturalism was intended to acknowledge the need for increased understanding between ethnic groups and the need to address racial discrimination, St. Denis (2011) argued that discourses of multiculturalism can also reinforce racism and colonialism. St. Denis (2011) further stated that "Multiculturalism helps to erase, diminish, trivialize, and deflect from acknowledging Aboriginal sovereignty and the need to redress Aboriginal rights" (p. 309). This is especially the case when multicultural narratives are used to deny social inequalities and dismiss traces of Canada's colonial roots. In order to follow through on anti-racist work, teachers should understand that the multiculturalism rhetoric may detract opportunity for meaningful conversations pertaining to racism.

#### **Theme #6: Teachers Drew on a Range of Human and Community Resources in their Asset-Based Approaches to Working with Newcomer Parents**

Asset-based pedagogy typically focuses on how educators can enhance the strengths and skills students have within the classroom. However, a holistic conception of asset-based approaches also encompasses a wide range of human and community resources beyond schools, extending to the broader community. As schools are shaped by external socio-cultural values and belief systems, it is important to acknowledge the abundance of resources schools can draw from our constantly changing society. During the interview with Anderson, he discussed how Toronto

has many resources that can be used inside the classroom to enhance the learning and socio-emotional wellbeing of his ESL students. He stated:

You take what resources we have and bring them in the classroom. I think in Toronto, we do have a lot of resources and those resources are human beings. I really enjoy Toronto for its diversity. I think that can be used to make ESL classrooms inclusive, equitable, sort of this great cultural exchange that can happen.

Again, this idea that cultural diversity is viewed as a strength rather than a deterrent in the learning progress of students, teachers, and community members reinforces asset-based thinking. Moreover, all of the participants mentioned that their ESL students felt excited about their field trip to downtown Toronto, where students would go skating at Nathan Phillips Square. CLD students would learn how to skate, socialize with their peers, and build their social capital.

As it pertains to newcomer parental involvement, Linda mentioned that parental volunteering on field trips was not as prominent in secondary education compared to the elementary level. Linda circled back to her belief that newcomer parents do not feel it is their priority to volunteer in schools due to personal, cultural, or socio-economic reasons. In Antony-Newman's (2019) research on eastern European immigrant parents, he noted that several parents in his study questioned the importance of volunteering for their children's learning. Furthermore, he stated: "[Newcomer parents] understand that it is useful for teachers to get help, but prefer to invest their efforts elsewhere, especially when they have demanding jobs" (p. 121). As educators, it is important to consider the range of resources CLD newcomer students and their parents can utilize at home.

Phil also mentioned how he would encourage students to have conversations with their parents at home about who their parents are and what they most admire about them. He stated:

Take time to get to know your students. Find out what their assets are. One fun way to do that is by getting to know them to tell their family story. Who are your parents? Who are your grandparents? Where are you from? What did your parents do before you came here? Maybe what they do now? What special skill does each of your parents have that you admire?

Based on Phil's responses, it could be argued that he was able to use home and community resources to enhance the social well-being of his ESL students. By finding out his students' family background, he could determine the assets his ESL students had. For example, he could assess the quality of his students' writing, as well as learn some of the cultural traditions and values passed onto the students from their ancestors. These values and beliefs continue to inform these students' understanding of the world. Educators should commit to learning more about their students' and their parents' diverse worldviews in order to avoid cross-cultural misunderstanding and conflict.

**Theme #7: Teachers Identified Access to Translators, Support from Students and Colleagues, and Diverse School Administrators as Key Resources and Factors Supporting Their Work in the Area of Asset-Based Approaches to Working with Newcomer Parents**

In order for these teachers to be committed to asset-based work, they require support from translators, multilingual students and colleagues, and diverse school administrators. Over the past few decades, the TDSB has been actively recruiting accredited interpreters for various languages to support teachers and school administrators to communicate with CLD newcomer families. As mentioned by Linda, the biggest challenge for her is the language barrier when communicating with newcomer parents. She claimed that she was fortunate to have access to translators provided by the school board. Also, during parent-teacher interviews, she, along with



Phil and Anderson, would encourage their CLD students to attend and help translate information between the teacher and parent. Should newcomer parents be unavailable or unwilling to attend, Phil mentioned that he would give his ESL students a written message to bring home for their parents to read that describes their child's progress in school.

Additionally, during my interview with Anderson, he mentioned that if teachers are multilingual, they can use this to their advantage and do some outreach to newcomer families. Therefore, teachers can also view themselves as assets in trying to support newcomer parents, if they can speak the languages newcomers understand. Having strong and abundant social networking is key for educators to have when trying to build partnerships with newcomer families.

Finally, it is important to have diverse school representatives who will be able to connect with newcomer parents, speak their languages, and understand their culture. This will foster a more inclusive climate for newcomers as they engage with the school. During my interview with Linda, she emphasized the idea that a diverse hiring policy and practice at the school level will create mutual trust between the school staff and newcomer parents when making education-related decisions for their children. Therefore, it is important that the school board continues to hire more CLD staff members, so that CLD families feel included, understood, and valued.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

The goal of this study was to explore how educators conceptualize asset-based approaches to working with newcomer parents, what motivates them to enact asset-based approaches, and what range of factors and resources support these teachers in this work. Participants of this study identified findings that illustrate the need for acknowledging strengths of newcomer parents in supporting their children's education and wellbeing. These findings

comment on the need for a transformative approach to parental involvement that is culturally sensitive and challenges deficit ideologies of immigrant parents. This research builds upon the work of others who have argued for an inclusive framework and definition of parental involvement and further suggests that educators, policymakers, and researchers need to be critical of how newcomer families are perceived.

This research demonstrates the need for teachers to actively and consciously strategize ways to enact asset-based approaches to working with diverse students and their parents. Teachers should also be critical in the way they conceptualize asset-based approaches, as these perceptions might unintentionally reproduce harmful stereotypes and essentialist views of CLD newcomer families. Constant reflection of one's positionality is necessary to combating racist beliefs and attitudes projected onto immigrant families. Existing literature on immigrant parental involvement mainly focuses on how mainstream teachers view immigrants through a deficit lens, without acknowledging the ways they are making the gradual shift to asset-based approaches.

This study highlights how a sample of TDSB teachers are making this proactive shift, while also taking into account areas for improvement in their approaches to perceiving immigrant families. As suggested in the literature, recommended practices teachers should consider when working with CLD parents include recognizing the importance of language support (Dyson, 2001), and taking into account the culture of immigrant students and parents (Guo 2011; Lopez et al., 2001; Sohn & Wang, 2006).

This study urges teachers to appreciate the knowledge and skills provided by CLD parents and incorporate their assets into the classroom without the need for them to physically attend school. Questions teachers should consider when interacting with immigrant families are as follows: How can we incorporate the home cultures of immigrant parents into the school

curriculum? For example, students may be given assignments that require them to interview their parents about their communities or their immigration experience. Also, how might immigrant parents help teachers and school administrators better understand cultural (mis)communication in order to build trusting relationships with all families? Teachers who are committed to learning more about the unique stories of diverse parents will have a much better chance to have effective and democratic parent-school partnerships for all (Antony-Newman, 2019; Panferov, 2010). These questions help acknowledge parents' cultural values and make parents feel that they can provide valuable contributions. They also help students make better connections between the school curriculum and their personal experiences, which in turn will help students succeed academically and build their funds of knowledge.

Future research on immigrant parental involvement should investigate newcomer parents' perspectives on their lived experiences of feeling valued by teachers in their children's schooling experience. More research should examine the significance of implementing asset-based approaches to working with CLD newcomer parents and how this strategy impacts their engagement with their children's formal education. Understanding the practicalities of applying an asset-based approach to working with CLD newcomer families can help teachers make more culturally informed teaching practices. This research contributes to our understanding of the importance of parental involvement, and how using an asset-based approach can enable teachers to capture a more holistic picture of CLD newcomer families that utilizes their strengths, knowledge, and skills.

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## **A Study on the Motivation Factors Affecting the Teaching Profession as a Career Choice**

Oktaý Cem Adiguzel and Ibrahim Karagol

### **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the motivation factors of teacher candidates in choosing the teaching profession. The study employed a survey model which was carried out with 543 teacher candidates. The data were collected through the “Factors Influencing Teaching Choice Scale” and were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. As a result of the study, it was concluded that the highest rated motivation factors of teacher candidates for teaching were “shape the future of children/adolescents”, “make a social contribution”, and “enhance social equity”. Teacher candidates were least affected by “job transferability”, “social influences”, and “fallback career”. Female teacher candidates attached more importance to social utility values, and they were more influenced by their environment to become a teacher than males. While the teacher candidates from the department of elementary education had the highest scores in the factors of “shape the future of children/adolescents”, “enhance social equity”, “make a social contribution”, “work with children/adolescents”, and “intrinsic career values”, the teacher candidates from the department of education science had the lowest scores in these areas.

**Keywords:** Motivation factors, teacher candidates, teaching career

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Teachers are one of the most significant factors in achieving the purpose of educational activities and increasing student performance. They play a significant role in shaping society and raising the qualified workforce that society needs. Teachers also have important roles in the transfer of cultural values to young generations, ensuring peace and tranquility in the society, and the development of the country.

The goal of a modern education system is to raise individuals with creative qualifications who are open to change and produce and use knowledge. The way to achieve this goal is to train effective qualified teachers. "A qualified teacher is one who has knowledge and skills in every field, can put it into practice and can pass it on to others." (Akgun, 2013). Within the scope of the general competencies for the teaching profession determined by the Turkish Ministry of Education, three characteristics that qualified and effective teachers should have are emphasized. These are "professional knowledge", "professional skills", and "attitudes and values". Professional knowledge covers pedagogical content knowledge, teachers' competencies of content knowledge, and knowledge on legislation about the teaching profession. Professional skills cover the planning of education and teaching, managing the teaching and learning process, creating learning environments, and assessment and evaluation. Attitudes and values cover national, moral, and universal values, personal and professional development, communication and cooperation, and the teacher's approach to students.

An effective teacher is defined as one who is tolerant, considerate, has good social interaction, understands students' emotional states, and has sensitive personality traits (Capel et al., 2005). Affective characteristics stand out in an effective teacher (Yilmaz et al., 2016; Fajet et al., 2005) and these characteristics comprise various concepts that include the individual's emotions, such as attitude, value, and motivation (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018; Batt, 2015;

Heystek & Terhoven, 2015; Oppong, 2014; Martin, 1989), and constitute an important part of teacher education. Teachers with a high affective commitment create a positive lesson atmosphere in the classroom as a role model for respectful and appropriate communication by encouraging cooperation between students, strengthening students' intrinsic motivation, and designing their lessons in line with the students' abilities (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). They try to make students love the subjects by making the lessons more enjoyable and play an important role in students developing positive attitudes towards the lessons and adopting cultural and national values. In this context, affective characteristics have a significant place in the teaching profession that requires dedication, patience, and affection (UNESCO, 1992).

Motivation constitutes a crucial factor related to affective characteristics. Motivation, defined as an internal condition that guides and maintains behavior (Woolfolk, 2016) or a force that drives an individual towards a specific goal (Eren, 2000), is one of the most essential factors that shape human behavior, and is a basic concept that psychology frequently emphasizes and tries to explain. Therefore, many studies and theories have been developed on this subject. For the last 30 years, social cognitive theories have dominated this area and have been quite effective in explaining motivation concepts (Wentzel & Wigfield, 2009). Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977), achievement motivation theory (Atkinson, 1957), attribution theory (Weiner, 1985), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2015), and expectancy-value theory (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) are some of the critical motivation theories that shed light on the examination and understanding of these elements that motivate individuals.

When considered in terms of choosing the teaching profession, it is significant to determine the motivation factors of teacher candidates enrolled in education faculties to understand why they made the choice to become teachers and to explain these factors. Literature

shows that teaching profession choices and motivation factors may depend on a variety of factors (König & Rothland, 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2007). In the literature, the reasons for choosing the teaching profession are discussed in three broad categories. These are altruistic reasons (reasons for a desire to help society improve, a desire to help children succeed), intrinsic reasons (reasons including the specific features of the profession), and extrinsic reasons (status, long holidays, level of pay) (Kyriacou et al., 1999). However, in later studies, these three categories were found not to be sufficient, and the reasons for choosing teaching as a profession were discussed further within the scope of existing motivation theories (Erten, 2014). Watt and Richardson (2007) stated that these three categories do not adequately explain the factors in career choice due to shortcomings in the theoretical framework. The authors identified 12 motivation factors effective in choosing the teaching profession based on the expectancy-value theory and developed the “Factors Influencing Teaching Choice Scale” (FIT-Choice scale). The theoretical model guiding the development of FIT-Choice factors consists of social utility values (shape the future of children/adolescents, make a social contribution, enhance social equity, work with children/adolescents), personal utility values (job transferability, job security, time for family), and five additional motivations (ability, fallback career, intrinsic career value, social influences, prior teaching and learning experiences). Ability construct items explore the perceptions of the participants’ own teaching skills. Intrinsic career value construct items focus on the interests and wishes of the participants towards their teaching career. Fallback career construct items explore whether participants chose a teaching career for reasons relating to being unsure what career they wanted, or not being accepted into a university of choice. Job security construct items ask about choosing a teaching career on the basis of it providing a reliable income and being a secure job. Time for family construct items focus on whether participants

chose the profession because it allows more family time and vacations, and that teaching hours allow for family commitments. Job transferability construct items explore whether teaching is useful for overseas employment. Shape the future of children/adolescents construct items address whether participants chose teaching in order to influence and shape future generations. Enhance social equity construct items look at the extent to which participants want to benefit the socially disadvantaged. Make a social contribution construct items investigate the desire of participants to serve and make a valuable contribution to society. Work with children/adolescents items are concerned with how much participants would like a career working with young people. Prior teaching and learning experiences construct items are connected with the past experiences of the participants related to teaching. Social influences construct items focus on how much participants are affected by those around them in their decision to become a teacher. Watt and Richardson (2007) applied this scale to the students in three different universities in Australia and concluded that intrinsic value, perceived teaching ability, and social utility motivations were the most influential when choosing the teaching profession as a career.

One of the significant factors affecting the choice of the teaching profession is gender. Some studies conducted in this context (Cermik et al., 2010; Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Acat & Yenilmez, 2004) deduced that female students chose the teaching profession more consciously, they saw the teaching profession as an assurance, and they were more idealistic than male students in terms of profession preferences. Johnston et al. (1999), in their study in England, concluded that men were affected by external factors, and women by internal factors when choosing the teaching profession, and there was a significant difference between men and women in terms of salary and working with children. In other words, while men cared more about the salary factor, women attached more importance to working with children. Some other

studies have indicated that "wanting to work with children" (Sinclair, 2008; Kyriacou et al., 1999; Yong, 1995; Brown, 1992), "enjoying the subject" (Kyriacou et al., 1999), "contributing to society" (Brown, 1992), "helping students gain a sense of personal achievement and self-esteem" (Book & Freeman, 1986), "high chance of finding a job", and "income status" (Chivore, 1988) are among the most significant factors in choosing the teaching profession as a career. Knowing how motivated teacher candidates are and by which motivations they are driven into the teaching profession is important in terms of developing better policies for the programs. Furthermore, it can be said that the motivation factors that are influential in a teacher candidate's choice of a profession have a strong effect on their willingness to participate in the lessons and what kind of teacher they will be in the future (Sinclair et al., 2006). Many studies have focused on the factors that affect teacher candidates' profession preferences (Yildirim et al., 2019; Suryani et al., 2016; König & Rothland, 2012; Cermik et al., 2010; Yazici, 2009; Boz & Boz, 2008; Watt & Richardson, 2007; Johnston et al., 1999). However, there are a limited number of studies examining the reasons for the choice of profession based on different departments (Kilinc et al., 2012; Boz & Boz, 2008), and therefore, this is the aim of our study. The study is important in terms of determining the factors that are effective in the choice of the teaching profession as a career. The study shows whether there has been a change in the factors of choosing the profession over the years and allows comparison between departments. Moreover, it is thought that determining the factors affecting the choice, and what motivates female and male teacher candidates in profession choices can contribute to the development of better policies regarding the selection of teacher candidates and their education processes (Ekinici, 2017). Accordingly, the aim of this study is to answer the following questions:



1. What are the motivation factors for teacher candidates choosing the teaching profession?
2. Do the motivation levels of teacher candidates differ according to department and gender variables?
3. What is the correlation among motivation factors?

## **Methodology**

### **Research Model**

This study used a survey model to determine the relationship between the motivation factors of first-year teacher candidates for choosing the teaching profession.

### **Population and Sample**

The population of the study consisted of first-year students studying at the education faculty of a large higher education institution located in the Eastern Marmara region of Turkey which had a total of 790 students. The aim was to reach the whole population, so the study did not employ a sampling method and, of 790 teacher candidates included in the population, 582 volunteered to participate in the study. When a preliminary examination was made on the answers given by the participants, 39 teacher candidates were excluded as there were more than 15% missing data in their answers. As a result, the analyses were carried out on the answers provided by 543 students. The distribution of the study group according to department and gender is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1***The Distribution of the Study Group According to Department and Gender*

Department	N	%	Gender	N	%
Foreign Language Education (FLE)	179	33.0	Female	369	68.8
Elementary Education (EE)	123	22.7	Male	173	31.9
Special Education (SE)	72	13.3			
Mathematics and Science Education (MSE)	70	12.9			
Education Science (ES)	57	10.5			
Turkish and Social Sciences (TSS)	42	7.7			
Total	543	100.0		543	100.0

As can be seen in Table 1, 369 of the participants were women (68.8%) and 173 were men (31.9%), 179 of the participants were from the Department of Foreign Language Education (33.0%), 123 from the Department of Elementary Education (22.7%), 72 from the Department of Special Education (13.3%), 70 from the Department of Mathematics and Science Education (12.9%), 57 from the Department of Education Science (10.5%), and 42 from the Department of Turkish and Social Sciences Education (7.7%).

### **Instruments**

The scale developed by Watt and Richardson (2007) consists of 56 items, 18 factors, and two subscales: perception and motivation. The motivation subscale consists of 12 factors: (job security, job transferability, time for family, work with children/adolescents, enhance social equity, shape the future of children/adolescents, intrinsic career value, make a social contribution, ability, prior teaching and learning experiences, fallback career, and social influences. The perception subscale consists of six factors (satisfaction with choice, social status, salary, expert career, high demand, and social dissuasion). Cronbach's alpha reliability of the motivation factors varies between .53 and .93 and between .61 and .89 for the perception factors. In this study, only the motivation subscale was used.

The scale was adapted into Turkish by Kilinc et al. (2012). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to certify the construct validity in the Turkish adaptation and yielded acceptable global fit indices:  $\chi^2/df=7.302$ , RMSEA=.066, CFI=.979, NFI=.976, NNFI/TLI=.974, SRMR=.062. In this study, the motivation subscale ( $\chi^2=404.41$ ,  $N=512$ ,  $p=0.00$ ,  $\chi^2/df= 2.47$ , RMSEA=.054, GFI=.92, AGFI=.90, CFI=.95, NFI=.92, NNFI=.94, RFI=.91, IFI=.95, SRMR=.05, PGFI=.72, and PNFI=.80) had good fit indices and showed that the structure of the scale is acceptable (Buyukozturk et al., 2010). The items of the scale and Cronbach's alpha reliabilities in the current study are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Scale items and Cronbach's Alpha Reliabilities*

Factors	Cronbach's Alpha
Motivation	
Ability	.84
Intrinsic career value	.87
Fallback career	.64
Job security	.83
Time for family	.78
Job transferability	.69
Shape the future of children/adolescents	.86
Enhance social equity	.83
Make a social contribution	.75
Work with children/adolescents	.95
Prior teaching and learning experiences	.75
Social influences	.84

As can be seen in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha reliability of the motivation factors ranges from .64 to .95 which indicates that all the factors of the scale are reliable.

### **Analysis of Data**

The data were analyzed using a statistical analysis program and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. When the motivation scores of teacher candidates were examined according to gender and department independent variables, it was determined that they did not

show normal distribution. Since normal distribution could not be achieved after clearing the extreme values, and transformations were not preferred, analyses on the original data were performed with nonparametric tests. Accordingly, the analyses were performed using Mann-Whitney U tests for the gender variable and Kruskal Wallis tests for the department variable. The relationships between the factors of the motivation subscale were analyzed using the Spearman Correlation analysis.

## Findings

### Findings Regarding the Research Question:

#### What are the motivation factors for teacher candidates choosing the teaching profession?

Descriptive statistics of motivation factors in teaching choice are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics of Motivation Factors in Teaching Choice*

Motivation	M	SD
Shape the future of children/adolescents	6.07	1.16
Make a social contribution	5.86	1.16
Enhance social equity	5.75	1.29
Prior teaching and learning experiences	5.09	1.48
Work with children/adolescents	5.05	1.79
Ability	4.97	1.29
Job security	4.95	1.53
Intrinsic career value	4.62	1.66
Time for family	4.33	1.59
Job transferability	4.27	1.62
Social influences	3.44	1.80
Fallback career	2.89	1.61

As can be seen in Table 3, teacher candidates attached more importance to the social dimensions of the profession, "shape the future of children/adolescents, "make a social contribution", "enhance social equity", "prior teaching and learning experiences", "work with

children/adolescents”, and the factors “job transferability”, “social influences”, “fallback career” affected teacher candidates the least.’

**Findings Regarding the Research Question:**

**Do the motivation levels of teacher candidates differ according to gender and department variables?**

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to examine the difference between motivation scores of teacher candidates according to the gender variable. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4***Mann Whitney U Test Results of Motivation Scores According to Gender Variable*

	Gender	N	Mean of Ranks	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Shape future of children/ adolescents	Female	369	286.58	105749.50	26352.50	.001
	Male	173	239.33	41403.50		
Make social contribution	Female	369	284.37	104934.00	27168.00	.005
	Male	173	244.04	42219.00		
Enhance social equity	Female	369	295.86	109172.00	22930.00	.000
	Male	173	219.54	37981.00		
Prior teaching and learning experiences	Female	369	273.59	100953.50	31148.50	.649
	Male	173	267.05	46199.50		
Work with children/ adolescents	Female	369	292.17	107810.50	24291.50	.000
	Male	173	227.41	39342.50		
Ability	Female	369	280.10	103358.00	28744.00	.061
	Male	173	253.15	43795.00		
Job security	Female	369	275.75	101724.50	30377.50	.363
	Male	173	262.59	45428.50		
Intrinsic career value	Female	369	292.98	108109.00	23993.00	.000
	Male	173	225.15	43795.00		
Time for family	Female	369	272.47	100541.00	31561.00	.833
	Male	173	269.43	46612.00		
Job transferability	Female	369	272.72	100632.50	31469.50	.791
	Male	173	268.90	46520.50		
Social influences	Female	369	282.12	104104.00	27998.00	.021
	Male	173	248.84	43049.00		
Fallback career	Female	369	262.75	96956.50	28691.50	.056
	Male	173	290.15	50196.50		

The motivation scores of the teacher candidates differ significantly according to the gender variable in the factors of “shape the future of children/adolescents” (U=26352.50, p<.05), “make a social contribution” (U=27168.00, p<.05), “enhance social equity” (U=22930.00, p<.05), “work with children/adolescents” (U=24291.50, p<.05), “intrinsic career value”

( $U=23993.00$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and “social influences” ( $U=27998.00$ ,  $p<.05$ ) in favor of females, as shown in Table 4. Effect sizes were calculated respectively as  $d=.14$ ,  $.12$ ,  $.23$ ,  $.19$ ,  $.20$ ,  $.10$  which is considered a small effect according to Cohen (1988). There is no significant difference according to the gender variable in the factors of “prior teaching and learning experiences” ( $U=31148.50$ ,  $p>.05$ ), “ability” ( $U=28744.00$ ,  $p>.05$ ), “job security” ( $U=30377.50$ ,  $p>.05$ ), “time for family” ( $U=31561.00$ ,  $p>.05$ ), “job transferability” ( $U=31469.50$ ,  $p>.05$ ), and “fallback career” ( $U=96956.50$ ,  $p>.05$ ).

The Kruskal Wallis test was used to examine the difference between the motivation scores of teacher candidates according to the department variable. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5***Kruskal Wallis Test Results of Motivation Scores According to Department Variable*

Factors	Departments	N	Mean Rank	Sd	X <sup>2</sup>	p	Significant Difference
Shape future of children/adolescent	1. Foreign Lang. E.	179	255.81	5	36.781	.000	1-2, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6, 4-5
	2. Education Science	57	182.54				
	3. Special Education	72	283.87				
	4. Elementary Education	123	323.18				
	5. Math. & Science E.	70	270.88				
	6. Turkish & Social Sci.	42	294.04				
Make social contribution	1. Foreign Lang. E.	179	244.60	5	42.774	.000	1-2, 1-3, 1-4-, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6, 4-5
	2. Education Science	57	181.68				
	3. Special Education	72	298.85				
	4. Elementary Education	123	325.78				
	5. Math. & Science E.	70	280.83				
	6. Turkish & Social Sci.	42	293.11				
Enhance social equity	1. Foreign Lang. E.	179	251.47	5	46.742	.000	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6
	2. Education Science	57	165.61				
	3. Special Education	72	298.50				
	4. Elementary Education	123	323.41				
	5. Math. & Science E.	70	282.34				
	6. Turkish & Social Sci.	42	290.64				



**Table 5** (Continued)

Factors	Departments	N	Mean Rank	Sd	X <sup>2</sup>	p	Significant Difference
Prior teaching & learning experiences	1. Foreign Lang. E.	179	287.61	5	20.484	.001	1-2, 1-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6, 3-4, 3-5, 3-6
	2. Education Science	57	220.14				
	3. Special Education	72	218.26				
	4. Elementary Education	123	283.75				
	5. Math. & Science E.	70	284.86				
	6. Turkish & Social Sci.	42	312.12				
Work with children/adolescents	1. Foreign Lang. E.	179	234.07	5	37.866	.000	1-3, 1-4, 1-6, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6, 4-5
	2. Education Science	57	212.69				
	3. Special Education	72	301.85				
	4. Elementary Education	123	325.93				
	5. Math. & Science E.	70	274.16				
	6. Turkish & Social Sci.	42	301.44				
Ability	1. Foreign Lang. E.	179	244.29	5	26.964	.000	1-3, 1-4, 1-6, 2-3, 2-4, 2-6, 4-5
	2. Education Science	57	218.25				
	3. Special Education	72	300.17				
	4. Elementary Education	123	317.01				
	5. Math. & Science E.	70	259.86				
	6. Turkish & Social Sci.	42	303.17				
Job security	1. Foreign Lang. E.	179	250.54	5	15.336	.009	1-4, 1-6, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6
	2. Education Science	57	227.35				
	3. Special Education	72	281.69				

**Table 5 (Continued)**

Factors	Departments	N	Mean Rank	Sd	X <sup>2</sup>	p	Significant Difference
Intrinsic career value	4. Elementary Education	123	293.56				
	5. Math. & Science E.	70	285.79				
	6. Turkish & Social Sci.	42	321.30				
	1. Foreign Lang. E.	179	262.90	5	60.146	.000	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 2-6, 3-5, 4-5, 5-6
	2. Education Science	57	144.72				
	3. Special Education	72	305.58				
Time for family	4. Elementary Education	123	323.20				
	5. Math. & Science E.	70	246.99				
	6. Turkish & Social Sci.	42	317.71				
	1. Foreign Lang. E.	179	227.79	5	32.562	.000	1-2, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6, 2-3, 3-4, 3-5
	2. Education Science	57	298.89				
	3. Special Education	72	244.74				
Job transferability	4. Elementary Education	123	295.80				
	5. Math. & Science E.	70	331.29				
	6. Turkish & Social Sci.	42	302.13				
	1. Foreign Lang. E.	179	331.83	5	52.177	.000	1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6, 2-3, 2-4
	2. Education Science	57	183.89				
	3. Special Education	72	271.06				
	4. Elementary Education	123	262.96				
	5. Math. & Science E.	70	226.98				
	6. Turkish & Social Sci.	42	239.69				

**Table 5 (Continued)**

Factors	Departments	N	Mean Rank	Sd	X <sup>2</sup>	p	Significant Difference
Social influences	1. Foreign Lang. E.	179	243.89	5	22.236	.000	1-4, 1-5, 1-6, 2-4, 2-6, 3-4, 3-6
	2. Education Science	57	242.21				
	3. Special Education	72	255.97				
	4. Elementary Education	123	303.95				
	5. Math. & Science E.	70	288.16				
	6. Turkish & Social Sci.	42	339.19				
Fallback career	1. Foreign Lang. E.	179	252.53	5	14.067	.015	1-2, 1-5, 1-6, 2-4, 4-5, 4-6
	2. Education Science	57	310.44				
	3. Special Education	72	267.88				
	4. Elementary Education	123	253.00				
	5. Math. & Science E.	70	301.03				
	6. Turkish & Social Sci.	42	317.15				

As shown in Table 5, there is a statistically significant difference between motivation scores of teacher candidates according to the department variable in the factor of “shape the future of children/adolescents” [ $X^2_{(5)}=36.781$ ,  $p<.05$ ]. The effect size (eta-square) was calculated as  $\eta^2=.06$  which is moderate according to Cohen's (1988) criterion. As a result of multiple comparisons made with the Mann-Whitney U test, this difference was found between FLE and ES in favor of FLE; between EE and FLE in favor of EE; between EE and MSE in favor of EE; and between ES and SE, EE, MSE, and TSS against ES.

A statistically significant difference was also found between the motivation scores of teacher candidates in the factor of “make a social contribution” [ $X^2_{(5)}=42.774$ ,  $p<.05$ ]. The effect

size (eta-square) was calculated as  $\eta^2=.08$  which is moderate according to Cohen's (1988) criterion. The multiple comparisons made with the Mann-Whitney U test found this difference between FLE and ES in favor of FLE; between FLE and SE and EE against FLE; between ES and SE, EE, MSE, and TSS against ES; and between EE and MSE in favor of EE.

There is a statistically significant difference between the motivation scores of teacher candidates according to department in the factor of “enhance social equity” [ $X^2_{(5)}=46.742$ ,  $p<.05$ ]. The effect size (eta-square) was calculated as  $\eta^2=.08$  which is moderate according to Cohen's (1988) criterion. As a result of multiple comparisons made with the Mann-Whitney U test, this difference was found between FLE and ES in favor of FLE; between FLE and SE and EE against FLE; and between ES and SE, EE, MSE, and TSS against ES.

A statistically significant difference was also seen between the motivation scores of teacher candidates according to the department variable in the factor of “prior teaching and learning experiences” [ $X^2_{(5)}=20.484$ ,  $p<.05$ ]. The effect size (eta-square) was calculated as  $\eta^2=.03$  which is small according to Cohen's (1988) criterion. The Mann-Whitney U tests found this difference between FLE and ES and SE in favor of FLE; between ES and EE, MSE, and TSS against ES; and between SE and EE, MSE, and TSS against SE.

Another statistically significant difference between the motivation scores of teacher candidates according to their department was found in the factor of “work with children/adolescents” [ $X^2_{(5)}=37.866$ ,  $p<.05$ ]. The effect size (eta-square) was calculated as  $\eta^2=.07$  which is moderate according to Cohen's (1988) criterion. As a result of multiple comparisons made with the Mann-Whitney U test, this difference was found between FLE and ES, EE, and TSS against FLE; between ES and SE, EE, MSE, and TSS against ES; and between EE and MSE in favor of EE.

The factor of “ability” was another where a statistically significant difference was identified between the motivation scores of teacher candidates according to department [ $X^2_{(5)}=26.964, p<.05$ ]. The effect size (eta-square) was calculated as  $\eta^2=.05$  which is small according to Cohen's (1988) criterion. The multiple comparisons made with the Mann-Whitney U test found this difference between FLE and SE, EE, and TSS against FLE; between ES and SE, EE, and TSS against ES; and between EE and MSE in favor of EE.

A further statistically significant difference between the motivation scores of teacher candidates according to the department variable was found in the factor of “job security” [ $X^2_{(5)}=15.336, p<.05$ ]. The effect size (eta-square) was calculated as  $\eta^2=.02$  which is small according to Cohen's (1988) criterion. As a result of multiple comparisons made with the Mann-Whitney U test, this difference was found between FLE and EE, and TSS against FLE; and between ES and SE, EE, MSE, and TSS against ES.

A statistically significant difference between the motivation scores of teacher candidates according to their department was identified in the factor of “intrinsic career value” [ $X^2_{(5)}=60.146, p<.05$ ]. The effect size (eta-square) was calculated as  $\eta^2=.11$  which is moderate according to Cohen's (1988) criterion. The Mann-Whitney U test multiple comparisons found this difference between FLE and ES in favor of FLE; between FLE and SE and EE against FLE; between ES and SE, EE, MSE and TSS against ES; and between MSE and SE, EE, and TSS against MSE.

For the factor of “time for family” another statistically significant difference between the motivation scores of teacher candidates was found according to the department variable [ $X^2_{(5)}=32.562, p<.05$ ]. The effect size (eta-square) was calculated as  $\eta^2=.06$  which is moderate according to Cohen's (1988) criterion. As a result of multiple comparisons made with the Mann-

Whitney U test, this difference was found between FLE and ES, EE, MSE, and TSS against FLE; and between SE and ES, EE, and MSE against SE.

A statistically significant difference was also identified between the motivation scores of teacher candidates according to their department in the factor of “job transferability” [ $X^2_{(5)}=52.177$ ,  $p<.05$ ]. The effect size (eta-square) was calculated as  $\eta^2=.09$  which is moderate according to Cohen's (1988) criterion. Multiple comparisons made with the Mann-Whitney U test found this difference between FLE and ES, SE, EE, MSE, and TSS in favor of FLE; and between ES and SE, and EE against ES.

A further statistically significant difference between the motivation scores of teacher candidates and their department was in the factor of “social influences” [ $X^2_{(5)}=22.236$ ,  $p<.05$ ]. The effect size (eta-square) was calculated as  $\eta^2=.04$  which is small according to Cohen's (1988) criterion. As a result of multiple comparisons made with the Mann-Whitney U test, this difference was found between FLE and EE, MSE, and TSS against FLE; between ES and EE, and TSS against ES; and between SE and EE, and TSS against SE.

The final statistically significant difference identified between the motivation scores of teacher candidates according to the department variable was in the factor of “fallback career” [ $X^2_{(5)}=14.067$ ,  $p<.05$ ]. The effect size (eta-square) was calculated as  $\eta^2=.02$  which is small according to Cohen's (1988) criterion. The multiple comparisons from the Mann-Whitney U test found this difference between FLE and ES, MSE, and TSS against FLE; and between EE and ES, MSE, and TSS against EE.

## Findings Regarding the Research Question:

### What is the correlation among motivation factors?

The Spearman correlation test was used to analyze the correlation among motivation factors. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6**

#### *Correlations Among Motivation Factors*

Factors	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
1. Ability	-											
2. Intrinsic career value	.55*	-										
3. Fallback career	-	-	-									
4. Job security	.32*	.56*		-								
5. Time for family	.34*	.34*	-.03		-							
6. Job transferability	.16*	.01	.21*	.54*	-							
7. Shape the future of children/adolescents	.23*	.07	.02	.30*	.14*	-						
8. Enhance social equity	.47*	.46*	-.28*	.31*	.03	.16*	-					
9. Make a social contribution	.47*	.46*	-.30*	.29*	.03	.15*	.37*	-				
10. Work with children/adolescents	.51*	.51*	-.22*	.39*	.08*	.12*	.66*	.66*	-			
11. Prior teaching & learning experiences	.50*	.67*	-.39*	.37*	.10	.04	.59*	.56*	.54*	-		
12. Social influences	.45*	.37*	-.20*	.27*	.05	.17*	.37*	.36*	.45*	.31*	-	
	.37*	.38*	-.01	.40*	.22*	.14*	.26*	.25*	.31*	.40*	.21*	-

\*p<.01

As can be seen in Table 6, there is a positive moderate correlation between “make a social contribution” and “enhance social equity” ( $r=.66$ ), “make a social contribution” and “shape the future of children/adolescents” ( $r=.66$ ), “shape the future of children/adolescents” and “intrinsic career value” ( $r=.55$ ). There is a negative moderate correlation between “fallback career” and “ability” ( $r=-.32$ ), “fallback career” and “intrinsic career value” ( $r=-.56$ ), fallback career” and “enhance social equity” ( $r=-.30$ ), “fallback career” and “work with children/adolescents” ( $r=-.39$ ).

There is a positive weak correlation between “time for family” and “ability” ( $r=.16$ ), “make a social contribution” and “job transferability” ( $r=.12$ ), “social influences” and “job transferability” ( $r=.14$ ).

There is no significant correlation between “time for family” and “intrinsic career value” ( $r=.01$ ), “social influences” and “fallback career” ( $r=-.01$ ), “job transferability” and “fallback career” ( $r=.02$ ), “shape the future of children/adolescents” and “time for family” ( $r=.03$ ), “work with children/adolescents” and “job transferability” ( $r=.04$ ), “prior teaching” and “learning experiences” and “time for family” ( $r=.05$ ).

### **Discussion, Conclusions, and Suggestions**

In this study, the motivation factors of teacher candidates for choosing the teaching profession were examined. Within the scope of the first research question of the study, it was observed that the highest rated motivation factors were "shape the future of children/adolescents, “make a social contribution”, and “enhance social equity”. Teacher candidates were least affected by “job transferability”, “social influences”, and “fallback career”. In other words, it can be said that teacher candidates attach more importance to the social utility values and they are little influenced by their environment when choosing the teaching profession. It has been reported in many studies that while altruistic reasons, such as “contributing to society”, “working with children” (Krecic & Grmek, 2005; Saban, 2003; Johnston et al., 1999), “shaping the future of children/adolescents”, and “enhancing social equity” are the most influential factors; “job transferability”, “social influences”, and “fallback career” are the least influential factors of choosing the teaching profession (Akpochafo, 2020; Salifu et al., 2017; Jukovic et al., 2012; Kilinc et al., 2012; Lin et al., 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2007; Richardson & Watt, 2006). In this context, the findings of this study support those found in the literature.



In our Turkish sample, social utility values were found to be the most important factors for choosing teaching as a career. Social utility values may arise from the collectivist culture of Turkish society in which instead of “I”, “we” is important, and therefore belonging to a group is of significant value (Eren, 2019). In contrast to the Australian (Watt & Richardson, 2007; Richardson & Watt, 2006) and Korean context (Lee & Kim, 2018), intrinsic value motivations were not among the most prominent factors in our study. In those contexts, teaching may be highly regarded as a valuable profession, in contrast to economically developing countries in which issues such as low teacher salaries, insufficiency of personal rights, negative statements of politicians towards teaching, inability to achieve success in education, and a lack of merit-based teacher recruitment are less easy to be taken for granted (Bozbayındır, 2019; Ozdemir & Orhan, 2019; Cum & Dogan, 2016). Despite these problems that the teaching profession faces (Moss, 2020; Layton, 2015), it is encouraging that the students in Turkey choose teaching for altruistic reasons and want to help contribute to society by being a part of young peoples’ growth and development.

Within the scope of the second research question, the motivation factors of teacher candidates for choosing the teaching profession were examined in terms of gender and department variables. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences in the motivation factors of “shape the future of children/adolescents”, “make a social contribution”, “enhance social equity”, “work with children/adolescents”, “intrinsic career value”, and “social influences” in favor of females. Other studies reached similar results (Cermik et al., 20010; Saban, 2003). It was concluded by Saban (2003), that “shape the future of children/adolescents”, “make a social contribution”, “work with children/adolescents”, “intrinsic career value”, and “social influences” are more effective in a female teacher candidate’s choice

of the teaching profession; and thus, intrinsic and altruistic reasons for becoming teachers motivate women more than men. Accordingly, it can be stated that female teacher candidates attach more importance to the social utility values and they are more influenced by their environment about being a teacher than males. Considering that the teaching profession is seen as a female profession in society (Dogan & Coban, 2009), it attracts females more than males (Erten, 2014) and women dominate the teaching profession (Barshay, 2015), the motivation level of female teacher candidates for choosing the teaching profession is higher than males. It is important to note that, although significant, these differences have small effect sizes ( $d=.12$  to  $.23$ ).

There are significant differences in all motivation factors of teacher candidates for choosing the teaching profession according to the department variable. The differences have moderate effect sizes ( $\eta^2=.06$  to  $.11$ ) in the factors of “shape the future of children/adolescents”, “make a social contribution”, “enhance social equity”, “work with children/adolescents”, “intrinsic career value”, “time for family”, and “job transferability”. It was observed that while the teacher candidates from the department of elementary education had the highest scores, the teacher candidates from the department of education science had the lowest scores in the factors of “shape the future of children/adolescents”, “make a social contribution”, “enhance social equity”, “work with children/adolescents”, and “intrinsic career value”. Elementary education teachers have an important place in the education life of the students. Since children see their teachers as role models from an early age, they tend to behave like them. Teachers' attitudes and behaviors affect students' attitudes towards school, teachers, and lessons, and leave a great impression on their present and future lives. Considering the importance of elementary teachers for the students, it can be said that the strongest motivation factors of the teacher candidates from

the department of elementary education show that they come to the profession with high motivation and passion.

It was observed that while the teacher candidates from the department of foreign language education had the highest scores, the teacher candidates from the department of education science had the lowest scores in the factor of “job transferability”. Students from the department of foreign language education may have the opportunity to give private lessons, translate, go abroad, and work in different fields besides teaching. At this point, they may have more opportunities to work in alternative language-related jobs compared to the students who do not know a second language. Therefore, it can be said that the “job transferability” factor in their choice of the teaching profession is high and they come to the teaching profession with high motivation in terms of “job transferability”. Although there are significant differences in the factors of “prior teaching and learning experiences”, “ability”, “job security”, “social influences”, and “fallback career” of teacher candidates for choosing the teaching profession according to the department variable, these differences had small effect sizes ( $\eta^2=.02$  to  $.05$ ).

Within the scope of the third research question, the correlations among motivation factors were examined. Among the 66 possible correlations between motivation factors, 56 of them were found to be statistically significant. There was a positive moderate correlation between “make a social contribution” and “enhance social equity” ( $r=.66$ ), “make a social contribution” and “shape the future of children/adolescents” ( $r=.66$ ), and “shape the future of children/adolescents” and “intrinsic career value” ( $r=.55$ ). There was a positive weak correlation between “time for family” and “ability” ( $r=.16$ ), “make a social contribution” and “job transferability” ( $r=.12$ ), and “social influences” and “job transferability” ( $r=.14$ ). Other studies reached similar results

(Glutsch & König, 2019; Akar, 2012; Kilinc et al., 2012; König & Rothland, 2012; Lin et al., 2012; Jugovic et al., 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2007).

It is important if a teacher candidate's motivations for choosing teaching affect the amount of motivation for learning during their education (Butler, 2017). Therefore, to increase the motivation of teacher candidates, the importance of the teaching profession for society can be emphasized, and teacher candidates can be provided with motivational experiences about teaching in teacher education programs.

This study was carried out using a quantitative method. Studies on this subject can be supported by different variables and qualitative studies, and more detailed results can be obtained for motivation factors. Similar studies can be carried out on different universities and the results of the studies can be compared. In the literature, there are many studies on the factors that affect the choice of teaching as a profession. Hence, the effects of different variables that affect this can be examined by combining the results of different studies on this subject with a meta-analysis study.

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