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Abstract	
Keywords: pre-service teachers; career choices; initial motivation; self-efficacy; support; teacher satisfaction	Teacher shortage is severe around the world and this dearth is also strongly felt in core subjects in Israel, specifically in English and Mathematics. As a result, efforts should be made to guarantee that the majority of pre-service teachers choose to pursue a teaching career upon graduating from their teacher education program. This study investigates the main motives of pre-service EFL teachers to enroll in teacher education and their perceptions about the importance of a set of internal and external factors, namely, self-efficacy, availability of a support system and satisfaction from their teacher education program regarding their decision to pursue a teaching career. In this qualitative study, 24 pre-service EFL teachers in a teacher education college in Israel were interviewed in semi-structured interviews. The results yielded evidence for perceived teaching ability being the most substantial initial motive for choosing a teaching career, and for the significance of the specifically explored internal and external factors in the decision of pre-service EFL teachers to pursue a teaching career. The results and their implications on teacher education are discussed.

Zusammenfasung	
Schlüsselworte: angehende Lehrer; Karrieremöglichkeiten; Ausgangsmotivation; Selbstwirksamkeit; Unterstützung; Lehrerzufriedenheit	Der Lehrermangel ist weltweit groß und dieser Mangel macht sich auch in Israel in den Hauptfächern, insbesondere in Englisch und Mathematik, stark bemerkbar. Daher sollten Bemühungen unternommen werden, um sicherzustellen, dass sich die Mehrheit der angehenden Lehrkräfte nach Abschluss ihrer Lehrerausbildung für einen Lehrberuf entscheidet. Diese Studie untersucht die Hauptmotive von angehenden EFL-Lehrkräften, sich für eine Lehrerausbildung anzumelden, und ihre Wahrnehmung bezüglich der Bedeutung einer Reihe interner und externer Faktoren, nämlich Selbstwirksamkeit, Verfügbarkeit eines Unterstützungssystems und Zufriedenheit mit ihrem Lehrerausbildungsprogramm, bei der Entscheidung eine Lehrtätigkeit nachzugehen. In dieser qualitativen Studie wurden 24 angehende EFL-Lehrkräfte an einer Pädagogischen Hochschule in Israel in halbstrukturierten Interviews befragt. Die Ergebnisse lieferten Hinweise darauf, dass die wahrgenommene Lehrfähigkeit das wesentlichste Ausgangsmotiv für die Wahl eines Lehrberufes ist, sowie für die Wichtigkeit der speziell untersuchten internen und externen Faktoren bei der Entscheidung von angehenden EFL-Lehrkräften, einen Lehrberuf einzuschlagen. Die Ergebnisse und ihre Implikationen für die Lehrerbildung werden diskutiert.

1. Introduction

In an era when teacher shortage is exacerbating and with a worldwide need to recruit over 5.2 million teachers (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2016), attempts must be made so that all pre-service teachers who graduate from their teacher education programs opt for a teaching career. This dearth is also strongly felt in Israel, particularly among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. According to the 2019 State Comptroller Report there was a shortage of 626 EFL teachers and currently the numbers have increased and now stand at 871(CBS, 2022). To date, there are various studies on teacher attrition and teacher retention (Arnup & Bowles, 2016; Akram, 2020; Carmel & Badash, 2018; Klassen & Chiu, 2011;

Reyneke & Botha, 2020); however, not many studies exist regarding the determinants of pre-service teachers' intentions to pursue a teaching career upon graduation.

Initial teacher education, also referred to as pre-service teacher training (UIS, 2021) denotes controlled, private and public educational programs that aim to prepare future teachers to officially enter the profession after receiving a government recognized teaching qualification. However, since different countries have different needs, policy makers are required to design teacher training programs that specifically cater to the needs of their own educational system, and thus, teacher training programs may vary

from country to country, not only philosophically and theoretically, but also in terms of content and length (Farrell, 2012). Most of the pre-service teacher training programs offered in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, including Israel, include content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (Shulman, 1986) in addition to techno-pedagogy (Gurukkal, 2021). According to Eren and Tezel (2010), pre-service teachers' motivation, effectiveness and commitment to a teaching career are largely affected by the quality of this initial training. Although a lot of effort is put into designing teacher education programs, there is still evidence showing that many programs do not prepare pre-service teachers for the realities in the field (Crandall, 2000), and specifically in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) many of the programs over-emphasize theory and understate the practical components of teaching (Agudo, 2017; Akcan, 2016; Farrell, 2012; Karakas & Yavuz, 2018; Karim et al., 2019; Seferoglu, 2006; Yin, 2019).

2. Theoretical foundation

Not much attention has been given to the factors that influence pre-service teachers' decisions to pursue a teaching career upon graduating from their teacher education program (Rots et al., 2014; Sinclair, 2008; Watt & Richardson, 2008). However, studies have shown the importance of both internal factors, such as initial motivation (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000) and self-efficacy (Lavrenteva & Orland-Barak, 2019; Pfitzer-Eden, 2016; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfok Hoy, 2001) as well as external factors, such as mentor and faculty support (Rots et al., 2007; Rots et al., 2012) and satisfaction from the teacher education program (Seker et al., 2015; Zientek, 2007) on the decision to pursue a teaching career.

2.1 Internal factors as predictors of pre-service teachers' intentions to pursue a teaching career: motivation and self-efficacy

Initial motivation as a predictor of pre-service teachers' intentions to pursue a teaching career after finishing their teacher education program has been reviewed in many different countries. Three main types of motivation have been identified: intrinsic, associated with the positive aspects of the job, driven by internal rewards and promoted by personal satisfaction; altruistic, which focuses on identifying teaching as socially worthwhile and a desire to make a social contribution; and extrinsic, which relates to the

external aspects of the job that are not related to teaching, such as the long holidays (Azman, 2013; Balyer & Ozcan, 2014; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Saban, 2003).

Some studies have even indicated that when pre-service teachers hold more than one motive for choosing to enroll in teacher education, there is a higher chance they will choose to follow a career in teaching upon graduating from their studies, since they can rely on other ambitions, in case one motivation is not fulfilled (Bergmark et al., 2018). Bergmark et al. (2018) have thus related to the value and significance of teacher education programs that draw on various motivation types in order to positively impact students to complete their studies and begin a teaching career. Nevertheless, other studies have also found that intrinsic motivation is the most prominent motivation type and the most significant predictor for pre-service teachers to pursue a teaching career upon graduation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Goller et al., 2019; Johannes & Rothland, 2012; Nachmani & Ben Horine, 2018; Rahmani & Abadi, 2014). Furthermore, Domenech-Betoret and Gomez-Artiga (2013) provided evidence that the intrinsic motivation of pre-service teachers also contributed to more meaningful learning and academic achievement, and in a recent study in China, An et al. (2021) uncovered that intrinsic motivation was found to be the strongest predictor of pre-service teaches career choice satisfaction. Evidence has also been presented to show that altruistic motivation, such as the wish to shape the future of children and adolescents, is the best predictor for completing a teacher education program (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2015), the most powerful motivator for opting to pursue a teaching career (Davis et al., 2019; Hennessy & Lynch, 2017; Jungert et al., 2014; Pop & Turner, 2009) and the most significant forecaster for satisfaction with career choice (Hennessy & Lynch, 2017).

Nonetheless, researchers have not always agreed on what constitutes each of the motivation types and this lack of clarity has often led to overlapping categorization in studies. As such, Richardson and Watt (2006) presented the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) model and its scale, based on Eccles et al.'s (1983) expectancy-value theory. This theory asserts that there is a link between career choice and an individuals' expectations and success; ability beliefs and the subjective value of the career (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The FIT-Choice model is a multi-dimensional theoretical and

analytical framework which comprises both motivational factors, and self and task perceptions (Watt & Richardson, 2007). The motivational factors include intrinsic values, personal utility values, and social utility values, whereas the perceptions include perceived teaching abilities, task demands and task returns, socialization influences and teaching as a fallback career. Various studies using this model have found that the intrinsic value and perceived teaching ability were the most prominent motivations at the point of entry into teacher education in the Dutch context (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2015), in Turkey (Kilinc et al., 2012) and in Australia (Watt & Richardson, 2007). Suryani et al. (2016) also provided evidence for perceived teaching ability being the most important factor in determining career choice in Indonesia. Other studies employing the FIT-Choice model have also identified social influences and choosing teaching as a fallback career as factors that are negatively related to a teaching commitment (Almulla, 2020; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Suryani et al., 2016). Wong et al. (2014) have however shown that there is a possibility of obliterating the negative effects of the fallback career if pre-service teachers are nurtured and sustained by role models with intrinsic and altruistic motivations.

A further internal factor revealed in the literature as a sound predictor of pre-service teachers' intentions to follow a teaching career upon graduation is their *self-efficacy*, or "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p.3). Tschannen-Moran and Woolfok Hoy (2001, p.783) defined teacher self-efficacy as "the judgment of his/her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated" and claimed that this judgment has a positive influence on teachers' enthusiasm, teaching commitment and teacher retention. Several other studies worldwide have provided evidence linking pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs to their intentions to pursue a teaching career and highlighting the critical role that self-efficacy plays on predicting pre-service teachers' actions and behaviour regarding their future career intentions (Bruinsma & Jansen, 201; Chestnut & Cullen, 2014; Lavrenteva & Orland-Barak, 2019; Pfitzer-Eden, 2016; Poulou et al., 2019; Rots et al., 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfok Hoy, 2001).

2.2 *External determinants of pre-service teachers' intentions to pursue a teaching career*

Regarding the external factors which impact pre-service teachers' decisions to pursue a teaching career, Rots et al. (2014) have discussed the significance of both the *faculty support provided by the training institutions*, and the *mentor support provided by the mentor during the practicum*. They reported that both these factors are positively linked to graduates' perceptions of the teacher education program. The support from the faculty staff, referred to as "the significant others", has also been shown to give the pre-service teachers a sense of validation and is a way to certify their efficacy (Rots et al., 2012). Thus, the importance of receiving positive feedback, high evaluations and feeling appreciated by the members of the faculty. Other studies have also provided evidence for the impact that the faculty and mentor support have on the pre-service teachers' commitment and their entrance into the teaching profession (Rots et al., 2007; Stokking et al., 2003).

The practicum offers the pre-service teachers the opportunity to build their confidence as teachers in the classroom and practice what they learn in their teacher education program. Nevertheless, there is often an enormous gap between the theory taught and the practice in the field, which causes tension and power struggle especially when the pre-service teachers are required to choose who they wish to comply with: the requirements of the teacher education program or the mentors in the field (Nguyen, 2020). In terms of mentor support, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) have reported that the support pre-service teachers receive during their practicum is very meaningful to them and can encourage retention of novice teachers, especially when the mentors are viewed as positive role models.

An additional factor that plays a fundamental role in determining whether pre-service teachers will or will not pursue a teaching career upon graduation is their *level of satisfaction from the teacher education program* (Rots et al., 2007; 2010; 2014). Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) and Zientek (2007) testified that the more pre-service teachers feel the program has prepared them for the demands of teaching and the more satisfied they are with the program, the higher the chance they will opt to pursue a teaching career. Seker et al. (2015) further reported that emphasis on practice rather than theory has an immediate impact on the decision to go into teaching. In a recent study in Pakistan, Akram et al. (2020) provided evidence that

one of the main reasons for their teacher shortage is inadequate teacher training.

The present study attempts to explore the stated motives of pre-service EFL teachers to enroll in a teacher education program and to examine which internal and external factors can impact their decisions to pursue a teaching career upon graduation. This study is an exploratory study aiming to explore emotional and cognitive processes that lead pre-service EFL teachers to pursue a teaching career (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The research questions framing this study are: 1) What are the main stated motives of pre-service EFL teachers to enroll in teacher education?; 2) With regard to their decision to pursue a teaching career, how do pre-service EFL teachers view the importance of self-efficacy, availability of a support system and satisfaction from the teacher education program?

3. Research methodology

3.1. Participants

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 24 preservice EFL teachers studying in the largest teacher training college in the center of Israel. The four-year teacher training program at this college grants students a B.Ed. diploma and a teaching certificate. Students wishing to pursue a teaching career are also required to do an Induction year during their fourth year at the college so they can receive a teaching license, required to teach in Israel. The interviews were conducted prior to the beginning of the academic year, and the participants were students starting their third or fourth year at the college. The sampling strategy used in this study was a non-random purposive sampling (McBride, 2016), specifically, the criterion sampling to allow for participants to be chosen according to the criteria that best met the requisites of the study (Crewell & Poth, 2017): six students starting the third year who intend to do the induction year and pursue a career in teaching; six students starting the third year who are still ambivalent as to their decision to do the induction year and pursue a teaching career; six students starting the fourth year who chose to go into the induction year and pursue a teaching career; and six students starting the fourth year who chose not to go into the induction year and decided to finish their B.Ed. without pursuing a teaching career.

3.2. Instrument

The semi-structured interview was chosen in order to allow for richer, more genuine and more realistic data to be generated (Coolican, 2019) and the interview guide was devised based on the literature review and the research questions. It included questions such as: Why did you decide to become a teacher? What were your main motives to pursue a teaching career and what influenced your decision to enroll in teacher education? How do you think the support you received during your studies at the college affected/ will affect your decision to pursue a teaching career?

3.3. Data collection and ethical considerations

To increase validity and reliability, also known as truth value and consistency in qualitative studies (Guba & Lincoln, 2005), the researcher recorded and transcribed the interviews, which allowed for repeated revisiting of the data. The researcher was granted permission to conduct the study in the teacher training college by the Ethics Committee of the College. In addition, in order to adhere to the code of ethics in the college, the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) code of ethics, all the information pertaining to the study was presented to the participants and the participants were asked to sign a consent form prior to beginning the study. This allowed them to make an informed decision and freely decide whether or not they wanted to participate in the study. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any given stage with no consequences. To protect students' anonymity and confidentiality, necessary measures were taken.

3.4. Data analysis

The data were analyzed using *Atlas.ti*, which enabled the data to be more organized, and to discover themes and relationships that might have otherwise been neglected. In addition, the themes were discussed with another researcher working in the field of teacher training, to reduce bias and yield the most inclusive findings. The first research question was analyzed using a data-driven thematic analysis, known as the bottom-up approach, which is beneficial when the coding of the data doesn't try to fit into pre-existing codes (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The data from the second research question were analyzed employing the deductive or top-down approach, also known as driven thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012). According to Sullivan and Forrester (2019), this

approach is favorable when the researcher wishes to investigate a fixed set of theoretical concepts.

4. Results

Participants were asked about their main motives and the factors that played a role in their decision to choose to enroll in a teacher education training program. The data were analyzed inductively, based on generated codes and categories. During the inductive data analysis, consistency was found with the FIT- Choice model (Watt & Richardson, 2007). The categories identified included not only the three motivation types ('nodes'): altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic, but also other categories as can be seen in Figure 1 (all figures were redesigned based on original *Atlas.ti* outputs).

Figure 1. Categorization of Motivational Factors for Choosing a Teaching Career
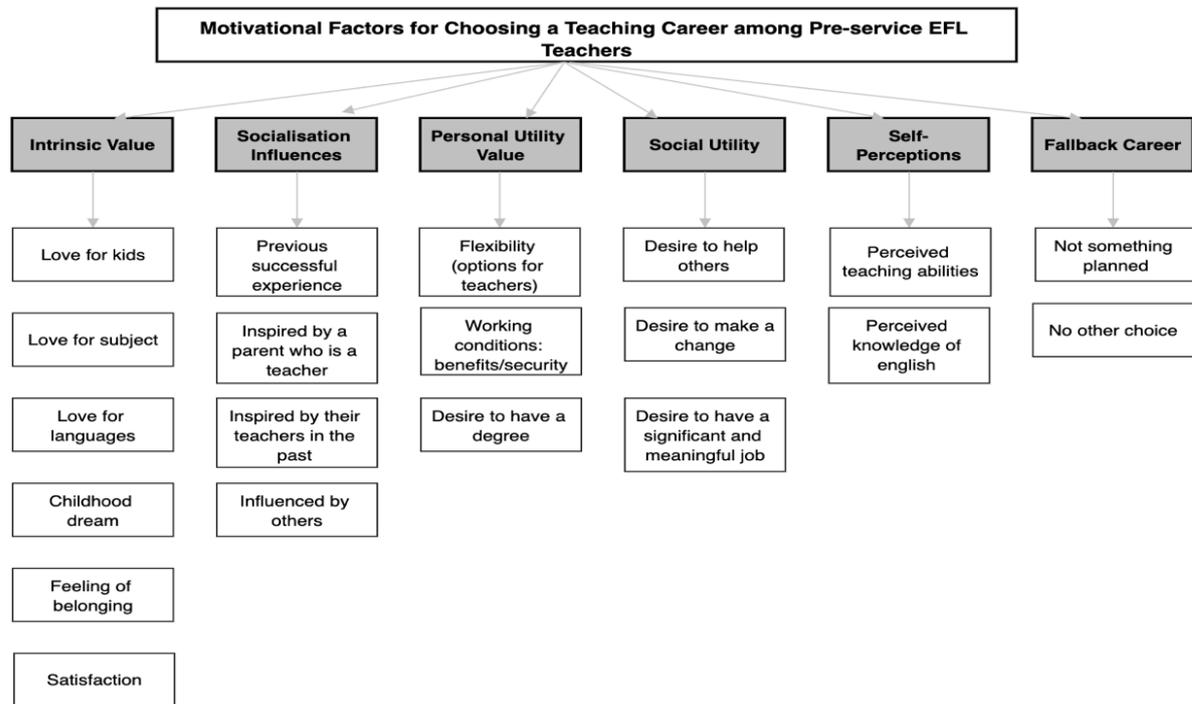
The "**Intrinsic Value**" factor included all the intrinsic motivations: *love for kids, love for the subject, love for languages, teaching as a childhood dream, a feeling of belonging and satisfaction.* The "**Personal Utility Value**" comprised of *a desire to have a degree, the flexibility of the teaching profession and the options teachers have, and working conditions: job security and benefits.* The "**Social Utility Value**" integrated altruistic motives such as *a desire to help others, a desire to have a significant and meaningful job and the desire to make a change.* Other categories found were "**Self-Perceptions**" consisting primarily of *perceived teaching abilities and knowledge of English and* "**Socialization Influences**" including *being influenced by others, being inspired by teachers' in the past, being inspired by a parent who is a teacher and having previous successful experience.* Lastly, the "**Fallback Career**" category reflected choosing teaching *as a result of having no other choices or simply not something planned.* The data from the interviews did not provide evidence for "task demands" and "task returns".

The participants were divided into four groups depending on their status at the time of the research:

1) Third Year A: Students commencing third year at the college who were considering pursuing a teaching career (*N1*=6).

2) Third Year B: Students commencing third year at the college who were still ambivalent as to whether they want to pursue a teaching career (*N2*=6).

3) Fourth Year A: Students starting their fourth year who had chosen to pursue a teaching career and were doing their induction year (*N3*=6).

4) Fourth Year B: Students starting fourth year who had chosen not to pursue a teaching career and were not doing the induction year (*N4*=6).

The main motivational factors for choosing a teaching career for each of these groups can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Main Motivational Factors for Choosing a Teaching Career among Pre-service EFL
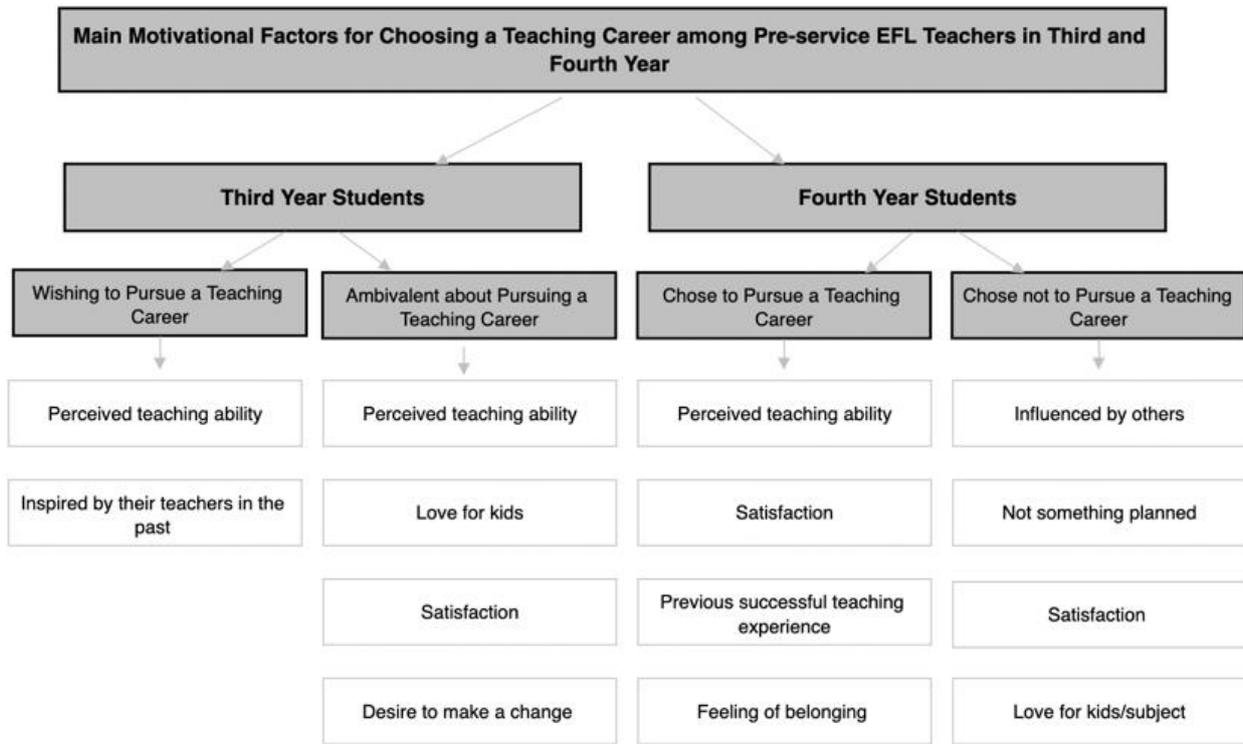
The third-year participants' **perceptions of their teaching ability** were found to be the most prominent motive for choosing to enroll in teacher education training both for those who want to pursue a teaching career (*N1=4*) and those who are still ambivalent (*N2=4*). Their comments included, for example: *"…and then I began to understand that I was quite good at what I was doing …and so why not have a career...and so I began my degree"(John, 28, third year A); and "I enjoyed explaining things to others and helping them understand and I did it well."(Tali, 24, third year B).*

For the third-year students who do want to pursue a teaching career the fact that they were **inspired by their teachers in the past** was the second most common motive for choosing a teaching career (*N1=3*): *"I enjoyed my experiences in school and the changes the teachers did for us."(Katie, 23, third year A); "My teachers really influenced me." (Gil, 23, third year A); and "I really loved my English teacher, and she inspired me to choose teaching as job for my life."(Sally, 23, third year A).*

Other motives which were also prominent with the third-year students who were ambivalent about

pursuing a teaching career included their '**love for kids**' (*N2=4*): *"I really love kids and everything about them"(Roni, 25, third year B), "I was interested in the relationship with kids and I have a good connection with them"(Danny, 28, third year B);* '**satisfaction**' (*N2=3*), *"the satisfaction from this profession is very high"(Noa, 25, third year B); "I know it's not the best salary in the world, but I prefer enjoying what I do"(Guy, 26, third year B);* and '**the desire to make a change and influence the next generation**' (*N2=2*): *"I want to know that I am making a difference."(Guy, 26, third year B); "I think about the future children."(Noa, 25, third year B).*

For the fourth-year students who did pursue a teaching career and are currently doing their induction year, the most popular motives included their **perceived teaching abilities** (*N3=4*): *"I tried to think of my strong qualities and what I did well….and then I remembered helping friends and family and they improved their abilities in English."(Amit, 25, fourth year A) and* **satisfaction** (*N3=4*) with comments such as: *"I chose what would make me feel good; what I would like to do every day."(Amit, 26, fourth year A); and "It is very satisfying to me…It's like that one thing that fulfills me."(Yoav, 26, fourth year A). Other*

common motives included having **previous successful teaching experience** (*N3=3*): *"I practiced teaching in the army and I loved it."(Dana, 27, fourth year A); "I was a teacher aid in a Hebrew school and there I helped the teachers and the students and they really liked me…I also really liked it."(Emma, 26, fourth year A);* and **a feeling of belonging** (*N3=2*): *"It's the best fit for me and the best place for me to feel comfortable."(Ori, 27, fourth year A).*

The results of the fourth-year students show that the most common motives for those who chose not to pursue a teaching career upon finishing their studies include the fact that they were **influenced by others** to start studying in a teacher education program (*N4=5*). This included being influenced by a family member: *"It was my mum's wish."(Andy, 29, fourth year B);* or being influenced by a boyfriend: *"I was dating a guy and he spoke so passionately about teaching; it wasn't even a direction I thought about in the beginning."(Liat, 27, fourth year B),* or even listening to random people: *"A lot of people told me I should have a profession and not just study English Literature and since I wasn't sure what I wanted, I listened to people around me."(Maya, 29, fourth year B)";* and that **it was not something they planned** (*N4=5*): *"I didn't really want to be a teacher…I just … I don't know even how I got to this degree."(Eden, 28, fourth year B)* and *"So actually, my decision to start the degree was kind of spontaneous…I just wanted to start studying." (Michal, 29, fourth year B).* Other motives that emerged from the data for these fourth-year students but were less common included **satisfaction** (*N4=4*): *"I wanted the satisfaction of having kids happy and educated." (Rotem, 26, fourth year B),* **love for kids** (*N4=4*): *"I knew I was good with kids and I like them." (Andy, 29, fourth year B)* and **love for the subject** (*N4=4*): *"I think first of all I really love the subject matter, I love English and everything we did with English and English literature." (Maya, 29, fourth year B).*

In conclusion, perceived teaching abilities was found to be the most substantial motive for choosing to enroll in teacher education among those in wishing to pursue a teaching career and those who are still ambivalent. The intrinsic value was also found to be a prevalent motivator type for the majority of pre-service EFL teachers. Other motivations that emerged included altruistic motivators, being inspired by previous teachers (for the third-year students who wish to pursue a teaching career) and previous experiences

being successful (for the fourth-year students who pursued a teaching career).

Self-Efficacy. To check **how pre-service EFL teachers view the importance of self-efficacy in relation to their decision to pursue a teaching career upon graduation,** participants were asked about their teaching abilities.

The third and fourth-year pre-service teachers wishing to pursue a teaching career related extensively to their teaching abilities (*N1=4, N3=4*) and their ability to build a rapport with the students (*N1=5, N3=3*) as the most significant factors shaping their self-efficacy. Their comments for **their teaching abilities related extensively to their self-confidence** and included comments such as: *"because I started off as someone that didn't have much confidence and I wouldn't have been able to teach and handle even a single student…and I think that's where the self-improvement aspect comes in…"(Ori, 27, fourth year A); "I learned many specific things, like how to teach vocabulary and grammar."(Dana, 27, fourth year A).* Regarding **their ability to build a rapport with the students**, students related to feelings of empathy, caring, and the importance of building strong and positive relationships with their students in school, as can be seen in the following examples: *"I was once shy and introverted so I know how to reach those students as well."(Nir, 26, third year A); "The most important thing, honestly, is having the relationships with the students and getting to know the students – and only then comes the teaching English." (Emma, 26, fourth year A).* These students also related to the importance of having **patience** (*N1=3, N3=3*)*: "You need to have patience, even when things take a little more time than you though it would" (Ori, 27, fourth year A).*

Those in third-year who are still ambivalent regarding pursuing a teaching career also related to the **importance of their teaching abilities** (*N2=4*) and **their English proficiency** (*N2=3*) with comments such as, *"in my report card from high school English is located pretty on top…"(Dani, 29, third year B)*, however, they did not relate to their abilities to build a rapport with the students at all. The fourth-year students who have already decided not to pursue a teaching career did relate to the importance of **building a rapport with students** (*N4=5*), however, they did not relate to their teaching abilities. Instead they related to **their lack of self-confidence** (*N4=4*) : *"It was my choice not to teach during practicum and*

it was because of my self-confidence…I wanted to take a class and teach them every week and see the progress and get to know the students…but I never did it and I didn't even have the courage to tell it to my host teacher."(Andy, 29, fourth year B).

External Factors. The significance of the external factors also emerged in the discourse of the pre-service EFL teachers.

Support System –Mentor and Faculty Support. When questioned regarding the mentor's support in the practicum and the faculty support provided by the training institution, pre-service EFL teachers related to their experiences in the practicum with the mentors and their satisfaction from the support they received from the faculty at the college.

Mentor Support and Practicum Experiences. Both third and fourth-year students who chose to pursue a teaching career related extensively to positive experiences with their mentors during their practicum (*N1*= 3, *N3*=4) in terms of **having someone to look up to – a role model**: *"The host teacher I am working with…she's amazing and she makes me want to be a teacher because she is enjoying every moment of it…She's like a role model and someone I can look up to…"(Amy, 25, third year A);* and **getting the needed support and help**: *"My experience with my host teachers was great… and they really helped me and were very practical."(Ori, 27, fourth year A).*

In contrast, the majority of the fourth-year students who chose not to pursue a teaching career (*N4*=5) expressed disappointment and reported negative experiences in the practicum. They depicted **mentors as not being available or offering no support**: *"In my second year I had an incident with a student and I didn't really know what to do and I asked the mentor for help but she didn't come…"(Maya, 29, fourth year B).* They also related to the professional attrition in the field, teachers being burnt and **mentor teachers who were emotionally exhausted**. These mentors were less sympathetic towards the pre-service teachers and their own students, as can be seen in the following quote: *"In my third year, I had a really bad teacher…I didn't understand her methods and she was cutting slack a lot and maybe that's something that happens when you've been in the system for like…I don't know…30 years…you just don't care and I decided that I don't want to be in such a system."(Liat, 27, fourth year B)*, they were also **less productive and less tolerant to problems** that arose as can be seen in the following comments: *"I think that the teachers in*

the practicum were so exhausted, and they had no power to do anything." (Eden, 28, fourth year B).

The third-year students who are still ambivalent related both to negative experiences in the practicum and positive ones. Some described **mentors as not being available or offering no support** (*N2*=3), just like the fourth-year students who did not pursue a teaching career. such as in the following comment: *"There is no real support…I don't know what mentor you are talking about…there is a teacher in the school and she is doing her best… no criticism… but she is overworked and over tired…" (Dani, 29, third year B).* On the other hand, there were also comments relating to **the support** (*N2*=3) received by some of these students: *"I, personally, like many of my classmates, had a few difficulties throughout the year and we felt less confident and when we turned to our pedagogical advisors or our mentors… they were willing to listen to us and to help us…that gave me more faith and even more energy to teach."(Tali, 24, third year B).*

Faculty Support. The majority of the fourth-year students: both those who chose to pursue a teaching career (*N3*=6) and those who chose not to pursue a teaching career (*N4*=4), and those in third year (*N1*=5 for those wishing to pursue a career, and *N2*=4 for those who are still uncertain) reported being very satisfied from the support they received from the faculty at the college. Their related to the **availability of the staff**: *"I definitely think all my pedagogical advisors and the head of the department helped me with every single problem or issue that I had and they put 100% of themselves in order to help me…and if I didn't have those people I think I would have felt that this is not a system I want to be in."(Emma, 26, fourth year A);* **inspiration:** *"I feel like I love being there…I mean truly I love being there and I love the inspirational aspect of the college."(Rotem, 26, fourth year B);* and in terms of **professionality:** *"Oh my God! First of all, I truly think the faculty members are like…each one of them is a diamond…each one of them is amazing…It's not only about how they teach or the syllabus…it's how they open the lessons, how pleasant they are to us and each other…"(Sally, 23, third year A).*

Satisfaction from the Teacher Education Program. Regarding their overall satisfaction from the teacher education program, most of the students in third and fourth year (*N*=18), both those who want to pursue a teaching career and those who don't (*N1*=4, *N2*=4, *N3*=5, *N4*=5)* reported feeling that the program

was **effective, comprehensive and relevant** and that they felt it prepared them for the profession (*N1*=3, *N2*=2, *N3*=4, *N4*=5). Their statements included: *"Yes, I am so satisfied because I never encountered anything that I am not familiar with and I think the college really did teach us a lot."(Eden, 28, fourth year B).*

Although the pre-service EFL teachers were mostly satisfied with the program offered by the college, when asked if anything was missing, two aspects that emerged were **the need to bridge the gap between what students learn in the college and what they experience in the field** (*N*=2 for each group) *"We were taught literature and it was very inspiring and I could implement that in my theoretical lessons, but I can't be creative in such a way in the school."(Rotem, 26, fourth year B)* and **the importance of focusing more on the practical aspects and less on theories**: This emerged mainly from the data of the third year students who are still debating (*N2*=4) and those in fourth-year who pursued a career (*N4*=3). *"I think there was a lot of theory in the courses and not enough practice."(Afik, 25, fourth year A). "I think we should be given more tools, like more courses in how we perform as teachers and most courses check how we perform as students in the college."(Amit, 25, fourth year A).*

Some of the fourth-year students who pursued a teaching career (*N3*=4) also related to the importance of **learning more about the bureaucracy in the system** and that includes the need to understand how the system works, The Ministry of Education, teachers' rights, the salary, joining the teaching unions, and about the paper work and the required documents they will need to submit: *"It's more connected to the professional side of the job, exactly what documents I need, how the municipality and the ministry of education work, how the unions work…"(Afik, 25, fourth year A).*

5. Discussions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the stated motives of pre-service EFL teachers to enroll in a teaching education program and explore the internal and external factors that they perceive as significant regarding their decision to pursue a teaching career upon graduating from the program. Studies conducted previously have shown that both internal factors such as initial motivation (Rots & Aelterman, 2009; Rots et al., 2014); and self-efficacy (Lavrenteva & Orland-Barak, 2019; Pfitzer-Eden, 2016, Rots et al., 2014) and external factors such as faculty support, mentor

support, positive practicum experiences (Rots et al., 2007) and satisfaction from the teaching education program (Rots et al., 2007, 2014) are each a strong indicator of pre-service teachers' choices to pursue a teaching career upon graduation. The findings of the present study suggest the significance of a combination of the internal and external factors when planning and designing an EFL teacher education program for third year pre-service EFL teachers, to ensure maximum entrance into the teaching profession upon graduation.

According to the pre-service EFL teachers, the **motivation** to enroll in a teacher training program corresponds to the FIT-Choice model (Richardson & Watt, 2006) and is in line with the literature regarding the existence of more than one motivation type for enrolling in teacher education (Pop & Turner, 2009; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Sinclair, 2008; Watt & Richardson, 2008). The most substantial initial motive indicated by the participants in the third year, both those who want to pursue a teaching career and those who are still ambivalent, and the fourth-year students who chose to pursue a teaching career, was their perceived teaching ability, prior to enrolling in the program. This result aligns with other studies dealing with initial motivation (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2015; Hennessy & Lynch, 2017; Richardson & Watt, 2006). Perceived teaching ability is a significant and important element of various motivation theories and has been found to have positive motivational implications (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

Intrinsic motives, including love for kids, satisfaction and a feeling of belonging, and some altruistic motivation, such as the will to make a change, were also included in the pre-service EFL teachers' responses. Similar results were found in previous studies that reported that the majority of the students that enroll in teacher education do so as a result of intrinsic or altruistic motivations (e.g., Nachmani & Ben Horine, 2018; Watt & Richardson, 2012). According to Deci and Ryan (2000), intrinsic motives can be strong predictors of commitment to a teaching career.

The findings of this study also provide evidence for the motives for not choosing to pursue a teaching career. The fourth-year pre-service teachers who had already decided not to pursue a teaching career reported that their motivation to enroll in teacher education was largely a result of social influences or

choosing teaching a fallback career. Studies in the past have shown that these kinds of motives have been found to lead to dissatisfaction and as such to disengagement, superficial engagement in the task, or to complete lack of commitment to the teaching profession (Almulla, 2020; Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010; Suryani et al., 2016; Watt & Richardson, 2006, 2007). It seems, therefore, that these motives will have a negative effect on teaching commitment as the pre-service teachers who chose to enroll in teacher education as a result of social influences or as a last resort option were not committed to begin teaching. Nevertheless, exposing such pre-service teachers to mentors who are intrinsically and altruistically motivated may help deactivate the negative effects of the fallback motivation, and as a result promote and nurture other types of motivations, as was seen in Wong et al. (2014).

Self-Efficacy. The findings of the present study emphasize the extent in which pre-service EFL teachers feel their perceived teaching abilities, namely their self-efficacy levels play a significant role in their decision to pursue a teaching career. Similarly, previous studies have provided evidence for the significance of teacher self-efficacy as an influencer and predictor of teacher commitment and intentions to pursue a teaching career upon graduation (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010; Chestnut & Cullen, 2014; Lavrenteva & Orland-Barak, 2016; Pfitzer-Eden, 2016; Rots et al., 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The third-year students who want to pursue a teaching career and the fourth-year students who chose to pursue a teaching career, as well as the third-year students who are still ambivalent about their decision to pursue a teaching career all spoke extensively about their perceived teaching abilities. On the contrary, the fourth-year students who chose not to pursue a teaching career, spoke extensively about their lack of confidence and their negative practicum experiences. These findings are in line with the findings of Rots et al. (2014) who showed that motivations and the intents to start a teaching career are prone to decrease with negative experiences. These students remarked that they felt they had no real role model to learn from and that the host teachers weren't available for them when they needed help and support. This also aligns with Bandura (1997) who stated that mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion and the psychological and emotional states are the sources that will influence the pre-service EFL teachers' self-efficacy.

Mentor and Faculty Support, and Teacher Education Programs. According to pre-service EFL teachers these external factors were perceived as important factors in relation to their decision to pursue a teaching career. Except for the pre-service EFL teachers who chose not to pursue a teaching career, all the other participants related to the mentors as role models, who were available and supported them. They expressed satisfaction and contentment from the positive encounters they experienced during the practicum. As was seen in Rots et al. (2014), such factors may promote more commitment and a more tranquil entrance into teaching. However, the pre-service EFL teachers in the fourth year who chose not to pursue a teaching career expressed disappointment, dissatisfaction, and a feeling that they never got the support they needed. They depicted the mentors they were assigned to as burned out and emotionally exhausted. Pre-service EFL teachers in third year who are still ambivalent about whether to pursue a teaching career or not, related both to positive and negative experiences in terms of mentor support.

Concerning the faculty support, regardless of whether the pre-service EFL teachers want to pursue a teaching career or not, 80% expressed that the staff in the faculty is professional, inspiring and offer full support to their students. In addition, 75% reported feelings of satisfaction regarding their teacher education program in the college and feeling that the program is effective. These results could point in the direction that faculty support on its own may not be sufficient to impact pre-service EFL teachers and predict their entrance into the teaching world. It seems that a combination of the internal (initial motivation and self-efficacy) and external factors (mentor and faculty support and satisfaction of the program) must be taken into consideration when designing teacher education programs so that more graduates feel the crave to enter the teaching profession once they graduate from the program.

The present study also highlights the significance of the EFL teacher education program for the third-year students. The third-year pre-service EFL teachers who were still ambivalent regarding their decision to pursue a teaching career, reported different responses in comparison to the students who were in fourth year and had already decided not to pursue a teaching career. Those in third year reported not only negative experiences in the practicum, but also positive practicum experiences and faculty support. They expressed feeling more faith and more energy to teach

as a result of the positive exposure to mentors. On the contrary, the fourth-year students barely related to any positive experiences from their practicum. These findings may lead to an understanding that the third year of the education program could be a critical year in shaping the pre-service EFL teachers, who have still not made a final decision regarding pursuing a teaching career.

Even if one cannot foresee whether pre-service EFL teachers who opt to pursue a teaching career will remain in the system once they finish the induction year, raising the number of motivated graduates of EFL teacher education programs, with high levels of self-efficacy who choose to do their induction year in their fourth and final year, may be a leap in the direction of increasing teacher retention, reducing teacher attrition and as such decreasing teacher shortage.

6. Conclusions

This study has brought to light some significant perceptions regarding EFL teacher education and these findings may have implications for EFL teacher education programs, locally and worldwide. It seems that the third year of the teacher education program is a turning point and a very influential year for the students in terms of whether or not they decide to pursue a teaching career. It also reinforces the importance of comprehending initial motivation among pre-service teachers. Failing to consider the pre-service EFL teachers' initial motivation in teacher education programs, may result in loss of interest and less satisfaction, and consequently lead the pre-service teachers to choose not to pursue a teaching career. As such, the findings of this study may facilitate the development of an innovative EFL teacher education program for students in the third year of their EFL teacher education

The main limitation of this study that should be taken into consideration for future research is that all participants come from the same teacher training college and thus there is a need for further research involving preservice EFL teachers from other institutions, both in Israel and abroad, before any generalizations can be made.

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