

## Career motivations as sources of teacher identity in foreign language education

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A wide range of factors impact the choice of teaching as a career and result in entry to the teaching profession. The notion that these career motivations may also be possible antecedents of teacher identity was the rationale behind this study. The present study aimed to determine pre-service English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' motivation for choosing teaching as a career and teacher identities, and to gauge to what extent career motivations predict their teacher identities. The study, therefore, adopted a correlational design, and more specifically, the multiple regression technique. Participants included 271 undergraduate students majoring in an EFL teacher education program of a state university in Turkey. The data collected through a set of scales were analysed statistically. Results obtained using the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) model showed that the three major self-reported career motives were altruistic-type social utility values called shaping future of children/adolescents and making social contribution as well as job transferability, a component of personal utility values. Teacher identity levels appeared to display a steady increase in each of the four grade levels from freshman to senior year. Multiple regression results indicated that career motivations accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance in teacher identity. Among career motivations, ability, intrinsic career value and working with children/adolescents appeared to be the three strongest positive predictors of teacher identity, respectively. Following these, time for family and fallback career negatively predicted teacher identity. Based on the findings, educational implications were drawn and directions for future research were discussed.

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### Introduction

Teachers' career motivations have been gaining incremental attention in educational research especially over the past couple of decades. Pre- and in-service teachers' reasons and motivations for the choice of teaching have been investigated from various perspectives over the years. Research conducted so far revealed main career motivations of teachers in numerous countries including Australia (e.g., Richardson & Watt, 2006), the USA (e.g., Watt, Richardson, & Wilkins, 2014), Turkey (e.g., Yüce, Şahin, Koçer, & Kana, 2013), the

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Netherlands (e.g., Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012), Germany (e.g., König & Rothland, 2012), Finland (e.g., Goller, Ursin, Vähävantanen, Festner, & Harteis, 2019), Serbia (e.g., Simić, Marušić Jablanović, & Grbić, 2021), Iran (e.g., Eghtesadi Roudi, 2021) and Ghana (e.g., Salifu, Alagbela, & Gyamfi Ofori, 2018) as well as international comparisons (e.g., Watt & Richardson, 2012).

The motives leading to the preference of the teaching profession were also scrutinized solely for pre- and in-service second/foreign language (L2) teachers in previous research (e.g., Amengual-Pizarro & García-Laborda, 2017; Gao & Xu, 2014; Gu & Lai, 2012; Igawa, 2009; Kyriacou & Benmansour, 1999, 2002; Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998; Zhao, 2008). In mainstream education, previous research was able to show how different career motivations were linked to different factors like burnout and career optimism (McLean, Taylor, & Jimenez, 2019), intention to keep teaching (e.g., Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010), and self-concept and emotions (e.g., Lohbeck & Frenzel, 2021). Similarly, a qualitative research study into entry motivations and teacher identity construction of English teachers evidenced the way career choice motivations of teachers illuminated teacher identity (Olsen, 2008). The notion that different motivations for choosing teaching as a career may potentially influence the development of teacher identity in different ways was the rationale behind the current study. The dearth of research into career motivations as antecedents of teacher identity especially in the Turkish context supported the need for conducting this research. Given that motivations for choosing teaching as a career may differ from country to country (e.g., Watt & Richardson, 2012), it was deemed necessary to scrutinize the specific career motives in the Turkish context, and most importantly, to reveal in what ways those motives impact teacher identity. On the basis of the development of teacher identity as a dynamic and ongoing process (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009) especially prone to shifts in teacher education (Thomas & Beauchamp, 2007), revealing the developmental trajectory of teacher identity during the four-year university education was another impetus behind the present study. The study was guided by an initial elaboration of theoretical underpinnings of motivations for choosing teaching as a career and teacher identity.

### ***Theoretical framework***

Teacher identity and its development process can be regarded as one of the core components of learning how to be a teacher (Friesen & Besley, 2013). The teacher identity construct is quite intricate and multidimensional in that it is under the impact of diverse factors such as the teachers' psychological and sociocultural characteristics, education, experiences and interaction with others (Chong, Low, & Goh, 2011; Pennington & Richards, 2016). Most importantly, teachers' professional identity is made up of two intensely intertwined sides: (1) other-driven expectations and notions for teachers and commonly held teacher images in people's minds, and (2) teachers' own views regarding the things they attach importance related to teaching and its constituents in view of their own experiences and backgrounds (Beijaard et al., 2004; Tickle, 2000). Bearing in mind the dynamic nature of teacher identity as a continually evolving concept (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), it is essential to consider it as a trajectory conducive to development and adaptation through experience, and teacher education and development processes (Pennington & Richards, 2016). In this sense, beginning teachers' different career motivational profiles, goals and aspirations will unsurprisingly induce diversity during the formation of professional identities of teachers as well (Watt & Richardson, 2008). In other words, different underlying motives resulting in choosing the teaching profession have the potential to distinctively impact the trajectories of teacher candidates in terms of their professional identities. This potential



impact may be better understood by a comprehensive look into motivations for choosing teaching as a career and teacher identity respectively.

### *Motivations for choosing teaching*

Individuals' job preferences depend on a variety of factors. This also holds true for the teaching profession that has a fundamental place in the society due to teachers' potential impact on children, adolescents and the society in general (Richardson & Watt, 2006). Although individuals' motivations for choosing teaching are inclined to differ vividly and in complex ways (see Heinz, 2015), these motives are discussed based on three groups in general as intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic motives (Watt et al., 2012). Intrinsic motives refer to those concerning the liking of teaching career overall or its different aspects; altruistic motives address the teaching profession as a socially worthwhile activity that helps the person to serve and contribute to the society; and extrinsic motives are not related to integral aspects of the teaching activity or the profession but concern some rewarding aspects of it like job security, status or salary (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Kyriacou, Hultgren, & Stephens, 1999).

The categories of intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic motives were prone to diverse conceptions and overlap of dimensions in past research, which made it necessary to operationalize a coherent theory-driven model: the FIT-Choice model (Richardson & Watt, 2006; Watt & Richardson, 2007). Drawing on the theoretical underpinnings of expectancy-value theory, which posits that motivation for an action depends on the individual's expectancy of a desired outcome through that action and the value attached to that goal and the desired outcome (see Eccles, 2005), Watt and Richardson (2007) provided both a comprehensive theoretical framework and a systematic measure for investigating teachers' career motivations. The FIT-Choice model involved a total of twelve motivational and six perceptual constructs. The motivational constructs were called "social influences, positive prior teaching and learning experiences, perceived teaching abilities, intrinsic value, personal utility values (job security, time for family, job transferability), social utility values (shape future of children/adolescents, enhance social equity, make social contribution, work with children/adolescents)" together with a last negatively-oriented motive called "fallback" teaching career (Watt & Richardson, 2008, p. 410). The perception factors under the model were named as "perceived task demand (expertise and difficulty) and return (social status and salary); ... social dissuasion, and satisfaction with the choice of teaching as a career" (Watt & Richardson, 2008, p. 410).

Various reasons induce the preference of the teaching profession across the world (for a review, see Heinz, 2015). International comparisons of teacher career motives and perceptions revealed both similarities and differences among countries. For instance, Watt et al.'s (2012) study with student samples from Australia, the United States, Norway and Germany found more similarities related to motivations for teaching while teaching perceptions were less similar. The highest rated motives in each country appeared to be intrinsic career value for the individual, ability, the aspiration for contributing to society, the wish to work with children or adolescents, and earlier experiences. A comparison of the cases in German, US, Croatian, Chinese and Turkish settings (Watt & Richardson, 2012) indicated that ability and intrinsic value of teaching were highly rated by German, US and Croatian pre-service teachers but not that much by Chinese and Turkish samples while the case about fallback career was just the opposite since German, US and Croatian samples' ratings of fallback career were less low than those of Chinese and Turkish samples whose average scores were also low indeed.

A closer look at the case in Turkey for the research into career motivations in relation to teaching reveals that the majority of research focused on career motivations of student teachers majoring in various teacher education programs of faculties of education (e.g., Akar, 2012; Aksu et al. 2010). Yet, there is a limited body of research explaining career motivations of pre-service L2 teachers in the Turkish EFL context (Başöz, 2021; Damar, 2018; Ekin, Yetkin, & Öztürk, 2021; Eren & Tezel, 2010; Erten, 2014; Topkaya & Uzlu, 2012). Research conducted so far specifically with samples of pre-service Turkish EFL teachers usually highlighted the role of a blend of intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic reasons with the prevailing impact of intrinsic (Erten, 2014) and altruistic motives (Ekin et al., 2021) or both (Topkaya & Uzlu, 2012). However, upon conducting a review of literature, no studies were encountered on entry motivations in relation to teacher identity particularly in the Turkish EFL context except for a qualitative study (Kavanoz & Yüksel, 2017). In the relevant qualitative study, the researchers investigated changes in Turkish pre-service EFL teachers' motivations and concerns so as to learn about the formation of teacher identity during initial teacher education using written reports. They revealed variations in motivations and concerns across years of study and concluded that pre-service teachers' professional identities are not stable either. The current quantitative study intended to contribute to this limited research line and elaborate on the relationships between career motivations and teacher identity by examining to what extent different types of motivations predict pre-service teachers' teacher identity in the Turkish EFL context.

### *Teacher identity*

Along with the paradigm shift from cognitive to social realization of learning within the past couple of decades, identity has been underlined as a major focus in the attempts to fully comprehend the teaching process and teacher learning in L2 teacher learning and development research (Pennington & Richards, 2016). This keeps with the premise that teachers do not start teacher education process with blank minds; on the contrary, they start it with their earlier experiences, individual values and perceptions, which also guide their actions in real teaching (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Beyond that, learning how to teach an L2 in L2 teacher education is now conceived of as a dialogic phase during which knowledge emerges out of a process of co-construction within specific sociocultural contexts, and teacher values and beliefs shape how teachers view themselves, students and the whole process of language learning and teaching (Johnson, 2009, 2016). In this sense, the teacher-learning process comprises numerous elements ranging from the learning of skills and subject matter to the understanding of what being a teacher really means, during which identity acts as a central dimension (Pennington & Richards, 2016; Singh & Richards, 2006).

Teacher identity has so far been subject to diverse definitions and conceptualizations due to its complex and intricate nature. Lasky (2005) briefly addresses teacher identity as the way teachers identify themselves both to themselves and to the people around. A deeper insight into teacher identity indicates that it is a two-way entity involving both the things teachers value individually with regard to teaching drawing on their personal experiences and backgrounds, and the impact of others' expectations such as widespread social images regarding the required knowledge-base and actions for a teacher (Beijaard et al., 2004). What scholars agree upon about teacher identity is that it is a multifaceted, dynamic, and persistently evolving phenomenon (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Olsen, 2008; Pennington & Richards, 2016). Thus, a teacher's identity development is considered as a struggle between various teacher roles, expectations and perspectives (Samuel & Stephens, 2000).



While accounting for language teacher identity, Pennington and Richards (2016) underscore the joint functioning of personal, contextual and professional elements related to teaching. Regarding the language teacher identity, they conceptualize its foundational competences as “language-related identity, disciplinary identity, context-related identity, self-knowledge and awareness, and student-related identity (student knowledge and awareness)” and its advanced competences as “practiced and responsive teaching skills (knowledge into practice), theorizing from practice (practice into knowledge), and membership in communities of practice and profession” (p. 11). These dimensions vividly reveal how multifaceted language teacher identity is. In this sense, teacher education plays a key role during the formation and ongoing development of a teacher’s professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2004). Teacher identity is continually shaped and reshaped during pre-service teacher education especially through student teaching and reflective teaching practice (Chen & Mensah, 2018; Nghia & Tai, 2017) and keeps developing during actual teaching career as well (Hong, Greene, & Lowery, 2017; Kaya & Dikilitaş, 2019). Thus, both teacher education and teaching experience have a critical role in the development of teacher identity.

Both due to its important role in language teacher education and its underlying complexities, language teacher identity has been getting L2 researchers’ attention incrementally (for a research timeline, see Kayi-Aydar, 2019). For instance, research conducted so far brought insights into the L2 teacher identity development (e.g., Karimi & Mofidi, 2019; Trent, 2016) and accounted for the characteristics of L2 teacher identity (e.g., Pavlenko, 2003). Teacher identity research in mainstream education elaborated on the relationship of teacher identity with various factors such as agency, commitment to work, job satisfaction, sense of self-efficacy, motivation and possible selves (e.g., Canrinus, Helms-Lorenz, Beijaard, Buitink, & Hofman, 2012; Cobb, Harlow, & Clark, 2018; Erdem, 2020; Marschall, 2021). Research in the Turkish EFL context investigated the perceived L2 teacher identities of pre-service (Babanoğlu & AĞÇAM, 2019) and in-service EFL teachers (Keskin & Zaimoğlu, 2021; Ölmez, 2016), revealed their incongruities with in-service training programs (Güngör, 2017) and explored the intricacies in L2 teacher identity development process (Kaya & Dikilitaş, 2019; Tokoz Goktepe & Kunt, 2021). In an attempt to contribute to this research line, the present study drew on the robustness of a well-structured motivation theory, expectancy-value theory, in offering broader insights into the intricate characteristics of teacher identity and motivation with their correlates (Richardson & Watt, 2018) and focused on the interplay of L2 teacher identity and career motivations using the FIT-Choice framework.

### ***Aims of the study***

Based on the relevant conceptual framework and review of literature, the current study aimed to determine Turkish pre-service EFL teachers’ career motivations and teacher identities, and to reveal to what extent career motivations predict their teacher identities. Accordingly, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What are the Turkish pre-service EFL teachers’ major career motivations?
- (2) What are the perceived levels of pre-service EFL teachers’ teacher identities?
- (3) Are there significant differences among perceived levels of teacher identities based on grade level?
- (4) How well do the pre-service EFL teachers’ career motivations predict their teacher identities?

## Method

### Research design

With a focus on the associations between career motivations and teacher identity, the current study employed a correlational research design. As the ultimate purpose was to explain how well the career motivations predict teacher identity, a predictive correlational design was adopted. In correlational research, prediction studies test the predictive role of a predictor variable on a criterion variable, and using multiple regression technique allows researchers to reveal the association between a criterion variable and two or more predictor variables (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). In the same vein, the current study sought to investigate the predictive role of career motivations (i.e., predictor variables) on teacher identity (i.e., criterion variable).

### Setting and participants

A cohort of 271 Turkish pre-service EFL teachers took part in the current study. They were included in the study using convenience sampling. Of the participants, 168 were female and 103 were male, corresponding to 62% and 38% of the sample respectively. Their ages ranged between 17 and 34 ( $M = 21.01$ ;  $SD = 2.93$ ). At the time of the study, they were enrolled in the ELT department of a state university in Turkey, which ranked among the top twenty five universities in Turkey according to the latest University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP) report. The grade level distributions were as follows: freshmen ( $n = 70$ ; 25.8%), sophomores ( $n = 76$ ; 28%), juniors ( $n = 67$ ; 24.7%) and seniors ( $n = 58$ ; 21.4%). The sample size was enough for running standard multiple regression based on a well-established rule of thumb; simply  $N \geq 50 + 8m$ , in which  $m$  stands for the quantity of independent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). With 12 independent variables, at least 146 participants were necessary and the sample size of current study was therefore deemed sufficient.

### Instruments

Career motivations: Participants' reasons for choosing teaching were gauged using the first part of the FIT-Choice instrument (Watt & Richardson, 2007). The original FIT-Choice scale involves 12 motivation and 6 perception factors. Only the items under the motivation factors were used for the current research. The adapted scale in Turkish (Kılınç, Watt, & Richardson, 2012) was specifically employed for this research context. The scale required participants to indicate their career motivations with an initial statement at the top of the instrument: "I chose to become a teacher because ...". The initial section of the Turkish FIT-Choice scale concerning career motives about teaching involved a total of 30 items under 12 factors. The scale made use of a 7-point Likert scale ranging between "not at all important" and "extremely important". A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was computed for the construct validity of the scale with the current sample. An inspection of the results with fit indices based on the well-established thresholds (Brown, 2006; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2011; Schermelleh-Engel & Moosbrugger, 2003) indicated a good fit of the data ( $\chi^2/df = 2.67$ , NNFI = .95, CFI = .96, SRMR = .067, RMSEA = .079). Following this, reliability estimates were calculated to see the internal consistency reliability of all subscales. Reliability estimates of the twelve motivation factors are given in Table 1.



**Table 1.** Reliability estimates for career motivations

Subscale	Cronbach Alpha Kılınç et al.	Current Study
Ability	.78	.77
Intrinsic career value	.87	.88
Fallback career	.57	.71
Job security	.81	.83
Time for family	.80	.83
Job transferability	.79	.82
Shape future of children/adolescents	.76	.88
Enhance social equity	.78	.89
Make social contribution	.75	.74
Work with children/adolescents	.93	.95
Prior teaching and learning experiences	.91	.91
Social influences	.77	.79

A closer look at the table indicates that except for fallback career, the alpha values of all twelve factors were found to be above .70 in Kılınç et al.'s (2012) research. This meant that alpha values of all these subscales conformed to the cut-off value .70 and above (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014). In the current research, internal consistency reliability estimates similarly reflected acceptable alpha values for all the subscales including fallback career. Most of these factors indicated high or very high reliability based on alpha values above .80 or .90 respectively (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

**Teacher identity:** Participant pre-service teachers' teacher identities were investigated using the Early Teacher identity Measure (ETIM) developed by Friesen and Besley (2013). The ETIM involved a total of 17 items and employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging between "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree". Turkish version of the scale (Arpacı & Bardakçı, 2015) was used for the current research context to assess participants' opinions on the early construction of their teacher identities. The original instrument in Friesen and Besley's (2013) study developed as a three-factor scale was found to better reflect a single-factor solution in the same research. Similarly, the Turkish version of the scale (Arpacı & Bardakçı, 2015) appeared to better represent a single-factor structure. The construct validity of the scale was checked with the current sample using a CFA. An evaluation of the results with the thresholds in the literature (Brown, 2006; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2011; Schermelleh-Engel & Moosbrugger, 2003) implied an acceptable fit ( $\chi^2/df = 3.86$ , NNFI = .96, CFI = .97, SRMR = .061, RMSEA = .084). Upon checking the construct validity, a reliability analysis was computed. The internal consistency reliability of the original scale (Friesen & Besley, 2013;  $\alpha = .87$ ) and the adapted scale (Arpacı & Bardakçı, 2015;  $\alpha = .91$ ) were corroborated in the current study ( $\alpha = .93$ ), indicating very high reliability (Cohen et al., 2007).

### **Data collection and analysis**

Data were gathered by the researcher during the fall semester of 2019–2020 academic year. Data collection tools were administered during the regular class hours of the participants. A survey form involving a demographic information section and the two scales were administered to the participants. Completing the survey form took about 15 minutes. Data were then entered to IBM SPSS 21 and analysed statistically. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Data analyses started with data screening, missing value analysis and outlier check. In addition, all the underlying assumptions relating to sample size, absence of multicollinearity and singularity; outliers, linearity, normality of data distribution, homoscedasticity and independence of residuals were all satisfied for running

standard multiple regression analysis. The distribution of data was checked to see whether there is normal distribution. The values of skewness and kurtosis corresponding to the total score of early teacher identity measure and the twelve motivation subscales under the FIT-choice scale were respectively computed as follows: early teacher identity (-.333; -.462); ability (-.799; .125), intrinsic career value (-.376; -1.044), fallback career (.565; -.825), job security (-.591; -.540), time for family (-.242; -.827), job transferability (-1.149; .536), shape future of children/adolescents (-1.753; 1.875), enhance social equity (-.993; .189), make social contribution (-1.411; 1.579), work with children/adolescents (-.480; -.999), prior teaching and learning experiences (-.924; -.457), and social influences (.437; -.883). As seen, all the aforementioned skewness and kurtosis values were between  $\pm 2.0$ , which indicated acceptable values for normal distribution (George & Mallery, 2016). Almost all these values also complied with the threshold  $\pm 1.5$  for normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). As aforementioned, the sample size complied with the minimum sample size requirement for multiple regression (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Data were evaluated in terms of multivariate outliers by means of Mahalanobis distance. The critical chi-square value 32.910 for 12 degrees of freedom using an alpha level of .001 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) was slightly exceeded by five cases in the dataset. However, due to the fact that 5 percent of outliers commonly appear in a dataset (Pallant, 2011), these cases were retained after a detailed look at the Cook's distance as well. In an inspection of Cook's distance, values greater than 1 potentially signal problems related to outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The maximum value in the current dataset was .075, implying no problem. To evaluate the data in terms of multicollinearity, tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values were inspected. While tolerance values ranged between .232 and .817, VIF values ranged between 1.224 and 4.316. As tolerance values higher than .10 and VIF values lower than 10 are acceptable values and imply nonexistence of multicollinearity (Pallant, 2011), the data in the current study satisfied this assumption as well. An evaluation of the plots did not reveal any nonlinearity. There was no problem related to singularity since none of the variables were perfectly or very highly correlated (see Table 5). Cohen's (1992) guidelines for cut-off values were taken as a basis while interpreting correlation coefficients: weak (between -.3 and +.3); moderate (between -.5 and -.3; between .3 and .5); strong (between -.9 and -.5; between .5 and .9); very strong (between -1.0 and -.9; between .9 and 1.0). Descriptive statistics were computed for the first two research questions while the third and fourth were answered by running a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and a standard multiple regression respectively.

## Results

### ***Motivational profiles of Turkish pre-service EFL teachers***

The study initially sought to reveal Turkish pre-service EFL teachers' motivations for choosing teaching as a career. Therefore, means and standard deviations were computed out of seven for the participants' career motivations. Table 2 provides the findings.



**Table 2. Descriptive statistics for career motivations**

Career motivations	Mean	SD
Shape future of children/adolescents	5.96	1.44
Make social contribution	5.65	1.50
Job transferability	5.48	1.67
Enhance social equity	5.36	1.66
Prior teaching and learning experiences	5.27	2.01
Ability	4.96	1.52
Job security	4.78	1.80
Work with children/adolescents	4.65	1.97
Intrinsic career value	4.60	1.85
Time for family	4.34	1.72
Social influences	3.25	1.82
Fallback career	2.92	1.74

As shown in the table, the participant Turkish pre-service EFL teachers' two highest rated career motivations appeared to be both altruistic-type social utility values: shape future of children/adolescents ( $M = 5.96$ ;  $SD = 1.44$ ) and make social contribution ( $M = 5.65$ ;  $SD = 1.50$ ). The third highest rated motivation was job transferability ( $M = 5.48$ ;  $SD = 1.67$ ), a component of personal utility values, while the fourth appeared to be another component of social utility values; enhance social equity ( $M = 5.36$ ;  $SD = 1.66$ ). These were followed by prior teaching and learning experiences ( $M = 5.27$ ;  $SD = 2.01$ ), ability ( $M = 4.96$ ;  $SD = 1.52$ ), job security ( $M = 4.78$ ;  $SD = 1.80$ ), work with children/adolescents ( $M = 4.65$ ;  $SD = 1.97$ ), intrinsic career value ( $M = 4.60$ ;  $SD = 1.85$ ) and time for family ( $M = 4.34$ ;  $SD = 1.72$ ) respectively. Mean values relating to all these motivations appeared to be greater than the scale midpoint. Lastly, the two lowest rated career motivations were social influences ( $M = 3.25$ ;  $SD = 1.82$ ) and fallback career ( $M = 2.92$ ;  $SD = 1.74$ ).

### ***Perceived levels of teacher identity***

The study secondly sought to unearth perceived levels of Turkish pre-service EFL teachers' teacher identities. Descriptive statistics were computed out of five for the whole group and for each grade level. The results can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3. Descriptive statistics for teacher identity**

Teacher Identity	n	Mean	SD
Freshmen	70	3.45	.70
Sophomores	76	3.66	.76
Juniors	67	3.74	.78
Seniors	58	3.85	.75
All undergraduates	271	3.67	.76

As demonstrated in the table above, the average level of teacher identity for the whole group of undergraduates ( $M = 3.67$ ;  $SD = .76$ ) appeared to be moderately high with a mean score close to 4 on a 5-point scale. An inspection of mean scores with a focus on grade levels showed that the lowest level of teacher identity belonged to the freshmen ( $M = 3.45$ ;  $SD = .70$ ), but it was above the scale midpoint. Teacher identities of sophomores ( $M = 3.66$ ;  $SD = .76$ ) and juniors ( $M = 3.74$ ;  $SD = .78$ ) came next. The seniors appeared to have the highest levels of teacher identities ( $M = 3.85$ ;  $SD = .75$ ). Therefore, the levels of teacher identities reflected a gradual and incremental increase during the pre-service teacher education as visualised with the means plot in Figure 1.

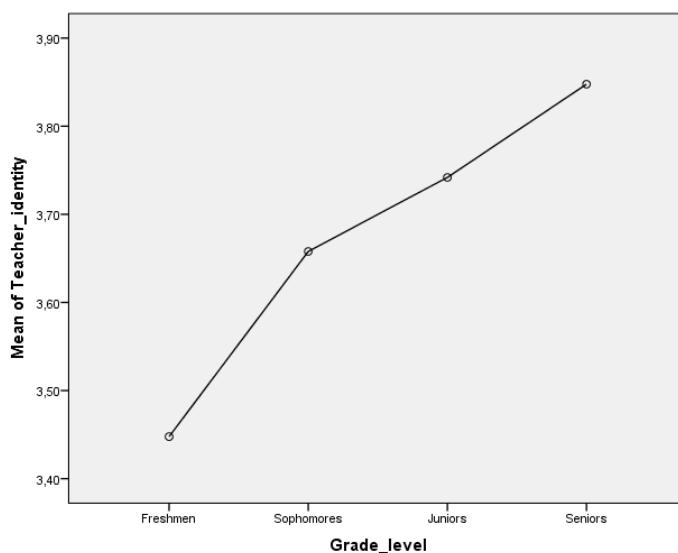


Figure 1. Means plot of teacher identities for the four grade levels

#### **A comparison of teacher identity levels based on grade level**

Upon seeing the incremental increase in the perceived levels of teacher identities, an ANOVA was run to gain deeper insights into the differences in the levels of teacher identities based on grade level. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Differences in levels of teacher identity based on grade level

Source of variation	Sum squares	of df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Direction of differences
Between groups	1803.951	3	601.317	3.748	.012	Sen.>Jun. p = .87
Within groups	42836.241	267	160.435			Sen.>Soph. p = .46
Total	44640.192	270				Sen.>Fres. p = .01 Jun.>Soph. p = .89 Jun.>Fres. p = .07 Sop.>Fres. p = .26

As seen in the table, the results of ANOVA revealed a significant group difference in teacher identity levels of the four grade levels,  $F(3, 267) = 3.748, p < .05$ , implying a small effect size ( $\eta^2 = 0.04$ ). Post-hoc comparisons with Tukey test demonstrated that among these groups, only the seniors' perceived level of teacher identity ( $M = 65.34, SD = 12.71$ ) was higher than that of freshmen ( $M = 58.24, SD = 11.76$ ) at a statistically significant level ( $p < .05$ ). Although group differences were observed for teacher identity levels of the other groups including that of sophomores ( $M = 62.09, SD = 12.94$ ) and juniors ( $M = 63.61, SD = 13.22$ ), none of the remaining group differences were able to reach statistical significance ( $p > .05$ ).

#### **The role of career motivations in accounting for teacher identity**

A final concern was to identify how well career motivations predicted the levels of teacher identity. A standard multiple regression analysis was run by entering teacher identity as dependent variable and the twelve career motivations as the independent variables. Table 5 demonstrates the correlations between these variables.

**Table 5.** Correlations between the career motivations and teacher identity

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Teacher identity	1												
2. Ability	.69**	1											
3. Intrinsic career value	.77**	.68**	1										
4. Fallback career	-.60**	-.42**	-.68**	1									
5. Job security	.10	.19**	.10	.04	1								
6. Time for family	-.13*	.07	-.09	.25**	.57**	1							
7. Job transferability	.05	.18**	.09	.10	.23**	.29**	1						
8. Shape future of children/adolescents	.53**	.46**	.47**	-.33**	.25**	.15*	.26**	1					
9. Enhance social equity	.55**	.41**	.53**	-.31**	.23**	.10	.20**	.70**	1				
10. Make social contribution	.53**	.52**	.54**	-.32**	.30**	.14*	.22**	.69**	.63**	1			
11. Work with children/adolescents	.71**	.53**	.76**	-.52**	.20**	.012	.04	.52**	.59**	.55**	1		
12. Prior teaching and learning experiences	.27**	.27**	.29**	-.16**	.18**	.16**	.12*	.35**	.43**	.37**	.29**	1	
13. Social influences	.17**	.24**	.15*	.12*	.27*	.24**	.11	.17**	.23**	.27**	.22**	.24**	1

\*\*Significant at  $p < .01$ \* Significant at  $p < .05$

As shown, Pearson correlation coefficients indicated that all types of career motivations except for *job security* and *job transferability* correlated significantly with teacher identity. An inspection of correlation coefficients revealed that *intrinsic career value* appeared to have the strongest positive correlation with teacher identity ( $r = .77, p < .01$ ). The second and third strongest positive correlations were with *work with children/adolescents* and *ability* respectively ( $r = .71, p < .01$  and  $r = .69, p < .01$ , respectively). *Fallback career* came next with a strong negative correlation with teacher identity ( $r = -.60, p < .01$ ). These were followed by three components of social utility values (i.e., *enhance social equity*, *shape future of children/adolescents*, *make social contribution*) which also had strong positive correlations with teacher identity ( $r = .55, p < .01$ ;  $r = .53, p < .01$  and  $r = .53, p < .01$ , respectively). Following these, *prior teaching and learning experiences* and *social influences* appeared to show weak positive correlations with teacher identity ( $r = .27, p < .01$  and  $r = .17, p < .01$ , respectively). In addition, *time for family* also indicated a weak negative correlation ( $r = -.13, p < .05$ ). Lastly, teacher identity was found to correlate positively and weakly with *job security* and *job transferability*; however, these correlations were not able to reach statistical significance ( $r = .10, p > .05$  and  $r = .05, p > .05$ , respectively). Following the correlations, the predicting effects of these career motivations on teacher identity are provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Predictors of teacher identity

Variables	B	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Ability	1.278	.305	6.433	.000
Intrinsic career value	.515	.223	3.263	.001
Fallback career	-.324	-.131	-2.677	.008
Job security	.083	.023	.549	.583
Time for family	-.334	-.135	-3.142	.002
Job transferability	-.107	-.028	-.768	.443
Shape future of children/adolescents	.400	.091	1.710	.088
Enhance social equity	.266	.104	1.982	.049
Make social contribution	-.078	-.019	-.364	.716
Work with children/adolescents	.445	.204	3.695	.000
Prior teaching and learning experiences	-.046	-.014	-.386	.699
Social influences	.070	.030	.791	.429

The multiple regression results indicated that the full model in which five of the career motivations were significant predictors was able to explain 72% of the total variance in teacher identity ( $F = 55.76, p < .01$ ). As seen in Table 6, among these predictors, *ability* made the strongest unique contribution to accounting for teacher identity ( $\beta = .305, t = 6.443, p < .01$ ). Then, the second strongest predictor of teacher identity appeared to be *intrinsic career value* ( $\beta = .223, t = 3.263, p < .01$ ). The third strongest predictor was *work with children/adolescents* ( $\beta = .204, t = 3.695, p < .01$ ). Following these positive predictors, *time for family* ( $\beta = -.135, t = -3.142, p < .01$ ) and *fallback career* ( $\beta = -.131, t = -2.677, p < .01$ ) appeared to be the two significant negative predictors of teacher identity. The predicting effects of the rest of the career motivations were nonsignificant.

## **Discussion**

Teachers play an exceptionally important role within societies as they take a crucial part in the construction of intellectual and knowledgeable citizens (Richardson & Watt, 2006). The critical role of the teaching profession for the whole societies makes it an attractive job choice for many people. However, altruistic reasons like the desire to contributing to the society is not the only cause of choosing teaching; on the contrary, various reasons are asserted for choosing teaching as a career in diverse ways, combinations and rankings (Watt et al., 2012). In the Turkish EFL context of the current study, the participant pre-service teachers' major motivations for teaching appeared to be two altruistic-type social utility values (i.e., shape future of children/adolescents and make social contribution), and a type of personal utility value (i.e., job transferability). The fourth highest rated motive was to enhance social equity, again a component of social utility values.

The emergent dominance of altruistic-type social utility values among motivations for choosing teaching in the current study corroborated the results of previous research with Turkish pre-service EFL teachers in Turkey (Başöz, 2021; Damar, 2018; Ekin et al., 2021; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). Interestingly, job transferability was a more dominant motive for the current sample compared to earlier research demonstrating it in lower places in motivational rankings of Turkish pre-service teachers majoring in different departments of faculties of education (Kılınç et al., 2012). The job transferability motive that regards teaching as a job conducive to employment in other countries and traveling more (Watt & Richardson, 2007) might have been a reason for the participants' choice of majoring in an ELT department since teaching English as a global language is conducive to working almost everywhere in the world as long as the applicants prove having the required qualifications.

The ranking order of the rest of the career motives after the aforementioned four reasons were prior teaching and learning experiences, ability, job security, work with children/adolescents, intrinsic career value and time for family. All these motives were rated above the scale midpoint, which meant that they also played an important role in the participants' choice of the teaching profession. The least rated motives were social influences and fallback career. With this finding, the current study echoed the results of earlier research in Turkey (Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). The low average score on fallback career showed that teaching was not a first-choice career for the current sample. Similarly, the low score on social influences indicated that they were not convinced to choose teaching under the influence of other people. In other words, most of the participants reported being personally determined for this profession and having a personal desire for being a teacher. These results were promising in that teachers' enthusiasm and motivation for teaching are inextricably associated with student motivation (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). However, the results should be interpreted cautiously since entry motivations show just the initial perspectives of pre-service teachers and maintaining motivation for teaching is crucial.

When it comes to the results in relation to teacher identity levels, the current sample appeared to have a moderately high level of teacher identity. As expected, participant pre-service teachers' sense of teacher identity appeared to increase steadily from the first year to the fourth. This finding was congruent with previous research that evidenced instances of teacher identity development during the pre-service teacher education in general or the practicum period in particular (Chong & Low, 2009;

Prabjandee, 2019). However, it is essential to interpret this result with the caveat that the trajectory of teacher identity development is prone to outside effects, experiences and challenges which largely stem from its dynamic and contextual nature (Morrison, 2013). In the current study, the comparison of teacher identity levels based on grade level yielded a significant difference between those of freshmen and seniors while the other group differences were nonsignificant. A possible explanation for this result of the current study is that the teaching practicum that holds an important place in the fourth year of EFL teacher education programs in Turkey is likely to have contributed substantially to the development of the participants' teacher identities. With this finding, the present study corroborated the results of previous educational research in Turkey which found significant differences between teacher identity levels based on grade level (Çelik & Kalkan, 2019; Eğmir & Çelik, 2019; Eğmir & Erdem, 2021). However, this result also ran counter to those of several other studies that did not find any significant difference in pre-service teachers' teacher identity levels based on grade level (Alkış Küçükaydın & Gökbüyük, 2019; Alptekin Yolcu & Kingir, 2021). The incongruent results in relation to grade level in previous research might stem from the differences between the research contexts, universities and departments, and the differences especially in the quality of teacher education in different universities as underlined by Erdem (2020). Pre-service teachers starting their initial teacher education have prior attitudes and beliefs about teaching that inform their emerging teacher identities, and their identities continue to be shaped and constructed during their pre-service education and when they start to work as teachers (Chong & Low, 2009). This is because teachers' identity formation is a constant and ongoing process (Buchanan, 2015; Flores & Day, 2006; Walkington, 2005). In this sense, one can conclude that the pre-service teachers' professional identities will keep developing and evolving when they graduate and start teaching, and throughout their teacher career.

Most importantly, correlations and multiple regression results indicated the interrelatedness of pre-service EFL teachers' career motivations and teacher identity levels. All career motives except for job security and job transferability showed significant correlations with teacher identity. Being two components of personal utility values, job security and job transferability reflected practical and extrinsic reasons for the choice teaching. Therefore, this finding was not so surprising. The multiple regression model involving motivations for choosing teaching as predictors appeared to explain a substantial amount of variance in teacher identity. In this sense, the results of this research study appeared to be in line with those of previous research that highlighted the impact of entry motivations and perceptions of teaching on emerging teacher identities in mainstream education (Chong & Low, 2009). The study also corroborated the research findings that underline the role of motivations for becoming language teachers in teacher identity development (Kavanoz & Yüksel, 2017). In addition, this result was also in parallel with previous research demonstrating the interrelatedness of teacher identity with teacher possible selves, a future-oriented dimension of teacher selves (Erdem, 2020; Uygun & Karalı, 2019). This is because, similar to career motives, pre-service teachers' possible selves like expected and feared selves show a motivational function and help to elaborate teacher identity (Hamman, Gosselin, Romano, & Bunuan, 2010).

The present study additionally provided evidence for the types of entry motivations that accounted for teacher identity. Of the twelve types of career motivations in the FIT-Choice model, five significant predictors of teacher identity from the strongest to least



strong were perceived teaching ability, intrinsic career value, work with children/adolescents, time for family and fallback career. While the first three were positive predictors, the last two negatively predicted teacher identity. This suggested that participants' higher motivations for teaching due to their perceived teaching ability; intrinsic interest in teaching; and aspiration for working with and helping children and adolescents might be indicative of higher levels of teacher identity. As ability-related, intrinsic and altruistic reasons, these being positive predictors of teacher identity were expected. This result is aligned with research evidence implying positive associations of intrinsic and altruistic entry motivations with perceived professional competence and learning (Tang, Wong, Li, & Cheng, 2020), commitment in teaching (Chan, 2006) and teacher retention (Chiong, Menzies, & Parameshwaran, 2017).

The emergence of time for family and fallback career as negative predictors demonstrated that having higher motivations for teaching to be able to spare more time for family and as a last resort career might be suggestive of lower levels of teacher identity. The results of the current study regarding time for family and fallback career bear similarities to previous research findings that underscore the negative contribution of time for family to affective teaching commitment (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012) and positive impact of fallback career on burnout (McLean et al., 2019). In the present study, the negative contribution of the choice of the teaching profession as a fallback career to teacher identity was quite expected since individuals resorting to teaching as an alternative or second choice in their minds might have difficulties in constructing teacher identities. Similarly, the finding that time for family negatively predicted teacher identity was also expected. This is because entering teaching to spend less time at work and more time with family instead might be linked with spending less time on developing oneself for the teaching profession and constructing a well-developed teacher identity. While this being the case, positive nonsignificant correlations of job security and job transferability (i.e., the other components of personal utility values) with teacher identity was surprising. A possible explanation for this is that participants' conceiving of teaching as a secure job allowing traveling and working in various places might be among its positive sides that combine with other motivations in their choice of teaching. But these might have failed to contribute positively to teacher identity on their own. To reiterate, one can conclude from the results of the current study that career motivations called ability, intrinsic career value and work with children/adolescents contribute positively to explaining teacher identity while time for family and fallback career negatively account for teacher identity.

## Conclusions

The teaching profession is preferred for diverse reasons, and a combination of altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic reasons guide this choice as evidenced by the current research as well. These various motivations may fuel the determination of the teacher candidates and help them maintain their commitment. Starting teaching with more than motive may also promote teacher retention (Bergmark, Lundström, Manderstedt, & Palo, 2018). However, preserving the motivation for teaching throughout teacher education process and during the teaching career is a lot more important. Therefore, academics in teacher education programs might work on pre-service teachers' entry motivations and take some steps to benefit from them in instilling and maintaining the motivation for teaching. In addition, pre-service teachers' initial motivations for

teaching as a career can inform planning of teacher training programs and curricula, recruitment of teachers, and educational policies (Watt & Richardson, 2007).

The steady increase of pre-service teachers' levels of teacher identity demonstrates that student teachers start initial teacher education with some sort of teacher identity and keep developing it throughout the pre-service years. An implication to draw here is that teacher educators might try to gain insights into previously developed conceptions of pre-service teachers at the early stages of initial teacher education and specifically guide the development of their teacher identities (see Leijen, Kullasepp, & Anspal, 2014). Teacher educators can make the most of their professional identity development process through activities and tasks tailored to the needs of specific groups of pre-service teachers from different grade levels.

Pre-service teachers' reasons for entry to teaching and their perceptions in relation to teaching at various stages contribute to their construction of a teacher identity (Chong & Low, 2009). Therefore, the salient role of career motivations in explaining teacher identity implies that while guiding the development of teacher identities, teacher educators might utilize the advantages of the motives that emerged as positive predictors of teacher identity and try to minimize the effects of the negative predictors. Thus, they can try to promote the pre-service teachers' beliefs in their teaching abilities, deepen their intrinsic interest in teaching and increase their liking of working with children and adolescents. Yet, they may need to try to hamper or weaken any possible prejudice regarding teaching as a fallback career or an easy job allowing more time for family by working less. In this sense, the current study builds on the current understanding of how to develop teacher identities by making use of pre-service teachers' career motives. More specifically, the study contributes to the field of teacher education in general and L2 teacher education in particular by casting a light on the way various intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic motives account for pre-service teachers' teacher identities.

However, the current study is not without limitations. Relying solely on cross-sectional self-report quantitative data is a limitation of the study. Hence, longitudinal research might provide deeper insights into the research variables. Further research might also explore motivations for choosing teaching as a career and teacher identity through qualitative and mixed methods research methodologies. Especially longitudinal research into the identity development of pre- and in-service EFL teachers with different motivations for the choice of teaching can offer a more insightful understanding of these factors. L2 researchers might also investigate the field-specific aspects and characteristics in the motivations for choosing teaching English and/or other languages as a career and language teacher identity.

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