



Influential Factors of Motivations and Perceptions of Teaching among Teacher Students: A Case of Farhangian University

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' ability to motivate students can be a function of their motivation and perception of teaching. Hence, identification of the influential factors inciting teacher students to embark on teacher education programs and to become teachers is of much significance to teacher trainers as well as education administrators. The review of the related studies crystallizes that teacher students' motivation and perceptions of teaching is an under-explored area. Thus, the present study was aimed at delineating these factors in an EFL context through comparing male and female senior and freshman teacher students' motivations for becoming teachers employing FIT-choice scale adapted and validated by Watt and Richardson (2007, 2008). Two hundred senior and freshman teacher students majoring in primary education in Farhangian University shaped the body of participants. The results of t-tests indicated significant difference between senior and freshman teacher students in terms of time for family, job transferability, and prior teaching/learning experience. The results also revealed that male and female students have the same perceptions of teaching though male students outperformed the female ones in ability, job security, and time for family as three components of motivations.

Keywords: IFT scale; Teacher Motivation; Perceptions of Teaching; Farhangian University.

1. Introduction

There is a myriad of factors contributing to the success of English learning process, of which the most important one is the teacher. (Suryanti Tambunan, Abdul Hamied & Sundayana, 2016). Teachers play a crucial role in motivating students (Jarvis & Woodrow, 2005; Richardson & Watt, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Yet the extent to which they succeed in arousing students' interests and motivation hugely is concomitant with how they motivate themselves (Atkinson, 2000; Bernaus, Wilson & Gardner, 2009; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). Hence, in language learning, teacher motivation is of paramount importance in students' success, determining both students' motivation and correlating with learners' performance.

(Alavi & Mehmandoust, 2011; Schmidt, Boraie, & Kassabgy, 1996). Thus, effective educational improvement need to begin with teachers (Grant & Murray, 1999).

Several factors provide teachers with required motivation

through which they enhance their work effectiveness. The factors can be listed as financial, physical, emotional, or academic (Lepper, 1988). Many educators strongly agree that teachers are initially motivated intrinsically through a sense of responsibility, accomplishment, and self-respect. However, it is urgent that administrators take into account the extrinsic factors to maintain the teachers' enthusiasm (Lia, 2014).

Kleinginna and Kleinginna (1981) argue that motivation is the internal state condition, often described as a need, desire, or want, activating and energizing and giving directions to behavior. Ryan and Deci (2000) believe that "to be motivated means to be moved to do something" (p. 54). Harmer (2001) similarly interprets motivation as "a kind of internal drive that encourages a person to pursue the action." But, as he further says, someone driven internally when the goal he seeks to achieve is "quite interesting" (p. 51). In pedagogical context, motivation is a driving force making teachers and students behave/act. Over the past years, many researchers interested in the field of teacher education have studied the motivation for becoming a teacher (to name just a few, Gao & Trent, 2009; Klassen, Al-Dhafri, Hannok, & Betts, 2011; Roness & Smith, 2010). Watt and Richardson (2007, 2008) described the Factors Influencing Teaching (FIT)-Choice model, based on the expectancy-value work of Eccles and colleagues (Eccles, 2005; Eccles et al., 1983). The FIT-Choice scale has since been employed in various contexts, such as Turkey (Eren & Tezel, 2010), the USA (Lawver & Torres, 2011; Smith & Pantana, 2010), Germany and Norway (Watt et al., 2012).

Despite the significance of exploring FIT choice among the teacher students, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, to date no study has attempted to inspect the Iranian teacher students' main motivations for becoming teachers and their perceptions of teaching. In addition, no study has compared the influential teaching factors choices of freshman with those of senior teacher students in Iran. Therefore, to fill the gap in the literature, this study set out to address the following research questions:

- 1) In what ways do freshman and senior teacher-students of elementary education at Farhangian University differ in their motivations for becoming a teacher and their perceptions of teaching?
- 2) Do male and female teacher-students of elementary education at Farhangian University differ in their motivations for becoming a teacher and their perceptions of teaching?

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The participants of the study included 200 (100 freshman and 100 senior) teacher students at Farhangian university branches majoring in elementary education. The participants consisted of both male and female teacher students with an age range of 19-23. Twenty-five freshman and 25 senior teacher students were randomly selected from four Farhangian branches. They were all informed of the purpose of the study and were assured that the data would be collected for research purpose and their scores on the questionnaire would not affect their academic status and job security in the future.

2.2. Instrument

The Persian version of FIT-choice scale by (Watt & Richardson, 2007) translated and validated by Zeinali and Jafari-Gohar (2017) was employed in the present study. The validated questionnaire consisted of two components: motivation component consisting of 38 items and perception component consisting of 20 items, which were all measured on a five-point-Likert scale. This questionnaire enjoyed an acceptable construct validity. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was measured through running Cronbach's alpha and the internal consistency indices for the two components were 0.78 and 0.80, respectively.

3. Results

The data of the study were analyzed through running descriptive statistics. The data were analyzed through independent samples-t-tests.

Research Question 1

The first research question was aimed at comparing senior and freshman teacher students' motivation and perceptions of teaching. The results of are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics; Components Motivation by Groups

Dependent Variable	Term	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Ability	Freshman	4.08	.057	3.975	4.199
	Senior	3.99	.057	3.881	4.105
IntrinsicCareerValue	freshman	4.23	.077	4.078	4.382
	Senior	4.09	.077	3.938	4.242
FallbackCareer	Freshman	2.1	.080	1.946	2.260
	senior	2.2	.080	2.110	2.424
JobSecurity	Freshman	3.6	.070	3.502	3.778
	senior	3.4	.070	3.342	3.618
Time for Family	Freshman	3.8	.065	3.444	3.701
	senior	3.3	.065	3.214	3.471
JobTransferability	Freshman	3.2	.070	3.135	3.412
	senior	2.7	.070	2.611	2.889
ShapeFuture ofChildren/Adolescent	Freshman	4.3	.060	4.278	4.515
	senior	4.3	.060	4.191	4.429
EnhanceSocial Equity	Freshman	4.1	.052	4.031	4.236
	senior	4.03	.052	3.934	4.139
MakeSocial Contribution	Freshman	4.4	.053	4.389	4.598
	senior	4.3	.053	4.289	4.498
Work with Children/Adolescent	Freshman	4.1	.069	3.974	4.246
	senior	4.1	.069	4.021	4.292
PriorTeaching / Learning Experience	Freshman	4.1	.064	3.994	4.246
	senior	3.7	.064	3.672	3.923
SocialInfluence	Freshman	3.8	.071	3.720	4.000
	senior	3.8	.071	3.676	3.957

As depicted in Table1, freshman teacher students seem to have gained slightly higher mean scores in most of the factors. Yet, to find out whether the differences were statistically significant, independent t-tests were run the results of which are displayed in Table 2.

As illustrated in Table 2, the means of the freshman and senior teacher students on majority of the motivation components including the ability, intrinsic career value, fallback career, job security, shape future of children/adolescents, enhance social equity, work with children, and social influence is not significant ($p > 0.05$). However, as Table 2 displays statistically significantly higher means were detected freshman student teachers on three of the components of the motivation for teaching ; namely, time for family ($t(1,198)=1.162, p > 0.05$),job transferability, $(t(1,198)=5.26,p < 0.05)$, and prior teaching/learning ($t(1,198)= 3.58, p < 0.05$). It seems that freshman teacher students could be more optimistic that teaching career allows more family time and teaching hours and

school vacations allows for family commitments and desirable quality-of-life issues. On the other hand, freshmen's perceptions of teaching as being useful for overseas employment and traveling and as allowing greater choice of where to live seem to be more positive than seniors. Freshman teacher students also believe more positive influence of prior teaching and learning. Freshmen's higher means on these three components shows that they enter the university with a high level of interest in teaching career.

Table 2: t-tests for comparing means on components of motivation

t-test for Equality of Means					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Ability	1.164	198	.246	.093	.080
Intrinsic Career Value	1.280	198	.202	.140	.109
FallbackCareer	-1.449	198	.149	-.163	.113
JobSecurity	1.615	198	.108	.160	.099
Time for family	2.497	198	.013	.230	.092
JobTransferability	5.267	198	.001	.523	.099
Shape future of children	1.019	198	.309	.087	.085
Enhance social equity	1.315	198	.190	.097	.074
Work with children	-.479	198	.632	-.047	.097
Prior teaching/learning	3.582	198	.000	.323	.090
Social influence	.431	198	.667	.043	.101

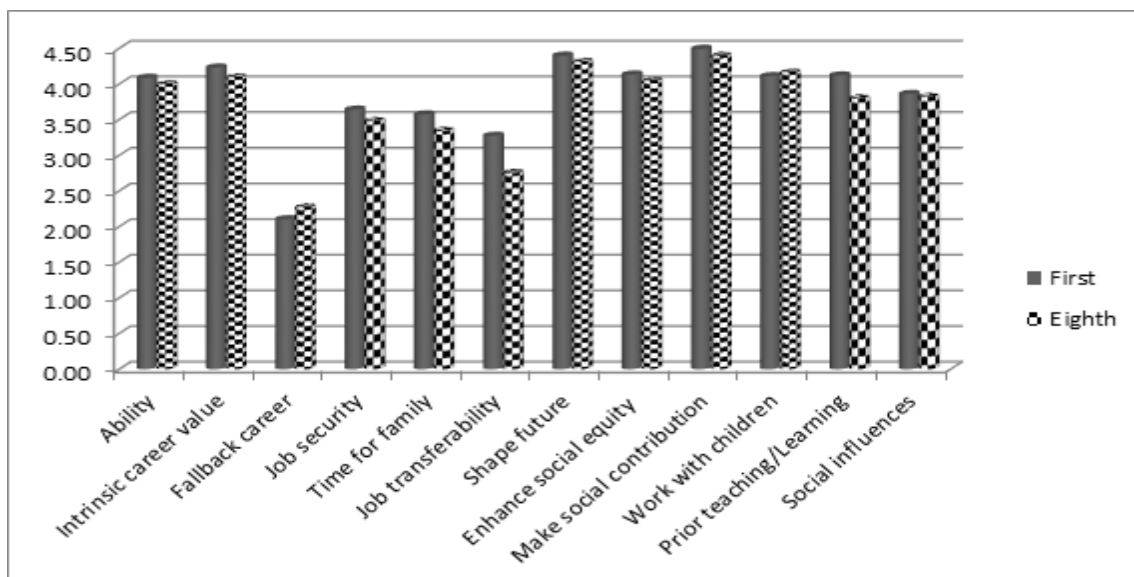


Figure 1: Comparing means on components of motivation

Research Question 1; Part II

Independent sample t-tests were run to compare the senior and freshman teacher students' means on the six components of perception. The results of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics; Components Perception by Groups

Dependent Variable	Term	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Expertise	First	4.10	.07	3.951	4.249
	Eighth	4.30	.07	4.151	4.449
Difficulty	First	3.55	.07	3.408	3.699
	Eighth	4.15	.07	4.008	4.299
SocialStatus	First	4.01	.07	3.876	4.157
	Eighth	3.81	.07	3.671	3.952
Salary	First	2.02	.09	1.839	2.201
	Eighth	1.76	.09	1.584	1.946
SocialDissuasion	First	2.93	.09	2.743	3.130
	Eighth	3.11	.09	2.923	3.310
Satisfaction	First	4.27	.08	4.116	4.438
	Eighth	4.03	.08	3.869	4.191

As it can be seen in Table 3, while on expertise, difficulty, and social dissuasion freshman teacher students gained higher mean scores, senior student teachers obtained higher means on salary, social status, and satisfaction. Shown in Table 5 are the results of t-tests run to test whether differences were statistically significant.

Table 5: t-tests for comparing means on components of perception

	Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Expertise	.04	.83	-1.87	198	.07	-.20
Difficulty	1.50	.22	-5.75	198	.00	-.60
Social Status	1.00	.31	2.03	198	.04	.20
Salary	.33	.56	1.96	198	.04	.25
Social Dissuasion	.52	.47	-1.29	198	.19	-.18
Satisfaction	.08	.77	2.13	198	.03	.24

The results of the t-tests illustrated in table 5 crystallize that no significant difference between the freshman ($M = 4.10, SD = .07$) and senior ($M = 4.30, SD = .07$) teacher students' means on their perception towards expertise ($t(1, 198) = 1.87, p > 0.05$). Moreover, the results indicated that there was not any significant difference between the freshman ($M = 2.93, SD = .09$) and senior ($M = 3.11, SD = .09$) teacher students' means on social dissuasion ($t(1, 98) = 1.29, p > 0.05$). In contrast, the results revealed that the senior teacher student ($M = 4.15, SD = .07$) had a statistically significantly higher mean on their perception towards difficulty than the freshman ($M = 3.55, SD = .07$) teacher students, ($t(1, 198) = -5.75, p < 0.05$). Also, the freshman teacher students ($M = 4.01, SD = .07$) had a significantly higher mean on their perception towards social status than the senior ($M = 3.81, SD = .07$) teacher students ($t(1, 198) = -2.07, p > 0.05$). Moreover, the difference between freshman ($M = 2.02, SD = .09$) and senior ($M = 1.76, SD = .09$) teacher students on their perception towards salary was found to be significant ($t(1, 198) = -1.96, p > 0.05$), with freshman teacher students gaining a higher mean score.

In addition, the difference between freshman and senior teacher means on their perception towards satisfaction (2.93 vs. 3.11) was significant ($t = -1.96, df = 198, p = .001 > 0.05$).

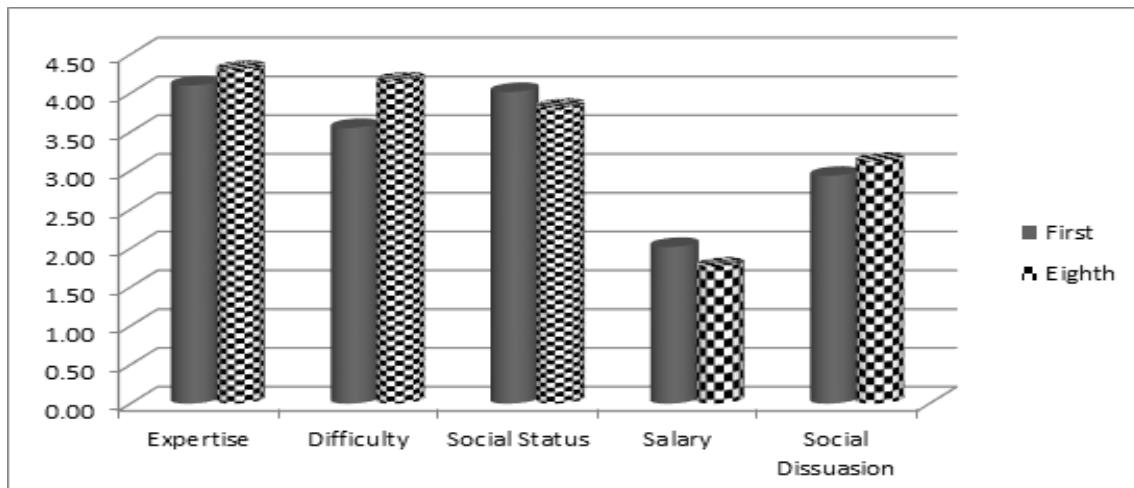


Figure 2: Comparing means on components of perception

Research Question 2

The second research question was intended to compare male and female teacher students' motivation for becoming teachers and their perceptions of teaching. In an attempt to find the answer to this question, for each component of motivation and perceptions an independent t-test was run. The descriptive statistics of motivation and perceptions are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics; Components Motivation by Males and Females

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ability	Male	100	4.14	.55
	female	100	3.94	.56
IntrinsicCareerValue	Male	100	4.20	.73
	female	100	4.12	.81
FeedbackCareer	Male	100	2.23	.80
	female	100	2.14	.79
JobSecurity	Male	100	3.33	.73
	female	100	3.79	.58
Time for Family	Male	100	3.30	.60
	female	100	3.62	.67
JobTransferability	Male	100	3.00	.79
	female	100	3.03	.70
ShapeFuture of Children/Adolescent	Male	100	4.37	.64
	female	100	4.33	.56
EnhanceSocial Equity	Male	100	4.11	.54
	female	100	4.06	.49
MakeSocial Contribution	Male	100	4.47	.54
	female	100	4.41	.51
Work with Children	Male	100	4.13	.64
	Female	100	4.14	.72
PriorTeaching / Learning Experience	Male	100	4.07	.62
	Female	100	3.85	.66
SocialInfluence	Male	100	3.83	.74
	Female	100	3.85	.67

As it can be observed in Table 6, in most of the components, male student teachers tend to get

higher mean scores when compared to female ones. Table 7 depicts the result of t-test aimed at comparing the mean scores in each component.

Table 7: t-tests for comparing male and females' means on motivations

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean Difference
Ability	.01	.90	2.61	198	.01	.20
Intrinsic Career Value	1.18	.27	.66	198	.50	.07
FeedbackC	.06	.79	.85	198	.39	.09
JobSecurity	3.08	.08	4.88	198	.00	-.46
Time for family	1.93	.16	3.58	198	.00	-.32
JobTransferability	.65	.42	-.28	198	.77	-.03
Shape future of children	.79	.53	.47	198	.63	.04
Enhance social equity	.05	.80	.67	198	.49	.05
Work with children	.02	.88	.79	198	.42	.06
Prior teaching/learning	.03	.85	-.13	198	.89	-.01
Social influence	1.24	.26	-.16	198	.86	-.01

As it is displayed in Table 7, the difference between male ($M=4.14, SD=.55$) and female ($M=3.94, SD=.56$) teacher students' mean scores on the ability was found to be statistically significant, with male participants having demonstrated a superiority ($t(1,198) = 2.61, p < 0.05$). The results also proved the difference between male ($M=3.33, SD=.73$) and female ($M=3.79, SD=.58$) teacher students' mean scores on job security significant, $t(1,198) = 2.61, p < 0.05$. The female participants ($M=3.32, SD=.60$) were also found to have significantly outperformed the male ones ($M=3.62, SD=.67$) on time for family ($t(1,198) = 3.58, p < 0.05$). In contrast, the results indicated no significant differences between the mean scores gained by male and female teacher students on the other components of motivations; namely, social influence ($t(1,198) = -.16, p > .05$), prior teaching/learning experience ($t(1,198) = -.13, p > .05$), work with children ($t(1,198) = .79, p > .05$), enhance social equity ($t(1,198) = .67, p > .05$) and shape children future ($t(1,198) = .47, p > .05$).

Next, another series of t-tests were run to compare the performance of male and female student teachers in various components of the FTI-choice scale. Table 8 displays descriptive statistics.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics; Components Perception by male and female teacher students

	gender	N	Mean	SD	SEM
Expertise	Male	100	4.13	.775	.078
	female	100	4.27	.742	.074
Difficulty	Male	100	3.84	.817	.082
	female	100	3.86	.774	.077
Salary	Male	100	1.88	1.073	.107
	female	100	1.91	.748	.075
Social Status	Male	100	3.85	.738	.074
	Female	100	3.98	.694	.069
Social Dissuasion	Male	100	3.20	.797	.080
	Female	100	2.86	1.114	.111
Satisfaction	Male	100	4.17	.840	.084
	Female	100	4.13	.810	.081

As it can be seen from Table 8, female and male student teachers appeared to have almost

similar scores, yet to find out whether the slight differences were meaningful, the researchers ran a series of t-tests the results of which are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: t-tests for comparing male and females' means on perceptions

	Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig	Mean Difference
Expertise	.256	.613	-1.3	198	.173	-.147
Difficulty	1.357	.245	-.17	198	.859	-.020
Salary	1.46	0.25	-.19	198	.849	-.025
Social Dissuasion	1.32	0.32	2.4	198	.07	.340
Satisfaction	.319	.573	.34	198	.732	.040

As it is shown in Table 9, the difference between male and female teacher students' means on all components of perceptions about teaching was found not significant ($p > 0.05$), indicating that both male and female teacher students had the same perceptions of expertise, difficulty of the job, salary which they receive as would be teachers, satisfaction with teaching as a career, and social dissuasion.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The main objective of the present study was an attempt to compare the motivation factors and perceptions of teaching among freshman and senior teacher students. The results showed that in majority of the components of the motivations freshman and senior students have the same mean scores. However, the difference between the senior and freshman teacher students' mean scores on time for family, job transferability and previous teaching/learning experience is significant. Freshman students have more time for family. Such a difference is deeply rooted in the nature of syllabus for freshman students which seems to be more lenient than the syllabus for senior students. Another difference is that freshman students take limited courses while senior students have to take more courses so that they can get graduated. Such a difference was not supported by related studies; therefore, a qualitative study is needed to deeply investigate the reasons for such a difference. In terms of the differences between freshman and senior students' mean scores on job transferability and previous teaching/learning experience, it could be strongly argued that senior students' cognition about job transferability changed while they were taking courses at university and syllabus they received at university influenced their cognition. This study should be replicated through a qualitative study so that the researcher can extract more information from the interviews with the students. The second objective of the research question was to compare the male and female teacher students' motivations for teaching and their perceptions of teaching. The results of the study showed that the difference between male and female teacher students' means on the ability, job security, job time for family is significant, favoring the male teacher students. That is, male teacher students' motivations for ability in teaching, job security, and time for family is higher than motivations of female teacher students. Whereas, in the other motivation factors for becoming teachers, the difference between male and female teacher students was not significant. The results also show that the difference between male and female teacher students' means on all components of perceptions about teaching is not significant. That is, both male and female teacher students have the same perceptions of expertise, difficulty of the job, salary which they receive as would be teachers, satisfaction with teaching as a career, and social dissuasion. This finding is not consistent with the findings reported by some related studies (e.g., Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Sinclair, 2008) who argued that in the Dutch, Australian and Chinese teacher education programs, in which pre-service teachers are predominantly female and females are more likely to be attracted to teaching. The results are also inconsistent with the findings of (Feng, 2011) who argues that teaching is identified as the least desirable career option by the Chinese male secondary school graduates. Therefore, it could be strongly argued that influential factors for teaching motivations and perceptions of teaching are culturally specific and unique.

Similar studies should be conducted to probe the generalizability of the research findings, to investigate why certain teaching motivations predominate in Iran context, and to draw a national profile of the Education Faculties. Therefore, as Akar (2012) argues a national profile helps better identify the influence of social, economic, and cultural contexts on how their motivation to become teachers, and contributes to the formulation and implementation of more relevant and specific teacher education policies.

Due to the limitations of the present study, further research is needed to deeply lay emphasis on the other aspects of teacher education in Iran, such as curriculum, the profile of teacher students, admission requirements, their job entrance, induction, and retention. Similar to other education research basis in other contexts, a strong research basis is needed to improve not only teacher education but also the recruitment efforts, and teacher education policies in Iran.

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