EXPLORING THE MOTIVATIONS OF TUNISIAN PRE-SERVICE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT
This study had two key objectives. First, it aimed at exploring the motivations of Tunisian pre-service primary school teachers. Second, it sought to examine the potential impact of gender on motivation. As a concept, motivation was operationally defined as the reasons that made students go into teaching. Quantitative data was collected by means of a Likert scale questionnaire. The participants were (n =226, 89 males and 137 females) doing a degree in educational sciences at a public Tunisian higher education institution. To address the first objective, I used descriptive statistics and ran a Principal Component Analysis (PCA). To address the second objective, I had recourse to an Independent Samples *t* Test. It was found that the prospect of a guaranteed job and lengthy holidays are the main incentives for Tunisian students to go into teaching. The study showed that females are attracted into the profession on the basis of intrinsic and altruistic motivations. However, most males are extrinsically motivated.
Keywords: Motivation; intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, gender, pre-service teachers, Tunisia.

Introduction
Teaching is a demanding job that takes a great deal of passion and motivation. The teacher cannot do their job properly if they are not passionate about it. Teachers who are lacking in motivation teach in a superficial way and cover the material mechanically (Daoud, 2019). Bringing about positive changes to the Tunisian education system is conditional on producing motivated and competent primary school teachers. As a concept, teacher motivation has major importance and is usually bracketed with other important concepts such as student motivation and educational reform (Han &Yin, 2016). Tunisian pre-service primary school teachers need to finish a three-year degree in educational sciences to get recruited. The prospect of a guaranteed job on completion of the degree has attracted very large numbers of students. The university teachers in the Tunisian departments of education have begun to express their concern. They noticed that the prospect of a guaranteed job has lured some students who take no interest in teaching. The aim of this study is to investigate the motivations of pre-service Tunisian primary school teachers. It seeks to identify the main reasons that made them go into teaching. The study aims at answering the following research questions:

1/What types of motivation do Tunisian pre-service primary school teachers have?

2/ What are the basic dimensions of Tunisian pre-service primary school teachers' motivation?

3/ Do male and female Tunisian pre-service primary school teachers differ in their motivations?

Theoretical framework
The definition of the concept of motivation in education has not enjoyed consensus. Dörney (2003) attributes the confusion of the scene to the abundance of motivation theories. Dörney and Ushioda (2011) define motivation as the energy or drive that has a natural galvanizing effect on people. In other words, the set of reasons that drive people to go into teaching. According to Sinclair (2008, p. 37), teacher motivation encompasses "all the factors that attract individuals to teaching and determine the degree to which they engage with their courses and the teaching profession". Teacher motivation falls into three main categories: altruistic, intrinsic and extrinsic (Bastick, 2000; Sinclair 2008; Young 1995). Altruistic motivation applies to teachers who have chosen teaching for the purpose of contributing to individual and social development. Intrinsically motivated teachers are those who go into teaching because they like working with children and doing work in their area of specialty. Extrinsic motivation encompasses external factors such as salary, job status and working conditions (Andrews & Hatch, 2010). To understand pre-service teachers' motivations, it is essential to be familiar with the following two theories, self-determination theory and the theory of basic human values (Fernández, Sánchez & Escoriaza, 2024). Those two theories form the genesis of motivation studies. Therefore, it is essential to discuss them. The concept of self-determination was first introduced by Deci and Ryan (1985). As the appellation suggests, it refers to the individual's ability to make their own decisions without being influenced by people's views and guidance. A self-determined individual makes their own decisions based on their own internal desires and convictions. And if anything goes wrong, they are ready to accept the consequences. The theory of basic human values could also be used in the study of motivations. It is premised upon the idea that people's attitudes, behaviours, and decisions are the manifestations of the values they hold. Bardi and Schwatz (2003) suggest a model that encompasses the

following modules: Benevolence, Universalism, Self-Direction, Achievement, Stimulation, Hedonism, Security, Conformity, Tradition, and Power.

Research into pre-service teacher motivation
The teacher's personal characteristics and cultural context might shape the type of motivation they have for teaching (Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998; Watt & Richarson, 2008). This would explain the differences in findings between the studies that were conducted in different contexts. Andrews and Hatch (2010) carried out a study on math teachers in England and concluded that the vast majority chose teaching because of their experiences as students and their eagerness to work with people. Gao and Trent (2009) carried out a study in China and concluded that job security and stability are the main reasons for going into teaching. In a number of studies carried out in Turkey, it was found that most teachers were intrinsically motivated (Cermik, Dogan., & Sahin, 2010; Üstüner, Demirtaş., & Cömert,2009; Yenilmez & Acat, 2003).

However, one must reiterate that the studies conducted in various contexts had also some common findings. Richards (1960, as cited in Han& Yin, 2016) indicates that satisfaction and juggling job and family life are among the top reasons for going into teaching. Fox (1961, as cited in Han& Yin, 2016, p.4) states that a "desire to work with children or adolescents, a desire to impart knowledge and the opportunity to continue one's own education and service to society" are among the top reasons. Han and Yin (2016) confirm that those findings were corroborated in various studies conducted in various contexts (e.g., Alexander, Chant, & Cox,1994; Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Richardson & Watt, 2008; Sinclair, 2008). In a similar vein, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) warn that unmotivated teachers might decide to quit in the middle of their careers. In Tunisia, pre-service teachers' programmes were reinstated in 2015. In addition, one must state that most of the work in this area was published in Arabic or French. Therefore, it is safe to say that the present study will contribute to the literature on Tunisian primary school teachers' motivation.

The study
The study was carried out in January 2022. The participants who took part in it were 226 (89 males and 137 females) future Tunisian primary school teachers. They were selected through a convenience sampling technique. To give the reader of this article an idea about how generalizable the findings could be, it is necessary to build up a detailed profile of the participants (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The students' ages ranged between 18 and 20. They studied for seven years at high school. In the final year, they took and pass a national exam called the Baccalaureate. In Tunisia, admission to university is conditional on passing this exam. At university, the participants are studying for three years. On completion of their educational sciences degree, they will immediately be recruited by the Ministry of Education to start teaching at Tunisian primary school teachers. On the educational sciences programme, students study science subjects, some humanities subjects and the following three languages (Arabic, French, and English).

The questionnaire
Data was collected by means of a Likert scale questionnaire. Opting for this type of instrument could be justified by its advantages. Lowe (2007, p.158) states that the use of questionnaire in education research guarantees standardization as there is no interviewer who can influence the respondent. Therefore, it is safe to say that this type of instrument is usually credited with an acceptable degree of reliability. Questionnaires are also prized for the fact that they cause no fear and embarrassment to the respondent as there is no direct contact with the researcher. By the same token, Lowe (2007) adds that questionnaires can ensure confidentiality, hence increase the truthfulness of the responses. The questionnaire that was used in the present study was composed of 12 items, and each item was incorporated with five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). I got official consent to have access to classrooms, and I myself distributed the questionnaire. The questionnaire was, to a large degree, based on the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) developed by **(**Blais, Briere, Pelletier, Senecal,Vallerand & Vallieres,1992). AMS is prized for its clarity and very acceptable internal consistency. Spittle and Spittle (2014, p. 6) state that AMS was used in a lot of studies because of its good structure and acceptable internal consistency. They underscore that its internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha values ranges between .83 and .86.

Results and discussions
To answer the first research question (RQ1: What types of motivation do Tunisian pre-service primary school teachers have?), I had recourse to the descriptive statistics. Table 1 details the percentage of respondents selecting each alternative.

Table1.Percentage of respondents selecting each alternative

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
1/I started a degree in education because I like teaching kids	26.4	28.4	22.6	14.9	7.7
2/Doing a degree in education was my own choice	19.7	32.2	11.1	26.9	10.1
3/I chose teaching to make a difference in people's lives	29.3	35.1	24	11.1	.05
4/I chose teaching to be a role model	20.2	32.2	27.4	13.5	6.7
5/I chose teaching because one of my teachers left a strong impression on me	18.8	22.6	18.3	20.2	20.2
6/I am enjoying the subjects I am studying at university	14.4	22.1	32.7	30.8	00
7/I look forward to starting my job as a teacher	38	34.6	17.8	7.7	1.9
8/Doing a degree in education was imposed on me by my parents	19.7	24	12	17.3	26.9
9/I chose teaching because I thought the job was guaranteed	55.8	32.2	4.8	3.4	3.8
10/I chose teaching to enjoy long holidays	47.1	31.7	6.7	8.7	4.3
11/The subjects that I am studying at university are useless and I feel that I am wasting my time	18.3	18.3	28.4	25	9.6
12/I regret choosing this degree	7.2	15.9	23.1	32.7	21.2

Table 1 shows that the prospect of a guaranteed job was the first motive in doing a degree in sciences of education. More than 80% agreed with the statement *I chose teaching because I thought the job was guaranteed.* The long holidays that teachers can enjoy was the second motive. More than 70% of the respondents agreed with the statement *I chose teaching to enjoy long holidays.* Making a difference in people's lives ranks third. One must highlight that 43.7 % stated that going into teaching was a decision imposed on them by their parents. This may explain why 36 % of the students are not enjoying the subjects they are studying at university. 18.3% strongly agreed and 18.3% agreed with the statement *The subjects that I am studying at university are useless and I feel that I am wasting my time.* In the same vein, 30.8 % disagreed with the statement *I am enjoying the subjects I am studying at university*. However, one must point out that only 23 % of the students regret doing a degree in sciences of education, and more than 60% look forward to the experience of teaching. To ease the interpretation of the descriptive statistics, the students' motivations were listed and ranked in a descending order in the table below. In a 5-point Liker scale, a mean ranging between 3.5 and 5 is considered high (Lowe, 2007). Therefore, the focus was mainly on the means higher than 3.5. Table 2 summarizes the descriptives of the pre-service teacher's motivation.

Table 2. Descriptives of the pre-service teacher's motivation

Item	Mean	SD
9/I chose teaching because I thought the job was guaranteed	4.3	0.83
10/I chose teaching to enjoy long holidays	4.1	0.91
3/I chose teaching to make a difference in people's lives	3.8	1.02
1/I started a degree in education because I like teaching kids	3.5	0.97

Principal component analysis
To explore the motivations of the participants and gain a clear understanding of the possible existing correlations between the variables, I ran a principal component analysis. The aforementioned statistical tool is defined as a data reduction technique that allows the researcher to see the potential various relationships between the variables (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Based on the following two criteria, Eigen Value criterion (>1.00) and the total Variance explained, I identified three components. The components accounted for 57.45 %. According to Mackey and Gass (2005), any value superior to 50% can be considered satisfactory. Based on the variables that load the highest, each component was given an appellation. Table 3 details the Varimax Rotated Principal Component Matrix.

Table 3. Varimax Rotated Principal Component Matrix of the Pre-service Teacher Motivation

Item	Loadings		
	1	2	3
1/I started a degree in education because I like teaching kids	.773		
2/Doing a degree in education was my own choice	.594		
3/I chose teaching to make a difference in people's lives	.683		

4/I chose teaching to be a role model	.589		
5/I chose teaching because one of my teachers left a strong impression on me	.584		
7/I look forward to starting my job as a teacher	.511		
9/I chose teaching because I thought the job was guaranteed		.638	
10/I chose teaching to enjoy long holidays		.664	
11/The subjects that I am studying at university are useless and I feel that I am wasting my time			.673
12/I regret choosing this degree			.531

On principal component 1, statement 1 *I started a degree in education because I like teaching kids* and statement 3 *I chose teaching to make a difference in people's lives* load the highest. Therefore, this component will be called 'Intrinsic and altruistic motivation' (Total variance explained 29.75 %). Altruistic motivation applies to teachers who have chosen teaching for the purpose of contributing to individual and social development. Intrinsically motivated teachers are those who go into teaching because they like working with children and doing work in their area of specialty (Andrews & Hatch, 2010).

On principal component 2, statement 9 *I chose teaching because I thought the job was guaranteed* and statement 10 *I chose teaching to enjoy long holidays* load the highest. Therefore, this component will be called 'Extrinsic motivation' (Total variance explained 14.34%). Extrinsic motivation encompasses external factors such as salary, job status, working conditions (Andrews & Hatch, 2010).

On principal component 3, statement 11 *The subjects that I am studying at university are useless and I feel that I am wasting my time* and statement 12 *I regret choosing this degree* load the highest. Therefore, this component will be called 'Dissatisfaction with the modules taught at university' (Total variance explained 13.36 %). The very long syllabi, the vague course descriptions, and the lack of coordination between teachers teaching the same subjects may explain the dissatisfaction on the part of the students (Meziane & Hmeissia, 2018). Table 4 provides the descriptives of the subscales.

Table 4. Descriptives of subscales of the pre-service teacher motivation

Sub-scale	Number of items	Mean	SD	Alpha
Intrinsic and altruistic motivation	6	3.59	1.18	.721
Extrinsic motivation	2	4.21	1.06	.825
Dissatisfaction with the modules taught at university	2	2.83	1.21	.745

Out of three means, two could be classed high since they were superior to 3.5. The one that was not high falls into the medium usage level as it was above 2.5 (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The three subscales have an acceptable value of Cronbach alpha (Hulin, Netemeyer, & Cudeck, 2001). Descriptive statistics showed that, for 80% of the respondents, the first reason to go into teaching is the prospect of a guaranteed job. One can argue that this conclusion can be explained by the current socio-economic situation in Tunisia. The specter of long years of unemployment has made a lot of families, parents and students consider teaching a safe alternative. Haouas, Sayre, and Yagoubi (2012) point out that unemployment among Tunisian university graduates has become a phenomenon. They explain that nearly 50% of the students who hold a university degree end up unable to find a job. Skilbeck and Connell (2003) highlight that the unavailability of alternative work makes a lot of students go into teaching, although they are not passionate about it. By the same token, Sinclair (2008) explains that the motivations of pre-service teachers can be determined by the socioeconomic situations in their respective countries. In developing countries, the decision to embark on a teaching career stems from extrinsic motives (Bastick, 2000).

The present study showed that job security and lengthy holidays are the main factors that attracted Tunisian students into the profession. In other words, the vast majority of Tunisian pre-service teachers did not choose teaching because they are passionate about it. They did so because they have reasons, other than a passion for teaching. This can explain why most of them are dissatisfied with the content taught on their teacher education programmes. The joy of teaching kids and the joy of making an impact on people's lives are the two intrinsic motivations mentioned by most respondents. One can argue that this conclusion enjoys some degree of consensus in the literature. A number of previous studies concluded that the joy of working with children and making a valuable contribution to society are the main intrinsic motivational preferences of teachers (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Reid & Thornton, 2000; Skilbeck & Connell 2003; Ornstein & Levine 2006).

To answer the third research (RQ3: Do male and female pre-service primary school teachers differ in their types of motivation?), I ran an independent samples *t test* on the three components. All the Levene's tests have a significance level far higher than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted and equal variances t-test was used. As shown in table 5, 'Intrinsic and altruistic motivation' and 'extrinsic motivation' have *p* values smaller than .05. Therefore, we can conclude that Intrinsic and altruistic motivation is a type of motivation that applies more to females (M= .05, SD= .91) than it does to males (M=.02, SD=.84); t=.47, P=.006. However, extrinsic motivation is a type of motivation that applies more to males (M=.05, SD=.76) than it does to females (M=.03, SD=.86); t=.001, P=.001. Table 5 sets out the T test results.

Table 5. *T test Results*

Components	Male (n=89)		Female (n=137)			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Intrinsic and altruistic motivation	.02	.84	.05	.91	.47	.006
Extrinsic motivation	.05	.76	.03	.86	.52	.001
Dissatisfaction with the modules taught at university	.04	.96	.01	1.01	-1.30	.191

With regard to the impact of gender on the type of motivation, the study found that intrinsic and altruistic motivation is a type of motivation that applies more to females. However, extrinsic motivation is a type of motivation that applies more to males. In other words, when considering a career in teaching, Tunisian female students place more importance on intrinsic and altruistic reasons than males. According to Thornton, Bricheno, and Reid (2002), this finding has enjoyed some degree of consensus in the literature. Thornton et al. (2002) point out that males choose teaching on the basis of extrinsic motives, in contrast to females. They reported a number of previous studies that confirm the view that female pre-service teachers are more intrinsically and altruistically motivated than males (Johnston, Mckeown, & Mcewen,1999; Reid & Thornton, 2000).

Limitations

As is the case in any study, the present one has its limitations. Data was only collected through questionnaires. One must acknowledge that this research instrument has its disadvantages. Lowe (2007, p.158) explains that questionnaires are not flexible as they do not allow respondents to fully express their opinions. Lowe (2007) adds that questionnaires do not give the researcher the chance to get supplementary observational data and understand the motive for replying. The study and its findings would have been more valid if I had supplemented the questionnaire with another research instrument. Mackey and Gass (2005) confirm that having recourse to more than one data collection tool would increase the validity of the study.The study can also be criticized for the fact that it used convenience sampling. This type of sampling has its limitations and is prone to "selection bias and influences beyond the control of the researcher" (Mooi et al., 2018, p. 46). Although the sample was acceptable (N=226), having a larger one would have given more credence to the findings. The teacher educators should have been involved in the study. They would have been able to provide a holistic and objective assessment of their students' motivations. Observing the participants in some classes would have given an idea about how enthusiastic and how engaged they are. The programme entails some practical teaching in primary schools. Observing the participants during those lessons could have given a clearer and more objective understanding of their motivations. It is worth noting that even on the teacher education programme, the student's motivation might be significantly impacted, either negatively or positively. Therefore, when exploring pre-service teachers' motivations, it is usually recommended to carry out longitudinal studies (Núñez-Regueiro, Escriva-Boulley, Azouaghe, Leroy & Núñez-Regueiro, 2024).

Conclusion

The present study was carried out for the purpose of exploring the motivations of Tunisian pre-service primary school teachers. As a concept, motivation was operationally defined as the set of factors that might attract Tunisian students into the profession of teaching. The study aimed also at investigating the possible differences between the motivations of males and those of females. The findings showed that the prospect of a guaranteed job and lengthy holidays are the main enticements. The study found that males and females differ in their types of motivations. Females go into teaching based on intrinsic and altruistic motivations, whereas males do so on the basis of extrinsic motivations.

Recommendations

Integrating classroom observations into the selection of prospective teachers in the Tunisian Departments of Education is the first recommendation to put forward in the present study. If we are to objectively assess the applicant's fitness for a teaching career, we must give them the chance to experiment with the task of teaching and managing a classroom (Klassen & Kim, 2019). In the Tunisian Departments of education, acceptance on the

educational sciences degree course is conditional on the outcome of an interview. Relying solely on interviews does not guarantee the selection of motivated students. Klassen and Kim (2019, p.33) state that, "as a selection method for prospective teachers, interviews cannot guarantee reliable and objective evaluation". They explain that factors such as race, age and appearance might come into play and subjectively impact the interviewer's opinion and their final decision. The second recommendation to put forward is the critical need to rethink and revise the curriculum in the Tunisian Departments of Education. One must warn that the long busy syllabi might demotivate even the most motivated student. Meziane and Hmeissia (2018) warn that the curriculum places great demands on both, students and teachers.

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