



Why do Teachers Decide to Teach?
Factors Influencing the Choice of Becoming a Teacher in Italy

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Ilaria Viola -PhD student in Didactics, Technology and Inclusive Education

Erika Marie Pace - Junior Researcher - Special Pedagogy and Didactics

Paola Aiello - Associate Professor, Special Pedagogy and Didactics

University of Salerno - Department of Humanities, Philosophy and Education

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Theoretical framework

The motivation to embark on the process of becoming a teacher is an aspect that is subject to many variables

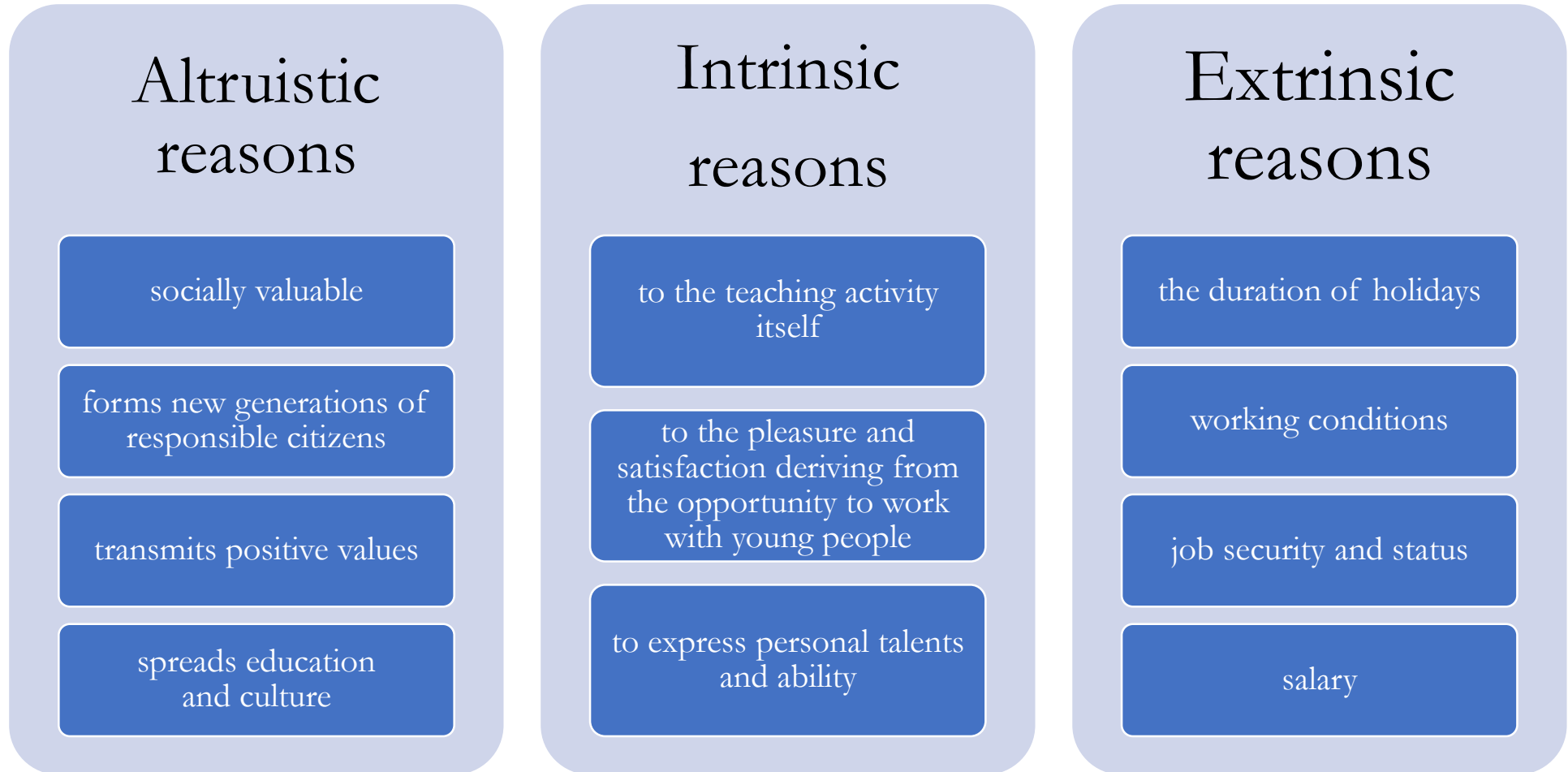
*“it involves a **prominent intrinsic component** as a main constituent.*

*it is very closely linked with **contextual factors**, associated with the institutional demands and constraints of the workplace, and the salient social profile of the profession.*

*along with all the other types of career motivation, it concerns an **extended**, often lifelong, process with a featured temporal axis which is most clearly reflected when talking about career structures and promotion possibilities.*

*it appears to be **particularly fragile**, that is, exposed to several powerful negative influences some being inherent in the profession”*

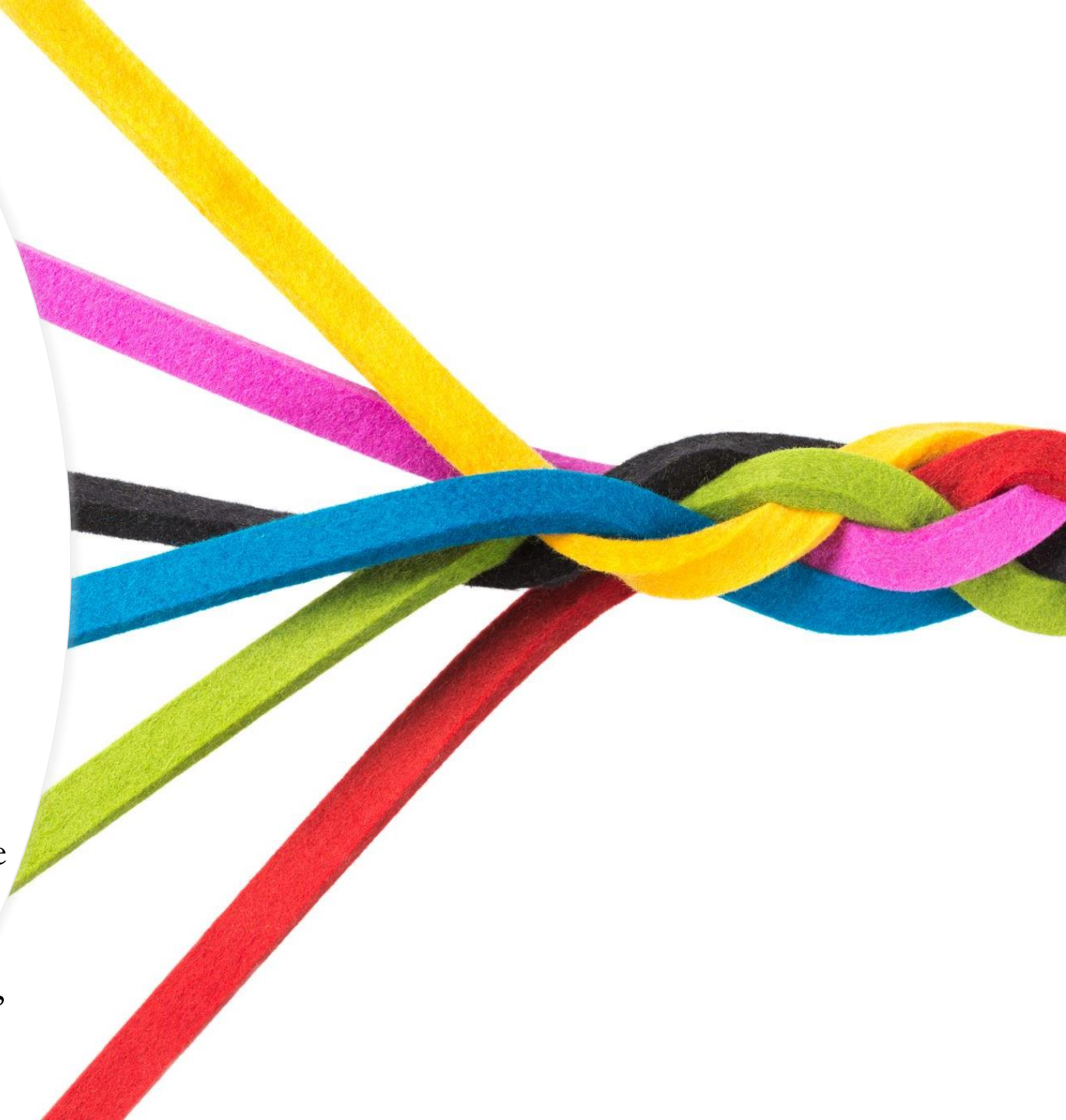
Theoretical framework



(Cornali, 2019; Sinclair, 2006, 2008; Bookhart and Freeman, 1992)

Theoretical framework

- From the TALIS report (2018) and from the data collected by Sinclair (2006; 2008), Brookhart, Freeman (1992), Watt, Richardson (2006; 2007; 2012) it emerges that intrinsic, altruistic and extrinsic motivations are determining factors for the decision to become a teacher.
- Further studies have shown that extrinsic motivations are more important in contexts with low-medium economic levels (Cornali, 2019).
- Job security, salary, and perception of career status have been identified as factors affecting the choice to become a teacher also in Brunei (Yong, 1995), Zimbabwe (Chivare, 1988), Slovenia (Kyriacou, Kobori, 1998), and Turkey (Kilinc, Watt, Richardson, 2012).



Rationale: Zeitgeist of interest

The urgency arises:

- from claimed shortage of registered teachers in many countries the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia Asia, and some European countries (Organization for Security and Cooperation and Economic Development, 2005);
- "from reports from numerous countries that denounce that not all teachers are motivated to teach and this trend is getting worse" (Bier, 2018, p.16; Dorney, Uschioda, 2011; Sinclair, 2008);
- from the fact that one third of the teachers present the desire to change jobs (OECD, 2019).



Rationale: Zeitgeist of interest

In a review of 44 studies, Brookhart and Freeman (1992) analyse what the characteristics of students enrolled in their first training course to become a teacher are.

The authors note that most of the studies:

pose problems of validity and reliability of the tools

claim the lack of useful and reliable tools

and the lack of an explanatory model

that integrates the various dynamic interactions between the variables of motivation

Teacher education for an inclusive education system: The Italian context

In 1971, the Law 118 paved the way to the abolishment of special schools, whereas Law 517 in 1977, besides guaranteeing education for all in mainstream classrooms, envisaged the introduction of a learning support teacher and an individualised educational plan for students with disability (Law 517/1977; Aiello, Sharma, 2018).




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Teacher education for an inclusive education system: The Italian context

Many support teachers are not satisfied with their situation (Ianes, 2014).

In fact, although still low when compared to other countries, higher dropout rates were found among support teachers when compared to general and subject teachers (Murdaca, 2014, Beck, Gargiulo, 2001; Billingsley, 2004).



Teacher education for an inclusive education system: The Italian context

The teaching support profession is characterized by a series of stress factors such as:

an overload of work caused by the demand for high levels of performance in different areas. These include:

the development of study programs

the control of conduct and behavior

classroom management

lesson planning

(Murdaca, 2014, p. 104)

Research objectives

The goal of the research is precisely to identify the reasons that push teachers to become support teachers, being a profession exposed to greater stressful situations.

The present study looks into the factors influencing the motivation of in-service teachers and young graduates to choose to further their studies and specialise in becoming learning support teachers.



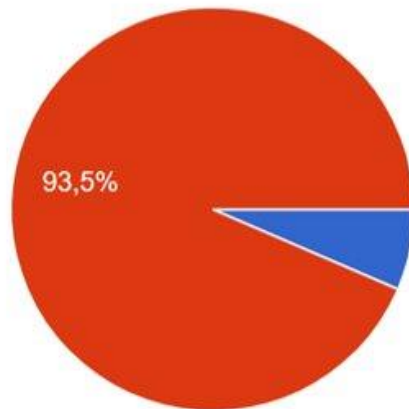
Methodology: Participants

- An online questionnaire was administered to 246 course participants attending a post-graduate specialisation course to obtain the warrant as Learning Support Teachers at the University of Salerno in the academic year 2019/2020.



Gender and age

The majority of the respondents (93.5%) were female

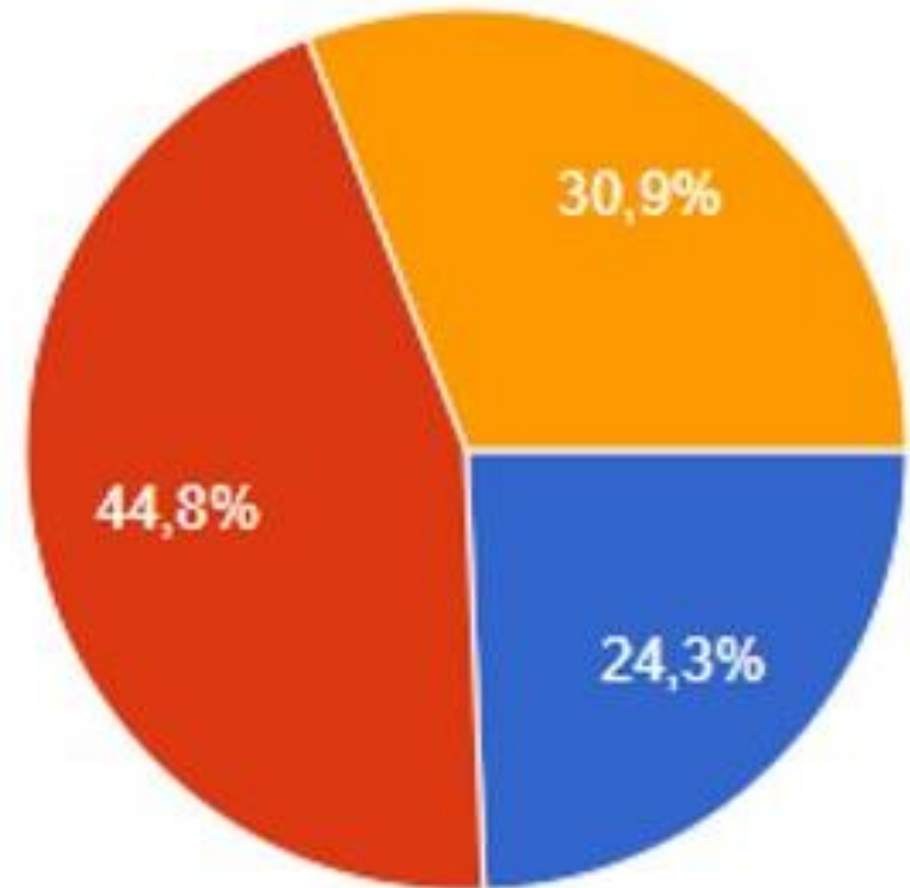


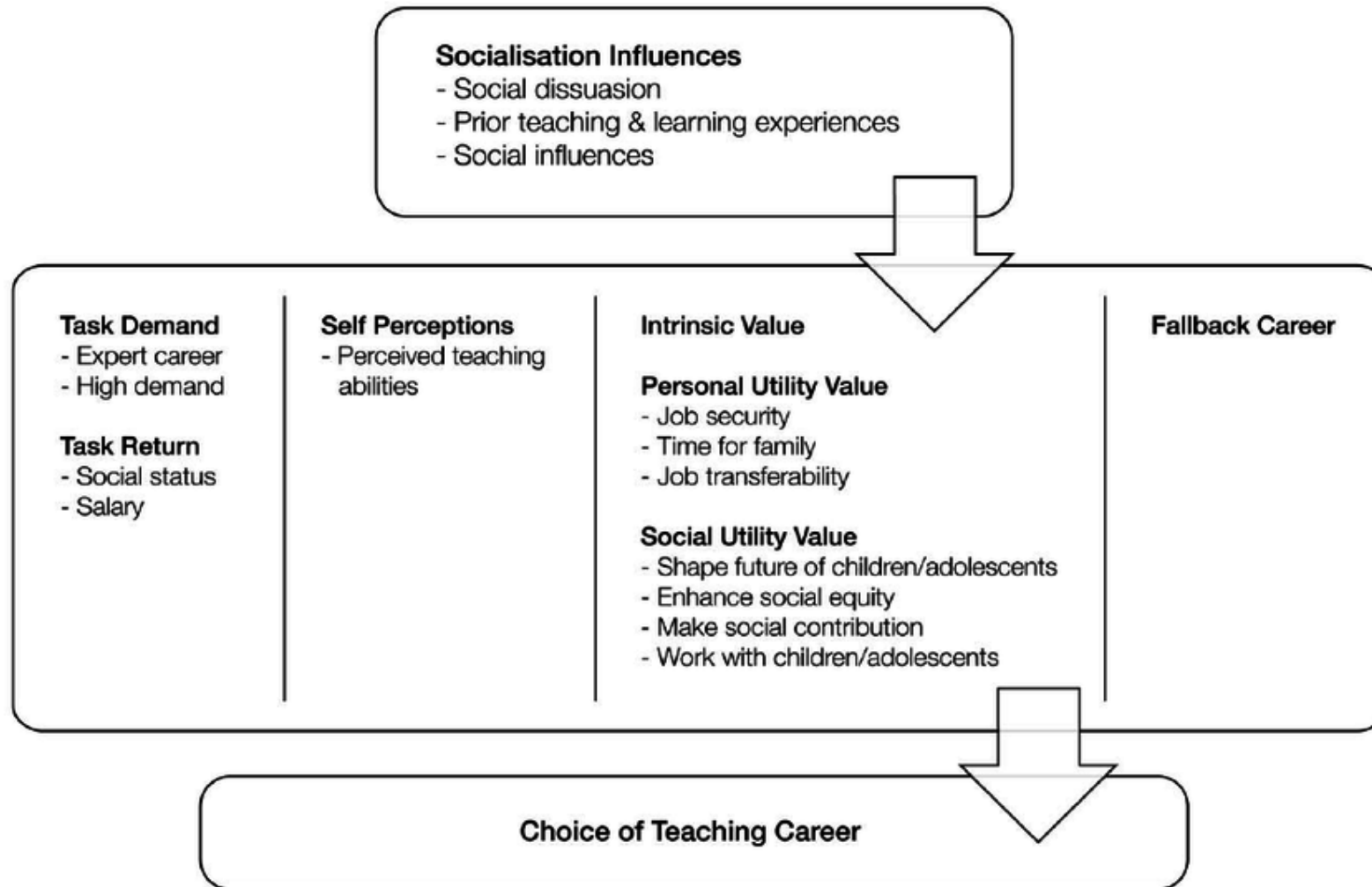
The age range varied from 24 to 56 (M=37.29; sd=7.02)



Teaching experience

- 44.8% of the sample had taught prior to the commencement of the course
- 30.9% declared to be teaching at the time of the study
- 24,3% had never taught.





Model: Factors Influencing Teaching-Choice

The underpinning theoretical framework and the methodology will be outlined with specific reference to the FIT-CHOICE scale (Factors Influencing Teaching-Choice) (Watt & Richardson, 2017) that is currently being validated

The Fit-choice test

The motivation factors measured via this scale include:

social influences, positive prior teaching and learning experiences, perceived teaching abilities, intrinsic value, personal and social utility values and the negative motivation of having chosen teaching as a 'fallback' career.

Measured perceptions of the profession include:

perceived task demand (expertise and difficulty) and return (social status and salary); also assessed are experiences of social dissuasion, and satisfaction with the choice of teaching as a career. (Watt & Richardson, 2007, p. 7).

Italian version of the Fit-Choice scale

The first section collected socio-demographic data

The scale includes 53 items and respondents had to provide an answer on a 7-point Likert scale whose anchors vary from “not at all important” to “extremely important”.

The scale includes items related to variables influencing the choice of becoming a teacher.

It investigates the respondents' beliefs regarding teaching.

The final section aims at exploring “social dissuasion” and the “satisfaction with the choice of teaching as a career”.

Analysis: Descriptive statistics for motivation and perception observed factors

Factors about Motivation	mean	ds
Ability	5,304	1,00
Intrinsic Value	5,958	0,99
Fallback career	1,799	1,08
Personal Utility Value- Job Security	3,924	1,64
Personal Utility Value- Time for Family	3,723	1,59
Personal Utility Value- Bludging	2,616	1,40
Social Utility Value- Shape future of children	5,589	1,181
Social Utility Value- Enhance social equity	5,110	1,45
Social Utility Value- Make social contribution	5,771	1,04
Social Utility Value- Work with children/adolescents	5,839	1,14
Prior Teaching and learning experiences	4,641	1,56
Social Influences	2,009	1,22

- ‘Intrinsic career value’ is the most strongly endorsed motivation, followed by ‘work with children/ adolescents’ and other scales of Social Utility Value. ‘Fallback careers” and “Social influences’ are the least endorsed.
- Six factors out of twelve are rated over 5 on the seven-point scale.

Analysis: Descriptive statistics for motivation and perception observed factors

- For perceptions, the highest means are for ‘Satisfaction with choice’ and ‘Expert career’, which both rate over 6. In addition, ‘High demand’ is rated above 5. The lowest rating was for ‘salary’.

Perception	Mean	SD
Task demand- Expert career	6,041	,859
Task demand- High demand	5,745	,956
Task return- Social status	3,200	1,276
Task return- Teacher morale	3,799	1,103
Task return Good Salary	2,502	1,400
Social dissuasion	3,564	1,55
Satisfaction with choice	6,141	,857

Analysis: internal reliability

- Cronbach's α measures of internal consistency are rather high for:
- 7 motivation factors: "good" (Alfa 80-90)
- 3 motivation factors: "discrete" (Alfa 79-80)
- Cronbach's α measures of internal consistency are rather low for two motivation factors: for 'fallback career', $\alpha = 0.46$, and for 'shape for future of children', $\alpha = 0.53$.

Factors about Motivation	Alfa	mean
Ability	,784	5,304
Intrinsic Value	,734	5,957
Fallback career	,465	1,799
Personal Utility Value- Job Security	,896	3,923
Personal Utility Value- Time for Family	,880	3,724
Personal Utility Value- Bludging	,795	2,616
Social Utility Value- Shape future of children	,538	5,589
Social Utility Value- Enhance social equity	,816	5,110
Social Utility Value- Make social contribution	,843	5,771
Social Utility Value- Work with children/adolescents	,804	5,839
Prior Teaching and learning experiences	,875	4,641
Social Influences	,814	2,009

Analyses: internal reliability

- Cronbach's α measures of internal consistency are rather low for: task demand
($\alpha=0,419$; $\alpha=0,376$)

Perception	Alfa	Mean
Task demand- Expert career	,419	6,041
Task demand- High demand	,376	5,746
Task return- Social status	,768	3,201
Task return- Teacher morale	,640	3,799
Task return GoodSalary	,892	2,502
Social dissuasion	,735	3,564
Satisfaction with choice	,804	6,141

Results

The reliability of factors is acceptable

‘intrinsic value’ of the profession and the desire to ‘work with children/ adolescents’ are the most highly rated.

The fallback career is not important for the decision but the values cannot be considered reliable.

At the same time, participants perceived teaching as a profession that requires ‘high expertise’ and with ‘high demands’ but these values are not reliable. ‘Satisfaction with choice’ is rated as rather high. Among the perceptions, ‘salary’ is the lowest rate.

Conclusions

On the basis of these results, one can assume that the participants made decisions mostly based on the **intrinsic value** (For Example: *I am interested in teaching; I like teaching, I have always wanted to be a teacher*) of the work of teachers, as revealed in other countries such such as Australia (Watt, Richardson, 2002; Sinclair, 2008), USA (Watt, Richardson, 2002)

Social influences (opinion of family/ friends) did not substantially affect students' career choice and it is the lowest compared to the means of other countries (Turkey: 4.71; Indonesia: 4.78; Estonia: 3.78; Australia: 3.13; Italy: 2.00).

In addition, participants perceived teaching as a low-paid job (for example: *Do you think teaching is well paid?; Do you think teachers earn a good salary?*).

The mean for **Salary** is the lowest compared to the means of other countries (Indonesia: 4,58; Ireland: 3,50; Spain: 3, 10; Australian validation sample: 3,33; US: 2, 49; Dutch: 3,29; German: 4,42; Swiss: 4, 72).

Conclusions

In the study there are twelve factors for motivations and seven factors for perceptions.

In the next analysis, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) will be conducted to evaluate the fit of the FIT-choice scale to the Italian context.

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