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## Gender Differences and Motivation for the Teaching Profession: Why Do Men Choose (Not) to Teach?

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*Abstract: The aim of this study was to explore gender differences in motivation for choosing teaching as a profession and perceptions of men's demotivation for the choice of this profession. 279 preservice subject teachers from the University of Zagreb, Croatia, filled in the FIT-Choice Scale (Watt & Richardson, 2007) and the Demotivation of Men for Teaching Career Choice Scale. Results revealed that, regardless of their gender, preservice subject teachers were primarily motivated by the intrinsic and social utility values of teaching, while specific gender differences imply the importance of the role of social factors in men's choice of this career. Low status of the teaching profession was perceived as the dominant reason for demotivation of men to choose it. Women were more likely than men to assume that men are demotivated to choose teaching because it is a "women's profession". Policy implications of findings on men's (de)motivation for teaching are discussed.*

**Keywords:** teaching motivation, demotivation of men for teaching, gender differences, preservice subject teachers, teaching profession

### Introduction

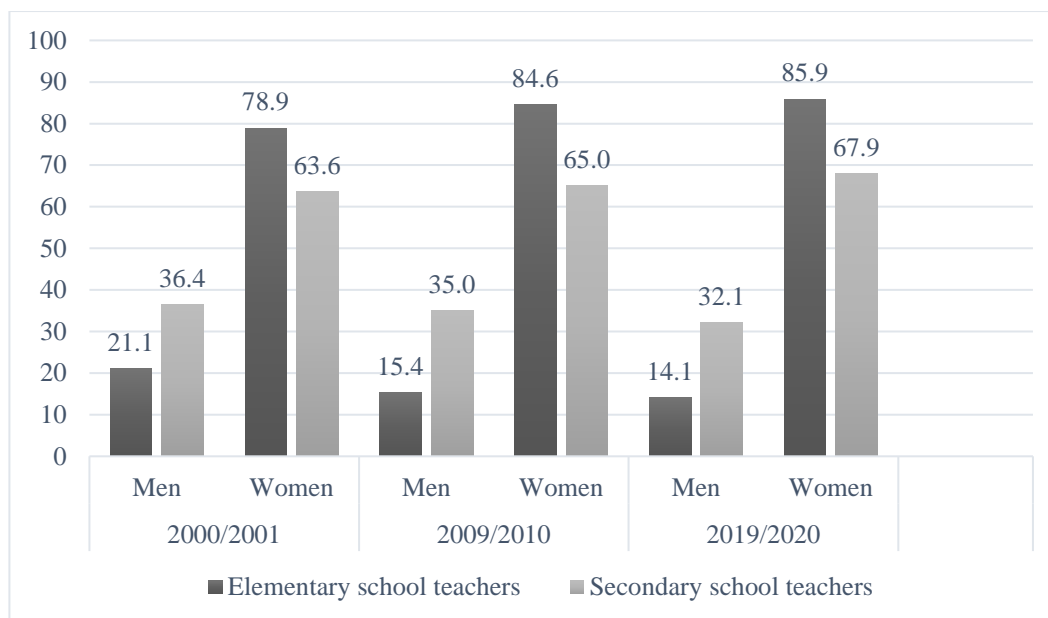
The key challenges for the teaching profession in Europe today are the ageing of the teaching population, a serious shortage of teachers, difficulties retaining younger teachers and significant gender imbalance at different educational levels (Katsarova, 2020). All these factors invoke the need for more detailed exploration of (preservice) teachers' motivation (and the lack of it) for entering teaching and their retention in the profession. In this paper we explore gender differences in preservice subject teachers' motivation to pursue a teaching career and perceived reasons of men's demotivation for the choice of this career.

Women represented 72% of 6 million teachers in the EU in 2020, with the most pronounced gender imbalance in Lithuania and Latvia (86%), Bulgaria (83%) and Iceland (83%) (Eurostat, 2022). Croatia with 78% of female primary and secondary school teachers is above the European average of 72% (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1: European primary and secondary school teachers by gender in 2020 (%)**  
 Source: Eurostat (2022)

In Croatia, the number of men employed as teachers in elementary (8 grades; pupils aged between 6/7 and 14/15 years old) and secondary schools (3-4 grades; pupils aged between 14/15 and 18/19 years old) has been declining for decades. Thus, according to data from the Croatian Bureau of Statistics, in 2019/2020 women represented 85.9% of full-time employed elementary school teachers compared to 78.9% in 2000/2001 (Fig. 2). Also, in 2019/2020 women represented 67.9% of full-time employed secondary school teachers compared to 63.6% in 2000/2001.



**Figure 2: Full-time employed elementary and secondary school teachers in Croatia from 2000/2001 to 2019/2020 by gender (%)**

Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics (2006, 2012, 2021)

In the following sections we will address the main conceptual approaches concerning the lack of men in the teaching profession, followed by a conceptual and empirical overview of gender differences in the motivation for teaching and the reasons for demotivation of men to choose a teaching career.

### Main Perspectives on Men in the Teaching Profession

For decades public concern in many countries was directed towards the issue of boys' educational underperformance, with feminisation of the teaching profession and the lack of male role models being most often mentioned as the cause (Carrington & McPhee, 2008; Carrington & Skelton, 2003). At the beginning of the millennium, countries like Australia, Sweden, Ireland, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, the UK, and Norway introduced measures to increase the number of male teachers including targeted advertising, establishing secondary school mentoring programmes where existing male teachers encouraged male students to become teachers, and commissioning institutions of higher education to attract male applicants to teacher education or to offer male-only scholarships in teacher education programmes (Berge, 2004; Carrington & Skelton, 2003; Cushman, 2007; Eurydice, 2012; Mills et al., 2004). Meanwhile, several studies have shown that teacher's gender does not significantly affect boys' academic achievement (Coenen & Van Klaveren, 2016; Lee et al., 2018), meaning that increasing the number of male teachers does not guarantee a solution to the boys' underperformance problem. What experts generally agreed upon was that the teacher population should represent the student population, reflecting gender (and every other) diversity and complexity (Carrington & Skelton, 2003; Cushman, 2007; McGrath & Van Bergen, 2017). However, said representation is impossible without addressing the underlying issues behind men's reluctance to pursue teaching.

The second perspective is associated with traditional concepts of masculinity and femininity that result in a gender division of occupations about which decisions are usually made during upbringing and schooling (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). While men tend to be employed in professions related to engineering and technology, women find their place in

professions dedicated to childcare, elderly care and healthcare, with many such professions being considered exclusively female. And although feminisation of the teaching profession facilitated access for many women to formal employment, economic empowerment and financial security, it simultaneously fixed them in a profession mistakenly considered as an extension of feminine nature and the continuation of women's innate abilities – those of childcare. At the same time, such understanding of the profession proved detrimental to the motivation of men to pursue a teaching career (Cushman, 2007). Studies indicate that women's interest in teaching occurs somewhat earlier in life compared to men's (Davids & Waghid, 2020) and that boys are less likely to aspire to work as teachers (Han et al., 2020).

The third important issue is that the teaching profession, largely due to its feminisation accompanied by undervaluation of women's work, has been characterised by a decline in social status and pay for decades (Bartnik et al., 2022; Moreau, 2018; Müller, 2019). 74% of teachers from TALIS study conducted in 48 countries believe that the teaching profession is not properly valued in society (OECD, 2020). Surveying the social status of teachers (according to the respect societies have towards them) in 35 countries around the world, showed that on the list of 14 occupations, teaching profession ranked seventh (Dolton et al., 2018; Katsarova, 2020). Although countries varied greatly in the extent to which parents would encourage their children to become teachers, the prevailing conclusion was that the higher the respect for teachers, the more likely it is that parents, regardless of the income, will encourage their children to pursue the teaching profession. Results of this report also showed that teachers are more valued in Asia, Africa and the Middle East than in Europe.

### **Conceptual and Empirical Overview of Gender Differences in Motivation for Teaching**

Motivation for the teaching profession includes a complex interplay of contextual and individual factors, with gender being one of the factors related to career choice. Gender differences in choosing teaching are reflected in the fact that men are much less attracted to enrol in teacher education programmes and numerous studies focused on perception of the teaching profession demonstrated that it is perceived as increasingly feminised (Moreau, 2018; Watt et al., 2012). However, studies relating motivation for teaching and gender are still relatively scarce.

In her review of research on student teachers' career motivation, Heinz (2015) indicated certain methodological and conceptual shortcomings referring to the lack of validated instruments and a solid theoretical base in a considerable number of studies (e.g. poor definitions of motivational constructs, overlapping and mixing various factors assuming to influence motivation for teaching). Within this context, the FIT (Factors Influencing Teaching)-Choice model (Watt & Richardson, 2007), explaining motivation for teaching and deriving from the situated expectancy-value theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2020), addresses some of these shortcomings and provides a clear model of factors influencing teaching career choice.

The FIT-Choice model (Fig. 3) comprises values that guide an individual's choice of teaching – intrinsic value, social utility value and personal utility value. Social utility value resembles what is in teacher education literature often called altruism (Watt et al., 2012), and includes shaping the future of children/adolescents, enhancing social equity, making social contribution, and working with children/adolescents. Personal utility value includes job security, time for family and job transferability. This model also comprises an individual's perception of demands (in terms of expertise and demandingness) and returns (in terms of social status and salary) of a teaching career, socialisation influences on career choice (social

dissuasion, social influences by significant others, and prior teaching/learning experiences), as well as motivation to select teaching as a fallback career. All of these factors are assumed to mutually predict choice of teaching and future professional engagement. The FIT-Choice scale provided the opportunity to compare motivation for teaching of different individuals in different contexts, and it displayed good psychometric characteristics (see Watt & Richardson, 2012, for more details on its cross-cultural validation).

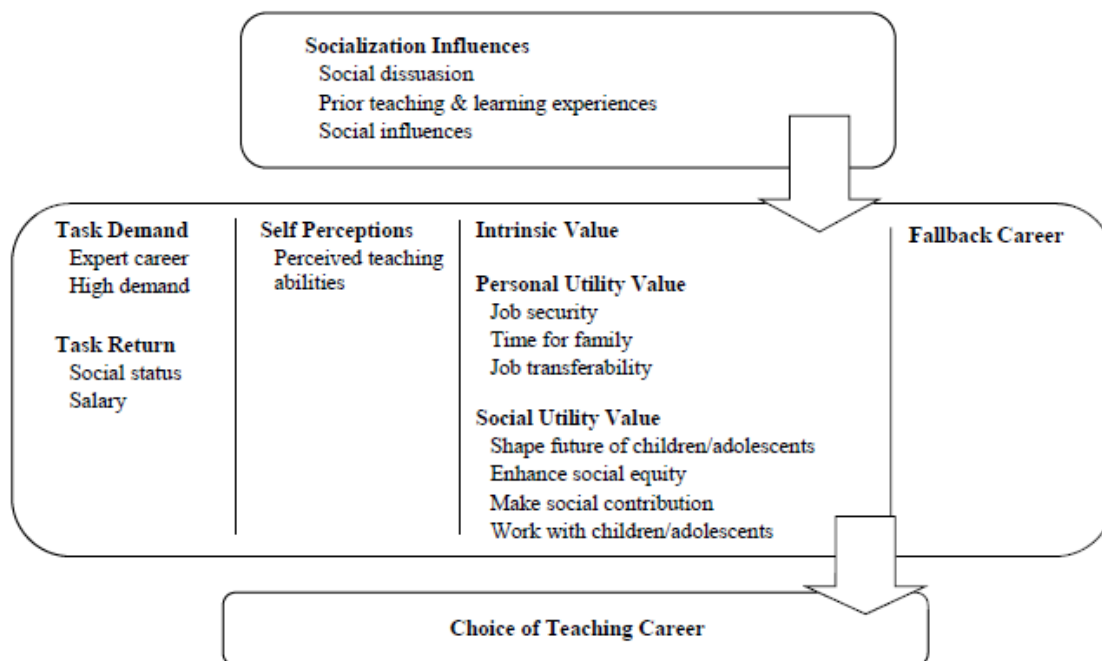


Figure 3: FIT-Choice theoretical model (Watt & Richardson, 2012)

Studies conducted within the FIT-Choice framework examined relations of proposed motivational influences with various factors such as professional commitment, personality, and different educational programme/teaching levels (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012; Kılınc et al., 2012; Marušić et al., 2017; Watt et al., 2017). However, studies examining gender differences in motivation for teaching within the FIT-Choice framework (and generally) are relatively scarce. For example, Watt et al. (2012) found that intrinsic value, work with children/adolescents and time for family were rated higher by Australian female preservice secondary school teachers. They also noticed that the fallback career motive is more present among men, similarly as in research conducted on Australian teachers (Wyatt-Smith et al., 2017) where, besides lower ratings of fallback career motive, women had higher ratings of social utility value of teaching and task demand. Similarly, female preservice teachers in Spain rated intrinsic career and social utility value, and task demand higher, as well as perceived ability, prior teaching and learning experiences, and satisfaction, whereas men scored higher on fallback career, social dissuasion and task return (Gratacós et al., 2017). A study with Iranian preservice teachers showed that women valued time for family higher, which was explained by unequal gender distribution of housework and family obligations (Eghtesadi Roudi, 2022). The FIT-Choice framework was also used in Turkey. Zehir Topkaya and Uztosun (2012) observed no gender differences on a sample of Turkish preservice English teachers, whereas Ozturk Akar (2012) noticed that male preservice classroom and subject teachers' scores on the social dissuasion factor were significantly higher, implying the importance of socialisation experiences in the development of certain gender differences in motivation (Meece et al., 2009).

Apart from the FIT-Choice model, some studies were conducted within the broader concept of motivation for teaching and certain parallels can be drawn among these motives. Examining motivation for teaching of preservice Turkish language teachers, Yüce et al. (2013) noted that women's ratings were higher on intrinsic, influence-based extrinsic and altruistic types of motivation, while mercenary-based extrinsic motivation (related to high status and good working conditions) was higher among men. They also obtained results indicating teaching as a first career choice for more women than men. Similarly, on a sample of preservice classroom teachers in Turkey, Saban (2003) obtained that female students more frequently allege altruistically and intrinsically motivated reasons. Drudy et al. (2005) observed that, among Irish preservice teachers, women reported child-focused motivation more often, and their ratings of intrinsic and altruistic values of teaching were higher, while men placed more emphasis on extrinsic factors.

### **Reasons for Demotivation of Men to Choose Teaching**

Studies examining reasons why men are reluctant to enter the teaching profession are dominantly conducted on men who had already chosen or were planning teaching. Most commonly cited reasons of men's reluctance to choose teaching are poor salaries, low social status of profession, negative perception of others, and uncertainties (following public scrutiny) regarding physical contact with children (Cushman, 2007; Davids & Waghid, 2020; Pollitt & Oldfield, 2017). Studies often imply that these factors are related to public understanding of the teaching profession as female and women's work as less valuable. Comprehending work as less valuable leads to poor salaries and social status, while its female connotation leads to critique and suspicion surrounding professionals who do not fall into the expected gender category. Although significant decline of the traditional male breadwinner model can be observed in recent decades, reality of gender pay and pension gap implies that society still expects men to earn better, making income a more significant factor for their career choices. Studies also imply that male students and workers prefer to be seen as achieving, competent and as having high status, which could underlie their reluctance to choose lower status careers, especially those whose lower status is associated with women's work (Thornton et al., 2002). Within the context of teaching profession expectations, Han et al. (2020), on a sample of 15-year-olds, obtained that boys, compared to girls, are more sensitive to salary as an external motivator for choosing the teaching profession, implying that raising teacher salaries might improve not only teacher attrition but teachers' gender ratio as well.

Although in a study conducted by Drudy et al. (2005) similar reasons for not choosing the teaching profession were observed among male and female participants (e.g. belief that women's natural affinity for children makes them better primary school teachers, attractiveness of other careers, low salary), what researchers found interesting were gender differences. Men's belief in women's natural suitability for teaching was more often mentioned by women as a primary reason for the lack of male teachers, while attractiveness of other careers was more often mentioned as the main reason by men. Moreover, Carrington (2002) indicated that male students distanced themselves from cultural stereotypes related to primary teaching.

Despite the understanding of the teaching profession as being female, there are some gradations of this understanding related to the age of children and educational level. For example, male preservice teachers in South Africa perceive that teaching older pupils is more appropriate for men, whereas teaching younger children is seen as appropriate for women due to their feminised caring roles (Bhana & Moosa, 2016). This gender bias was also

demonstrated in a study with undergraduate students in the U.S., which showed that a female preschool teacher was rated warmer and more suitable for the job than a male preschool teacher (Halper et al., 2019).

### **Present Study**

Although the literature indicates that feminisation of the teaching profession is increasing, studies on gender differences in motivation for teaching are relatively rare, and often conducted on gender unbalanced samples (with a very low ratio of men). Additionally, literature review implies the need for more studies based on theoretically and empirically validated models of motivation for teaching. On the other side, research on demotivation of men for teaching revealed that in quantitative studies individual items are predominantly used to explore men's reasons for demotivation, pointing to the need for an instrument with sound psychometric properties measuring perceived reasons of men's demotivation to choose teaching. Present research mostly highlights two groups of reasons, one related to lower status of the teaching profession (low pay, higher attractiveness of other careers, perception of teaching as unchallenging), and the other related to the understanding of teaching as a women's profession (Carrington, 2002; Drudy, 2008; Pollitt & Oldfield, 2017). Hence, in constructing a scale for exploring reasons of men's demotivation for teaching, this study focused on these two dominant reasons.

Specifically, the aim of this study was to compare the motivation of male and female preservice subject teachers for choosing the teaching profession (on a gender balanced sample of preservice teachers), as well as their perceptions of men's demotivation for the choice of this profession. Therefore, the first research question was to explore gender differences in factors influencing teaching as a career choice. The second research question was to explore and validate the factor structure of perceived reasons of men's demotivation for the choice of teaching. Additionally, we also examined whether there are gender differences in the perception of these reasons.

Existing studies indicate somewhat ambiguous results. Some studies imply that certain gender differences regarding motives for the choice of teaching could be expected (Giersch et al., 2021; Meece et al., 2009; Wyatt-Smith et al., 2017), while on the other hand, Watt et al. (2012) presume that men who have self-selected into teaching could, in terms of motivation, generally not be very different from women who chose teaching. Additionally, Drudy et al. (2005) propose that men who choose teaching could be more oriented towards altruistic and less towards status factors than men in general. Therefore, we could expect that male and female preservice teachers do not significantly differ on most motivations for the choice of the teaching profession, whereby we could expect that men were more discouraged from choosing teaching (i.e. experienced more social dissuasion), and that a fallback career motive is somewhat more present among men. Further, we have expected our data to support two main categories of perceived reasons for men's demotivation to choose teaching: lower status of the teaching profession, and teaching as a women's profession. According to the literature (Carrington, 2002; Drudy et al., 2005), we could also expect that male preservice teachers would be less likely to attribute men's demotivation for teaching to the perception of teaching as women's profession than female preservice teachers would.



## Method

### Sample and Procedure

The sample consisted of 279 four- and fifth-year preservice subject teachers from different higher education institutions at the largest Croatian university, the University of Zagreb. There were 157 women in the sample (56.3%) and 122 men (43.7%). 137 (49.1%) of the students were from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (from the Department of English, Department of Croatian Language and Department of History), 98 (35.1%) from the Faculty of Kinesiology, 27 (9.7%) from the Academy of Fine Arts and 17 (6.1%) from the Academy of Music. Participants' average age was 23.35 years ( $SD=1.42$ ), ranging from 21 to 30, with no age difference between students from different faculties. Women were more represented among students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (63.5%), and men among students from the Faculty of Kinesiology (61.2%). There were 22 women and 5 men in the sample from the Academy of Music, and 10 women and 7 men from the Academy of Fine Arts. Questionnaires were administered during one regular class at the end of the academic year, after participants had provided informed consent. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, with 100% response rate. The research was conducted according to ethical standards and with the approval obtained by the Ethics Committee of the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb.

### Instruments

The *FIT-Choice Scale* (Watt & Richardson, 2007) is a self-report instrument measuring 12 motivations and 6 perceptions about teaching. The Croatian version of the scale was adapted in agreement with the authors of the scale and validated on the Croatian sample (Jugović et al., 2012). *Motivations for teaching* assess the importance of different motivations in participants' choice of a teaching career. Motivational factors include intrinsic career value, personal utility values, social utility values, self-perceptions of individuals' teaching abilities, fallback career choice, social influences, and prior teaching and learning experiences. All items had the same prefacing statement ("*I chose to become a teacher because...*") with a response scale from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important). *Perceptions about teaching* consist of two higher-order constructs, task demand and task return. Additionally, two subscales assess experiences of social dissuasion, and satisfaction with the choice of teaching as a career. Participants indicated their strength of agreement on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely). Very good internal consistencies were demonstrated for most factors. Nine out of eleven subscales had  $\alpha \geq .80$ , while the remaining two subscales had acceptable alphas of .64 (fallback career) and .79 (prior teaching and learning experiences) (Tab. 1).

*The Demotivation of Men for Teaching Career Choice Scale* is an eight-item scale measuring different reasons of why few men choose the teaching profession. Our goal was to include predominantly explored reasons in the literature (Drudy, 2008) related to the perception of teaching as a profession for women (e.g. considering women more successful in teaching, being demotivated by overrepresentation of women in the profession), as well as reasons related to lower status of the profession (e.g. being demotivated by low salaries, finding other jobs more attractive) (see Tab. 2 for the full list of items). Participants indicated their strength of agreement on a five-point Likert scale from 1 ("I completely disagree") to 5 ("I completely agree"). Validity and reliability of the subscales were satisfactory ( $\alpha \geq .80$ ).

## Results

### Gender Differences in Factors Influencing Teaching as a Career Choice

The first research question was to explore gender differences in factors influencing teaching as a career choice among preservice teachers. We performed the one-way MANOVA with gender as an independent variable, and with eleven FIT-Choice factors as dependent variables. The analysis was statistically significant ( $F=3.16, p<.001$ ), allowing us to explore gender differences on each factor. Descriptive statistics for FIT-Choice factors and the results of the tests of between-subjects' effects are presented in Table 1.

	Women			Men		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta_p^2$
	$\alpha$	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
<i>Motivations</i>								
Intrinsic career value	.826	5.63	1.40	5.42	1.23	1.42	.235	.006
Ability	.823	5.48	1.16	5.25	1.04	2.42	.121	.010
Social utility value	.939	5.24	1.28	5.12	1.07	0.57	.453	.002
Prior teaching and learning experiences	.790	4.82	1.56	4.65	1.45	0.74	.390	.003
Personal utility value	.854	4.21	1.26	4.47	1.20	2.56	.111	.011
Social influences	.853	3.80	1.89	4.33	1.49	5.33	.022	.023
Fallback career	.643	2.28	1.21	2.65	1.50	4.49	.035	.019
<i>Perceptions</i>								
Task demand	.886	5.88	0.90	5.36	1.03	16.64	.000	.067
Task return	.872	2.95	1.16	3.07	1.10	0.56	.453	.002
<i>Decision to become a teacher</i>								
Satisfaction with choice	.832	5.40	1.39	5.06	1.367	3.63	.058	.015
Social dissuasion	.797	3.45	1.70	4.09	1.44	9.09	.003	.038

$\eta_p^2$ =partial eta-squared

**Table 1: Results for gender differences in FIT-Choice factors, and subscale reliabilities**

Inspection of mean values for each motivation for choosing teaching reveals that the order of their importance was the same for men and women. Intrinsic career value, self-perception of ability for teaching and social utility value were the most important reasons for choosing the teaching profession, while prior teaching and learning experiences and personal utility value were somewhat less important. Social influences were moderately important, whereas choosing teaching as a fallback career was not the reason why participants chose this profession.

Gender differences were statistically significant on only two out of seven motivations: social influences and fallback career. Men were more likely to allege that social influences, e.g. opinions of family and friends, were important for their decision to become teachers. Men were also more likely to choose teaching as a fallback career. Other motivations were similarly important for both men and women, such as self-perceptions of teaching ability, intrinsic, social and personal utility values, as well as prior experience with teaching and learning.

Results regarding perceptions of teaching as a career show that both men and women perceive this profession as more demanding than the returns it provides. Gender difference was statistically significant regarding task demand. Women were more likely than men to perceive teaching as emotionally demanding and as a profession that requires expertise and highly specialised knowledge. There was no gender difference for task return, and both genders disagreed that teaching career would offer a high social status or a good salary.

Results for the last two factors showed that male and female preservice teachers were equally (and rather highly) satisfied with teaching as their career choice. Gender difference on social dissuasion was statistically significant, whereby men were more likely to report being discouraged by other people to choose teaching.

**Confirmatory Factor Analyses of Perceived Reasons Why Men are Demotivated to Choose Teaching as a Career**

The second research question was to explore and validate the factor structure of perceived reasons why men are demotivated to choose teaching. We performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) across eight items measuring different perceived reasons why few men choose teaching, to assess divergent and convergent construct validity of two subscales: the first, entitled Women’s profession, and the second, entitled Low-status profession. The CFA model had the following fit indices:  $\chi^2=64.243$  ( $df=19, p<.001$ ),  $\chi^2/df=3.381$ ,  $GFI=.941$ ,  $CFI=.946$ ,  $RMR=0.063$ , and  $RMSEA=0.093$ . Given that most indicators showed good or modest model fit, this model was accepted. Table 2 presents factor loadings from the CFA as well as reliability coefficients. Additionally, descriptive statistics for each item was calculated to explore which specific reasons within each factor are perceived to demotivate men the most from choosing the teaching profession.

Items	Factors		M	SD
	Women’s profession	Low-status profession		
Many men consider the teaching profession a profession for women.	.80		3.25	1.20
Men are demotivated by the fact that women are overrepresented in the teaching profession.	.73		2.66	1.13
Men generally consider women to be more successful in the teaching profession than men.	.69		2.67	1.13
Men receive support from the family to choose the teaching profession less often than women.	.66		2.97	1.16
Men are generally not inclined to work with children and young people.	.57		2.53	1.11
Most men find other jobs/career opportunities more attractive than the teaching profession.		.81	3.92	1.00
Many men find the teaching profession uninteresting.		.77	3.37	1.09
Most men are demotivated by low teacher salaries.		.74	3.66	1.09
Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ )	.818	.803		

**Table 2: The Demotivation of Men for Teaching Career Choice Scale CFA factor loadings and Subscale Reliabilities and Descriptive Statistics for Each Item**

Women’s profession subscale consisted of five items, and the Low-status profession subscale comprised three items. Very good internal consistencies were demonstrated for both factors.

According to the average results, the first two most important reasons for men’s demotivation to choose the teaching profession, as perceived by preservice teachers, are higher attractiveness of other jobs/career opportunities, and because they are demotivated by low teacher salaries. Preservice teachers mostly agreed with both of these statements. Other reasons were perceived to be comparatively less important, and, on the average, preservice teachers neither agreed nor disagreed that these reasons are responsible for fewer men choosing teaching as a career. The reason perceived to be the least likely to explain the lack of male teachers was men’s unwillingness to work with children/young people.

**Gender Differences in Perceived Factors That are Demotivating Men to Choose Teaching as a Career**

The third research question was to explore gender differences in perceived reasons why men are demotivated to choose teaching, and the results are shown in Table 3.

	Total sample		Women		Men		<i>t</i> ( <i>df</i> )	<i>p</i>	Cohen’s <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Women’s profession	2.82	0.87	2.91	0.89	2.69	0.83	2.15 (274)	.033	0.255
Low-status profession	3.65	0.90	3.74	0.94	3.54	0.83	1.81 (273)	.072	0.226

**Table 3: Gender Differences in Perceived Factors That are Demotivating Men to Choose Teaching as a Career Choice**

Preservice teachers perceived that lower status of the teaching profession was a more pronounced reason for demotivation of men to choose teaching, than perception of teaching as a women’s profession ( $t(274)=16.90, p<.001$ ). There was no gender difference in the perception that men are demotivated to choose teaching because it is a low-status profession. However, gender difference was statistically significant for the “Women’s profession” factor. Male students were less likely to think that men are demotivated to choose teaching because it is a women’s profession, although, both groups neither agreed nor disagreed that few men choose teaching due to the perception of this profession as being more suitable for women.

**Discussion**

As expected, there are more similarities than differences in motivation for the choice of the teaching profession between male and female preservice teachers. The priorities of their reasons are the same, with intrinsic value, self-perception of ability for teaching and social utility value being the three most important reasons for their career choice. Other studies on preservice teacher motivation, e.g. in the UK and Australia, have also obtained results indicating that the most important motives were either intrinsic motives or altruistic motives (such as social utility value of teaching), or both (Carrington, 2002; Drudy et al., 2005; Thornton et al., 2002). In a study on Australian teachers, intrinsic career value was also the highest rated motivation, followed by perceived teaching ability (Wyatt-Smith et al., 2017). Although some other studies showed that male (preservice) teachers were less intrinsically and altruistically motivated, including being less motivated and focused on working with children/adolescents (Drudy et al., 2005; Saban, 2003; Watt et al., 2012; Wyatt-Smith et al., 2017), our study showed that male and female preservice subject teachers rated intrinsic career value and social utility value equally.

Our results also indicated that men and women do not differ in personal utility value that taps into extrinsic reasons for choosing teaching (job security, more time for family and opportunity to work in different contexts). Results of other studies are mixed, with time for family being rated higher by Australian and Iranian female preservice teachers (Eghtesadi Roudi, 2022; Watt et al., 2012), while extrinsic factors (short day, holidays, job security, respected position and job availability) are rated higher by Irish male preservice teachers (Drudy et al., 2005), and mercenary-based extrinsic motivation (good working conditions and status) is higher among Turkish male preservice teachers (Yüce et al., 2013).

Obtained results also indicated that male preservice teachers were more likely to say that teaching was their second career choice. This was expected, given that some other studies indicated the same trend (Giersch et al., 2021; Watt et al., 2012; Wyatt-Smith et al., 2017; Yüce et al., 2013). Additionally, our research revealed that male preservice teachers were more discouraged by others from choosing teaching, confirming the findings obtained on Spanish and Turkish preservice teachers (Gratacós et al., 2017; Ozturk Akar, 2012). It is not uncommon for non-traditional gender occupational choices to be discouraged by significant others (Chaffee & Plante, 2021; Šimunović & Babarović, 2020). Parents', especially fathers' reactions to their son's choice of teaching ranged from insults or persuasion to pursue other careers to support and affirmation (DeCorse & Vogtle, 1997; Mulholland & Hansen, 2003). When it comes to friends' reactions, men who have chosen teaching have reported being criticised by their friends for their career choice, usually because friends perceived teaching as a women's job or an *easy* career option (Biemmi & Leonelli, 2018; Mulholland & Hansen, 2003).

Our data showed that men were more likely to allege social influences as an important factor when deciding to choose teaching. We assume that men need more social support to choose a teaching career than women because they are making a non-traditional career choice, one that disrupts gender barriers. Indeed, a qualitative study on male preservice primary teachers in Australia showed that an important motivator for men to choose teaching was when their parents and friends perceived them as competent to work with children, which emphasises the importance of social support (Mulholland & Hansen, 2003). Accordingly, in a study conducted by Andin et al. (2017), lack of parental encouragement was an important reason for young male students not to consider choosing teaching as a career option.

When inspecting perceptions of teaching, male and female preservice teachers had similar views on task returns. They perceived that social status and salary accompanying the teaching profession are rather moderate compared to its cognitive and emotional demands, i.e. they were ready to give more than they expected to receive in return in terms of status and salary. Perceiving a teaching career as one of not particularly high social status and salary is in line with the TALIS study in which 74% of teachers believed that the teaching profession is not properly valued in society (OECD, 2020). Our results also showed that male preservice teachers were less likely to perceive teaching as demanding in terms of expertise and required emotional effort, which is in line with results obtained on Australian and Spanish (preservice) teachers (Gratacós et al., 2017; Wyatt-Smith et al., 2017). This could imply that men and women have different expectations of themselves as teachers in terms of effort they should invest in teaching and relationships with pupils. Existing literature indicates that female teachers defined their roles as more demanding in terms of emotional investment into pupils' learning, establishing order in the classroom, and creating an individual approach for each pupil, whereas male teachers were more likely to keep emotional distance from pupils and to focus less on pupils' individual needs (Demetriou et al., 2009; Olson et al., 2019).

Although men in our research were somewhat more likely to choose teaching as a second career, there were no gender differences in satisfaction with the choice of this career.

Existing research on this topic is scarce, with mixed results. For example, women were more satisfied with their choice of the teaching profession than men in studies involving preservice teachers in Spain (Gratacós et al., 2017) and preservice teachers studying non-science fields in Turkey (Kılınç et al., 2012). However, there were no gender differences among preservice teachers studying science programmes in Turkey (Kılınç et al., 2012). Satisfaction with the choice of teaching career is important due to its potential repercussions on teachers' future careers in terms of planned effort, persistence in profession and leadership aspirations (Watt & Richardson, 2007).

Our second research question was to explore and validate the factor structure of perceived reasons why men are demotivated to choose teaching. Results of the confirmatory factor analysis and scale reliabilities supported the construct validity of the Demotivation of Men for Teaching Career Choice Scale with its two factors: one related to the perception of teaching as a women's profession, and the other to the perception of teaching as a low-status profession.

Additionally, we examined gender differences in perceived reasons for men's demotivation to choose teaching as a career, and obtained results indicating that female preservice teachers were more likely to assume that men are demotivated to choose teaching because it is a women's profession. Drudy et al. (2005) similarly found that women were more likely to think that men do not choose teaching because they believe that women's natural affinity for children makes them better primary school teachers. These results could also be linked to those obtained by Carrington (2002) and Heinz et al. (2021) which imply the importance of caring masculinities for male preservice teachers and their rejection of cultural stereotypes of female teachers as being better in care and communication. Finally, our study showed that there were no gender differences in perceptions that men are demotivated to choose teaching due to low status of the teaching profession (including greater attractiveness of other careers), which is not in line with findings obtained by Drudy et al. (2005) that men were more likely to attribute men's demotivation for teaching to greater attractiveness of other careers.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The results demonstrated that, regardless of their gender, preservice subject teachers in this sample are primarily motivated by the intrinsic and social utility values of the teaching profession, while specific gender differences imply the importance of further investigation of the role of social factors in men's choice of this career. Furthermore, the proposed instrument, aimed at capturing the perception of dominant reasons for men's demotivation for teaching, demonstrated a good model fit, and also indicated some gender differences in the perception of these reasons, contributing to relatively underrepresented research on gender differences in (de)motivation for the choice of teaching. As already mentioned, studies addressing gender differences in motivation for teaching are often conducted on samples with a much lower ratio of men compared to women, and this study used a more balanced sample to address the issue.

In assessing reasons why few men choose the teaching profession, insufficient attention is paid to the reasons why some men did choose it, and we tried to contribute to this field of research too. Also, we sought to paint a broader picture of (de)motivation by paying attention to the permeation of individual reasons for (not) choosing a certain profession while trying to acknowledge their broader social context. In doing so, we could not fail to notice the power that gender stereotypes have when it comes to occupational choices, as well as encouraging indications of their deconstruction by those with non-stereotypical choices.

Unfortunately, current trends suggest that the latter phenomenon is still increasingly uncommon, prompting further research and effective and all-encompassing measures, especially when it comes to men moving into professions that are perceived as female, including teaching. By bringing together the FIT-Choice model and main perspectives on men in teaching, we wanted to contribute to understanding of men's choice of the teaching profession, despite discouragement and widely accepted gendered perceptions of teaching. We argue that their resilience and career choice lie in their redefinition of masculinity as caring and of the teaching profession as not primarily a women's profession, a notion supported by McGrath et al.'s (2020) comprehensive theoretical framework for researching a shortage of male teachers.

Some limitations of this study should also be addressed. The research sample was from one university only. Although it seems reasonable to expect similar results from other Croatian universities, it would be worth including a more diverse sample of students in future studies for generalisability. Additionally, in our sample, only preservice subject teachers were included, and it would be useful to include classroom, as well as preschool preservice teachers. Besides from a further understanding of gender differences in motivation to teach, this would also contribute to a more detailed understanding of reasons for men's demotivation for this profession which can also be related to the differences regarding the perception of women and men working with children of different ages (i.e. the perception that working with younger children is more suitable for women's career choice).

Placed in a broader context, it is unlikely that men will become more motivated for the teaching profession as long as it is accompanied by low social status, relatively low salaries and specific gender connotations. It is also not very likely that any measure addressing one of these factors will be successful without addressing the others. And although measures aimed at certain financial and organizational aspects of the teaching profession might differ regarding country-specific differences (e.g. financial investments in the educational sector), the aspect of teachers' social status related to gender-related connotations, perceptions and occupational differences seems to be a common factor for many countries worldwide, including Croatia. Therefore, we propose gender-sensitive education as one measure, the implementation of which would be the responsibility of those with knowledge and experience in teaching. The second measure concerns gender non-stereotypical career guidance available to all pupils/students. The third should concern public campaigns related to teachers who have experienced a decline in status in recent years. Finally, the teaching profession requires tangible and intangible investments in personal and professional development of its professionals. Without that, it is not certain that any change for the better can be expected.

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