



## **Investigating Indonesian pre-service English teachers: perceptions and motivations to enter the teaching profession**

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### **Abstract**

Teaching is one of the fundamental professions in society. Pre-service English teachers' perceptions and motivations may significantly influence their career decision-making to enter the profession. This study aimed to investigate pre-service English teachers' perceptions and motivations to enter the teaching profession. It employed mixed-method research with questionnaire and interview as the instruments to collect data. The respondents were 44 pre-service English teachers from an English Teacher Education Department of a well-known university, in East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. Results showed that the students had various perceptions regarding the teaching profession and most of them were altruistically motivated to be teachers in the future. The current study offers two important implications. First, since perceptions and motivations to enter the teaching profession are not fixed and may be influenced by the students' family, environment, and study program, building positive perceptions and motivations should be an integrated element of the teacher education curriculum. Second, graduating students need strong support from the family, environment, and the government to maintain positive perceptions and motivations about the profession.

**Keywords:** career motivation; pre-service English teachers; teaching perception; teaching profession

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## Introduction

Teaching promotes a deep belief of the teachers across the values and norms (Rots et al., 2012). Values and norms that exist in a society will likely influence their perception of the profession. The teaching profession is categorized as a respected profession by society in Indonesia. Teachers are given a rhetoric appreciation; it is being called "*Pahlawan tanpa tanda jasa*" or the unsung heroes. Along with the high appreciation in society, teacher education departments have also gained interest from the graduates of secondary high schools in Indonesia over the past few years (Lestari & Arfiandhani, 2019). Lestari and Arfiandhani (2019) present data from the Indonesian Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education in the Higher Education Databases (PD-DIKTI) 2019 about the top three faculty programs surveyed from the numbers of the students. The top three are the social sciences program with 995,269 students, followed by the economics department as the top two with 1,089,469 students, and the education departments becoming the most popular target with 1,290,879 students. These data clearly suggest that young people in Indonesia are highly enthusiastic to undertake education programs and become teachers.

English teacher education departments particularly play an important role in English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesia. This is strengthened by Lengkanawati (2015), when she argues that the program is the place for prospective teachers to construct and nurture the standardized teacher's competences and identity. It also provides the need for qualified and professional English teachers for the whole country. However, the finding from Lestari and Arfiandhani's study (2019) shows that there is an inconsistency between pre-service teachers majoring in the teacher education departments and their decision to choose teaching as their long term career in Indonesia. After conducting interviews to the faculty members in some teacher education departments in Yogyakarta, Lestari and Arfiandhani (2019) found that the departments have not been able to entice all of their graduates to become teachers. This unfavorable situation could eventually pose a problem regarding

the availability of potential English teachers in Indonesia. Shortages of teachers may happen if pre-service teachers feel reluctant to become teachers after graduation. This is inevitably linked to the perception of pre-service teachers to enter the teaching profession.

The Indonesian government has concentrated on increasing the teachers' welfare since 2005. Teachers are eligible to a basic salary raise as well as other benefits (pension funds and incentives) (Tustiawati, 2019, p. 105). Based on the policy, teaching is considered to be a professional occupation. However, the policy has not necessarily made the teaching profession the most coveted and the promising profession in Indonesia. Tustiawati (2019, p. 105) affirms in her study that teaching has been seen as less prominent and profitable than other professions. There are other professions that are more promising in terms of income, careers and future. Although teaching profession has a high status in society, this status does not necessarily lead to the pre-service teachers' motivation to embrace teaching.

Meanwhile, some recent studies have reported related issues such as English teachers' vulnerability, critical incidents, attrition and the struggles faced by the novice teachers in Indonesian rural areas that may influence their perception in teaching (Florida & Mbato, 2020; Kharismawan & Mbato, 2020; Lomi & Mbato, 2020; Putri & Kuswandono, 2020). Many novice teachers particularly those working in the rural areas face imminent struggles to stay in the profession (Lomi & Mbato, 2020). In addition, many novice and experienced teachers may face burn out as the result of hard task demands (see Florida & Mbato, 2020; Kharismawan & Mbato, 2020). One may assume that pre-service teachers' beliefs and expectations about the task returns as provided by the governmental policies could stimulate positive perceptions, and make them believe that teaching is their destined career. However, facing realities in the fields and accepting hard task demands could also challenge them in a certain way that they may see teaching as a less favorable career choice.

In general, the perceptions of prospective teachers influence their future professional commitment, growth, and the quality of their work (Richardson & Watt, 2010). Therefore, it is important for prospective teachers to nurture positive perceptions toward teaching profession. In addition to perception, motivation has been reported as another factor that determines the individual choice to pursue a certain career (Clark & Newberry, 2019; Rots et al., 2014; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014; Zarei & Sharifabad, 2012). Upa and Mbato (2020) mention that motivation is part of a person's achievement, decision and

action. Concerning career motivation, there are three types of motivation of pre-service English teachers: intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic teaching motivation (Lestari & Arfiandhani, 2019). Some teachers start teaching with a more or less consistent motivation to teach and some others make use of teacher education as a step towards another profession (Roness, 2011). Their motivation is not purely to teach, but simply to have a job to survive (Kuswandono, 2013, p. 21). From the literatures mentioned above, it can be summarized that pre-service teachers may possess various perceptions and motivations, and apparently their perceptions and motivations could not be separated from the process of their career decision making.

A number of studies (Lestari & Arfiandhani, 2019; Maiza et al., 2020; Suryani et al., 2016; Suryani, 2020) have acknowledged the importance of pre-service teachers' perceptions and motivations during the study in teacher education program in Indonesia. These studies showed that pre-service teachers had various types of perceptions and motivation that contributed significantly to their future career choices.

However, to date, very few studies have extensively assessed the perceptions and motivations of pre-service English teachers in Indonesia's rural regions to undertake the teaching profession. This research aimed to fill in the gap in the literature by conducting a study on the pre-service teachers' perceptions and motivations to embrace the teaching profession particularly in the rural region of Indonesia. Rural areas in Indonesia are the areas which are typically linked with poor quality of human resources, inadequate infrastructure, limited distribution of resources, and inadequate development of good security (Muhaimin et al., 2020, p. 7). These dire conditions present difficult challenges for pre-service teachers to envision teaching in the rural areas. Sending out teachers to the rural areas does not seem to address the lack of teachers and good quality education in these regions (see, Febriana et al., 2018). In fact, Fananta et al. (2018) assert that, to develop the whole education system in Indonesia, more studies on pre-service teachers and teachers serving in rural areas need to be undertaken..

Specifically, this study investigated the career perceptions and motivations of pre-service teachers in the Indonesian rural area context, particularly in the East Nusa Tenggara province. East Nusa Tenggara is categorized as one of the rural areas in Indonesia (Sfenrianto et al., 2018, p. 417). The findings from this study could provide insights into the reasons for pre-service teachers to enter the English teacher education program and the

teaching profession in Indonesia, particularly in East Nusa Tenggara. They were also expected to provide strategies for current students and novice teachers to embrace the teaching profession. In addition, data from this study could be used by the English Education Study Programs in Indonesia in preparing their students' future teaching careers. Furthermore, the findings from this research could be used as valuable information for the local and national government in devising support system and facilities. All related parties could collaborate in creating preventive actions and regulations to ensure the availability of future English teachers in Indonesia. To guide this research, two research questions were formulated:

- (1) What are the pre-service English teachers' perceptions of the teaching profession?
- (2) What motivated the pre-service English teachers to (not to) enter the teaching profession?

## **Method**

### ***Research design***

This research used a mixed-method design. Mixed method studies have been utilized by many Indonesian researchers, specifically in the field of education (Aini et al., 2020; Astriningsih & Mbato, 2019; Daud et al., 2019; Lomi & Mbato, 2019; Pardede, 2019). The aim of the combined methods was not to substitute quantitative or qualitative data but to combine both results by examining the findings of the entire study and drawing conclusions (Ivankova et al., 2006, p. 17).

A mixed-method sequential explanatory design was used as the guidance to collect and analyze the data. The design has been applied by some Indonesian researchers in educational field (e.g. Aini et al., 2020; Daud et al., 2019). It includes two main phases: quantitative data collection and analysis, then qualitative data collection and analysis (Ivankova et al., 2006). Through the stages in the mixed method design, the researchers could obtain a deeper understanding and information about the participants to affirm the reliability and trustworthiness of the data and their inference (Zohrabi, 2013). Practically, this design allowed the researchers to bring the two types of data together into a study. The findings from qualitative data collection helped the researchers to clarify the results from the quantitative data collection (Bowen et al., 2017, p. 10).

### **Participants**

There were 24 male pre-service English teachers (54.5 percent) and 20 female pre-service teachers (45.4 percent) participating in this research. The participants were from different backgrounds and areas around East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. The researchers recruited them using convenience and purposive samplings as this research needed participants who voluntarily agreed to participate, accessible to the researchers, enrolled in the English Education Program and lived in Kupang (Etikan, 2016). The researchers did not recruit them based on their ethnic groups in the sampling processes. However, the information about their ethnicity was important to determine whether the participants originated from the area. Those coming from outside East Tenggara would still be included in the research as long as they met the criteria above. The largest age group responding to the research questionnaire consisted of participants aged 23 and above (n=16). In particular, the pre-service English teachers were between the ages of 21 and 22, and over (70.4 percent). A summary of the descriptive analysis of the pre-service English teachers' socio-demographic data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Breakdown of pre-service teachers' socio demographic profile

Socio-demographic items		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	24	54.5
	Female	20	45.4
Age	19-20	13	29.5
	21-22	15	34.0
	23 and above	16	36.3
Ethnicity	East Nusa Tenggara	41	93.1
	Non – East Nusa Tenggara	3	6.8
Religion	Catholic	13	29.5
	Protestant	30	68.1
	Moslem	1	2.2
Academic year	2013	6	13.6
	2014	3	6.8
	2015	20	45.4
	2017	5	11.3

### **Data collection**

Data of this research was gained by using two instruments. The first was a closed-ended survey questionnaire named Factor Influencing Teaching–Choice

(FIT-Choice) questionnaire as the quantitative data instrument. The questionnaire consisted of seven variables of teaching perception and 13 variables of career motivation. The variables of perceptions were salary, social status, expertise, difficulty, social dissuasion, media dissuasion and job satisfaction. The 13 variables of career motivations were divided into three groups: intrinsic (3 variables, 6 statements), extrinsic (7 variables, 11 statements) and altruistic (3 variables, 5 statements) motivations. The questionnaire consisted of 31 statements arranged in Likert seven-point scales from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree. It was adapted from a questionnaire developed by Suryani et al. (2016) and originated from the FIT Choice questionnaire (Richardson & Watt, 2006). The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for all final factors' scores indicated well to acceptable internal consistency (Suryani et al., 2016, p. 197).

The qualitative data instrument in this research was a semi-structured interview. It was used to redefine the findings from the quantitative data collection and to get detailed information from the participants (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). Before collecting data, the researchers sent out the invitations and the online consent form to pre-service teachers in the study program containing the objectives of the research and data confidentiality (Creswell, 2014). A total of 44 pre-service English teachers responded and agreed to participate in this research. The data of questionnaire was collected through Google form website. The interviews were carried out in the second phase by using landline telephone. The data collection techniques were used as they enabled the process to be conducted in different parts of the country (Bowen et al., 2017, p. 17). The researchers chose six participants for the interviews based on the findings of the questionnaire i.e., high, medium, and low motivation. We determined this by adopting the categories used by Astriningsih and Mbato (2019, p. 68). The researchers took two representatives from each of the group in order to gain more in-depth data from the interviews. The interpretation of the pre-service teachers' mean scores is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Pre-service English teachers' mean range

Mean range	Interpretation
4.30 – 5.29	High motivation
3.00 – 4.29	Medium motivation
1.94 – 2.99	Low motivation

(Source: Astriningsih & Mbato, 2019)

The participants' interviews lasted about 30-40 minutes each. The interviews aimed to collect data about the participants' views regarding the

teaching profession and the reasons why they entered the English teacher education department. All the interviews were conducted in the Indonesian language because it allowed the participants to answer the questions more clearly and comfortably. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

### **Data analysis**

The researchers used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the responses of the participants in the questionnaire. After collecting the data from interviews, the researchers analyzed the transcriptions descriptively. In the process of analyzing the quantitative data, we coded the participants to keep the data confidentiality and make it easier to categorize them for further data collection and analysis processes. The pre-service teachers were named PTS and followed by their numbers. The numbers were sorted according to how fast they filled out the questionnaire. The researchers firstly analyzed the result of questionnaire and proceeded with the process of collecting and analyzing the interviews' results. The collection and analysis stages were completed at the integration process of the quantitative and qualitative data (Ivankova et al., 2006). The researchers discussed and integrated the entire findings of the research. Details of the findings are provided in the next part.

### **Findings**

The findings of the present study consist of two parts: perceptions regarding the teaching profession and motivations to (not to) enter the teaching profession.

#### ***The perception regarding teaching profession***

In the first part, the researchers presented data and discussed findings of the pre-service teachers' perceptions about the teaching profession. The summary of the pre-service English teachers' perception of the teaching profession is presented in Table 3.

From A1 to A7, it could be seen that the pre-service English teachers demonstrate positive perceptions about the teaching profession. They expressed a high interest in the level of professionalism of the teachers with adequate knowledge and skills (A3, M= 5.30). They also stated that teaching was a secure job (A2; M=5.25) and a well-respected career (A2; M=5.25). Based on the result, the standard deviations in this finding range from 1.22-1.62. It means that the distribution of the questionnaire's responses was less homogeneous. The descriptive analysis of the questionnaire data was in line with the interview

results, in which one of the participants shared her views about the expertise of the teachers:

I think being a teacher is hard; educating students, organizing classes, preparing materials, mastering technologies and I feel that prospective teachers must be well prepared to be professional teachers. Teachers cannot be labeled as professionals if they do not have much experiences (in teaching) at schools (PTS11).

Table 3. Pre-service teachers' perceptions about teaching profession

	Statements	Mean (M)	SD	Percentage (%)
Salary (task return)	Teachers earn a good salary	4.45	1.45	63.6
	Teachers get more incentives (e.g., health insurance, pensions)	4.75	1.41	63.1
Social status (task return)	Teaching is a well-respected career	5.25	1.52	75
Expertise (task demand)	Teachers are perceived as professionals	5.30	1.37	75.6
Difficulty (task demand)	Teaching is a stressful job	3.98	1.62	56.8
	Teaching is a tough job	4.66	1.62	67.8
Satisfaction with choice	You are satisfied with the choice being teachers in the future	4.91	1.25	70.1
Social dissuasion	Other people influence me to consider careers other than teaching	4.43	1.22	63.3
Media dissuasion	I have affected by the media reporting of teachers' living condition	4.66	1.36	66.5

The pre-service English teachers saw teaching as a tough job (A7; M=4.66) and a stressful job (A4; M=3.98). PTS11 shared their concern about being teachers in their area:

Teachers find it difficult to present appropriate material to students because of the lack of facilities in schools that support the teachers (PTS11).

Specifically, PTS08 mentioned her thoughts about the teachers in East Nusa Tenggara:

To become a teacher, in my opinion, the difficulty is more about their salary. Teachers in the area Kupang get less attention. There are some stories I heard that temporary teachers sometimes had to wait for about 3-5 months to get a salary. Then, they spent the salary on transportation costs and daily needs. It is not sufficient. But I think for the civil servant teachers, their situation will be much better (PTS05).

PTS10 added his opinion about the teachers' conditions in the rural area:

We are exposed to the reality of teachers working in this region's rural areas where temporary teachers often do not have an adequate salary and teach with very limited facilities (PTS10).

The pre-service English teachers also revealed that some other people influenced them about the bad sides of teaching (A6; M=4.43) and they had been affected by the media reports about teachers' living conditions (A7; M=4.66). However, they still expressed a high satisfaction with the choice of being teachers in the future (A5; M=4.91). For example, PTS09 expressed her gratefulness for being a student of a teacher education program:

I am grateful to be an English study program student because the career choice is not limited to one profession. Teachers can also be up to date. For example, if a particular issue is developing nowadays, it can be used as a material for teaching. I also enjoy interacting with children (PTS09).

In summary, the pre-service teachers' perceptions, based on the questionnaire, are mainly related to salary, social position, expertise, and the difficulty of the job. In general, they show a positive perception towards teaching although some of them seem to have a negative view about the teaching profession.

### ***Pre-service English teachers' motivation to (not to) enter the teaching profession***

This part shows the data analysis to answer the second question i.e., what is the pre-service English teachers' motivation to (not to) enter the teaching profession. The motivation of the pre-service English teachers is divided into

three general types of motivation; intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and altruistic motivation.

### *Intrinsic motivation*

The participants showed various responses related to the intrinsic motivation for entering the teaching profession. The summary of the pre-service English teachers' responses to intrinsic motivation variables is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Intrinsic motivations influence PTS to teach

Elements of motivation	Statements	Mean (M)	SD	Percentage (%)
Self-perception	Teaching is a career suited to my abilities	4.80	1.35	66.8
	I have good teaching skills	4.30	1.09	57,6
Intrinsic career value	I am interested in teaching	4.95	1.48	88.9
Fallback career	I was not accepted into my first enrollment choice to another program	3.61	1.65	51.6
	I was unsure of what career I wanted	4.39	1.24	62.6

From Table 4, it can be concluded that in general students had a strong intrinsic motivation towards teaching. The calculation from B1 to B3 showed that their highest-rated intrinsic motivation was their interest in teaching (B2; M=4.95). Most of the pre-service English teachers felt intrinsically the values of being teachers. Based on the finding, some participants expressed that teaching suited their abilities (B1; M=4.80) and that they had good teaching skills (B1; M=4.30). The finding in the questionnaire was in line with the results of the interviews. In the interviews, PTS05 stated that self-esteem to speak in front of the class appeared while she followed the process in the teacher program:

I'm not the type of person who cannot speak in public. I was initially not very confident. But I learned through activities in the classroom where we were required to do presentations, debates, speeches, and so forth. We learned to teach our friends. Now, I can feel that teaching suits me (PTS09).

A lack of motivation was reported by PTS05. After following a teaching practice program at school, he admitted:

I don't feel it (the enjoyment of becoming a teacher), I had experienced the teaching practicum in school and I think I am not suitable to be a teacher (PTS05).

Some pre-service English teachers, however, reported experiencing a fallback career. Half of them (B3; M=3.61) stated that they chose the teaching program after being rejected from their first enrollment choice in another program. Similarly, the pre-service English teachers revealed that they were unsure of what career they wanted (B3; M=4.39). One example was PTS20. She reported in the interview the experience of a fallback career at the beginning of her study:

Initially, I put the English Language Study Program as a second choice. My first choice was the nurse academy because I wanted to become a nurse. Incidentally, I passed the SNMPTN (National Selection of State University Entrance) in the English Education Study Program, which was the reason why I decided to go there (PTS20).

The same case also happened to PTS10, who stated that he was not interested in English teacher education at the first:

I was more interested in the communication major. But at that time I did not pass the entry test, my second choice was an English language education that I passed, so I just continued (PTS10).

Furthermore, based on the result of the interview, the researchers found that the PTS entered the English Education Study Program not because they wanted to become English teachers but because they were interested in the English subject. They showed an interest in improving their skills in mastering English as a foreign language.

Initially, I liked English and I wanted to learn English deeper. I had a dream of going abroad so I thought that I had to master English (PTS11).

Another pre-service teacher (PTS09) showed her love for English in the interview:

I majored in Science when I was in high school. After graduation, I felt bored and wanted to try a language major. I chose an English study program. It was because I love English. I want to have the opportunity to go abroad, or maybe later meet with people from foreign countries in my city (PTS09).

PTS09 also shared that society saw people speaking English as trendy people:

It becomes a pride too. We can see in our region now that when we can speak in English well, we will be considered cool and so on (PTS09).

For the calculation of the standard deviation of the group of responses, the researchers conclude that spreading responses from the pre-service teachers were in the low homogeneity with the range between 1.09-1.65. The pre-service teachers showed various responses to the questionnaire and they particularly like English as the major of the teacher education department.

#### *Extrinsic motivation*

The summary of the pre-service teachers' responses to extrinsic motivation variables is presented in Table 5.

Based on Table 5, it can be concluded that the majority of pre-service teachers possessed the external motivation to be teachers. The pre-service English teachers rated job security (C1, M=4.89), job working days (C3, M=4.11), second job (C3, M=4.50), job transferability (C4, M=4.27), teaching certification (C4, M=4.70), tuition fee of teacher education (C6, M=4.61) and social influence of family members (C8, M=4.11) fairly well. The pre-service teachers highly rated the social influence as an extrinsic motivation of becoming English teachers. They expressed that other people thought that they should become teachers, with a quite high mean score of 5.18 (C8; M=5.23). It is supported by PTS05 who stated that becoming a student in the teacher education was his mother's wish. "Apart from my interest, entering English education was also my mother's wish" (PTS05).

The English pre-service teachers also expressed the influence of the teacher education program with a high mean score (C5; M=5.18). The result is supported by PTS11, who mentioned that the learning process in the teacher education affected her to be more confident as a future English teacher. There were a lot of practice and exercises that supported her ability to use English and teach students. They caused her to believe that she could be a professional English teacher in the future:

My motivation increased when I took the practice teaching program. We spent 6 months in semester 7. I was teaching in junior high school. I got to teach 6 classes, and I handled them by myself. From then on, I felt the challenges of being a teacher. I was glad when I was given the responsibility to teach them. I have a sincere desire to become a teacher (PTS11).

Table 5. Extrinsic motivations influence PTS to teach

Elements of motivation	Statements	Mean (M)	SD	Percentage (%)
Job Security	Teaching is a secure job	4.89	1.33	72.7
	Teachers can be civil servants with reliable income	4.89	1.36	69.8
Time for family	Teaching hours fit with the responsibilities of having a family	5.02	1.10	71.7
	Teachers have short working days	4.11	1.40	58.7
Second job	I could have more time to do home duties and other works	4.50	1.17	64.2
Job transferability	A teaching job allows me to choose where I wish to live	4.27	1.48	61.0
	A teaching certification is recognized everywhere	4.70	1.28	65.5
Prior teaching experience	I have had inspirational teaching experience	5.18	1.43	74.0
Tuition fee for teacher education	Entry to teacher education was affordable	4.61	1.06	65.9
Admission into teacher education	Entry to teacher education was less competitive	3.18	1.50	45.4
Social influence	People around me think I should become a teacher	5.23	1.72	74.6
	I have parents/ relatives who are teachers	4.80	2.14	68.5
Time for teacher education graduates	Waiting period to get a teaching job is shorter compared to other professions	3.95	1.34	53.5

The statement the influence of their family members who firstly became teachers got a mean score of 4.80 (C8; M=4.80). It is lined with the interview result, specifically from PTS25 who said that: " I like being a teacher. I want to

be a teacher because my parents are teachers. I want to follow their footsteps to become a teacher" (PTS25).

The less rated element of the extrinsic motivation is the influence of admission into teacher education. The pre-service English teachers who stated that entry into teacher education was less competitive (C7; M=3.18). It is in line with the statement from PTS30 in the interview:

Many people are competing to enter teacher education and become teachers, the ones who hold the status of civil servants to be safe (economically) (PTS30).

Based on the calculation of the standard deviation of the group of responses, the researchers conclude that the questionnaire's spreading responses were in the middle homogeneity. The lowest standard deviation score was 1.10 and the highest score was 2.14. In summary, the pre-service English teachers displayed various kinds of responses regarding the extrinsic motivation to be English teachers. It could be seen that the pre-service teachers are mostly influenced by their teaching and learning process in the English teacher education department.

#### *Altruistic motivation*

The summary of the pre-service English teachers' responses to altruistic motivation variables is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Altruistic motivations influence PTS to teach

	Elements of motivation	Mean (M)	SD	Percentage (%)
Make social contribution	Teaching has a social contribution	5.68	1.28	81.1
	Teaching enables me to 'give back' to society	5.25	1.52	75
Religion influence	My religion suggests me that I can serve others through teaching	5.61	1.54	80.1
Work with children	I like working with children/	5.45	1.50	77.9

In this study, the pre-service English teachers seemed to rate the impact of altruistic motivation in teaching highly. As can be seen from Statements D1 to D3 they strongly respected the teaching profession's social contribution, with the mean score of 5.68 (D1; M=5.68). It is followed by the influence of the values

of their religion, which suggests them to serve others through teaching, with the mean score of the statement 5.61 (D2; M=5.61). These data found support from PTS30, who shared the value of teaching in his religion: "My motivation to enter the English study program besides learning English is I want to fulfill the mission of the monastery" (PTS30).

Statement number 2 shows that teaching enables pre-service English teachers to 'give back' to society (D1; M=5.25). The pre-service English teachers also reported that most of them like working with children/adolescents (D3; M=5.45). Based on the result of the interview, PTS11 shared her opinion about being a teacher as follows: "Being a teacher is a very noble job. You can imagine that teachers create a lot of people to become better in the future through their teaching" (PTS11). Based the calculation of the mean score and standard deviation of the group of responses, the researchers conclude that the questionnaire's spreading responses were in the low homogeneity with the range between 1.28 -1.50. The pre-service teachers were specifically interested in the social contribution of the teaching profession to society.

Table 7. Summary output of regression statistics (hypothesis 1)

<i>Regression statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.52
R Square	0.27
Adjusted R Square	0.25
Standard Error	1.27
Observations	44

  

ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Regression	1.00	24.44	24.44	15.22	0.00
Residual	42.00	67.47	1.61		
Total	43.00	91.91			

In order to test the validity of data and evaluate how the pre-service English teachers' perceptions correlated with their career motivations, the researchers conducted significance test by using regression statistics. The researchers picked one variable from each group and made some hypotheses. The first hypothesis was whether or not the pre-service teachers' perceptions of the teaching social status was correlated with their interests in teaching (intrinsic motivation). The second hypothesis was whether or not the pre-service teachers' perceptions of the teaching's social status was correlated with the attraction of the job's security (external motivation). The last hypothesis was

whether or not the pre-service teachers' perceptions of the teaching's social status was correlated with the attraction of social contribution of the profession (altruistic motivation).

Based on the calculation in Table 7, the Pearson correlation ( $r$ ) indicated a moderate correlation between the social status of the teaching profession and the pre-service English teachers' interests in the profession ( $r = 0.52$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ,  $n = 44$ ) (Schober & Schwarte, 2018, p.3). There was a significant relationship between the ways the pre-service teachers perceived the social status of the teaching profession and their teaching interest. The calculation above indicated that the hypothesis was accepted and the two variables from perception and intrinsic motivation were statistically significant ( $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ ).

Table 8. Summary output of regression statistics (hypothesis 2)

<i>Regression Statistics</i>					
Multiple R		0.46			
R Square		0.22			
Adjusted R Square		0.20			
Standard Error		1.54			
Observations		44			

  

<i>ANOVA</i>					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1.00	27.49	27.49	11.52	0.00
Residual	42.00	100.23	2.39		
Total	43.00	127.73			

From Table 8, the Pearson correlation ( $r$ ) indicated a moderate correlation between the social status of the teaching profession and the attraction of the job's security ( $r = 0.39$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ,  $n = 44$ ) (Schober & Schwarte, 2018, p.3). It can be interpreted that the society perceived teaching as a high-status profession, which made them believe that the profession was secure in terms of career path, salary and future assurance (PTS20). The result of the calculation proved that the second hypothesis was accepted and the two variables from perception and extrinsic motivation were statistically significant ( $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ ).

In addition, in Table 9, the Pearson correlation ( $r$ ) indicated a moderate correlation between the social status of the teaching profession and the social contribution of teaching profession ( $r = 0.61$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ,  $n = 44$ ) (cf. Schober & Schwarte, 2018, p.3). It can be interpreted that the pre-service were altruistically

motivated to be teachers because they perceived teaching as a noble profession. The result of calculation proved that the third hypothesis above was accepted and the two variables from perception and altruistic motivation were statistically significant ( $p$ -value < 0.05).

Table 9. Summary output of regression statistics (hypothesis 3)

<i>Regression Statistics</i>					
Multiple R					0.39
R Square					0.15
Adjusted R Square					0.13
Standard Error					1.24
Observations					44.00

  

<i>ANOVA</i>					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1.00	11.70	11.70	7.59	0.01
Residual	42.00	64.73	1.54		
Total	43.00	76.43			

## Discussion

There were three major findings drawn from the study. The first finding is related to pre-service English teachers' perception of the teaching profession. The perceptions fell into two categories: positive and negative perceptions. In terms of their motivations to enter the teaching profession, students seemed to be influenced mostly by altruistic motivation, and then extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation appeared to be the least factor for them to embrace the profession. In addition, this research found that some students did not possess any one of the three types of motivations. They entered the program because they were not admitted to their chosen course.

Based on the findings, most of the students perceived teaching positively. For example, PTS11 states that: "In my opinion, people used to say teaching was a noble job; during the practice teaching in a school, I can say that I felt that (the nobility)". The result strengthens previous studies (Suryani, 2020; Suryani et al., 2016; Tustiawati, 2019), which reveal teaching as a highly regarded position in Indonesian society, and teachers as those holding a responsibility equal to parents during school hours. The pre-service English teachers also highly rated the expertise of teachers. They marked a high satisfaction with their choice to be future teachers (A5,  $m=4.91$ , see Table 2). The high interest and satisfaction are most commonly associated with positive

teaching experiences and a good atmosphere (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014, p. 2) as clearly indicated by PTS11. She expressed her enjoyment in teaching after experiencing teaching practice in a Junior High school.

However, the pre-service English teachers also revealed some negative perceptions. They perceived teaching as a tough job (A7; M=4.66) and a stressful job (A4; M=3.98). PTS11 shared their concern about being teachers in their area; "Teachers find it difficult to present appropriate material to students because of the lack of facilities in schools that support the teachers" (PTS11). PTS20 mentioned his concern about temporary teachers who had to wait for about 3-5 months to get their salary and had limited access and facilities in their workplaces. It is in line with the study of Sariguna et al. (2019), who reveal that East Nusa Tenggara is still dealing with the issues of teachers' employment, the salary of employees, and the infrastructure. The researchers also found that the pre-service teachers rated very high on the task demand of the teaching profession (teaching is tough job /A4, M=4.66). This is parallel with the finding from Suryani et al. (2016), which confirms teaching as a demanding profession with high responsibilities and pressures from the society. The responsibilities and pressures given to teachers make the profession seems difficult to be pursued.

The next findings are about the career motivations of the pre-service English teachers. It was revealed in this research that students were influenced by the three types of motivation i.e., altruistic, extrinsic, and intrinsic motivation. Altruistic motivation was the most important reason why these pre-service students considered entering the teaching profession. This is indicated by the highest mean score of all the motivational variables (Statement D1/make social contribution, M=5.68, see Table 5) and the statement from PTS11 in the interview: "Being a teacher is a very noble job. You can imagine that teachers create a lot of people to become better in the future through their teaching" (PTS11). This finding supports the result of a study by Suryani, Watt, and Richardson (2016) and also a recent study by Suryani (2020), who found that 'social contribution' indicated the highest mean score (M=6.00) (Suryani, 2020). Suryani et al. (2016) mention that it is important for Indonesian education system to have more altruistic teachers who are delighted to serve the country. If these teachers focus on serving the vulnerable society then ideally, they may be encouraged to teach in these areas. This finding is, however, in contrast with the results from these authors (Lestari & Arfiandhani, 2019; Maiza et al., 2020). Maiza et al. (2020) found that their pre-service teachers were mostly influenced

by intrinsic motivation (subject interest) while Lestari and Arfiandhani (2019) found the highest rated motivation was shaping the values to the children.

In the second place, the pre-service teachers rated the external motivations highly. The data specifically indicated that students' motivation was influenced by the social environment (C8; M=5.23). This data is supported by the statement of PTS05, who mentioned that being a student in the English teacher education was his mother's wish. This finding is quite different from Lestari and Arfiandhani's (2019) study. They revealed the opportunities to pursue further studies as the highest rated extrinsic motive (M=3.43). The students chose English education as a stepping stone to a further prospective academic study. The pre-service teachers also rated religious influence highly (D2; M=5.61). This is in line with the statement of PTS30 in the interview. He is a Brother (a member of a mendicant religious order in the Catholic Christianity). He clearly stated that being a teacher supports the life purpose of his religion where he wanted to fulfill the mission of the monastery (PTS30). Suryani (2020) confirms in her study that Indonesia was contextually different from other countries in which cultural attributes, especially religious beliefs, have an impact on the Indonesian pre-service teachers' decision to enter the teacher education. In fact, most religions in Indonesia perceive teaching as a noble job (Suryani et al., 2016).

On the other hand, the researchers found that the educational experiences in the teacher education program could decrease their interests in teaching profession. PTS05 stated, after following a teaching practice program: I had experienced the teaching practicum in school and I think I am not suitable to be a teacher (PTS05). PTS10 also expressed his disinterest in teaching; "During the six months at school, I feel this is not my passion." (PTS10). Media dissuasion (A7; M=4.66) and social dissuasion (A6; M=4.43) also influenced the pre-service teachers' motivations to neglect the teaching profession. This was mirrored in the interview: "We are exposed to the reality of teachers working in these rural areas" (PTS10). This finding was in line with the negative portrayal of the teaching profession in the mass media and the society, which likely discourages young people from choosing teaching as a career path (Suryani et al., 2016). Civil servant teachers are indeed given security in terms of monthly salaries, allowances and pension funds from the government. However, it can be seen that the life of teachers living and serving in rural Indonesia is not better than the entrepreneurs, doctors or other public officials. The contract based teachers who dominate in terms of numbers barely receive adequate financial rewards and facilities (Suryani, 2020). Mark (2015) clearly states that

the motivation and salary of teachers are crucial to the success of teachers. It is because teachers are motivated by good appreciation, which in turn affects greater success in the teaching and learning processes.

In the third place, the pre-service English teachers in East Nusa Tenggara rated the intrinsic motivation quite highly, especially on the teaching interest (B1, M=4.95, see Table 3) as was also shown in the interview; "I love being a teacher ..." (PTS11). This was consistent with the finding from (Lestari & Arfiandhani, 2019; Suryani et al., 2016). They found their participants' high interest in teaching. This slightly contradicted with the result from study by Suryani (2020). Her finding showed that the participants from English-language education ranked the lowest and were the least satisfied with their choice of enrollment in the teacher education (Suryani, 2020). It was reported that among other pre-service teachers, English language education participants were less motivated.

Another interesting finding was exposed during this research. It was found that some students did not possess altruistic, external or intrinsic motivation at the beginning of their journey as pre-service teachers. They entered the study program because they were denied admission to their chosen study program. As seen in the result of the questionnaire, the pre-service English teachers rated the statements of a fallback career in this research quite high (B3; M=3.61) and (B3; M=4.39) (see Table 3). It was supported by the results of some participants' interviews, for example PTS20: "My first choice was that I wanted to enter a nursing academy and became a nurse" (PTS20), and PTS10: "In the past, I was more interested in the field of communication. But at that time I did not pass the entry test" (PTS10). The findings are in line with the finding from Hellsten and Prytula (2011), which indicates that some of the pre-service teachers in their study had no initial motivation to be teachers the first time they entered the program. They were merely interested in English as the major of the program. They started to grow their motivation in teaching, and in turn decided to learn more about being a teacher once being accepted.

As all the above findings have shown that East Nusa Tenggara pre-service English teachers possess various perceptions and motivations regarding the teaching profession. To some extent they chose the teaching career through altruistic, extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. Despite all the diverse perceptions and motives described above, it has been shown in this research that most pre-service English teachers from East Nusa Tenggara province demonstrate a high interest in teaching and a high satisfaction of their choice to become English

teachers in the future. The findings interestingly enrich the previous studies. Ultimately, being a teacher is not only about joy but also about their ability to feel the joy in the midst of carrying out their difficult responsibilities. As affirmed by Suryani (2020) that more efforts are needed to support the future of these prospective teachers in order to increase and maintain the quality of education in Indonesia especially in the rural areas.

## **Conclusion**

This research contributes to the studies on the teaching perception and motivation of Indonesian pre-service English teachers in terms of bringing the interesting findings from Indonesian rural areas. Although some recent research in Indonesia have been conducted on the importance of the pre-service teachers' perceptions and also motivations in teaching, very few studies have been dedicated to investigating pre-service English teachers specifically in Indonesian rural areas. This study enriches the current literature in at least two important ways. First, the social status and the expertise of teachers highly influence the pre-service English teachers' perceptions. Second, the interest in teaching, social influences, and the value of the social contribution of the teaching profession significantly affect the pre-service English teachers' decision to be teachers in the future. It was found that they started to grow their motivation in teaching because of these factors, and in turn, decided to learn more about being a teacher. However, some of the pre-service teachers also admitted experiencing fallback career where they did not possess a strong interest at the beginning of their journey in the teacher education program.

In light of the results of the study, teacher education programs and educational policymakers should be aware of the importance of career perceptions and motivations in teaching. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that policy reforms related to teachers may not have been able to significantly change the perceptions of the young generation to enter the profession. However, it is important to remember that social influence plays an important role in building their perceptions of the teaching profession. In this case, the study program is expected to provide a good stimulus and real encouragements in order to develop the perceptions and motivation of pre-service teachers. The study program can address this issue by integrating elements of perceptions and motivation building into the curriculum. This way, pre-service teachers can gain reinforcements from the beginning about the importance of teachers in society, especially in rural areas. Despite the positive outcomes, this study involved one English education study program from one

rural area. Therefore, further studies on similar issues involving a larger number of participants from diverse rural areas in Indonesia are needed. Future researchers may also investigate motivational strategies used by pre-service teachers in order to keep them in the teaching profession and how these strategies impact the pre-service teachers' career decisions specifically in dealing with COVID-19 pandemic situations today.

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