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## Pre-service Preschool Teachers' Teaching Motivation in Local Undergraduate Colleges of China

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** This research aims to explore the teaching motivation level of pre-service preschool teachers. **Methods:** A total of 432 pre-service teachers from local undergraduate institutions in China were selected to investigate the dimensions of their teaching motivation, employing the "Factors Influencing Teaching Choice Scale". **Results:** Pre-service teachers in local undergraduate colleges in China are generally more motivated to teach. Among the motivational factors, the social utility value factor was the strongest and the fallback career factor was the weakest. The study suggests that local undergraduate institutions in China should guide pre-service preschool teachers to improve their understanding of the professional value of early childhood teaching, establish professional beliefs, clarify their professional inclinations, establish reasonable professional expectations, and actively respond to the challenges of professional specialization.

**Keywords:** Pre-services Preschool Teachers, Teaching Motivation, Career Choice Satisfaction

### Introduction

At present, Chinese society is developing and progressing and has entered a brand new stage, which will bring new challenges, and education has become an inevitable topic. Education is not an overnight process but a continuous process of development (Suo et al., 2022). Early childhood education is the cornerstone of all education, the development of early childhood education is crucial, and teachers are the decisive force in the development of education (Wang, 2020). As a result, the field of early childhood education is gaining more and more attention, and issues raised about early childhood education and early childhood teachers are gaining more and more attention. Multiple reasons such as low salaries, high work intensity, high occupational stress among staff, and teachers' lack of awareness of the meaning and

status of the profession they are engaged in have led to high mobility and high turnover rates among kindergarten teachers (Guo & Sun, 2018).

Similarly, existing studies on the current situation of pre-service preschool teachers found that the motivation for personal choice of profession is not clear and unclear making many pre-service teachers in early childhood education have a low overall level of professional identity, lack firm professional beliefs, and are reluctant to choose and pursue a career in early childhood education after graduation (Geng, 2020). According to a survey on early childhood teachers' willingness to leave the profession in Guangdong Province, China, teachers who have had thoughts of leaving the ECE profession account for nearly sixty percent of the province's early childhood teachers, with younger teachers accounting for more than sixty-two percent of the number of those thinking of leaving (Liu, 2019). At the same time, a significant number of students choose to enter kindergarten as a teacher to have a good job in a difficult employment environment (Zhu & Ma, 2014). Thus, it is evident that most of the current early childhood teachers in China lack positive intentions to pursue teaching. In addition, because they have different motivations for choosing a career as an early childhood teacher, this can result in teachers showing very different development. In other words, if the motivation for teaching is not well supported, teachers' growth will be hindered, which is detrimental to teachers' improvement and children's growth on a small scale, and negative to the development of preschool education on a large scale, which is a problem we cannot ignore (Wang, 2020). Therefore, it is necessary to explore the motivation of pre-service preschool teachers in teaching.

The study of teachers' teaching motivation, an important topic in the field of teacher education, has currently generated much discussion among researchers. Teachers' teaching motivation can directly reflect whether or not individuals will choose teaching as a career, as well as the factors that motivate individuals to choose to become teachers, and whether or not individuals subjectively want to become teachers (Zembar et al., 2020). Also, teaching motivation is somewhat predictive of an individual's post-teaching enthusiasm for the job, willingness for self-professional advancement, etc., and is also closely related to burnout and career choice satisfaction (Chen et al., 2021). However, research on pre-service preschool teachers' teaching motivation has tended to be more urban, and little research has been conducted on the motivation of teachers who will teach in county and rural early childhood after graduating from local undergraduate institutions (Cen, 2022). The present study focuses on the motivation of teachers in local undergraduate institutions. This study was conducted to investigate the motivation of pre-service preschool teachers in local undergraduate institutions, i.e., to consider the deeper reasons through the manifestation of pre-service preschool teachers' motivation to help pre-service preschool teachers form the positive motivation for teaching, and then to propose countermeasures and suggestions for pre-service training, induction training, and post-service development support system for early childhood teachers.

Therefore, this paper hopes to put forward the following research objectives in the context of literature reading and practice: Objective 1: To investigate different levels of teaching motivation for pre-service preschool teachers in China. Objective 2: To examine whether there are differences in the different teaching motivations for pre-service preschool teachers by gender, grade, and internship experience. Objective 3: To determine whether there is a correlation between the different teaching motivations of pre-service preschool teachers. The specific research questions in this study were as follows: What are the different levels of motivation for pre-service preschool teachers to teach? Are there significant differences in

the different motivations for teaching among pre-service preschool teachers by gender, grade level, and internship experience? What is the relationship between the different motivations of pre-service preschool teachers to teach? The four null hypotheses of the study were: (1) There is no significant difference in the dimensions of teaching motivation among pre-service preschool teachers by gender; (2) There is no significant difference in the dimensions of teaching motivation among pre-service preschool teachers by grade level; (3) There is no significant difference in the dimensions of teaching motivation among pre-service preschool teachers by internship experience, and (4) There is no significant relationship between different motivations to teach among pre-service preschool teachers.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Factors Influencing Teaching Choice**

In the last decade, the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) study has become the most influential research project in the field of teacher attrition and education quality decline abroad (Watt & Richardson, 2007). Australian scholars Watt and Richardson began their FIT-Choice study in 2002 to address the issue of "Australian teachers leaving within five years of teaching" by drawing on Eccles' and Wigfield's expectancy-value theory (Richardson & Watt, 2016). Eccles & Wigfield's expectancy-value theory emphasizes success expectations and task value as the main factors influencing individuals' task choices (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Eccles & Wigfield et al. argue that expectation of success, perception of self-competence, and task value is the main motivational factors that influence task choice, motivation to perform tasks, and task performance (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002); and emphasize the role of social experiences in influencing expectation of success, perception of self-competence, and task value (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002); and constructs a specific expectancy-value theoretical framework that defines operational definitions of the dimensions in the framework (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002). Watt and Richardson constructed the FIT-Choice theoretical framework based on Eccles' and Wegfeld's expectation-value theory. On the one hand, the success expectation was adapted into the teaching motivation dimensions, and the self-perception of competence and task value was adapted into the career awareness dimension; on the other hand, the fallback career factor was added to reflect the special status of pre-service teachers' career choice. In addition, the career choice satisfaction dimension was set up to further discuss the effects of motivation and career awareness on career choice (Richardson & Watt, 2006). The FIT-Choice scale and the theoretical framework were published in 2006 and technically validated in 2007, and have since been widely accepted and adopted worldwide. The research content has also been enriched. The research on the factors influencing career choice based on the FIT-Choice scale and theoretical framework has clarified the interactions between motivation, career perceptions, and career choice satisfaction, and provided a systematic and comprehensive theoretical framework for related research studies.

To summarize, this study intends to select pre-service preschool teachers in local undergraduate institutions in China as the research subjects and use the FIT-Choice theoretical framework and questionnaire to investigate the motivation of pre-service preschool teachers in local undergraduate institutions in China to make up for the shortcomings of existing studies, and to provide some basis for improving the recruitment and training of pre-service preschool teachers in China and ensuring the quality and stability of the future teaching force.

## Methodology

### Participants

In this study, a total of five local undergraduate colleges and universities offering pre-service preschool teacher education majors in a province were randomly selected in a stratified manner for questionnaire research. A total of 525 questionnaires were distributed and 478 questionnaires were collected. 432 questionnaires were valid, with a recovery rate of 91% and an effective rate of 82.2%. Among the 432 valid questionnaires, 137 were boys and 295 were girls, 98 (22.6%) were in the first year, 94 (21.7%) were in the second year, 105 (24.3%) were in the third year, and 135 (31.2%) were in the fourth year.

### Research Instruments

This study was conducted using the FIT Choice Scale based on Watt and Richardson's Motivational Factors for Teaching Scale. The scale was selected to include a 7-point Richter scale of Teaching Motivation (1 being "strongly disagree" .....7 being "strongly agree"), with higher scores indicating a stronger role for each factor. The higher the score, the stronger the motivational effect of each factor. The Teaching Motivation Scale consists of 10 dimensions: perceived teaching abilities (PTA), fallback career (FC), job security(JS), time for family (TFF), job transferability (JT), shape future of children (SFC), enhance society equity (ESE), make a social contribution (MSC), work with children (WWC), prior teaching or learning experience (PTE), and social influences (SIS), with a total of 35 items. The overall Cronbach alpha coefficient for the teaching motivation scale was 0.939, with good internal consistency and high reliability.

## Results

In this study, SPSS 22.0 was used to conduct data statistics and analysis, which mainly included descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and correlation analysis. Three sub-themes will be discussed here, namely (1) the different levels of motivation of pre-service preschool teachers to teach, (2) comparisons across dimensions such as gender, grade, and internship experience, and (3) the relationship between pre-service preschool teachers' teaching motivation.

### (i) Different Levels of Motivation for Pre-service Preschool Teachers to Teach

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PTA	432	5.2684	1.13552
FC	432	3.4454	1.32333
JS	432	5.2242	1.13865
TFF	432	4.5912	1.21108
JT	432	4.6578	0.98345
SFC	432	5.7227	0.90403
ESE	432	5.1622	1.04948
MSC	432	5.7788	0.94555
WWC	432	5.3658	1.16834
PTE	432	5.5988	1.03045
SIS	432	5.0472	1.21243
Valid N (listwise)	432		

As seen in the teaching motivation scale, in addition to the fallback career, the perceived teaching abilities (PTA), job security(JS), time for family (TFF), and job transferability (JT), shape the future of children (SFC), enhance society equity (ESE), make a social contribution (MSC), work with children (WWC), prior teaching or learning experience (PTE), and social influences(SIS). The mean values for the “make social contribution” factor were higher than the overall average, with the make social contribution factor having the highest mean value; the mean value for the fallback career factor was lower than the overall average.

### (ii) Comparison between Gender, Grade and Internship Experience

T-tests and ANOVA were conducted on pre-service preschool teachers' teaching motivation by using gender, grade, and internship experience as independent variables.

#### Comparison between Genders

Table 2 shows the results of the independent t-test for the first null hypothesis. the p-value for Levene's Test is 0.382, 0.280, 0.588 0.834,0.205,0.170,0.511,0.833,0.642, 0.069 separately in the dimension of PTA, JS, TFF, JT, SFC, ESE, MSC, WWC, PTE, and SIS, which is more than .05 ( $p > .05$ ), Then, the output of equal variances assumed showed a p-value of 0.340,0.731,0.913,0.544,0.914,0.401,0.991,0.653,0.497and 0.385, which is also more than .05 ( $p > .05$ ). Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected.; The p-value for Levene's Test is 0.044 in the dimension of FC, which is less than .05 ( $p < .05$ ), then the output of Equal variances not assumed showed a p-value of 0.379, the null hypothesis<sub>1</sub> is not rejected. As conclusion, there is no significant difference in the different factors of teaching motivation between genders.

Table 2  
Comparison between Genders

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Difference	Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
PTA	Equal variances assumed	0.771	0.382	0.959	0.340	0.637	0.665	-	0.680	1.955
	Equal variances not assumed			1.066	0.392	0.637	0.598	-	1.782	3.057
FC	Equal variances assumed	4.133	0.044	0.292	0.771	0.227	0.778	-	1.314	1.768

	Equal variances not assumed			0.984	0.379	0.227	0.231	-	0.406	0.860
JS	Equal variances assumed	1.178	0.280	-0.344	0.731	-0.230	0.669	-	1.556	1.095
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.229	0.840	-0.230	1.006	-	4.465	4.004
TFF	Equal variances assumed	0.295	0.588	0.109	0.913	0.078	0.712	-	1.333	1.488
	Equal variances not assumed			0.133	0.905	0.078	0.581	-	2.245	2.400
JT	Equal variances assumed	0.044	0.834	0.609	0.544	0.352	0.577	-	0.792	1.495
	Equal variances not assumed			0.601	0.606	0.352	0.585	-	2.046	2.749
SFC	Equal variances assumed	1.624	0.205	-0.108	0.914	-0.058	0.531	-	1.111	0.995
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.065	0.954	-0.058	0.886	-	3.803	3.688
ESE	Equal variances assumed	1.909	0.170	0.843	0.401	0.518	0.615	-	0.700	1.737
	Equal variances not assumed			1.488	0.256	0.518	0.348	-	0.772	1.808
MSC	Equal variances assumed	0.434	0.511	-0.002	0.999	-0.001	0.556	-	1.102	1.100
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.001	0.999	-0.001	0.783	-	3.287	3.285
WWC	Equal variances assumed	0.045	0.833	0.450	0.653	0.309	0.686	-	1.051	1.669
	Equal variances not assumed			0.457	0.690	0.309	0.676	-	2.454	3.072
PTE	Equal variances assumed	0.217	0.642	0.682	0.497	0.412	0.604	-	0.786	1.610
	Equal variances not assumed			0.704	0.551	0.412	0.586	-	1.978	2.802

SIS	Equal variances assumed	3.372	0.069	-0.872	0.385	-0.619	0.710	-2.027	0.788
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.958	0.156	-0.619	0.316	-1.698	0.459

### Comparison Between Grades

The data shows the results of ANOVA for the second null hypothesis. The differences in the factors of teaching motivation among pre-service preschool teachers in different grades are shown in Table 3. (1) There were significant differences in the factor of time spent with family members among pre-service preschool teachers of different origins,  $F(3, 557) p=0.017<0.05$ , and post hoc analyses showed that the motivation of time spent with family members was significantly higher for freshman pre-service preschool teachers than for senior pre-service preschool teachers, and for sophomore pre-service preschool teachers than for junior pre-service preschool teachers; (2), There were no significant differences in other motivational factors among pre-service preschool teachers of different grades. Therefore, null hypothesis 3 is partly rejected. In Conclusion, there is no significant difference for pre-service preschool There is no significant difference for pre-service preschool teachers of different grades in PTA, FC, JS, JT, SFC, ESE, MSC, WWC, PTE, and SIS; There is a significant difference for pre-service preschool teachers of different grades inTFF; The average mean score for the level of TFF of freshmen is significantly higher than that of senior (Mean Difference=1.131\*). The average mean score for the level of TFF of the sophomore was significantly higher than that of junior (Mean Difference=1.292\*).

Table 3

#### Comparison between Grades

		Sum Squares	of Mean Square	F	Sig.	Post Hoc Tests
PTA	Between Groups	3.264	1.088	0.84	0.475	
	Within Groups	141.149	1.295			
	Total	144.413				
FC	Between Groups	2.21	0.737	0.414	0.743	
	Within Groups	193.926	1.779			
	Total	196.136				
JS	Between Groups	0.973	0.324	0.245	0.865	
	Within Groups	144.237	1.323			
	Total	145.209				
TFF	Between Groups	14.647	4.882	3.557	<b>0.017</b>	mean difference:freshman-senior=1.131*; sophomore-junior=1.292*
	Within Groups	149.624	1.373			
	Total	164.271				



JT	Between Groups	2.808	0.936	0.96	0.41
	Within Groups	105.516	0.968	7	1
	Total	108.324			
SFC	Between Groups	1.082	0.361	0.43	0.72
	Within Groups	90.452	0.83	5	9
	Total	91.534			
ESE	Between Groups	5.617	1.872	1.73	0.16
	Within Groups	117.742	1.08	3	4
	Total	123.359			
MSC	Between Groups	2.695	0.898	1.00	0.39
	Within Groups	97.44	0.894	5	4
	Total	100.136			
WWC	Between Groups	1.322	0.441	0.31	0.81
	Within Groups	151.559	1.39	7	3
	Total	152.881			
PTE	Between Groups	4.429	1.476	1.40	0.24
	Within Groups	114.496	1.05	5	5
	Total	118.924			
SIS	Between Groups	4.147	1.382	0.93	0.42
	Within Groups	160.49	1.472	9	5
	Total	164.637			

### Comparison Between Internship Experience or not

In this study, 135 people have internship experience and 297 people have no internship experience. The data shows the results of the independent t-test for the third null hypothesis. The p-value for Levene's Test is 0.614,0.313,0.075,0.355,0.844,0.277,0.515,0.464, 0.793 and 0.441 separately in the dimension of PTA,FC,JS,JT,SFC,ESE,MSC,WWC,PTE,SIS, which is more than .05 ( $p > .05$ ); The p-value for Levene 's Test is 0.039 in the dimension of TFF ,which is less than .05 ( $p < .05$ ). Therefore, null hypothesis 3 is partly rejected.

To summarize, there is no significant difference between pre-service preschool teachers with internship experience or not in PTA, FC, JS, JT, SFC, ESE, MSC, WWC, PTE, and SIS; There is a significant difference for pre-service preschool teachers with internship experience or not in TFF;

The average mean score for the level of TFF of pre-service teachers with internship experience ( $M=4.275$ ) is higher than that of pre-service teachers without The average mean score for the level of TFF of pre-service teachers with internship experience ( $M=4.275$ ) is higher than that of pre-service teachers without internship experience ( $M=4.764$ ).

Table 4

*Comparison between internship experience and not*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Interval of the Difference	Confidence of the Difference
								Lower	Upper
PT A	Equal variances assumed	0.118	0.732	0.506	0.614	0.113	0.224	-0.331	0.557
	Equal variances not assumed			0.512	0.610	0.113	0.222	-0.327	0.554
FC	Equal variances assumed	3.508	0.064	1.014	0.313	-0.264	0.260	-0.780	0.252
	Equal variances not assumed			0.965	0.338	-0.264	0.273	-0.809	0.281
JS	Equal variances assumed	1.388	0.241	1.797	0.075	-0.399	0.222	-0.838	0.041
	Equal variances not assumed			1.734	0.087	-0.399	0.230	-0.857	0.060
TF F	Equal variances assumed	0.484	0.488	2.085	<b>0.039</b>	-0.489	0.235	-0.955	-0.024
	Equal variances not assumed			2.009	0.048	-0.489	0.244	-0.975	-0.004
JT	Equal variances assumed	0.006	0.939	0.929	0.355	-0.180	0.194	-0.563	0.204
	Equal variances not assumed			0.911	0.365	-0.180	0.197	-0.573	0.213
SF C	Equal variances assumed	0.312	0.577	0.197	0.844	-0.035	0.179	-0.389	0.319
	Equal variances not assumed			0.195	0.846	-0.035	0.181	-0.395	0.324
ES E	Equal variances assumed	3.011	0.085	1.092	0.277	-0.225	0.206	-0.634	0.183
	Equal variances not assumed			1.036	0.304	-0.225	0.218	-0.659	0.209
M SC	Equal variances assumed	0.524	0.471	0.654	0.515	-0.122	0.186	-0.491	0.248

	Equal variances not assumed			-	0.64	0.520	-0.122	0.189	-0.498	0.254
W	Equal variances assumed	0.44	0.508	0.734	0.464	0.169	0.230	-0.287	0.625	
W	Equal variances not assumed			0.718	0.475	0.169	0.235	-0.300	0.638	
C	Equal variances assumed	0.61	0.436	0.262	0.793	0.053	0.204	-0.350	0.457	
PT	Equal variances not assumed			0.257	0.798	0.053	0.208	-0.361	0.468	
E	Equal variances assumed	0.08	0.776	0.774	0.441	0.185	0.239	-0.289	0.658	
S	Equal variances not assumed			0.764	0.447	0.185	0.242	-0.297	0.667	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

(iii )Relationship between the dimensions of pre-service preschool teachers' teaching motivation

Table 5 shows that the PTA of pre-service preschool teachers is significantly positively correlated with JS,TFF,JT,SFC,ESE,MSC,WWC,PTE,SIS( $r=.428^{**}, .239^{*}, .302^{**}, .382^{**}, .341^{**}, .242^{**}, .475^{**}, .497^{**}, .360^{**}$ ), and significantly negatively correlated with FC; the FC of pre-service preschool teachers is significantly negatively correlated with SFC,MSC,WWC,PTE,SIS ( $r=-.206^{*}, -.215^{*}, -.332^{**}, -.259^{**}, -.259^{**}$ );the JS of pre-service preschool teachers is significantly positively correlated with TFF,JT,SFC,ESE,MSC,WWC,PTE,SIS ( $r=.626^{**},.603^{**},.519^{**},.438^{**},.522^{**},.448^{**},.476^{**},.308^{**}$ );the TFF of pre-service preschool teachers is significantly positively correlated with JT,SFC,ESE,MSC,WWC,PTE,SIS ( $r=.648^{**},.435^{**},.439^{**},.466^{*},.447^{**},.412^{**},.246^{**}$ );the JT of pre-service preschool teachers is significantly positively correlated with SFC,ESE,MSC,WWC,PTE,SIS ( $r=.566^{**},.581^{**},.448^{**},.529^{**},.480^{**},.400^{**}$ ); the SFC of pre-service preschool teachers is significantly positively correlated with ESE,MSC,WWC,PTE,SIS ( $r=.540^{**},.760^{**},.598^{**},.729^{**},.461^{*}$ ); the ESE of pre-service preschool teachers is significantly positively correlated with MSC,WWC,PTE,SIS ( $r=.547^{**},.458^{**},.404^{**},.466^{**}$ ); the MSC of pre-service preschool teachers is significantly positively correlated with WWC,PTE,SIS ( $r=.498^{**},.694^{**},.309^{**}$ ); the WWC of pre-service preschool teachers is significantly positively correlated with PTE,SIS ( $r=.622^{**},.668^{**}$ ); the PTE of pre-service preschool teachers is significantly positively correlated with SIS ( $r=.449^{**}$ ). Hence, null hypothesis 4 is partly rejected.

Table 5  
Correlations

		PTA	FC	JS	TFF	JT	SFC	ESE	MSC	WWC	PTE	SIS
PTA	Pearson Correlation	1.00										
	Sig. (2-tailed)											
FC	Pearson Correlation	<b>-.259**</b>	1.00									
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.01										

JS	Pearson Correlation	<b>.428**</b>	-0.07	1.00								
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.45									
TF	Pearson Correlation	<b>.239*</b>	0.03	<b>.626**</b>	1.00							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.01	0.73	0.00								
JT	Pearson Correlation	<b>.302**</b>	-0.13	<b>.603**</b>	<b>.648**</b>	1.00						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.00							
SF	Pearson Correlation	<b>.382**</b>	<b>-.206*</b>	<b>.519**</b>	<b>.435**</b>	<b>.566**</b>	1.00					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00						
ES	Pearson Correlation	<b>.341**</b>	-0.05	<b>.438**</b>	<b>.439**</b>	<b>.581**</b>	<b>.540**</b>	1.00				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.61	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00					
M	Pearson Correlation	<b>.242**</b>	<b>-.215*</b>	<b>.522**</b>	<b>.466**</b>	<b>.448**</b>	<b>.760**</b>	<b>.547*</b>	1.00			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00			
W	Pearson Correlation	<b>.475**</b>	<b>-.332**</b>	<b>.448**</b>	<b>.447**</b>	<b>.529**</b>	<b>.598**</b>	<b>.458*</b>	<b>.498*</b>	1.00		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
PT	Pearson Correlation	<b>.497**</b>	<b>-.259**</b>	<b>.476**</b>	<b>.412**</b>	<b>.480**</b>	<b>.729**</b>	<b>.404*</b>	<b>.694*</b>	<b>.622**</b>	1.00	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
SIS	Pearson Correlation	<b>.360**</b>	<b>-.259**</b>	<b>.308**</b>	<b>.246**</b>	<b>.400**</b>	<b>.461**</b>	<b>.466*</b>	<b>.309*</b>	<b>.668**</b>	<b>.449*</b>	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

## Discussion

It is both reasonable and important to examine the teaching motivation of pre-service teachers. by doing so, teacher educators can understand pre-service teachers' teaching motivation more comprehensively and accurately (Hennessy & Lynch, 2017).

## Demographic Information on the Factors of Teaching Motivation

According to the degree of gender influence on the dimensions of pre-service preschool teachers' teaching motivation, no significant differences were found between genders for the different factors of teaching motivation. This is in line with the study of Sun et al (2015), which is less consistent with the findings of Sun and Chen Ligang (2015), who concluded that male teachers have higher teaching motivation than female teachers in general. The main reason for the inconsistent findings may be the inconsistency of the survey and research population. The subjects of this research study are pre-service preschool teachers in local undergraduate institutions in China, who have employment contracts with the government and must go to work in counties and rural areas after graduation, and the findings of Sun et al. are all based on a survey of pre-service preschool teachers in centrally managed higher education institutions, so the findings of this study are also more in line with current reality.

The accompanying family time factor of teaching motivation showed significant differences across grade levels, specifically, freshman pre-service preschool teachers were significantly more motivated to accompany their family members than senior pre-service preschool teachers, and sophomore pre-service preschool teachers were significantly more motivated to accompany their family members than junior pre-service preschool teachers. This result was

not found in previous studies. The reason for this result is that freshmen and sophomores believe that they will have more time to spend with their families when they enter the preschool teaching profession, while juniors and seniors have a deeper understanding of preschool teaching after their apprenticeship and internship, and understand that preschool teaching is not an easy job, and there are other administrative tasks and chores besides teaching. Freshmen and sophomore preschool teachers are less motivated to spend time with their families than freshmen and sophomore pre-service teachers.

In addition, the mean value of the motivational factor of time spent with family members was significantly higher for preschool teachers without internship experience than for preschool teachers with internship experience, and there was a significant difference that coincided with the previous comparative data on grade differences. In the current preschool teacher education curriculum in China, freshman and sophomore students need to spend more time learning knowledge and subject content. In their third and fourth years of college, college students will spend less time learning knowledge and content by increasing their apprenticeship and internship opportunities. As a result, pre-service preschool teachers without internship experience have higher motivational factors for spending time with their families.

### **The Level of Teachers' Interests and Career Choice Satisfaction**

Overall, pre-service preschool teachers had high levels of motivation for teaching on all dimensions (out of 7), indicating that pre-service preschool teachers have a strong motivation for teaching. The pre-service preschool teachers' motivational factors for teaching were, in descending order, make social contributions, shaping the future of children, previous teaching and learning experiences, working with children, perceived teaching efficacy, job security, enhancing society equity, social influences, job transferability, time with family, and fallback career. Of these, job security, time with family, and job transferability are personal utility values in motivation, while shaping the future of children, enhancing society equity, make social contributions, and working with children are social utility values in motivation. From the results of the study, the social utility value factor plays the strongest role in the motivation of pre-service preschool teachers' career choices, which is consistent with the results obtained from many studies (Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007; Eren & Tezel, 2010; Nesje et al., 2018). This indicates that pre-service preschool teachers strongly recognize the social value of the early childhood teaching profession and want to make social contributions through the early childhood teaching profession to serve and give back to society; furthermore, the desire to work with children and help them grow has been an important reason for pre-service preschool teachers to choose the early childhood teaching profession (Fokkens & Carrinus, 2012), which is consistent with the findings of this study. The finding that prior teaching or learning experiences and significant others play an important motivational role in pre-service teachers' career choices suggests that people need to belong and that an individual's development depends on the development of all other people with whom he or she interacts directly or indirectly. pre-service preschool teachers' exposure to teachers and their own teaching experiences have an important role modeling role in pre-service preschool teachers' career choices, influencing the acquisition of new ways of living or behaving and ultimately influencing their career choices (Salifu et al., 2018); also, the mean value of perceived teaching efficacy was significantly higher than the overall average, which is consistent with the results of existing studies (Padhy et al., 2015). Self-efficacy is a very important factor that influences the career choice of teacher educators; the motivation level of the personal utility value factor

in this study was slightly higher than the overall average, and studies have suggested that everything people strive for is related to their interests, and that personal utility value is a question of quality of life, involving family time, salary, job security, and career status, and is an important factor that influences the career choice of teachers (Fokkens & Canrinus, 2012); the mean of the fallback career factor was slightly lower than the overall average, with a mean of 3.44 (on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree on a scale of 1 to 7), indicating that pre-service preschool teachers were less likely to consider early childhood teaching as a fallback career.

### **The Relationship between Different Factors of Teaching Motivation**

Table 5 shows that PTA of pre-service preschool teachers is significantly positively correlated with JS, TFF, JT, SFC, ESE, MSC, WWC, PTE, SIS and significantly negatively correlated with FC; FC of pre-service preschool teachers is significantly negatively correlated with SFC, MSC, WWC, PTE, SIS; JS of pre-service preschool teachers is significantly positively correlated with TFF, JT, SFC, ESE, MSC, WWC, PTE, and SIS were significantly positively correlated; TFF of pre-service preschool teachers was significantly positively correlated with JT, SFC, ESE, MSC, WWC, PTE, and SIS; JT of pre-service preschool teachers was significantly positively correlated with SFC, ESE, MSC, WWC, PTE, and SIS; SFC of pre-service preschool teachers was significantly positively correlated with ESE, MSC, WWC, PTE, and SIS were significantly and positively correlated; ESE of pre-service preschool teachers were significantly and positively correlated with MSC, WWC, PTE, SIS; MSC of pre-service preschool teachers were significantly and positively correlated with WWC, PTE, SIS; WWC of pre-service preschool teachers were significantly and positively correlated with PTE, SIS; PTE of pre-service preschool teachers were significantly and positively correlated with SIS.

The results of the study indicated that the factors in pre-service preschool teachers' teaching motivation were closely related rather than acting individually to produce the results of their career choice. The higher the perceived teaching abilities of pre-service preschool teachers, the stronger their JS, TFF, JT, SFC, ESE, MSC, WWC, PTE, and SIS motivation; the stronger the FC motivation of pre-service preschool teachers, the weaker the SFC, MSC, WWC, PTE, and SIS motivation; the stronger the JS motivation of pre-service preschool teachers, then the TFF, JT, SFC, ESE, MSC, WWC, PTE, SIS; the stronger the pre-service preschool teacher's TFF motivation, then the stronger the JT, SFC, ESE, MSC, WWC, PTE, SIS motivation; the stronger the pre-service preschool teacher's JT motivation, then the stronger the SFC, ESE, MSC, WWC, PTE, SIS motivation; the stronger the pre-service preschool teacher's SFC motivation, then the stronger the ESE, MSC, WWC, PTE, and SIS motivation; the stronger pre-service preschool teachers' ESE motivation, then the stronger MSC, WWC, PTE, and SIS motivation; this finding is consistent with the findings of Guo et al (2015); the stronger pre-service preschool teachers' MSC motivation, then the stronger WWC, PTE, and SIS motivation; the stronger pre-service preschool teachers' stronger WWC motivation, then stronger PTE and SIS motivation; the stronger pre-service preschool teachers' PTE motivation, then stronger SIS motivation.

Therefore, Chinese educational administrations and schools should pay more attention to and make efforts to improve pre-service preschool teachers' teaching motivation, thereby promoting the improvement of early childhood teachers' teaching beliefs and career satisfaction. In summary, these studies on the relevance of pre-service preschool teachers' motivation dimensions for teaching provide an important basis for understanding the importance of motivation for teaching.

### Limitations of The Study

The small sample size did not allow for a more detailed analysis of the effects of different demographic factors such as location and age on all dimensions of pre-service preschool teachers' teaching motivation; nor were the mediating and moderating variables that might be involved attempted. In the future, it is necessary to further accumulate and expand the data, add significant variables, broaden the scope of the study, and conduct research from the perspective of early childhood teachers to further inform the selection and training of preschool teachers.

### Conclusion

This study investigated the motivation of pre-service preschool teachers in local undergraduate institutions in China. The results showed that the overall motivation of pre-service preschool teachers in local undergraduate institutions in China is at a high level, among which the social utility value factor is the most important motivational factor in the motivation of pre-service preschool teachers, indicating that the preschool teaching profession itself has some professional characteristics that attract pre-service preschool teachers. Therefore, in the process of education and teaching, schools should improve pre-service preschool teachers' positive understanding of the preschool teaching profession in terms of serving society, repaying society, and helping children grow and develop through teacher career education and propaganda. On this basis, they should continue to construct pre-service preschool teachers' beliefs about the teaching profession. In their freshman and sophomore years, pre-service preschool teachers believe that early childhood teaching is a job that allows them to spend more time with their families, but this is not the case. Therefore, local undergraduate institutions need to improve students' understanding of the nature and content of the early childhood teaching profession and establish reasonable career expectations to prevent students from becoming rebellious when choosing a career due to the psychological gap. In addition, reasonable arrangements for the duration of educational internships and internship guidance have an important impact on the career choices of pre-service teachers. For example, local undergraduate institutions should develop corresponding internship guidance programs and contents according to freshman to senior years, carefully select internship schools and pre-service preschool teachers' instructors in the internship arrangement, and guide students to establish reasonable career expectations and make appropriate career choices.

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