



Research Papers in Language Teaching and Learning

Vol. 11, No. 1, February 2021, 238-250

ISSN: 1792-1244

Available online at <http://rpltl.eap.gr>

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The practicum as a motivating force to choose teaching English as a career

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This paper aims to explore the motivational forces that drive university students pursuing studies in English language and literature to follow teaching as a career by looking into the similarities and differences in their views among those students who have completed their practicum as part of their undergraduate studies and those who have not done so. It is interesting to delve into the aspects that motivate a young person to choose teaching English as a career since the future of the young generation depends widely on their choice of occupation. 140 students in their third and fourth year of studies in the School of English took part in this study. 74 had not opted for the practicum, while 66 had done so and had completed it. Based on the findings, both groups are motivated by altruistic views and the fact that they consider English to be an important subject both for them and their future learners. The ability to teach is another essential factor for them, while opportunities and meaningful relationships do not seem to play an important role for their choice. However, their personality seems to be a more motivating factor for those who had completed the practicum.



Το άρθρο αυτό αποτελεί μια προσπάθεια διερεύνησης των κινήτρων που ωθούν τους φοιτητές να ακολουθήσουν τη διδασκαλία των αγγλικών ως επάγγελμα εξετάζοντας τις ομοιότητες και τις διαφορές ανάμεσα στους φοιτητές οι οποίοι έχουν πραγματοποιήσει την πρακτική τους άσκηση στο πλαίσιο των προπτυχιακών τους σπουδών και σε αυτούς που δεν την έχουν επιλέξει. Είναι ενδιαφέρον να εξετάσουμε διεξοδικά τα κίνητρα ενός νέου ανθρώπου να επιλέξει τη διδασκαλία των αγγλικών ως επάγγελμα. 140 φοιτητές που σπουδάζουν Αγγλική Γλώσσα και Φιλολογία πήραν μέρος στην έρευνα. 74 δεν είχαν παρακολουθήσει το μάθημα της Πρακτικής και 66 φοιτητές είχαν ολοκληρώσει την πρακτική τους άσκηση. Σύμφωνα με τα αποτελέσματα, και οι δυο ομάδες φοιτητών έχουν αλtruιστικά κίνητρα και θεωρούν ότι τα αγγλικά αποτελούν ένα ενδιαφέρον μάθημα τόσο για τους ίδιους όσο και για τους μελλοντικούς μαθητές τους. Η διδακτική ικανότητα αποτελεί επίσης ένα σημαντικό παράγοντα για την επιλογή τους, ενώ αντίθετα οι ευκαιρίες και οι ουσιαστικές σχέσεις δεν φαίνεται να τους επηρεάζουν σε σημαντικό βαθμό. Παρ'όλα αυτά, η προσωπικότητα φαίνεται να αποτελεί σημαντικό κίνητρο στους φοιτητές οι οποίοι

έχουν πραγματοποιήσει την Πρακτική Άσκηση σε αντίθεση με αυτούς που δεν έχουν παρακολουθήσει το συγκεκριμένο μάθημα.

Key words: practicum, motivation to choose teaching English as a career, similarities and differences

1. Introduction

Motivation has been an interesting theme of investigation since the 1970s (Bess, 1977), and various fields such as Linguistics and Psychology have put the issue of motivation under the lens (Dörnyei, 2006). In the linguistic field, many researchers have tried to shed light on the motivational forces that drive learners to learn a foreign language as well as the forces that drive teachers to teach a foreign language. However, not much research has been conducted in the examination of the motivation of university students who wish to follow teaching English as a career (Demiröz & Yeşilyurt, 2012, Gürsoy, 2013).

The present study is part of a research that was conducted in order to investigate the beliefs and motivation of students of English in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki to follow teaching English as a career in a country with poor economy in the past few years. It is important to look into the motivational patterns that lead university students to follow this career, since their choice of occupation is one that will play an important role in their lives. In this paper, their motivation will be examined in relation to having completed their practicum, which is offered to the students of the School of English in the fourth year of studies in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. In other words, it is necessary to see if the completion of the practicum is related to their choice of profession.

More particularly, this study investigates the motivation of 140 students of English while pursuing their studies towards the attainment of a BA degree in English Language and Literature in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, in order to follow teaching English as a career. Their motivation is tested in relation to “Intrinsic value”, “Job benefits”, “Meaningful relationships”, “Altruistic views”, “Ability”, and “Opportunities”. Taking all of these into consideration, this paper attempts to answer the following question: Is there a difference in motivation between the students who have completed the practicum and those who have not completed it?

2. Motivation to choose teaching English as a career

In the past, various voices questioned whether teaching a foreign language constitutes a career. In a study conducted in Poland some years ago, the results were divergent since the researcher concluded that in some countries, such as Greece, Mexico, Russia, Korea and the United States of America, teaching English is considered to be a career, whereas in other countries, such as Germany and Japan, it is not thought to be a career (Johnston, 1977). Their opinions varied, since there were some teachers who connected the profession to the teaching experience and others who thought that commitment to work entailed performing their daily duties. Moreover, several teachers claimed that due to the fact that they could not make ends meet, they also offered private lessons, while altruistic reasons to choose teaching were viewed with irony by some of them.

Teaching as a career and the reasons that lead a young student to follow it has been the research focus of many studies in the past. For instance, altruistic reasons have been found to be among the most important factors that motivate undergraduate students to follow teaching as a career (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000). It seems that teaching is considered to be important for the improvement of society and that learners' success is of great importance. These altruistic factors have been connected with intrinsic motivation, which is defined as "doing an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence" (Ryan & Deci, 2000: 56). The motivational characteristics that are linked with intrinsic motivation are the teachers' need to use their expertise in the field by providing quality and creative learning. The only reward or praise that is expected by intrinsically motivated teachers is their learners' success for the benefit of society.

Another category of motivation is the extrinsic one which is defined as "doing an activity for the attainment of a separable outcome" (ibid). This "separable outcome" includes factors like the salary and long holidays constituting an instrumental type of motivation. It can be assumed that teachers (or students who wish to become teachers) may not be motivated by forces which belong to one sole category. One's goal may be his or her students' success, but it is also quite possible that they expect the salary at the end of the month or the holidays at the end of the school year (Thomson, Turner & Neitfeld, 2011). This view mirrors an individual driven by several factors which fall into both categories (i.e. altruistic views and opportunities) but what may differ is the degree to which each factor motivates each teacher. However, there are opposing views that resulted in a contrast between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Deci, 1971; Weiner, 1985).

In an attempt to find the motivational forces that lead future teachers of various disciplines in a British university to follow this particular career, it was concluded that those participants who expressed their will to follow teaching as a career were motivated by intrinsic factors claiming their contribution to the society by following a profession, which they considered to be enjoyable (Kyriacou & Coulthart, 2000). On the contrary, those students who were not willing to become teachers claimed that promotion and earnings could be a motivating factor for them.

Another study, which was conducted in Turkey among prospective teachers of various subjects, showed that these teachers' interest in the subject they teach, the methods they use and education itself were related to their effort and persistence to succeed, to their ambitions and to the satisfaction they get from this profession (Eren, 2012). Educational programmes were thought to be of great value, since it feels they would be more prepared when they would be asked to enter the classroom as they would be called to connect their theoretical background with practice. To this end, Housego (1990) came to the conclusion that prospective teachers feel indeed more prepared after attending an educational programme and that their feelings towards the profession may change after one year of studies.

Teaching English as a profession and the motivation of future teachers of English was the focus of a study in Slovenia (Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998). In this study, it became apparent that due to being intrinsically motivated future teachers of English considered their subject enjoyable and important to the extent that it could lead to their students' success. Extrinsic motivation was also present since they claimed that they liked the varied work pattern this profession may offer. A very interesting finding was that they felt the need to familiarise their learners with the English culture as English is considered an international language.

Few future teachers of English claimed that they had been influenced by their family or peers to follow this profession.

Moreover, it seems that even though motivation has been widely researched among learners of foreign languages and what motivates them, there is not much research on what motivates university students to choose teaching English as their profession. In the same path, there are studies on the beliefs about teaching in general, but not so much research on the beliefs about teaching as a career. This conclusion has also been drawn in a recent article on a study that was carried out in Turkey (Gürsoy, 2013). It was concluded that it is important to explore the motivation and the attitude towards teaching English, since the teachers' motivation can enhance students' motivation in turn and pave their way to successful learning. Gürsoy also concluded that lower integrative motivation may show professional readiness because an internal wish to learn is connected to teaching efficacy. Therefore, more research should be conducted in order to help learners succeed under the guidance of motivated teachers with positive views about teaching as a career.

The lack of substantial research on teachers' motivation has been acknowledged in another study, which was also conducted in Turkey (Demiröz & Yeşilyurt, 2012). The findings of this study brought to light that in-service teachers of English in Turkey adopt mastery goal orientation, which is considered to be interrelated with autonomy in asking for help in the professional field, as well as a need to promote learning and professional development. Moreover, it was found that they seem to have low mean scores in ability avoidance (i.e. to avoid showing inferior ability in relation to colleagues) and work avoidance goal orientation (i.e. to make only a small effort in order to perform one's duties as a teacher), two factors that are related with less effort to handle academic and professional tasks. Another finding was that the instructors who had completed a postgraduate degree were less likely to adopt ability avoidance goal orientation than their colleagues who held only a Bachelor's degree. This ability avoidance goal orientation and negative patterns of motivation were positively related. This is a logical result since a teacher, who is not motivated, is not willing to put much effort in order to help his or her learners. Thus, it can be safely inferred that this type of goal orientation is not a characteristic that can assist the learning process.

3. Contextualising the study

3.1. The programme of study

The present study was conducted in the School of English in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The programme of study offers courses in several domains over an eight-semester course, i.e. (i) Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, (ii) English Literature and Culture, (iii) American Literature and Culture and (iv) Translation and Intercultural Studies. The variety of courses offers to the students the proper qualifications to gain wide knowledge on cultural, linguistic and teaching methods, which could prove valuable for their future career as teachers of English. Some of the courses offered concerning the linguistic and teaching fields are: Second Language Acquisition, Methodology of Teaching Modern Languages, The Classroom: Principles and Practice, Practice in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, which are compulsory courses, and Vocabulary Acquisition and Teaching, Syllabus Design and Material Preparation, Language Classrooms Observed, Testing and Evaluation, Assessment in the Classroom, Early Foreign Language Learning and Teaching among others, which are elective ones (<http://www.enl.auth.gr>). The students also have the opportunity to complete their practicum by attending the course.

The practicum lasts for one semester during which the students have to attend a number of seminars prior to the allocation to a particular primary or secondary school. In the past few years this course has become compulsory for the completion of studies. The aim of this course as presented on the internet site is: "...to provide student teachers with the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the practicalities of teaching in the context of the primary and secondary ELT classroom in state schools" (ibid). They are allocated to a state school for eight weeks. Throughout this period, they are expected to work closely with the teacher of the school as well as with their University supervisor. The final product is the compilation of a portfolio, which includes observation reports, lesson plans, reflective practice reports, lesson comment forms, and copies of the teaching material they used in class. The portfolio reflects the student teachers' attempt to put theory into practice.

3.2. Job opportunities for graduates

Among other job opportunities, the graduates from the School of English can seek employment in the state sector as teachers in a primary and secondary school or in the private sector (i.e. private centres of foreign languages or private schools). Upon completion of their studies they can be enlisted in the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and be selected as substitute teachers before gaining a permanent position in a state school. At this point, it should be mentioned that teachers in Greece appear to be among the most hard-working teachers in Europe since it has been found that they work for more hours than many of their colleagues in other European countries. For example, according to the European Network "Eurydice", a study carried out by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), teachers in Greece work for 24 hours per week, while teachers in Norway work for 14.5 hours and teachers in Poland work for 14 hours per week (<http://www.iefimerida.gr/news/104908>).

4. The study

4.1. Data collection and analysis

The participants who took part in this study were 140 students of the School of English of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and were in the third or fourth year of their studies. The sample was representative since it covered a 25% of the total number of students studying in the School at the time of the study (Klangou, 2015).

66 (47%) had completed the practicum, whereas 74 (53%) had not opted for the practicum since it was not a compulsory course at the time of the study. In relation to their career intentions, 67.5% of those who had not attended the practicum claimed to be committed to teaching, while 81.9% of those students who had attended this course showed their intention to become teachers of English.

Upon completion of the questionnaires, the results were analysed with the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS 16.0). The questionnaire was found to be reliable since the Cronbach alpha is .781. Motivation was analysed with the help of the T-test for independent samples, because the similarities and the differences between the two groups of students can be safely examined and can render statistically significant results. The significance level is set at $p < .05$.

4.2 Research tool

The data gathering tool was a questionnaire, which is an adapted version of the Reasons for Teaching Scale (RTS) (Kyriacou, Hultgren and Stephens 1999); this questionnaire delved into motivation issues that pertained to the beliefs held by the university students regarding their motivation to choose teaching as a career. As classified by Kyriacou et al. (1999), the questions fall into the following categories: intrinsic value, job benefits, meaningful relationships, altruistic views, ability to teach and opportunities. All the questions made use of a 5-point Likert Scale and the answers ranged from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). The questionnaire also contained some questions, which asked for personal details concerning age, gender, courses they had attended and future career plans.

5. Results

In terms of “Intrinsic value”, significant differences were yielded in the questions about the importance of the subject for prospective teachers and their students showing that the students who had attended the practicum (Group 2) considered the subject more important for themselves and their students than their counterparts (Group 1) who had not attended the course (Group 1; see Table 1).

	Questions about Motivation: Intrinsic value		M	S D	t	df	P
1.	I enjoy the subject I will teach.	Group 1	4.09	0.87	-1.75	138	0.08
		Group 2	4.33	0.70	-1.77	136.68	
2.	I can get a job as a teacher in any part of the country.	Group 1	2.94	1.01	-1.20	138	0.22
		Group 2	3.16	1.14	-1.19	131.05	
3.	The subject I will teach is important to me.	Group 1	3.90	0.70	-2.56	138	0.01
		Group 2	4.22	0.78	-2.54	131.89	
4.	The subject I will teach is an important subject for students.	Group 1	3.90	0.77	-3.75	138	0.00
		Group 2	4.36	0.64	-3.79	137.34	

Table 1: The role of “Intrinsic value” to follow teaching English as a career

It was found that in the case of Group 2, the participants enjoyed the subject they would teach more than those of Group 1; the same participants considered the high value of this particular subject. The fact that they are able to get a job as teachers of English in any part of the country did not result in significant differences between the two groups.

With regard to “Job benefits”, the participants in Group 2 appeared to be more motivated by the fact that teaching offers security and that this job is considered to have a respectable status in society. Long vacations and the certainty of being employed as teachers upon completion of their studies did not yield any significant differences (see Table 2). Interestingly, the mean scores in the question about their future employment were low compared to the results in the other questions.

	Questions about Motivation: Job benefits		Mean	SD	t	df	p
1.	Teaching offers good job security.	Group 1	3.14	0.88	-2.81	138	0.00
		Group 2	3.60	1.01	-2.79	128.73	
2.	There are long vacations.	Group 1	3.55	0.93	-0.12	138	0.89
		Group 2	3.57	1.05	-0.12	131.10	
3.	My employment as a teacher of English is assured after graduation.	Group 1	2.32	1.08	-0.70	138	0.48
		Group 2	2.45	1.09	-0.70	135.85	
4.	Teachers have a respectable social status.	Group 1	3.18	0.87	-2.39	138	0.01
		Group 2	3.56	0.96	-2.38	131.91	

Table 2: The role of “Job benefits” to follow teaching English as a career

Moreover, “Meaningful relationships” seem to play an important role for those students who had attended the practicum. It seems that they had been influenced by other people to follow this career (e.g. previous teachers, friends, family), and that their own experience as students of English was important for their choice (see Table 3).

	Questions about Motivation: Meaningful relationships		M	S D	t	df	p
1.	Family members influenced me to become a teacher.	Group 1	2.74	1.19	-0.74	138	0.00
		Group 2	2.89	1.20	-0.74	135.92	
2.	Other people influenced me to become a teacher (e.g., previous teachers, friends).	Group 1	2.62	1.14	-3.84	138	0.89
		Group 2	3.34	1.08	-3.85	137.40	
3.	It can help me to get a job teaching in another country.	Group 1	3.35	0.83	-1.39	138	0.48
		Group 2	3.56	0.94	-1.38	130.51	
4.	My experience as a student has given me a positive image of the job.	Group 1	3.36	1.04	-3.45	138	0.01
		Group 2	3.93	0.90	-3.48	137.94	

Table 3: The role of “Meaningful relationships” to follow teaching English as a career

In Table 4, it becomes apparent that both groups share similar altruistic views. However, the high mean scores in both questions of this category show that both groups consider teaching to be a noble profession that can help improve society. The level of different views in relation to this set of questions can lead to the conclusion that altruistic views can be a motivating force to become teachers of English for both groups.

	Questions about Motivation:		M	S D	t	df	p
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Altruistic views							
1.	Teaching is a noble profession.	Group 1	3.78	1.03	-1.61	138	0.10
		Group 2	4.07	1.09	-1.61	133.96	
2.	Being a teacher can help improve society.	Group 1	4.16	0.66	0.65	138	0.51
		Group 2	4.07	0.88	0.64	119.82	

Table 4: The role of “Altruistic views” to follow teaching English as a career

In terms of “Ability to teach”, the future teachers in Group 2 seem to be more motivated by the fact that they like the activity of classroom teaching as well as by the fact that they consider their personality to be suited for this career since statistically significant differences were found in these questions. Interestingly, the mean scores were high for both groups in both of these questions (see Table 5). Another important finding is the fact that both groups claimed that they are motivated by their learners’ success as the mean scores in this question were quite high (4.40 in Group 1 and 4.53 in Group 2).

	Questions about Motivation: Ability to teach		M	SD	t	df	p
1.	I want to help children succeed.	Group 1	4.40	0.68	-1.13	138	0.25
		Group 2	4.53	0.61	-1.14	137.98	
2.	I like the activity of classroom teaching.	Group 1	3.82	0.88	-3.59	138	0.00
		Group 2	4.31	0.72	-3.63	137.18	
3.	I have a personality that is suited for this job.	Group 1	3.52	0.83	-3.69	138	0.00
		Group 2	4.06	0.87	-3.68	134.29	

Table 5: The role of “Ability to teach” in students’ decision to follow teaching English as a career

The last category examined was the one of “Opportunities”, which included questions about the socialisation with colleagues, the salary and the opportunity to use teaching as a stepping stone to follow another profession. The issue of salary received for the work done seems to be a motivating factor in the case of future teachers who had completed the practicum in an attempt to come into contact with their future profession (see Table 6). However, the mean scores were quite low (2.55 for Group 1 and 3.12 for Group 2). Socialisation with colleagues and the opportunity to follow a different career in the future did not yield any statistically significant differences.

In conclusion, “Altruistic views” seem to be important for the majority of future teachers and their decision to attend the practicum plays no role. It seems that two aspects play a great role in their motivation to choose teaching as a career: the enjoyment derived from the subject they will teach and the importance of the subject both for them and their students. “Job benefits” did not seem to motivate them and “Meaningful relationships” were not so important, either. In terms of “Ability to teach”, the majority of the future

teachers were motivated by their will to help their students succeed and by the fact that they enjoy teaching. Personality issues seem to have motivated students who had attended the practicum to contemplate a teaching career. Finally, “Opportunities” were not considered that important by the two groups, since both their satisfaction with the salary and the fact that teaching can lead to other jobs received low mean scores; it seems that only socialisation can be a motivating force for them.

	Questions about Motivation: Opportunities		M	S D	t	df	p
1.	The job offers opportunities to socialize with colleagues.	Group 1	3.97	0.59	0.76	138	0.44
		Group 2	3.87	0.85	0.75	114.81	
2.	The level of pay is quite good.	Group 1	2.55	0.86	-3.22	138	0.00
		Group 2	3.12	1.20	-3.16	116.07	
3.	Being a teacher can lead to other jobs in the future.	Group 1	3.36	0.88	0.19	138	0.84
		Group 2	3.33	1.04	0.19	128.21	

Table 6: The role of “Opportunities” to follow teaching English as a career

6. Discussion

Motivation to choose teaching English as a career was the scope of this study. More specifically, an attempt was made to shed some light on the similarities and differences in the motivation among university students who had gained some teaching experience through a practicum as opposed to students who had not attended such a course. In line with previous studies (Roness, 2011; Eren, 2012), the two groups had positive feelings about the subject of English, since most participants claimed they would enjoy teaching English; thus, “Intrinsic values” were shared by both groups. However, in our study those participants with a definite teaching future orientation were overall more positive about all issues regarding the intrinsic values. On the other hand, both groups were not motivated by the fact that they might find a job in any part of the country, a factor which appeared to be one of the least motivating ones for the future teachers. This could be attributed to the difficulties they might face due to the low salary they would get as new teachers as well as their allocation to remote areas. However, the future teachers who had attended the practicum were also motivated by the importance of English as a subject both for themselves as well as for their own students.

In terms of “Job benefits”, the two groups showed similar views regarding the job security offered by teaching, the long vacations and the assured employment after graduation. At this point, the findings reflect future teachers’ job insecurity and lack of assured employment after graduation. The negative feelings among the Group can be associated with the gloomy economic situation in Greece, as being appointed in the state school sector has become a far-fetched dream. As in previous studies, low pay was found to be a demotivating factor (Richardson & Watt, 2006). However, the fact that the subject of English is quite important seems to act as a driving force for future teachers who have completed the practicum.

With regard to “Meaningful relationships”, their own experience as students of English was given prominence for their career choice. The students who had completed the practicum seem to be more influenced by other people as well as by their own experience as students of English, even though they were not so highly motivated by their families, friends, their own teachers and the fact that they could get a job abroad. It seems that in previous research the findings are quite contradictory regarding the influence exercised by meaningful relationships (Kyriacou & Koberi, 1998; Stuart, 2000), showing that there is a societal difference in the degree of how someone is influenced by others to choose a career since these studies were conducted in different countries.

One of the most important findings was that “Altruistic views” were the most motivating factors for both groups. The vast majority of students claimed that they were motivated by the fact that teaching is a noble profession and by the fact that being a teacher can improve society. The positive views of both groups highlight the fact that these prospective teachers believe that they can improve society by practicing this noble profession. This finding is in line with the results related to “Student development” in previous studies (Poppleton, 1989; Spear, Good & Lee, 2000; Kyriacou & Coulthart, 2000; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Roness, 2011; van Uden, Ritzen & Pieters, 2013; Thomson & Palermo, 2014).

“Ability to teach” was also regarded by future teachers of both groups as important since they like the activity of classroom teaching and they have a personality that is suited for this job. The completion of the practicum seems to have influenced their decision-making and to have boosted their confidence in their ability to teach. The fact that they have expressed their willingness to help children succeed was one of the most motivating factors for the vast majority of the prospective teachers. This result was in line with previous research conducted in other countries (Kyriacou, Hultgren & Stephens, 1999; Thomson, Turner & Neitfeld, 2011).

“Opportunities” was seen as a motivating factor. The future teachers who had completed the practicum viewed the salary as a motivating force in order to pursue this career. However, their replies failed to reach the high levels of other questions showing that they are more motivated by other reasons such as altruistic ones. Socialising with other colleagues seemed to be an encouraging factor for both groups, while they were not able to decide if this job could lead to other jobs in the future.

In conclusion, it seems to be important that programmes like the practicum in the School of English of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, are offered in order to provide prospective graduates with an opportunity to have a first contact with the classroom. Theory and practice should coexist in every educational programme that prepares future teachers in order to familiarise with the eventualities of a future profession. Even the students who are not willing to become teachers and who would prefer to follow another profession upon graduation could gain some experience, which might be important for their future. Moreover, as previous researchers concluded (Hoy & Murphy, 2001; Cummings, 2012; Moore-Russo & Wilsey, 2014), these programmes should encourage students to reflect on their beliefs and motivation to follow teaching as a career. These results can be used to improve the educational system of a country since the opinions of the future teachers will influence the teaching practices and their learners one day.

7. Conclusion

The completion of a practicum offers the opportunity to prospective graduates to come into contact with a future profession, to put theory into practice and to contemplate their future commitment to this profession based on their personality, aspirations, abilities, and beliefs. When choosing teaching English as a career in Greece, job benefits do not play an influential role in prospective teachers' decision-making. Other factors seem to exert a certain degree of influence, which shapes prospective graduates' views about their future career choice. Thus it seems that the motivation to choose teaching English as a career is driven by intrinsic values, meaningful relationships, opportunities, and altruistic views. On the whole, university students who have an inner drive to complete their practicum as part of their undergraduate studies show more positive feelings towards teaching in general and teaching the subject of English in particular.

Teacher education programmes can offer an invaluable help to future teachers who complete a practicum as they give an opportunity to connect theory with practice. Even though some of the students of the School of English might wish to follow other careers, the engagement in the practicum can prove to be a valuable experience for their future career, as the experience gained helps people develop their knowledge and their personality.

The study of motivation and beliefs about teaching as a career can bring fruitful results to understanding why someone chooses to follow a particular profession. Once these conclusions are drawn, there will be greater understanding which may eventually assist the educational system through a study of those factors that can motivate someone to become a teacher of English. The need to help learners succeed, the love for the subject they will teach and more altruistic factors such as the ability of a teacher to improve society can also be rewarded with better working conditions in terms of resources and income. After all, the children as the future citizens of this society will gain more if they are taught by highly motivated teachers, who love their profession and enjoy working with children to help them succeed and develop their personality.

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Οδηγός Σπουδών 2014-2015: <http://www.enl.auth.gr/>

Στοιχεία του δικτύου 'Ευρυδίκη': Πόσες ώρες διδάσκουν οι εκπαιδευτικοί στην Ελλάδα και στην Ευρώπη. (2013, Μάιος, 13). I efimerida. Retrieved from <http://www.iefimerida.gr/news/104908>

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