

Multifaceted Motivation of Becoming English Teachers in Thailand: Beyond Intrinsic, Extrinsic, and Altruistic Reasons

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Teacher shortage is currently a global phenomenon (Heinz, 2015; Prabjandee, 2014); many countries around the world have reported the rapid need to prepare qualified teachers to enter the teaching profession (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010; Gao, 2010; Lee & Yuan, 2014; Low, Ng, Hui, & Cai, 2017; Moses, Berry, Saab, & Admiraal, 2017; Rampa, 2014; Shih, 2016; Sinclair, 2008; Watt & Richardson, 2008). The shortage has proliferated with manifestation of challenges in attracting new students into teacher education from the resignation of mid-career teachers and the retirement of senior teachers (Sinclair, 2008). This shortage impacts the quality of student's learning (Sinclair, 2008) and the improvement of education (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Thus, the teacher shortage is an urgent concern for many researchers worldwide.

Like other countries, Thailand has suffered from the teacher shortage of English teachers; newspaper headlines and statistics have reported the inadequacy of English teachers every year and there seems to be no sign of a precise solution to reconcile this crisis (Prabjandee, 2014). This drives many researchers to question the roles of teacher education in preparing prospective teachers to enter the teaching profession (Gao & Trent, 2009; Lee & Yuan, 2014; Roness & Smith, 2010; Sinclair, 2008). Why do student teachers decide not to step into the teaching profession? Does teacher education support pre-service teachers' motivation to enter the teaching profession? These questions were used to frame this inquiry.

With endeavors to demystify the teacher shortage, previous studies have tried to understand students' motivation to choose teacher education as an analytic lens to understand the desire to enter the teaching profession. Motivation is defined as a reason driving prospective teachers to enroll in teacher education as a stepping stone to become a teacher (Lee & Yuan, 2014). This line of research has grown rapidly to investigate teachers in general, but limited research has focused on English teachers (Hayes, 2008; Shih, 2016; Zhao, 2008). English teachers are valuable to emphasize within the context of Thailand because they have distinctive characteristics since English is the only subject where effective instruction requires teachers to use a medium of instruction that is foreign to students (Borg, 2006). Also, the fact that English is a compulsory subject for many EFL countries increases the demand to urgently attract new teachers into the profession. Finally, since English has gained the global status, permeating into individual's daily life (Jenkins, 2015), it is urgent to study why there always seems to be a shortage of English teachers into the profession. This study aimed to undertake such challenging chain of research in order to understand the teacher shortage crisis.

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Conceptual Framework

Motivation to become English teachers

In general, motivation is a person's drive to exert effort, make certain choices, and be engaged in an action (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In particular, pre-service teachers' motivation refers to the desire to become a teacher while studying at teacher education, and this motivation affects the determination to step into the teaching profession and the commitment to teaching (Sinclair, 2008). Pre-service teachers' motivation is inherently multiple and subject to change; it is *multifaceted* and *developmental* as individuals move through teacher education (Gao & Trent, 2009; Lee & Yuan, 2014). These characteristics of motivation have the ramification to study the development of motivation change over time.

In the context of teacher education, an examination of prospective teachers' motivation to become an English teacher has been a pressing issue. A seminal work by Kyriacou and Kobori (1998) in Slovenia revealed three categories of motivation to teach English: *intrinsic*, *extrinsic*, and *altruistic* reasons (Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998). Prospective teachers who decide to enter the teaching profession based on intrinsic reasons are mainly motivated by the enjoyment of the teaching activity, whereas extrinsic reasons dealt with external-driven teaching-related factors such as job stability, and altruistic reasons are the perception of teaching as socially worthwhile (Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998). Even though the tripartite framework was developed in the context of English teachers, these categories have been recognized as the conventional model of becoming a teacher in many fields (Low et al., 2017; Roness & Smith, 2010).

Anchored in the tripartite conventional framework by Kyriacou and Kobori (1998), previous researchers have investigated motivation to become English teachers, and these motivations are varied depending on sociocultural contexts. For example, Shih (2016) explored motivation to choose teaching English as a career choice by interviewing in-service English teachers in Taiwan from multiple levels of schools, and pointed out that the primary reasons for becoming English teachers are mainly *intrinsic* (e.g., enjoy learning English or perceive teaching as a childhood dream), followed closely by *extrinsic* (e.g., satisfied with the salary, and the capability of balance between work and life). Additionally, Gao and Trent (2009) examined mainland Chinese pre-service teachers in Hong Kong. They found that Chinese teachers selected teacher education because of *extrinsic* reasons, such as professional stability, the prestigious status of the teaching English profession, and the perceived advantages of possessing English competence. The aforementioned studies provide a common understanding that motivation to choose teaching English as a career choice is *multiple* and *interconnected*.

In Thailand, an extensive review of the literature found only two studies (Hayes, 2008; Prabjandee, 2014), exploring the reasons why Thai English teachers decided to enter teaching. The two studies illustrated inconsistent findings with the tripartite framework (Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998). Hayes (2008) examined in-service mid-career English teachers' motivation to enter the teaching profession, and revealed that the participants entered the English teaching profession because of the influence of their schooling (e.g., love English and had inspirational English teachers), and sociocultural and economic influences (e.g., parents' influence). Additionally, Prabjandee (2014) investigated reasons why in-service English teachers decided to become teachers and found that the teachers in his study attributed their reasons to become English teachers as destiny (or 'the call to teach'), teaching as a pride profession, schooling experience, and the influence of mother's wishes. These two studies focused on in-service teachers, so pre-service teachers remain under-researched in Thailand context.

While prior studies in other contexts have uncovered the multiple reasons of why pre-service teachers decided to enter teacher education, they failed to capture the developmental nature of this motivation (Lee & Yuan, 2014). When the attempts to explore the development of motivation were conducted, they were short-lived, such as after the implementation of a course (Gao, 2010; Lee & Yuan, 2014; Roness & Smith, 2010). As a result, little is known about how motivations changed over time from a longitudinal perspective. This study extends this line of research to investigate motivation change in teacher education over the course of a five-year period. It is important to examine the developmental aspect of motivation since it provides richer information about how teacher education promotes motivation to enter the teaching profession. An understanding of this phenomenon will be beneficial for teacher educators to design teacher education practices in order to attract new teachers.

Motivation Change in Teacher Education

To date, limited research has been conducted to understand motivation change in teacher education (Lee & Yuan, 2014). The focus on motivation change legitimates the need to explore motivation as a *developmental* construct. The developmental aspect is an important area of inquiry, especially motivation change in teacher education, because the teacher candidates are prospective teachers and their motivations to enter the teaching profession largely depend on their experiences in teacher education. Therefore, the question of whether teacher education has an impact on motivation to choose teaching as a career choice is extremely important.

Prior research has yielded consistent results that teacher education has little effect on motivation change of pre-service teachers. For example, Lee and Yuan (2014) investigated motivation change of six pre-service English teachers in Hong Kong by interviewing them after attending a course. The findings revealed that the course had little impact on motivation change. Prior experiences, personal beliefs, and course content contributed to this little change. Also, Gao (2010) examined motivation and commitment to the teaching profession of English teachers in China. It was found that the teachers were not initially attracted to the teaching profession; they enrolled in teacher education simply because they loved English. However, after studying teacher education, their motivation slightly shifted after they had positive experiences. It should be noted that these studies examined motivation change from a short-term perspective. This present study attempts to fill the gap by investigating motivation change from a longitudinal perspective over a five-year period in teacher education in Thailand.

Methods

This study is part of a larger research project aimed to investigate teacher identity development in teacher education (Prabjandee, 2020). The data for this study were extracted from the interviews. Two research questions were used to guide this inquiry: 1) What motivated pre-service teachers to choose teacher education as a stepping stone to become English teachers? and 2) What motivation change (if any) to choose teaching English as a career choice during teacher education?

The Thai Context

Thailand is a productive context to study motivation to enter the English teaching profession since the status of English and the journey to becoming an English teacher are unique from other counterpart contexts. To elaborate, Thailand has no colonial relations to the English language, so there is no political pressure to use English in daily life. In Thailand, English is regarded as a foreign

language, which has restricted prevalence outside the tourism industry or international business (Hayes, 2008).

The global importance of English often demands individuals with English fluency to work in the business sector, which offers more remuneration than in the teaching profession (Prabjandee, 2014). As a result, many students who entered the teacher education with an English major might not be attracted to the teaching profession; rather they simply enter the program to procure a place as a stepping-stone to other professions, in which they can use their English competence. This situation is similar to other EFL contexts, such as in Hong Kong (Lee & Yuan, 2014). As a result, the challenging question is whether or not teacher education can transform these teacher candidates to step into the teaching profession.

Unlike some other countries and contexts, the profession of teaching in Thailand enjoys a high social status, a stable job, and social welfare. Prabjandee (2014) pointed out that teaching in Thailand is regarded as an honorable profession, so the teachers in his study decided to enter the teaching profession because they felt that being a teacher gave them pride. Additionally, teaching in Thailand is a very stable profession because a teacher is a public servant, who receives salary and extra benefits from the government, such as free healthcare for oneself and direct family members. However, the teachers in Thailand receive a relatively low monthly salary; only 15,000 baht (approximately \$500). Based on these circumstances of a teacher, there is a saying in Thailand that “If you want to be rich, do not become a teacher.”

Becoming a teacher in Thailand has a restricted journey since teaching is a licensed profession. The license is obtained through enrolling in one of the 112 accredited Faculty of Educations in a higher education (Vibulphol, 2015) or a Graduate Teaching License (2-year program (Prabjandee, 2020). Becoming an English teacher requires an individual to complete a degree in education with an English major. At the time of this study, teacher education in Thailand is a five-year curriculum (four years of classes and one year of a teaching practicum), while other bachelor’s degrees are mostly four-year. The pre-service teachers must choose an English major prior to entering teacher education. Unlike pre-service teachers in Singapore who have an assurance for teaching once they enroll in teacher education (Low et al., 2017), pre-service teachers in Thailand do not receive a guarantee job. After completing teacher education, they automatically have a five-year teaching license and they have a chance to decide how to proceed professionally. If they want to become a teacher, they have to take a national examination. If they do not want to become a teacher, they can apply for other jobs.

Participants

A teacher education program at a Faculty of Education from a university in the central part of Thailand was selected to be the site of the study. The participants were 50 pre-service teachers majoring in English; 10 pre-service teachers from each year were purposefully selected (Year 1 – Year 5). Unlike quantitative research, by selecting 50 pre-service teachers, it was not my intention to have these participants as a representative of the population (Lee & Yuan, 2014). Rather, the number of participants was determined arbitrarily based on a theoretical sampling method to achieve a conceptual understanding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The criteria to obtain the participants were those who maximized what I wanted to study, who were easy to access to, hospitable to my inquiry, and were willing to participate (Stake, 1995). Out of the 50 pre-service teachers, there were 37 females and 13 males.

Data Collection

Since I was interested in stories that pre-service brought with them into the teacher education from a longitudinal perspective, this study employed a narrative cross-sectional research design; 10 pre-service teachers from each year (Year 1 – 5) were purposefully selected for the interviews. Prior to the interviews, the pre-service teachers were informed about the purpose of the study. They signed a consent form, and they were given a copy for reference. They understood that their participation was voluntary, and they could drop out of the research any time without negative consequences. This study adopted an in-depth phenomenologically based interviewing approach by Seidman (2007). The goal of this approach was to understand the essence of a phenomenon, hereafter the motivation to choose teacher education, by allowing the pre-service teachers to actively engage in the interview process.

Guided by Seidman's interview framework (2006), three series of interviews were implemented. In the first interview, I asked the pre-service teachers to answer four open-ended questions: 1) Why did you decide to enroll in teacher education? 2) Why English education? 3) What is your experience in teacher education? 4) Would it be different if you had not taken teacher education? Then, I transcribed and analyzed the first interviews. In the second interview, I asked the pre-service teachers to narrate specific details of the events mentioned in the first round. For example, one participant mentioned that she decided to enter teacher education because she was born in a family of teachers. In the second interview, I asked them to retell the story in detail. The guided question in the second interview was: Can you tell me more about this event? In the last interview, I asked the pre-service teachers to reflect upon the meaning they had gained after the first two interviews. The guided question in this last round was: Given what you have said about your decision to study teacher education, please explain your motivation to choose teaching English as a career choice? By using the three-round interviews, I was able to extract richer data to answer the research questions.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, I used the zoom model, developed by Pamphilon (1999). Originally, the model was used to analyze life histories, but it is an appropriate data analysis method in this study since it provides different angles to decipher the complexity of the life story data (Prabjandee, 2014). The model generates themes from coding, reflecting, and categorizing. According to Pamphilon (1999), the zoom model consists of four levels of analysis: 1) macro zoom, 2) meso-zoom, 3) micro-zoom, and 4) interactional-zoom. For the macro-zoom level, I analyzed the interviews by focusing on sociocultural contexts that shaped the stories. In the meso-zoom level, I examined repetitive patterns of stories across the interviews. In the micro-zoom level, I explored specific details of narratives, such as pauses or key phrases. Finally, in the interactional-zoom level, I reflected upon my subjectivity that might influence the data analysis (Pamphilon, 1999). It should be noted that the four levels are not linear but interactive. When I encountered contradictions in the analysis, I either zoomed in or out to scrutinize the data (Prabjandee, 2014). After each level, I wrote memos to record my hunches to supplement the analysis for emergent themes. This interactive analysis method allowed me to capture the multifaceted motivation to choose teacher education. To enhance the trustworthiness of the data, the findings were sent back to some participants for member check (Merriam, 2009).

Findings

Multifaceted Motivations to Become English Teachers

Five themes emerged that highlighted participants' motivation to choose teacher education: family influence, love of English, dream profession, enjoyment of teaching, and dual benefits of learning to be English teachers. To filter these themes into the tripartite conventional framework (Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998), the themes of 'love of English' and 'enjoyment of teaching' are considered an intrinsic motivation. The other themes are beyond the framework as illustrated in Figure 1.

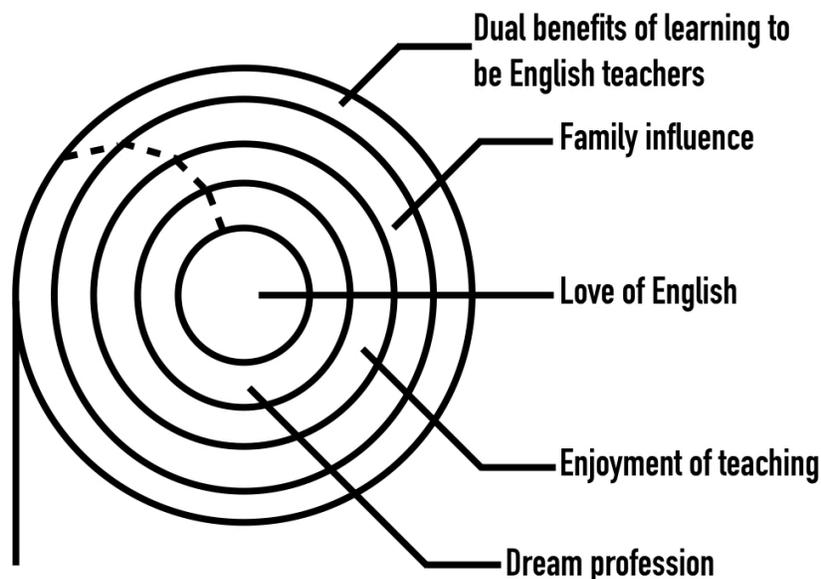


Figure 1. *Onion Model of Multifaceted Motivations to Become English Teachers*

As illustrated in Figure 1, the multifaceted and interconnected nature of motivation to choose teacher education could be best described through a visual representation of the onion model. An onion represents a holistic person who brings multifaceted motivations to teacher education as a stepping stone to become English teachers. To understand the multifaceted nature of motivation, one must peel an onion from the outermost facet to the innermost facet. The outer facet indicates the external factors and the inner facet reflects the internal factors. Each facet is interconnected; taken together, they form a holistic person.

Dual Benefits of Learning to be English Teachers: The outermost facet of motivation is the dual benefits of learning to be an English teacher. In this theme, the participants reported that they decided to study teacher education with an English major because it offers more opportunities for future jobs than studying English alone as shown in the following example:

I think with an English major, it is easier to find a job because there is a high demand for people with good English proficiency in the ASEAN. After I have graduated with a teaching

degree, let's say I did not pass the exam to become an English teacher, I could do other things related to English, such as being a tour guide or a translator.

The aforementioned quote is not anecdotal. There were 12 other participants, out of 50, who reported similar stories. Based on this theme, it is not surprising that teacher education in Thailand might enroll pre-service teachers who were attracted to the English language rather than the teaching profession. Their motivations to teach English were initially ambivalent as English proficiency might give them better opportunities in the future. This theme is quite important in the Thai context, and may be other EFL contexts, since it reflects the importance of English as a significant tool for multiple career opportunities. With the increasing significance of English, it has become a social norm for deciding to choose English for their careers.

Family Influence: Nested in the first facet, the theme of family influence was emerged. The participants reported having a family member as an influential factor in choosing teacher education. It was revealed that the family's perception of social norm influenced pre-service teachers to choose teacher education. Three stories emerged frequently: 1) A love of English means the family coaxes them into being a teacher; 2) A determination to be a teacher means the family asks them to choose English as a major; and 3) the family forces them to be an English teacher. These themes represent the uniqueness of the Thai context that family is an influential part to determine a career choice. The first story that drives pre-service students to enter teacher education is the story of a person who initially loved English, so the family 'asked' or 'forced' them to become a teacher. The following example illustrates the point:

At first, I didn't want to study teacher education. I like learning English. My mother asked me to become a teacher, so I decided to follow her wishes. Even though I wanted to be a tour guide, but being a teacher is okay for me.

Apart from the being requested to become a teacher, there is the story of a person who inherently wanted to be a teacher, but the family 'asked' or 'forced' them to choose English as a major. The quote below represents an example of this group of stories:

For me, I wanted to be a teacher. I wanted to teach traditional Thai dance, but my mother told me to be an English teacher. Since I am an only child, I can't ignore my mother's wish. If I didn't study English major, she would not have supported me. So, here I am learning to be an English teacher.

As shown in the aforementioned quote, the participant respected her mother's wish by relinquishing her freedom to choose her future career. This is not only unique to this student, but the theme echoes in the other 23 pre-service students who attended this teacher education.

Finally, some pre-service teachers reported that they were forced to choose teaching English as a career choice otherwise they would not have received support from their family.

My father told me to become an English teacher or a nurse. If I didn't study to become these two careers, he would not have supported me. That's what he said. Actually, I wanted to study

Humanities and Social Sciences in the English major, but he said there is no security in the career path, compared to being a teacher.

It should be noted that the theme of family influence is a very strong factor to influence pre-service students to choose teacher education to become English teachers.

Enjoyment of Teaching: The participants reported enjoyment of teaching, such as helping with homework for younger siblings, tutoring high-school classmates for examination, or teaching singing in a Christian church. These positive teaching experiences drive pre-service teachers to choose teacher education because they have gained a sense of self-efficacy in their teaching ability. The following examples illustrate this point:

I entered teacher education because I love the experience of teaching my younger brother. I remember when he was in kindergarten, I helped him with homework. When his teacher returned his homework and I saw what we did together was correct, I was very happy. I really enjoyed that experience.

Thinking back, I tutored my friend for an exam, and he understood what I explained. So, I thought I could be a teacher.

It should be mentioned that these prior teaching experiences were not directly related to teaching English. Also, the notion of teaching was not actually teaching; it was helping others to understand something better. The concept of teaching at this stage was simplistic and reductionist, but it helped pre-service teachers decide to enter teacher education.

Dream Profession: Peeling the onion to the fourth facet reveals teaching as a dream profession. Teaching is a dream profession for many pre-service teachers, and some of them even specify that becoming an English teacher is their dream profession. Out of 50 participants, 21 pre-service teachers expressed a strong passion to become a teacher since they were young as shown in the following examples:

Being a teacher has been my dream since I was young. My mother told me that I would role play being a teacher. I would write on a board pretending to be a teacher.

I have wanted to be an English teacher since I was young. I am from a rural area and I had no access to English teachers. I remember I learned English with a social studies teacher, and that was not okay. So, I wanted to become an English teacher and go back to teach at my hometown.

The strong passion was developed from growing up in a family of teachers and having an inspirational English teacher when they were in schools.

Love of English: At the core of the onion is the theme of love of the subject of English. More than half of the pre-service teachers reported love of English as the determining factor to enroll in teacher education. The love of English is the heart of motivation to choose teaching English as a

career choice since it is the passion to learn the subject that they love in order to teach it. It is illustrated in the following examples:

I love the English language because I can do it best. I don't think I can do other things better than English. I love English.

English is what I love, so I chose to major in English. I have fun when I learn English. I like my English teacher. She helps me understand English.

I want to live abroad. Growing up, I saw my neighbors getting married with foreigners and their lives are better. If I want to live abroad, I should learn English.

As illustrated in the aforementioned quotes, the love of English is rooted in three main sources: 1) a history of success in learning English, 2) an inspirational English teacher, and 3) an integrative motivation to live abroad.

Multifaceted Motivation Change in Teacher Education

As mentioned earlier, all pre-service teachers enter teacher education with multifaceted and interconnected motivation to choose teacher education. Regardless of having a strong passion or not so strong a passion to become an English teacher, the data showed that the pre-service teachers in Year 1 – 4 expressed the desire to choose teaching English as a career choice, but pre-service teachers in Year 5 showed signs of ambivalence.

For the pre-service teachers in Years 1 – 2, their motivation to enter the teaching English profession did not waiver even though some of them did not show a strong passion to become English teachers prior to enrolling in teacher education. It was because teaching was still a mysterious profession to them, so they would like to stay in teacher education in order to decipher the mystery. It was in Year 3 that pre-service teachers started to express a stronger motivation to choose teaching English as a career choice. Many pre-service teachers developed a sense of landlord, guarding the teaching profession territory; they argued that those who enrolled in teacher education should only be legitimate teachers. The ownership of the teaching profession was developed because of the challenges they had faced throughout the course of teacher education.

Being a teacher is not easy. It takes time to be a teacher. A teacher has to be the one who can be a good role model for the students and know how to disseminate information. Being a teacher is not simply about teaching. It involves taking care of the students as well. For those who did not enroll in teacher education, how can they do those things?

However, in Year 5, pre-service teachers reported a reluctance to choose teaching English as a career choice. The strong motivation displayed earlier was substituted by an uncertain decision to step into the teaching profession as shown in an example below.

After I graduate, I will take the national exam first. If I pass, I will be a teacher. If I don't pass, I will do something else.

To track down the reasons for this change, it was revealed that the negative experiences in the teaching practicum caused this shift. During the teaching practicum, the pre-service teachers reported feelings of disappointment in their teaching ability and a sense of powerlessness to teach their own classes. For example, some pre-service teachers reported that they invested their energy to design activities for their students, but the students did not cooperate, so they were disappointed. Some of them reported that they did not have the freedom to teach because their mentor teachers treated them like novices.

Discussion

This study situates in the literature of teacher shortage by using English teachers as the focus of inquiry. To understand the teacher shortage, this study concentrates on exploring the motivation to choose teacher education as a stepping-stone to become an English teacher and investigating the motivation change during the teacher education. This inquiry reveals some insights why there is not adequate number of English teachers. This line of research is legitimate, and it warrants the need to conduct more research since teacher education is the first place to recruit, train, or prepare prospective teachers to step into the teaching profession. Such inquiry is helpful for building an evidence-based design and policy for teacher education that attracts English teachers with a commitment to teaching.

Generally, the findings of this study are consistent with prior research, pointing out that pre-service teachers enter teacher education with multifaceted and interconnected motivation (Lee & Yuan, 2014; Shih, 2016). Through the three series of interviews, five themes were emerged: 1) family influence, 2) love of English, 3) dream profession, 4) enjoyment of teaching, and 5) dual benefits of learning to be an English teacher. Among these themes, “enjoyment of teaching” and “love of English” were aligned with the tripartite conventional framework as an intrinsic motivation (Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998; Zhao, 2008). The other themes (dual benefits of learning to be an English teacher, dream profession, and family influence) were beyond the framework. To elaborate, on the surface level, the themes of “dual benefits of learning to be an English teacher” and “family influence” might look similar to extrinsic motivation, but they were not because they were not specific to teaching-related reasons (Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998); rather it was about having more advantages of possessing English competence and it was about having a family member took part of the career decision. Moreover, the theme of “dream profession” might look like intrinsic reason, but it was not because intrinsic motivation is about internal-driven factor (Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998); whereas this theme reflects the call to teach.

The theme of family influence is consistent with prior research in other Asian contexts (Hayes, 2008; Shih, 2016). Previous studies have pointed out that family wishes often have an impact on one’s career choice (Shih, 2016). Prabjandee (2014) explained that teaching in Thailand is regarded as a high-status profession. Thus, families tend to influence their children to choose teaching and the children are expected to follow the family’s wishes otherwise they might be labeled as ungrateful because they do not follow the elderly, or they might not be supported financially to pursue their degrees. Moreover, the theme of dual benefits of learning to become English teachers is also consistent with prior research in other Asian contexts (Gao & Trent, 2009). The fact that becoming a teacher in Thailand requires individuals to complete a five-year teacher education, which is considered a restricted career entry, so it was found that many people decided to enter teacher education just because it provided more opportunities than studying only English alone. This decision reflects the value of neoliberalism, which naturalizes English as a global competitiveness (Piller & Cho, 2013). This study adds an insight about

the negative side of neoliberalism, which creates a social cost for teacher education to enroll those who are not attracted to teaching; rather they are enrolled in teacher education because of English; the language for competition (Piller & Cho, 2013).

Based on the findings, it was obvious that many of them did not express a strong desire to become an English teacher; they simply entered the teacher education program just to procure a place in higher education (Lee & Yuan, 2014) or they were purely attracted to the English language (Gao, 2010). Only some groups were in fact attracted to teaching because they had enjoyed teaching and it was their dream job since they were young. The findings problematized current practices of recruiting students into teacher education. Clearly, the current selection process at the site of study was not effective enough to obtain candidates who express a strong passion to become an English teacher. The teacher education might argue that they had no control over the selection policy. However, regardless of the reasons and limitation in selecting the candidates, it is time that teacher educators hunt for better ways to select candidates who have strong motivation to become English teachers. This may be the first step to quench the crisis of teacher shortage; “selecting the right ones.”

Furthermore, contributing to the current literature is a new visual representation, *the onion model*, to represent the multifaceted and interconnected motivation to choose teacher education. The model represents a unique conceptualization of motivation to choose teacher education, reflecting the complicated constellations of social norms, the status of English, and career values in Thailand. This conceptualization offers future research to include the sociocultural context as an important factor to explore motivation to teach.

Finally, for the motivation change in teacher education, the findings in this study were not consistent with prior research, which pointed out that teacher education had little effect on motivation to choose teaching English as a career choice (Gao, 2010; Lee & Yuan, 2014). From a longitudinal perspective, the motivation change in teacher education is more complicated than what previous studies pointed out. Teacher education could intensify motivation to choose teaching as pointed out that pre-service teachers in Years 3–4 developed a sense of ownership for the teaching profession. However, upon entering the teaching practicum in Year 5, pre-service teachers developed a sign of ambivalence to choose teaching as a career choice because of the negative experiences in the practicum. The findings raise questions to the design of teacher education and pushes teacher educators to critically examine the roles of teacher education in forming motivation to choose teaching English as a career choice.

An interpretation of this study should be conducted with caution because of the limitations in the cross-sectional qualitative research design. The design did not allow for a causal relationship generalization; the findings in this study are mainly descriptive with attempts to understand a phenomenon of motivation to choose teacher education and how this motivation changes in teacher education. Also, since this study focused on the roles of teacher education in forming motivation to choose teaching English as a career choice, there might be other factors that were not included in this study. Future research should incorporate other factors or follow up these pre-service teachers as to whether or not they entered the teaching profession after they had completed teacher education. An inquiry in this line of research will extend the knowledge base to attract prospective teachers to actually become teachers.

Conclusion

This inquiry offers empirical insights about motivation to step into the teaching profession that pre-service teachers bring with them to teacher education. It was obvious that many of them entered teacher education just to secure their seats in higher education; they were not really attracted to teaching. Thus, it is time for the teacher education to revisit the selection process of teacher candidates in order to ensure that the teaching profession attracts “the right ones” to become English teachers.

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