




## "Belief in Education and in Oneself" Cross-National Intrinsic Career and Study Choice Motives of Student Teachers in Brazil, Chile, Germany, and Japan

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2024-12-09	<p>In light of the global teacher shortage (UNESCO, 2019), the question of the motives for choosing a career in teaching is also becoming increasingly relevant internationally. Previous studies emphasize the central role of intrinsic motives in this decision. This study explores the intrinsic motives of student teachers from four international university locations using biographical texts collected by means of online questionnaires. The data were analysed using a qualitative content analysis. The exploratory study shows that similar intrinsic career and study choice motives exist across countries and can be described in a differentiated way. Partial results suggest that 'belief in education' is a central motive, although this varies according to context. The influence of biographical experiences with one's own teachers and the resulting desire to do better also emerged as a universal motive for choosing teaching as a career.</p>
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## Introduction

Career choice motivation is one of the potential individual entry requirements for the teaching profession - along with background and personality traits as well as performance requirements (Cramer, 2023). Motivational orientations are considered to be one of the main reasons for choosing a career and study program. These can be roughly divided into extrinsic, pragmatic, and intrinsic motivational orientations (Scharfenberg, 2020). Intrinsic motivational orientations play an important role in the teaching profession and are understood as part of pedagogical professionalism (Baumert & Kunter, 2006; Cramer et al., 2019). They also have an impact on the process of professionalization (Gröschner & Schmitt, 2008).

Overall, research on career choice motives is very 'fragmented [...] and largely isolated nationally' (Scharfenberg, 2020, p. 41). National and international studies on the career and study choice motives of student teachers point to gender-, subject- and school type-specific



motives (e.g. Heinz, 2015; Sinclair, 2008; Ulich, 2004). Studies comparing different countries describe differences in terms of motives, which in turn can be attributed to state-specific differences, e.g. in the form of structural framework conditions (Scharfenberg, 2020) or the consideration of pedagogical experiences (König et al., 2013) and are reflected, for example, in the personal perception of the teaching profession (Watt et al., 2012).

In view of the increasing shortage of teachers worldwide (Canli & Demirtas 2018; Lang-Wojtasik, 2014) and the multiple global (educational) challenges, the question arises: what motivates young people across the globe to choose this profession despite difficult working conditions, social challenges, and increasing political and ecological uncertainty?

The motivation that drives young people in different countries to pursue this profession could be of theoretical interest in terms of which values, ideals, professional and personal perspectives generally play a role or offer insights into the interactions between individual, social and societal factors in different cultural contexts and educational systems. This could contribute to a well-founded description of (universal) motives for career choice and thus to the description of the attractiveness of the teaching profession.

In addition, a deeper understanding of (universal) motives could help to develop targeted measures for advertising the teaching profession and for designing courses of study in order to ensure the quality and resilience of education systems worldwide.

In this study, an explorative methodology was chosen in which four university campuses (Brazil, Chile, Germany, and Japan) were used to ask an open-ended question about the reasons for studying to become a teacher. The resulting biographical writings were analyzed using content analysis (Kuckartz, 2018).

### ***Career choice motives of student teachers in international discourse***

The 'Global Perspectives on Teacher Motivation' anthology (Watt et al., 2012) provides an overview of the current state of international research and emphasizes the complex interplay of factors that motivate individuals in their career decision-making. As a basis for the following empirical analysis, established models and motive groups for describing career and study choice motives are first introduced and classified. Following a career biographical approach (Terhart, 2011), these motives are understood to be particularly significant in the professionalization process of teachers.

#### ***Models for career choice***

In the discourse on teachers' career choice motives, individual characteristics are predominantly analyzed as entry requirements for the teacher training process (Rothland et al., 2018). These personal characteristics can be assessed, for example, through retrospectively constructed meaningful narratives and are particularly dependent on biographical experiences (Scharfenberg et al., 2022) from before entering university.

The individual decision-making characteristics of student teachers for the teaching profession include, among other things, their interests and motivational orientations. The professional and social background of the family of origin also comes into focus as part of the discourse on career inheritance (Rothland et al., 2015) and the so-called 'Moving-up-Study' ('Aufsteigerstudium' see Cramer, 2016).

The selection process for a profession is described using various models. When describing career choice profiles, most studies concentrate on so-called expectancy-value models, which, in addition to subjective judgments of value and expectation components, also consider individual decision-making characteristics (e.g. Eccles et al., 1983; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Based on Atkinson's expectation-value theory (1957), the career choice motives for the teaching profession are categorized using the *Factors Influencing Teaching Choice Framework* (FIT Choice). The FIT-Choice model (Watt & Richardson, 2007; König & Rothland, 2012) has become established as a theoretical description of teachers' career choices. It is now used in numerous (cross-national) studies to analyze motivational structures (e.g., Goller et al., 2019; König, et al., 2013). Another instrument, which was also developed on the basis of the FIT-Choice model, is the instrument for recording motivation for choosing a teacher training program (FEMOLA). This instrument distinguishes between value components (pedagogical interest, subject-related interest, and usefulness), expectation components (belief in ability, low difficulty of the degree program), and social influences (Pohlmann & Möller, 2010). In comparison to the FIT-Choice model, the country-comparative instrument of the Student-Teacher's-Motives (STeaM) study (Scharfenberg, 2020) considers not only career and study choice motives but also the relationship between the motives and other personal characteristics, such as self-efficacy.

#### *Classification of career choice motives into motive groups*

In motivational research, a general distinction is made between intrinsic and extrinsic motives (Deci & Ryan, 1993). This distinction is also relevant for career choice motives, however, it goes beyond this and can be described as a multidimensional framework (Cramer, 2023). *Extrinsic motives* (1) are predominantly characterized by salary and job security, work-life balance, and self-determined work schedules. *Intrinsic motives* (2) include working with children and young people, professional interest, biographical experience or enjoyment of teaching. In addition, *altruistic motives* (3), the desire to contribute to society, to work with or help other people, and *pragmatic motives* (4), the choice of studying as an emergency solution, lack of interest and external influences (Rauin & Römer, 2010; Scharfenberg, 2020) can be described as a further group of motives.

Fray & Gore (2018) point out that in addition to the motivation for teaching, intrinsic and altruistic motivations, in particular, are mentioned in the results of various studies. Intrinsic, relationship-oriented motives favor academic success, satisfaction, and the feeling of stress in a positive way (Brühwiler, 2001; Küsting & Lipowsky, 2011). As a result, students who

begin their teacher training program with a strong intrinsic motivation still exhibit a high level of intrinsic motivation even after several years in the profession (König et al., 2013; Mayr, 2009). The common classification between intrinsic and extrinsic motives is justified both empirically (Cramer, 2012) and normatively (Sinclair, 2008) (cf. Heinz, 2015; Watt et al., 2012), but the motives are systematized differently depending on the study. Overall, different categories of motives can be systematized differently by the various authors.

To facilitate comparison, the various individual motives are summarized into motive groups for the following analysis. The basis is the system of career and study choice motives offered by Scharfenberg (2020), which draws on the distinction between intrinsic, extrinsic, and pragmatic motives.

### *Comparison of countries*

A meta-analysis of empirical studies on career and study choice motivation (Heinz, 2015), reveals that most studies originate from the English-speaking context. Although some international comparative studies on this topic predominantly focus on countries in the Global North (Flores & Niklasson, 2014; König, et al., 2013; Scharfenberg, 2020; Watt et al., 2012).

Cross-country comparative studies increasingly focus on different motives, with significant country effects being recognized in extrinsic motives in particular (Keller-Schneider et al., 2018; Scharfenberg, 2020). Country-specific differences with regard to the professional environment (e.g., socio-economic status, job profile, or training programs) suggest variations in career and study choice motives. Countries in the Global South in particular have rarely been included in comparative studies.

Selected studies are presented below to provide a context-specific insight into the career and study choice motives across the four reference countries (Brazil, Chile, Germany, and Japan). The participating universities were selected on the basis of existing collaborations. The universities of Brazil and Chile are cooperating with the authors' institution as part of a DAAD project, "Internationalization of Teacher Education (ILAP)"<sup>1</sup>. The co-operation with the Japanese university was based on individual collegial relationships.<sup>2</sup>

### *Brazil*

In a qualitative study, Nascimento (2015) uses a set of standardized questionnaires and open questions to investigate the motives behind Brazilian students' choice of study. According to the results, the motivation of the prospective teachers is largely based on intrinsic motives. Despite the strong erosion of the teaching profession in Brazil, students feel committed to 'social change'; at the same time, the motive of 'personal and social fulfillment in teaching'

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ph-weingarten.de/international/modellprojekt-ilap/ueber-das-projekt-ilap/>

<sup>2</sup> In this context, we would like to express our thanks to Professor Yoshihiro Sakakibara at Kyoto University of Education.

plays a central role (Nascimento, 2015, p. 10). This shows that the preference for the specific subject area takes priority over the goal of practicing the teaching profession as its own.

#### *Chile*

In the research by Dufraix Tapia et al. (2020), motives for choosing a university degree were analyzed using focus groups and semi-structured interviews with Chilean students and teachers of the subject 'Spanish Language and Communication'. With regard to the motive categories, altruistic motives take precedence over intrinsic motives for the participants; at the same time, the choice of degree program is less of a fallback option (pragmatic motive). Overall, it is clear that the motives, similar to those in Brazil, often go hand in hand with 'social transformation' (Dufraix Tapia et al., 2020, p. 92). In particular, the educational mandate as a teacher and the feeling of a clear vocation towards public service are articulated here.

#### *Germany*

In studies from Germany (Glutsch et al., 2018), intrinsic motives drive the choice of profession and study program. Here, both the motivation to 'work with children and young people' and social motivation are often expressed. König and Rothland (2012) show that intrinsic motivation has a positive effect on general pedagogical knowledge. In addition, experience in pedagogical areas can be an important decision-making basis for career choices (Cramer, 2012; Rothland, 2014) and is therefore also relevant for the success of the teacher training program (König et al., 2013, p. 558).

#### *Japan*

In addition to well-known motives such as 'I like children' and 'alignment with abilities and character' or 'stable salary', Japanese studies on motivation to study identify the relationship with one's own teachers and so-called club teachers (mentors) as a significant motive (Mishima, 2012; Oishi, 2013).

The decision to become a teacher appears to go hand in hand with a high level of idealism. Regardless of the national survey context, intrinsic motives are regularly referred to when student teachers justify their career and study choice (see also Watt et al., 2012). However, there are also differences in the intrinsic motives. While in Latin America, the impact of one's own opportunities to act (as a teacher) on a macro level (society) is emphasized as a central motive, the focus in Germany and Japan is more on a micro level (interaction between teachers and pupils).

#### ***Aim and research question***

In this context, intrinsic career choice motives of prospective teachers in particular have already been explored extensively both nationally and internationally (König, et al., 2013; Rothland et al., 2018; Scharfenberg et al., 2022). Internationally, studies are increasingly focusing on countries in the 'global North'. Overall, standardized methods (Heinz, 2015) are

predominantly used to record career choice motives (Rothland, 2014). Qualitative studies on career choice motives are less common (Scharfenberg, 2020). This study takes these observations as an opportunity for a cross-national study (including the global North and the global South) on career and study choice motives, which follows a qualitative-explorative approach and a focus on intrinsic motives. It focuses on similarities without ignoring the different national contexts. The article is guided by the assumption that intrinsic motives play a crucial role in the biographical professionalization process.

This study addresses the following question:

*What intrinsic motives for career and study choice do student teachers across countries articulate, and how can these be further examined using an exploratory approach?*

This question is investigated using a content analysis approach, which is described below.

## Methodology

The results presented here are part of the research project 'BeWaMo – **B**erufs**W**ahl**M**otive von Lehramtsstudierenden' (Career choice motives of student teachers).<sup>3</sup> In the context of the project, 1,050 text elements of self-reflection from eight German university locations in five federal states as well as one from universities in Chile, Brazil and Japan have been collected to date. The data survey was advertised in courses focusing on pedagogy. The present analysis refers to the data from the international survey as well as a selection of the German data sets. To balance the weighting of the data from the four different countries, only the data from one German university location was used.

### Collection of data

Data from the large-scale project were selected for this sub-study. The survey was conducted between October 2019 and January 2021 using an online questionnaire. The questionnaire included socio-demographic questions regarding university location, field of study, number of semesters, gender, age as well as an open-ended prompt, which was asked in the respective national language: *For what reasons did you decide to study to become a teacher? Please describe as specifically as possible the situations and personal considerations that led to your decision.*

The stimulus for reflection was passed on to students via established contacts with university teachers at the university's different locations. The international sample (N=187) includes student teachers from the four university locations Florianópolis/Brazil (N=40), Concepción/Chile (N=54), Kyoto/Japan (N=41) and Weingarten/Germany (N=52). Students from Brazil and Chile show a clearly heterogeneous picture in terms of age range. This is due to the fact that some students there have already gained professional experience before starting their studies, while the majority of German and Japanese students enroll for the

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<sup>3</sup> Further partial results from the overall project deal with the professional profile of special education students (see Schieferdecker et al. 2024)



teacher training program directly after graduating from school. The university locations differ in their geographical and socio-demographic environment, the university framework and the structure of the teacher training program. The following table presents an overview of the four university locations, the number of students, and the duration of the teacher training program.

**Table 1:** Summary of the Location of the University

Location of the University	Type of University	Student numbers (total/teaching degree)	Duration of study
Florianópolis (Brazil)	University	48.000/1.090	8-9 Semesters
Concepción (Chile)	University	24.000/3.000	10 Semesters
Kyoto (Japan)	University of Education	1.600/1.600	8 Semesters
Weingarten (Germany)	University of Education	3.600/2.300	8-10 Semesters

With the exception of the private university in Chile, all universities are state universities. The university in Germany is located in a rural area, while the other three universities are located in large cities. Various subjects and teacher training programs can be studied at all locations. The program structure at the universities in Chile, Japan, and Germany is comparable; the teacher training course there lasts around eight to ten semesters. At the Brazilian university, on the other hand, students first complete a six-semester specialized course followed by a two- to three-semester didactic course. The teacher training colleges in Kyoto (Japan) and Weingarten (Germany) share the common feature of primarily focusing on teacher training, whereas the other two institutions are general universities.

### **Data Analysis**

The focus of this study is on the subjective descriptions and explanations of the interviewees regarding their career and study choice motivation. Relevant data were collected. Qualitative content analysis provides a methodical approach to exploring this subjective sense (e.g. Lamnek, 2016). Hence, the data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz, 2018). With this methodological approach, the extensive material could be systematized to enable a targeted selection within the deductive categories and an exploratory description of subcategories. The analysis follows a three-phase approach. In the first phase, the material was analyzed deductively with a view to the research questions. For this purpose, reference was made to three motive groups (intrinsic, extrinsic, and pragmatic) as root categories.

In the second phase, the intrinsic career and study choice motives were differentiated into further subcategories using inductive coding (Kuckartz, 2018, p. 97). The coding was reviewed and continuously refined in regular interpretation meetings (consisting of the authors). In this process, coding and consensus-building alternated (Schreier, 2012) until a category system appropriate to the research interest and the empirical material was available. The category system was then applied to the remaining material in a third phase. Individual code

definitions and code formulations were finalized. For example, the code "Change in society" is defined as follows: "This code refers to selfless values, aspirations, and goals that carry social relevance, such as socio-political engagement or a desire to bring about social change". Corresponding code passages include instances where participants explicitly express a desire or necessity to contribute to social change through their role as a teacher". The text excerpts for the respective survey countries were categorized as follows: Brazil (B), Chile (C), Germany (D), and Japan (J), in order to determine between which groups these differences existed.

## **Findings**

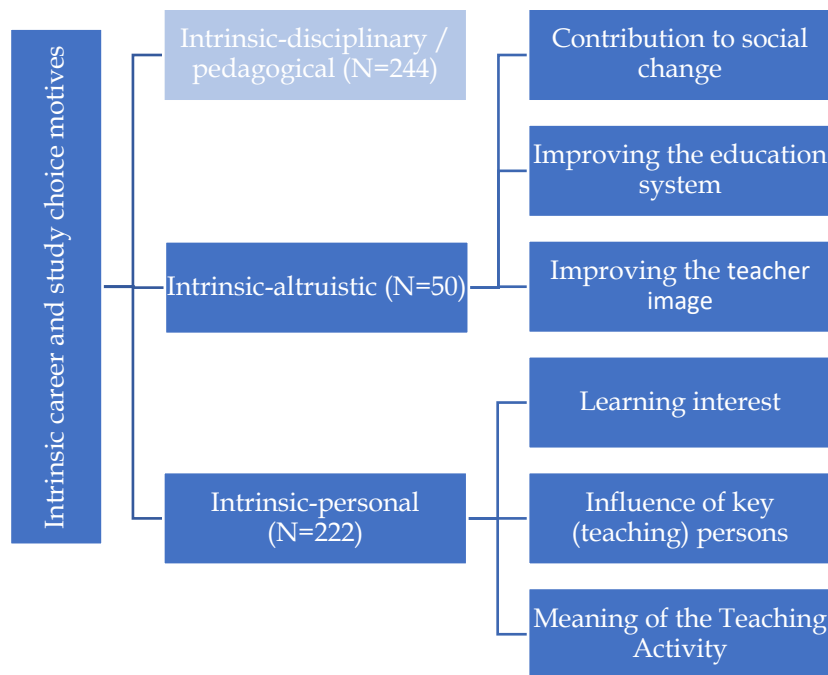
The focus of the analysis is on the intrinsic motives behind the career and study choices of student teachers in an international context. These are first described in an overview. Individual results are then described and illustrated with examples of transcripts.

### ***Presentation of the intrinsic motives for career and study choice***

Three subgroups of intrinsic career and study choice motives can be identified: an intrinsic-educational/intrinsic-professional motive group, an intrinsic-altruistic motive group and an intrinsic-personal motive group.

The intrinsic-professional and intrinsic-pedagogical motive groups are sometimes described separately in specialist discourse and sometimes combined (Caselmann, 1949; Keller-Schneider et al., 2018; Kiel et al., 2015; Scharfenberg et al., 2022). In the following, we combine these two motive groups into one group and briefly outline them together (5.1.1). However, the analysis focuses on the intrinsic-altruistic (5.1.2) and intrinsic-personal (5.1.3) motive groups, as these have received less attention and description in academic discourse so far. Figure 1 shows the differentiation of intrinsic motives with their respective (sub)categories.





**Figure 1.** Detailed Overview of Intrinsic Motives for Choosing a Degree Program and their Subcategories

### ***Intrinsic-disciplinary and intrinsic-pedagogical motives***

Although intrinsic-disciplinary and intrinsic-pedagogical motives can be clearly distinguished, both focus on interaction with pupils and are therefore closely related in terms of content. In light of this, the two groups of motives are summarized below.

The *subject-related motives* relate to (positive) experiences in teaching, subject-related interest, the promotion of competences and skills, enjoyment of a school subject and methodological and didactic work. In contrast, *pedagogical motives* describe those motives that are related to the pedagogical support of pupils in a broad sense. These include the guidance and support of children, the personal relationship between the teacher and the children, and the protection and support of marginalized children.

### ***Intrinsic-altruistic motives***

The motive group of intrinsic-altruistic motives is characterized overall by selfless, altruistic values, wishes and goals with regard to school education with social relevance. Within this group of motives, meanings can be divided into three categories. These include: contribution to social change (1), improvement of the existing education system (2) and enhancement of the teacher's image (3).

(1) The desire to be able to contribute to social change through the teaching profession is characterized by the hope and goal that one's own work as a teacher will generally contribute to positive social change. The goal of 'making a difference in society' and building a 'more environmentally conscious and tolerant society' by 'influencing children at an early stage and

pointing them in the right direction' (D19-008) points to this desire. This line of reasoning is particularly prevalent in the Brazilian and Chilean data, as reflected in statements such as 'the belief that education alone can change the world' or 'that I can bring about social change' (B21-29). However, only one Japanese student refers to 'building a new society' (J20-011) without providing further details. It can be seen that the personal contribution that teachers can make to social change is cited by most as a relevant motive for choosing the teaching profession.

(2) In the context of the desire to improve the education system, this already socially framed hope is further specified, namely in relation to the existing education system. The goal formulated here is contribute to shaping an education system that better supports learning. This can be illustrated by an excerpt from Chile: 'This is exactly why I wanted to become a teacher, to change these situations that are present in the school system and to be a teacher that my students feel comfortable with so that they can achieve a meaningful learning process.' (C21-021). In Germany and Brazil, motives can also be found that testify to a positive influence on the system, with the aim of 'being able to make a difference in the school life of the students' (B21-03), as this has 'a great influence on later life' (D19-001).

(3) The idea of improving the image of the teaching profession is mentioned as another relevant motive for choosing a career and study program and is explained as follows. The reason given was that the teaching profession in Germany is 'quite underestimated [...] and taken for granted' (D19-003) and 'the teaching profession for primary schools [in Chile] is undervalued' (C21-052). In Brazil, the teaching profession is also seen as inadequate. The desire is therefore, to raise its status in the public eye and to emphasize what a demanding and meaningful profession it is.

The motive group of intrinsic-altruistic motives is defined by the perception of society as a key frame of reference extending beyond the school context.

### ***Intrinsic-personal motives***

The third group of motives can be described as personal experience and development. It consists of the motive categories interest in learning (1), the influence of people with a formative (teaching) impact (2), and the meaning of teaching (3).

(1) The motive of interest in learning relates to personal development; studying is described less as a professional qualification and more as a holistic enrichment of the student's personal life, expressed in various ways. General statements about knowledge acquisition, such as 'constantly learning something new' (B21-06) are complemented by the desire to expand competencies in knowledge transfer or the design of learning opportunities, e.g. 'to rethink the teaching profession and discover a new way of teaching' (J20-052). In addition, students want to 'specialize in the subjects that really interest [them]' (D19-020). This addresses the motivation to further develop knowledge or skills in a particular subject area.

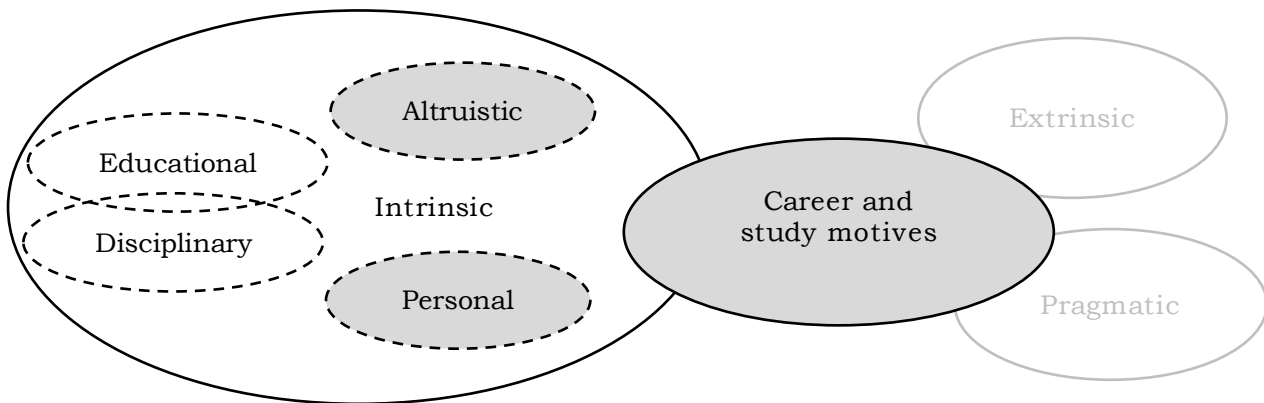
(2) A second motive category encompasses the influence of individuals who have had a formative impact, particularly teachers. In addition to positive and negative experiences with teachers, other people such as family members, friends and relatives are also mentioned. The material clearly shows that teachers from the respondents' own school days are mentioned on various levels when explaining their career and study choices. The role model function of teachers is expressed 'both professionally and personally' (C21-018). A regional peculiarity can be seen in the Japanese data. The role model function of 'listening', as social and emotional support from teachers, goes far beyond a neutral function, with admiration - 'because I admired teachers like him' (J20-031) as well as support and respect - 'they were the people I respected the most in my life' (J20-051) - playing an important role. Similarly, in Brazil, (direct) encouragement from one's own teacher to take up the teaching profession is also relevant, e.g. by seeing 'the talent to be a teacher' (B21-04). Equally important is the motive of social and emotional support provided by former teachers as 'reference persons' (D20-010). Formative teachers are often associated with their own goals in the future professional field. Students refer to positive experiences and the desire to emulate their formative teacher: 'I decided to study education when I was about 15 years old, I had an English teacher who motivated me a lot and I decided that I wanted to be like her.' (C21-007). (C21-007). In addition, encouragement from family members and friends, e.g. the ability to 'teach others something' (B21-24) or to have a special 'way with children' (C21-039), as well as the role model function of parents and siblings who are already working in the teaching profession, contribute significantly to the decision-making process.

(3) The significance of the teaching profession constitutes the third category of motives. The data focused on the match between the teaching profession and the individual. These include both general assessments, such as that they 'enjoy and are good with people and above all [like] children' (J20-058) and that they can 'identify with the job' (B21-36). More specific assessments are also expressed, such as that teaching corresponds to their own 'interests' (J20-060). The data reflect, among other things, a positive evaluation of the teaching profession and its associated activities. This is reflected, for example, in the fact that everyday working life is rated as 'varied' (D20-008) and the 'versatility of the profession' (D20-016) is emphasized positively. A sense of purpose is attributed to the teaching profession, e.g. through the feeling of 'being needed' (D20-002). This also aligns with the notion of 'being involved in the educational process of future generations' (C21-038) and 'benefiting from it' (D20-012).

The following can be summarized with regard to the differentiation of intrinsic motives: Intrinsic motives can be identified across all analyzed universities. Nevertheless, differences in the motive groups were also evident depending on the university location. While the intrinsic-pedagogical, intrinsic-professional, and intrinsic-personal motives are mentioned at all universities, the intrinsic-altruistic motives appear more frequently, especially at Latin American university locations.

## Discussion

Following the results presented, two central conclusions can be drawn with regard to the question of intrinsic career and study choice motives. Firstly, within the *intrinsic motives*, *intrinsic professional* and *intrinsic educational* motives can be found in the empirical material. This aligns with the existing discourse (e.g. Caselmann, 1949; Keller-Schneider et al., 2018; Kiel et al., 2015). For example, a reference can be made to the FEMOLA study, which summarizes pedagogical and professional interest as one of three components under 'value component'. On the other hand, *intrinsic-altruistic* and *intrinsic-personal* motives, which have been less frequently described, were also identified in the available data. These findings can contribute to existing models of career and study choice motivation by incorporating altruistic and personal aspects.



**Figure 2.** Expanded Presentation of Career Choice Motives with a Focus on Intrinsic Motives (expanded illustration based on Scharfenberg, 2020 and Weiß et al., 2016)

The two motives, intrinsic-altruistic and intrinsic-personal, point to (context-) specific characteristics, which will be discussed below.

### ***Intrinsic-altruistic motives: the relevance of the social contribution to keep the school system running***

Motives that indicate a social contribution are typically categorized under the motive 'social relevance' in previous motive inventories but are not named more specifically (see Scharfenberg, 2020, pp. 340-348). Based on the results presented, the motive of 'social relevance' can be further characterized. The belief in education and the teaching profession as a key to social change becomes clear, as does the hope for an improvement in the education system and the image of teachers. These findings are particularly evident in the Latin American data, though partially presented in the German data. No specific statements on this matter are found in the Japanese data. This apparently context-specific weighting suggests that socio-political framework conditions may be significant for intrinsic altruistic motives. Above all, support for social change is already a well-known motive in Latin American

discourse (Dufraix Tapia et al., 2020; Nascimento, 2015). In the German discourse, altruistic motives in the sense of social change are less strongly represented (Foerster, 2008; Ulich, 2004). However, improving the education system and the image of teachers does not appear to have been addressed as a separate motive in either Latin America or Germany to date.<sup>4</sup>

In both the Brazilian and Chilean data, the intrinsically altruistic motives for studying to become a teacher express a social system criticism. The responses frequently refer to (educational) policy challenges and precarious working conditions. At the same time, these circumstances do not appear to be an obstacle choosing to study to become a teacher. On the other hand, the argument that people choose to become a teacher because these problems exist appears several times. This could be seen as an indication of a special feature of the data from Latin American universities. Thus, motivation for the teaching profession extends beyond professional, pedagogical, and personal motives and encompasses a socio-political dimension of participation in shaping school and society.

In light of this, it can be stated that career and study choice motives are also related to the political life context of the students. Depending on the context, this ranges from active criticism of the system (Latin America) to passive abstinence from the system (Japan). A potential hypothesis is that intrinsic-altruistic motives contribute to 'maintain the system' and thereby stabilize the educational system; either despite or precisely because of their inherent contradictions - school should enable political change (Latin America) or politics plays no significant role in the school context (Japan). To put it bluntly: The intrinsically altruistic career and study choice motives of student teachers testify to the desire to preserve the school system, even if the specific motives differ depending on the context. In this context, the question arises as to whether there is a uniform image of school behind the motive or to what extent the ideas are different.

***Intrinsic-personal motivation: the relevance of school biographical experiences for social and professional role models***

The empirical findings that the career and study choice motive related to experiences with formative (teaching) figures, as well as the opportunity to continue learning with interest and pursue meaningful activities, is equally represented across all study groups. This suggests that intrinsic-personal motives are equally important in different social contexts and that different framework conditions enable their development.

The following section focuses on the influence of formative (teaching) figures, which represent a partial aspect of the intrinsic-personal career and study choice motive. In addition to the assessment of other people that one is suitable for the teaching profession, the inner desire to become like a significant teacher (keyword: role model) also plays an important role. The

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<sup>4</sup> Looking at the entire data set of the project 'BeWaMo – BerufsWahlMotive von Lehramtsstudierenden' (Career choice motives of student teachers), the first impression is that altruistic motives play a particularly important role in the description of career choices, especially in the area of special education teaching.

latter focuses on various aspects: enthusiasm for the subject and methodological and didactic skills, but also the social-emotional skills of the (role model) teacher.

In academic discourse, key teachers often appear as role models and are classified either under 'biographical experiences' (Eberle & Pollak, 2006) or 'external influences' (Willer, 1993). Several studies have already examined the relevance of biographical experiences (Oesterreich, 1987; e.g. Steltmann, 1980; Terhart et al., 1994). In addition to experiences with teachers (role models), these also relate to experiences with other educational staff, as well as personal experiences with educational supervision and support. Formative teachers, therefore, represent only one facet of biographical experiences.

The Japanese data present a very specific image of teachers: they are often retrospectively described as 'attentive listeners' who, due to this characteristic, serve as important reference figures. This type of teacher-student relationship appears to play a particularly important role in biographical narratives about the choice of study or career. The relationship with one's own teachers or so-called club teachers (mentors) confirms the motif already identified as significant in Japan (Mishima, 2012; Oishi, 2013). In the Chilean data, however, it is not so much the teacher as such but enthusiasm for the subject that makes a decisive contribution to motivation. Negative learning experiences are also important. Compared to the Japanese data, the Brazilian data highlights the significance of subject-related methodological competence, teachers' general working methods, and their approach to teaching in influencing career and study choices. These findings suggest that, depending on the context, teachers tend to act either as subject-specific or social role models. Overall, both facets appear to be relevant for the role model function.

### **Limitations and outlook**

In the context of career and study choice motivation, the significance of social contribution to maintaining the school system, as well as the impact of school biographical experiences for social and/or professional role models, were identified as transnationally mentioned intrinsic motives and were analyzed in detail. The study results suggest that certain intrinsic career and study choice motives contribute to stabilizing the school system, independent of the (national) context. The influence of biographical experiences with (teaching) figures also emerges as a universal motive for choosing the teaching profession.

Intrinsic-altruistic motives reflect the pursuit of meaningfulness. The extent to which this idealistic attitude remains, changes or disappears in the course of teaching requires further investigation. In this regard, a longitudinal study examining potential variations in intrinsic-altruistic motives and other motives would be of particular interest. However, this study has certain limitations: A deeper analysis using alternative methods could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the findings. Furthermore, incorporating a quantitative analysis linked to sociodemographic data could provide deeper insights into the interpretation of results. Expanding the sample to include a broader and more diverse range of participants

would enhance the ability to make stable statements about national differences in career and study choice motives. Additionally, the potential influence of social desirability on the responses should also be considered.

Nevertheless, the results presented here encourage a systematic analysis of the country-specific aspects.

For counseling and teaching practice at universities across all analyzed countries, it is recommended to utilize different intrinsic motives, for example, for a counseling instrument (possibly a questionnaire) in the introductory phase of studies or for an opportunity for reflection during the course of studies. This could not only support and strengthen the students' decision to pursue a degree program but could possibly also be corrected in good measure. A recommendation for higher education teaching is to facilitate dialog among students regarding their motivation for the teaching profession, encouraging cross-national exchange. This could, for example, be incorporated into existing university seminars as preparation for a semester abroad or integrated into virtual international courses at universities.

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