

Research Article

I Want to Become a Teacher because. . .? Student-Teachers Change in Attitudes of Becoming Teachers in Austria and Kosovo

Fjolla Kačaniku ¹, Irene Maderbacher,² Franz Erhard,² and Blerim Saqipi ¹

¹Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, Prishtinë 10000, Kosovo

²University College of Teacher Education Lower Austria, Baden 2500, Austria

Correspondence should be addressed to Blerim Saqipi; blerim.saqipi@uni-pr.edu

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The motivation for career choice motivation of student-teachers is a well-studied topic with a representative theoretical basis in teacher education research that has a long-standing tradition in the international research landscape. However, in understanding the pressing questions of why young people choose to become teachers, only a few longitudinal and comparative studies have been carried out that focus on the development of motivation for choosing a teaching career. This longitudinal study reports on the effects of time within initial teacher education and how it influences student-teacher attitudes and motives about the teaching profession. This article is a product of a larger study that aims at addressing the existing literature gap by examining student-teacher change in attitudes of becoming teachers in Austria and Kosovo starting from initial teacher education, during early stages of their teaching career as novice teachers, and to more advanced stages of their teaching career. This is a panel study located within a longitudinal design. In this study, a questionnaire and student-teacher reflection texts were used as instruments. Data were collected in three phases during which 673 student-teachers participated in face-to-face administered questionnaire as follows: 341 (phase 1), 185 (phase 2), and 147 (phase 3), as well as 19 student-teacher reflections. Questionnaire data were analysed using the general linear model (GLM) with repeated measures test, whereas the reflection text data were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings in this longitudinal study provide evidence that student-teacher attitudes and motives for becoming teachers can change over time during the initial teacher education in Austria and Kosovo, and they can be influenced by in-school experiences during teaching practice. The study concludes that motives for choosing a teaching career are primarily intrinsic, are not time-stable, and change over the course of studies. The study findings have clear implications for initial teacher education programs in addressing changes in student-teachers' attitudes of becoming teachers. The insights gained from the findings of this study lead to recommendations that initial teacher education programs should strengthen teaching practice to better manage the preparation of students and teachers and their entry into the teaching profession.

1. Introduction

The motivation for career choice for students is a well-studied topic in teacher education research that has a long tradition in the international research landscape. The main focus of the research area is to address the question of why young people choose to become teachers, but so far only a few longitudinal studies have been conducted that focus on the development of motivation to choose a teaching career [1].

According to Besa and Schüle [2], little research has been carried out to date on whether the motivation to choose a teaching career is a “stable construct.”

1.1. Education Contexts of Austria and Kosovo. This study focuses on the contexts of Austria and Kosovo to shed light on the continuous change in student-teachers' attitudes of becoming teachers throughout initial teacher education.

1.1.1. Teacher Education in Austria. The Lower Austrian University of Education (PH Niederösterreich) realizes the basic concept of education, training, and continuing education with an optimal educational offer for the demanding profession of teacher and enables the acquisition of comprehensive teaching and educational skills. Since the academic year 2015/2016, the Lower Austrian Pedagogical University (Pädagogische Hochschule Niederösterreich) offers a teacher training course for primary school teachers ("Primarstufe"). The Bachelor's Program Primary School has a workload of 240 ECTS credits, of which 60 ECTS credits will be completed in a specialization study. This enables a deepening in one area and thus offers the students the possibility of specialization. The master program has a value of 60 ECTS credits and ends with the academic degree "Master of Education—Med."

Pedagogical practical studies (PPSs) are at the heart of teacher education. The modules of the PPS also provide a link between theory and practice. The practical implementation at the PH takes place through the possibility of the students to perceive the school practice as a central place of experience, which enables probation and verification of theoretical knowledge in connection with concrete practice. The concept of the pedagogical practical studies at the Pedagogical University of Lower Austria finds its basis in the constructivist learning theory [3]. Education of students in the context of practical pedagogical studies is carried out at the university's own practical elementary school. In addition, there is professional cooperation with more than 50 partner or practice schools of primary and secondary education and some kindergartens.

Internships, as well as self-planned and held lessons, or team lessons are part of the pedagogical practical training of the PH Lower Austria from the first semester onwards. The professional accompaniment of the students is provided on the one hand by practical consultants of PH Niederösterreich as well as trained mentors at the practice locations. From the third to the fifth semester, the PPS concept is based on the "location model." A larger group of students (mostly 8–10 people) complete the pedagogical practical studies at a school site and are accompanied by a practical counsellor. After the internships or the self-taught classes, the accompanying lecture takes place directly at the location. In the sixth and seventh practical semesters, the students complete the school practice in an individually chosen field of primary education, for example, as sports, arts, or IT. In the eighth semester as well as in the master's program, the students complete their practical training in the form of a three-week block internship, which is intended to perfect the students' diagnostic and reflective skills and the role of the class teacher and the associated administrative tasks.

Individual and collaborative practice reflections, as well as peer-feedback tandems, didactic study groups, Lesson Study cycles, and professional learning communities, should accompany and support the students in their education and contribute to the development of reflective competence. The accompanying e-portfolio (Mahara) will be used to document the acquisition of skills, competence development, and proof of proficiency by the eighth semester, which students

can use to exchange with the practical counsellors as well as with the mentors and fellow students.

1.1.2. Teacher Education in Kosovo. Initial teacher education in Kosovo is offered at the university level since 2002. The Faculty of Education within the University of Prishtina, the sample institution in this study, was the first and largest provider of teacher education in the country. However, with continuous reform and developments in higher education in Kosovo over the last two decades [4, 5], four additional teacher education institutions were instituted and offer BA and MA teacher education programs. Initial teacher education programs have also undergone continuous reforms intending to raise teacher education standards and develop teacher professionalism [6].

The primary teacher education program is a bachelor's degree of 240 ECTS. Students attending the primary teacher education program are required to realize 154 ECTS in the courses in which they enroll, while only 54 ECTS represent the number of elective courses. Furthermore, students are responsible for attending 22 ECTS compulsory teaching practice credits during their four years of studies (1st year: 2 weeks; 2nd year: 4 weeks; 3rd year: 6 weeks; 4th year: 8 weeks). On average, one course can represent 4–6 ECTS. As a final requirement before graduation, students must submit a bachelor's thesis that represents 10 ECTS. Student-teachers can choose elective courses from all the course catalogues, while mandatory courses are enforced to student program requirements.

An important aspect of the program is the teaching practice experience of student-teachers [7]. Teaching practice or school placement is also a mandatory aspect and is organized during all teacher education programs. During the early years of teaching practice, students are only required to observe and provide their reflections. In the fourth year, students are required to engage in independent teaching. According to teaching practice guidelines, student-teachers are observed by assigned faculty members and mentored by schoolteachers.

Teaching practice is a good opportunity for students to integrate their theoretical knowledge of student development and learning with the development of practical teaching skills, in an environment that supports their learning and professional development. Practical learning is regarded by all professionals as the most important point of teacher training. However, in reality, school-university communication and collaboration toward quality-oriented practical student learning are lacking [7]. Consequently, the synthesis between theoretical and practical student learning remains a major challenge.

1.1.3. Research Purpose. The purpose of this article is to examine the changing attitudes of student-teachers toward becoming teachers and the motivations for a teaching career choice in Austria and Kosovo during initial teacher education. The study examines changing student-teachers' attitudes of becoming teachers from the first year of initial teacher education and tracks the change in three years. This

article is a product of a larger study that aims at following the same sample of student-teachers to later stages of their teaching careers. The larger study sets to examine attitudes of student-teachers to becoming teachers in Austria and Kosovo starting from initial teacher education, during early stages of their teaching career as novice teachers, and to more advanced stages of their teaching career and continuous professional development.

1.1.4. Research Questions

- (1) To what extent do student-teachers' attitudes of becoming teachers change over time in initial teacher education in Austria and Kosovo?
- (2) What is the effect of time in initial teacher education on the student-teacher change in attitudes of becoming teachers?
- (30) What are student-teachers' reflections regarding their changes in attitudes of becoming teachers during initial teacher education in Austria and Kosovo?

2. Literature Review

Motives and interests of the teaching profession have been extensively examined in international research on teacher education and have a long-standing tradition. The choice for a teaching profession is a comprehensive decision-making process that is influenced by many factors and has an impact on the course and success of studies [1, 8].

There are many reasons why students decide to become teachers and, according to Heinz [9], relate less to their studies and more to their work. Rothland [10] also speaks of motives for choosing a teaching career and less of motives for choosing a degree. This connection between the world of work and study requires, even at the beginning of the teacher training course that student-teachers' competencies and interests are in line with program and teaching practice [11].

Various theories on the choice of a teaching profession suggest that the decision to choose a profession is a long process that begins in childhood and takes place in confrontation with and under the influence of the environment [11, 12].

Holland [13] postulates in his classic career choice theory that people look for environments in which they can realize their values and attitudes, and environments look for people who fit their tasks and roles. A person's professional behaviour is determined by the degree of fit between the personality structure and the environmental structure [14].

In line with Holland's [13] classic career choice theory, people willingly strive to work in professional environments that correspond to their skills and interests. With his congruence theory, Holland [13] aims at providing understandable answers to the questions that people are interested in regarding their career choice. In this sense, according to Nieskens [14], professional interests and the choice of a profession are viewed as fundamental personality orientations. From the perspective of Holland's theory of career

choice behaviour [13], the decision for the teaching profession can be described as a match between the individual personality structure and the environmental structure (professional requirements).

In addition to the classic career choice theory, there is a large number of international studies on the motives for choosing a career among teacher training students, which Rothland [8] presents in a tabular form and which represent an excerpt from the broad range of research. With the range of scientific studies [9, 11, 12, 15–19], the subject area appears well researched from a superficial point of view, but at this point, the inconsistency of the scales used and the different study designs must be pointed out [1, 8].

König and Rothland [20] have conducted a comprehensive study on "Change of Teaching Motivations and Acquisition of Pedagogical Knowledge during Teacher Education." In a representative sample, motives for choosing a career among teacher training students from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland were recorded. This longitudinal study aims at generating valid statements about the motivation for choosing a career for students to acquire skills at the beginning and end of their training [21].

A result of the longitudinal study shows that intrinsic motivation, depending on practical school learning opportunities, increases, whereby country-specific differences emerged, which the authors attribute to the various concepts of teacher training [22]. Their findings provide evidence that teaching motivations can change during initial teacher education and that they can be influenced by in-school opportunities to learn. Furthermore, the study shows that "teacher preparation matters for the change in motivation for career choice of students teachers" [22].

In a country comparison, the dominance of the four motivational factors, the intrinsic motivation, the self-perceived ability to teach, the desire to make a social contribution, and the desire to want to work with children and adolescents, can be seen. In summary, it can be assumed that from an international perspective, the choice of the teaching profession is based on a generalizable motivation structure, a basic and core motivation [1, 11].

Although the international findings on the motives for choosing a career among teacher trainee students show different methodological approaches [8], it can generally be assumed that the motives for choosing a career are primarily intrinsically motivated; that is, the interest or joy in having children and young people wanting to work is the dominant factor in choosing a career and the most frequently mentioned reason [1, 8, 11]. A comparison between developed and developing countries shows that the dominance of intrinsic, altruistic, and social motives applies mainly to developed countries and that extrinsic motives (remuneration, job security, professional status) depend on the regional framework conditions of the teaching activity [2].

Now, there are only a few studies that focus on the longitudinal analysis of the development or change in motives for choosing a career among teacher training students [1]. As a result, we have yet to receive evidence on whether teacher motivation can be changed [23] during teacher education. According to Besa and Schüle [2], very

little research has so far been carried out on whether this construct can be assumed to be stable over time. Current and young study and research projects, such as the study on the development of job-specific motivation and pedagogical knowledge in teacher training [20] and the PaLea study [24], address this research desideratum. König et al. [22] show in this context a change in motivation for choosing a career, which they attribute to internship experience during studies.

In our study, there is also a longitudinal analysis of the development of career choice motivation in Austria and Kosovo. This longitudinal study is not only about the question of why students start the teacher training course, but also about the extent to which motives for change in teaching career motives are encountered with the desired professional field within the framework of practical school elements. This desideratum and the question whether there can be a temporal change in the motives to choose teaching career are addressed in this study.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design. This study uses a longitudinal design. According to Cohen et al. [25], longitudinal studies investigate issues or people over time. Longitudinal research design comprises a process in which researchers conduct repeated observations of the same group of sample representatives during short or long periods. Longitudinal design enables researchers to analyse the duration of social phenomena; highlight similarities, differences, and changes over time in respect of one or more variables or participants; identify long-term effects; and explain changes in terms of variable characteristics [25]. This is a panel study within a longitudinal design that focuses on a group of people who experience a common event [26]. In the context of this study, we track student-teachers' changes in attitudes regarding the teaching profession starting from the first day of enrolment in primary teacher education programs in Austria and Kosovo. The study looks at time effects within initial teacher education (including theoretical courses and exposure to teaching practice of students) and how it influences their change in attitudes toward becoming teachers.

3.2. Sample. Student-teachers from initial teacher education in Kosovo and Austria were randomly selected [26]. Since we were interested in the same student-teachers of the same program of the study, as well as factors and ways in which their attitudes and reflections change during initial teacher education, we have used the same sample of student-teachers from Kosovo and Austria and conducted repeated testing over three years (sample characteristics are presented in Table 1).

However, because filling out the questionnaire was voluntary, the size of the sample in all three years of data collection was not the same. Although the ratio of sample size in year one to sample sizes in years two and three is not large, we consider the reduction of sample size over the years as a limitation of the study.

3.3. Instruments. The study examines the change in attitudes between student-teachers using a questionnaire and in-depth reflection texts from student-teachers in Austria and Kosovo. The questionnaire comprises two parts: the (i) demographic dimension and the (ii) factors of becoming a teacher dimension. The demographic dimension asks student-teachers to report on gender, age, and year of the study program (to measure time effect). The questionnaire measures factors to become a teacher in terms of the following: (1) education interest (6 items), (2) teacher-related self-concept (7 items), (3) usefulness and prestigious (6 items), (4) social influences (6 items), and (5) study (5 items). The questionnaire comprises 30 items in total. The reliability of the instrument was measured according to Cronbach's alpha model, and it is presented in Table 2 for each factor.

In addition to the questionnaire, student-teacher reflection texts were used for the in-depth examination of the inner reasons for the student-teacher change in attitudes toward becoming teachers. This was especially an important instrument to obtain verbal feedback in addition to statistical data.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis. Data were collected in three phases in Austria and Kosovo. In the first phase, the questionnaire was distributed to student-teachers in the first week of their enrolment into the Primary teacher education program in fall 2018. The purpose of distributing the questionnaire in the early days of enrolment of students in the program was to capture their attitudes and motives to become teachers before their exposure to the study program.

In the second phase, the questionnaire was distributed to the same student-teachers when they moved to the second year of the Primary Teacher Education Program in fall 2019. In this phase, only two factors of the questionnaire were used for retesting, namely, education interest and teacher-related self-concept, which were more fitting once student-teachers joined and continued the initial teacher education program. Another reason for continuing the measurement for these two factors was that the initial statistical analysis showed higher mean values for these two particular factors (see Table 3). In addition to the questionnaire, in 2019, we have also collected student-teacher reflections. Reflection texts were gathered after their first teaching practice experience for that academic year. This was an important part of feedback since student-teachers were no longer exposed only to the theoretical dimension of the teaching profession (with program courses), but experienced teaching practice in schools.

In the third phase, the questionnaire was distributed to the same student-teachers when they moved to their third year of primary teacher education program in fall 2020 and spring 2021. Similarly, only two factors of the questionnaire were used for retesting (education interest and teacher-related self-concept). Furthermore, student-teachers were asked to reflect in the text version their experiences after completing their subsequent teaching practice for that academic year. The same timeline for data collection was devised in both contexts (Austria and Kosovo). This is a

TABLE 1: Sample characteristics of student-teachers in Austria and Kosovo.

Case studies	Phase I (2018) <i>questionnaire</i>	Phase II (2019) <i>questionnaire</i>	Phase III (2020/2021) <i>questionnaire</i>	Phases II and III (2019 and 2020/2021) <i>reflection text</i>
Austria	136	59	44	5
Kosovo	205	126	103	14
Total	341	185	147	19

TABLE 2: Reliability of measuring the instrument (according to Cronbach’s alpha model).

Variables	Cronbach’s alpha	Cronbach’s alpha based on standardized items	No. of items (N = 30)
Education interest	.960	.961	6
Usefulness and prestigious	.945	.956	6
Teacher-related self-concept	.900	.939	7
Social influences	.874	.867	6
Study	.870	.877	5

TABLE 3: Mean and standard deviation of five factors of becoming a teacher (first-year fall, 2018).

Becoming a teacher	Austria		Kosovo	
	M	SD	M	SD
Education interest	3.49	.340	3.70	.546
Teacher-related self-concept	3.73	.275	3.57	.578
Usefulness and prestigious	2.46	.599	3.46	.770
Social influences	1.93	.416	2.48	.591
Study	2.98	.543	3.00	.420

continuous investigation; thus, our team will track the same sample of students also after their graduation. The long-term goal of our study is also to compare pre-service and in-service changes in attitudes of becoming and being teachers.

Questionnaire data were analysed with the SPSS program. Descriptive and inferential statistical tests were used. To better understand the effect of time (student-teachers moving from first to the second academic year and from second to third) in student-teachers’ attitudes toward becoming teachers, a general linear model (GLM) with repeated measures test was run [27]. The GLM repeated measures procedure provides an analysis of variance when the same measurement is made several times on each subject or case [28]. This model suits our aim to examine student-teachers’ change in attitudes of becoming teachers over time in initial teacher education and considers both theoretical and teaching practice impact of the initial teacher education program. For multivariate tests, the Wilks lambda result was reported as the most commonly used for the time effect. For tests within-subjects, Greenhouse–Geisser epsilon adjustment (value <.75) was used, which is consistent with the sphericity assumption. Moreover, tests of within-subjects contrasts looked at the linear and/or quadratic effect of time. Finally, a Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise comparison was used to analyse the precise effect of time [29], moving from 1st to 2nd and 3rd year of initial teacher education in the student-teachers’ change in attitudes toward becoming teachers.

The data of the reflection text were analysed using thematic analysis to generate relevant themes and open coding [30]. According to [26], when dealing with text data,

the use of thematic analysis enables the research team to generate important themes and detailed findings of the study.

4. Results

This section presents the results from the student-teacher questionnaire and student-teacher reflection text. The results from the student-teacher questionnaire reveal the extent to which student-teachers’ attitudes of becoming teachers change over time in initial teacher education in Austria and Kosovo. Moreover, it shows the effect of time in initial teacher education in student-teacher changes in attitudes of becoming teachers. The results from student-teacher reflections capture more in-depth reasoning behind the student-teachers change in attitudes of becoming teachers. A noteworthy aspect of student-teacher reflections is their experiences during teaching practice (school placement) as an important indicator to interpret student-teacher change in attitudes.

4.1. Results of the Student-Teacher Questionnaire. The results of the student-teacher questionnaire show the results of descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The descriptive statistics presents mean values of factors of becoming a teacher in the first year of student-teachers’ studies, as well as a general overview of the repeated measures over three years of their studies, indicating a change in students’ attitudes. The chi-square test indicates that time is a statistically significant variable to justify the student-teachers’ change in attitudes toward becoming teachers. The results also show time effects using a general linear model (GLM) with repeated measures. The effect of time is statistically significant in Austria and Kosovo, inferring that initial teacher education programs influence student-teachers to change their attitudes toward becoming teachers.

The results in Table 3 show the mean values of five factors influencing student-teachers becoming teachers in Austria and Kosovo at the beginning of their studies. In both contexts, mean values for education interest 3.49 (Austria) and 3.70 (Kosovo) and teacher-related self-concept 3.73

(Austria) and 3.57 (Kosovo) are higher compared to other factors in explaining students-teacher intentions and motives of becoming teachers.

More specifically, mean values for factor-specific items are reported in the following passage. Regarding education interest detailed indicators, student-teachers showed they enjoy working with children and adolescents 3.95 (Austria) and 3.89 (Kosovo); they would like to practice a profession in which they can help to shape the education of children and adolescents 3.88 (Austria) and 3.87 (Kosovo); they appreciate the artistic and creative possibilities of the profession very much 3.90 (Austria) and 3.71 (Kosovo); and they have been following this wish since childhood 3.32 (Austria) and 3.66 (Kosovo). Regarding detailed indicators of teacher-related self-concept, student-teachers pointed out that they want to impart knowledge and teach children something 3.92 (Austria) and 3.93 (Kosovo); they can explain well and convey contents in an interesting way 3.63 (Austria) and 3.68 (Kosovo); they have often been praised for their patience in explaining things 3.48 (Austria) and 3.72 (Kosovo); they think that they will become good teachers 3.82 (Austria) and 3.81 (Kosovo), they consider teaching as an exciting task 3.93 (Austria) and 3.75 (Kosovo), and they think that they have good skills for this work 3.56 (Austria) and 3.52 (Kosovo).

However, student-teachers assign less importance to other factors, such as usefulness and prestige, social influences, and study, when deciding to become teachers, which highlights that education interest and teacher-related self-concept are better associated with student-teacher attitudes of the teaching profession and motives for a career choice in Austria and Kosovo during initial teacher education.

When measuring student-teacher attitudes over three years of their studies (see Table 4), it shows that their attitudes toward becoming teachers change over the course of initial teacher education programs in Austria and Kosovo. In particular, mean values of factors such as education interest and teacher-related self-concept have decreased over time. This infers that the time between initial teacher education years of studies is associated with the student-teachers decline in interest and motives to become teachers.

The data were further examined to provide more insights into what are the main variables influencing student-teachers' change in attitudes toward becoming teachers. The chi-square test (X^2) was used to investigate whether there are significant differences in the age, gender, and students' and teachers' year of study related to the two factors (education interest and teacher-related self-concept) that determine their attitudes toward becoming teachers (see Table 5).

The results show that there are statistically significant differences between student-teacher attitudes compared to the time in their first, second, and third years of studies. This result indicates the importance of the time factor in determining student-teachers' changing attitudes toward becoming teachers. Austria and Kosovo report the same results. However, age and gender were not statistically significant variables in Austria or Kosovo. Subsequently, the general linear model (GLM) with repeated measures test was used to understand the effect of the time variable on student-teacher changes of attitudes (see Table 6).

We performed a multivariate analysis to test the main effect of time. From multivariate tests, Wilks' lambda is reported as the common result. The results show the main effect of time is statistically significant for both factors (education interest and teacher-related self-concept) in Austria and Kosovo. It indicates a variation in the means of student-teacher attitudes toward education interest and teacher-related self-concept, inferring their intentions of becoming teachers' decline over time in initial teacher education. Moreover, Table 7 reports within-subjects effects.

Concerning the effects within subjects in Table 7, the main effect of time on student-teacher attitudes to become teachers is statistically significant for both factors (education interest and teacher-related self-concept) in Austria and Kosovo. The results report Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon adjustment (value $<.75$) where the results ensure consistency with the sphericity assumption.

Tests of within-subject contrasts looked at the linear and/or quadratic effect of time (see Table 8). The results also show that the test of the linear component of the trend is statistically significant for both factors (education interest and teacher-related self-concept) in Austria and Kosovo.

This means that as the student-teacher year of study increases (as they move from one year of study to the next), their education interest and teacher-related self-concept attitudes of becoming teachers decrease. This shows a descending linear trend of the effect of time. However, the education interest of student-teachers in Kosovo has both a statistically significant linear and quadratic trend of time effect, which means that as student-teachers upgrade their year of study, their education interest of becoming teachers bends twice downward.

To identify the precise differences and compare student-teacher attitudes toward becoming teachers in the first, second, and third years of the initial teacher education programs in Austria and Kosovo, we used Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise comparisons (see Table 9).

In the context of Austria, the results for the education interest factor show that there are statistically significant differences in attitudes of student-teachers when they were in the first year of studies with the second year of studies, as well as differences in attitudes when comparing their first-year measurement and third-year measurement. Regarding the teacher-related self-concept factor, there are only statistically significant differences in attitudes of students-teachers when we compare measurement in the first year as compared to the measurement in their third year of studies.

In the context of Kosovo, the results for both education interest and teacher-related self-concept show a statistically significant difference between student-teacher attitudes toward becoming teachers when comparing their attitude measurement in their first year of studies and their attitudes measured in their third year of studies. However, the mean difference values of results in Austria and Kosovo (see Table 9) show that the statistically significant differences in student-teachers' attitudes are not great when comparing different years of studies.

TABLE 4: Mean and standard deviation of two factors to become a teacher (3-year comparison).

Case studies	Factors of becoming a teacher	2018		2019		2020/2021	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Austria	Education interest	3.65	.271	3.25	.568	2.88	.953
	Teacher-related self-concept	3.71	.425	3.46	.916	2.73	1.062
Kosovo	Education interest	3.70	.546	3.37	.936	2.95	1.013
	Teacher-related self-concept	3.57	.578	3.23	.922	2.74	.885

TABLE 5: Chi-square test between variables (cumulative data of three years).

Independent variables	Dependent variables	Sig	
		Austria	Kosovo
Age	Education interest	.425	.082
	Teacher-related self-concept	.332	.154
Gender	Education interest	.270	.834
	Teacher-related self-concept	.803	.090
Year	Education interest	.000	.000
	Teacher-related self-concept	.000	.000

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 6: Multivariate tests within-subject design (time).

Case studies	Factors	Effect (time)	Value	F (b)	Hypothesis df	Sig.	Partial eta squared
Austria	Education interest	Wilks' lambda	.668	6.946	2.000	.004	.332
	Teacher-related self-concept		.750	4.836	2.000	.015	.250
Kosovo	Education interest		.831	10.300	2.000	.000	.169
	Teacher-related self-concept		.857	8.437	2.000	.000	.143

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 7: Tests of within-subject effects.

Case studies	Factors	Source (time)	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial eta squared
Austria	Education interest	Greenhouse-Geisser	4.604	1.535	2.999	6.430	.007	.181
	Teacher-related self-concept		9.414	1.737	5.419	5.352	.010	.151
Kosovo	Education interest		12.939	1.889	6.850	12.723	.000	.111
	Teacher-related self-concept		9.495	1.420	6.688	9.832	.001	.088

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 8: Tests of within-subject contrasts.

Case studies	Factors	Source (time)	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial eta squared
Austria	Education interest	Linear	4.446	1	4.446	8.945	.006	.236
	Teacher-related self-concept		8.731	1	8.731	9.870	.004	.248
Kosovo	Education interest	Linear	10.723	1	10.723	19.265	.000	.159
	Teacher-related self-concept	Quadratic	2.215	1	2.215	4.812	.031	.045
		Linear	8.563	1	8.563	15.476	.000	.132

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

4.2. Results of Student-Teacher Reflections. The results from student-teacher reflections also confirm that student experience during initial teacher education (theoretical courses and teaching practice) has tremendously influenced change in student-teacher attitudes of becoming teachers. The analysis reveals two themes discussing how students become less interested in the teaching profession over time of their

studies, including (i) teaching practice shock, (ii) theory-practice gap, and (iii) conflicting mentoring experiences.

4.2.1. Teaching Practice Shock. There was a consensus among student-teachers that they had experienced some sort of shock during teaching practice (school placement). We

TABLE 9: Pairwise comparisons.

Case studies	Factors	Time (I)	Time (J)	Mean difference (I-J)	Sig.
Austria	Education interest	1	2	.361*	.006
			3	.544*	.017
		2	1	-.361*	.006
			3	.183	.829
		3	1	-.544*	.017
			2	-.183	.829
	Teacher-related self-concept	1	2	.194	.976
			3	.751*	.011
		2	1	-.194	.976
			3	.557	.156
		3	1	-.751*	.011
			2	-.557	.156
Kosovo	Education interest	1	2	.049	1.000
			3	.456*	.000
		2	1	-.049	1.000
			3	.408*	.001
		3	1	-.456*	.000
			2	-.408*	.001
	Teacher-related self-concept	1	2	.087	.451
			3	.408*	.000
		2	1	-.087	.451
			3	.320*	.022
		3	1	-.408*	.000
			2	-.320*	.022

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

present some direct student-teacher quotes to illustrate the rationale behind the student-teacher change in their attitudes toward becoming teachers.

Although I was very enthusiastic about the teaching profession during theoretical courses in the first year, I experienced a practice shock during my first teaching practice. I felt so overwhelmed having to deal with more than 30 students at the same time. Even though I was only expected to observe and assist the teacher during practice, I felt that I do not have the necessary skills and competencies to manage this complex environment after graduation. I believe that the first teaching practice completely changed my perspective on the teaching profession. I realized how demanding it is and I experience a lack of confidence ever since. (Student-teacher 7, 2019)

Teaching is more work than it appears to be. During my teaching practice, I started to question everything I have learned during my courses. I was screaming inside saying “I cannot do this.” (Student-teacher 11, 2020)

One of the biggest challenges I have faced during teaching practice was to reach all students inclusively. My model of an inclusive teacher shattered in front of my eyes when I realized how difficult this is to achieve in practice. I felt powerless and this changed my idea of the teaching profession entirely. (Student-teacher 19, 2021)

4.2.2. Theory-Practice Gap. The second theme that emerged from the analysed reflection text concerns the gap between theory and practice. Student-teachers collectively claimed the difficulty they experienced connecting and applying theoretical knowledge to teaching practice.

During teaching practice, I understood that there is no theoretical knowledge that can give enough “warning” and a basis to anticipate the expectations of the teaching profession. Our courses are too theoretical and content-based. As such, I realize a great gap between theoretical courses and my experience during teaching practice. (Student-teacher 18, 2021)

To better understand the teaching profession, I would need to visit the class more often and participate in their daily school life. I think that theoretical teaching is far away from what we are faced with during teaching practice and spending as much time as possible in a class could be considered a better preparation for starting a career. (Student-teacher 14, 2020)

4.2.3. Conflicting Mentoring Experiences. Another important theme that shows the student-teacher change in attitudes is because of conflicting or poor mentoring experiences. Student-teachers showed their disappointment regarding their mentoring experiences. Although initially they expected a more productive mentoring experience that is supposed to help them overcome their fears and doubts about becoming teachers, the majority of student-teachers shared how mentors (both in school and faculty) influenced negative thinking of the teaching profession.

Teachers in school provided conflicting instructions as compared to the mentors at the university. Within the university, we developed the understanding that our responsibilities as future teachers are not to just formally complete the daily and weekly plan but to ensure that all students engage in various activities and benefit by

developing life skills and abilities. However, this philosophy has been rejected by school teachers, who argue that our goal is to complete the scheduled plan, neglecting the direct needs of students. Teachers at school urged me to literally forget about student-centred teaching, suggesting that it cannot be achieved. The practice has made us very confused, and now, we have contradictory conceptualizations of being a teacher. (Student-teacher 11, 2020)

After the poor mentoring experience during teaching practice, provided both by school and faculty mentors, I fear I will not have a proper mentoring experience during my initial years as a teacher. I am more scared and insecure than ever to become a teacher. I have doubts about having chosen a teaching degree. (Student-teacher 17, 2020)

In addition to strong statements about teaching practice shock, theory-practice gap, and conflicting mentoring experiences, a few student-teachers, mainly from the context of Austria, provided their positive reflection on how enriching they found teaching practice to be. We show a student-teacher excerpt below:

The teaching practice was of course the highlight in the first year of study. The teaching practice in the first semester was a great help. And in the second semester, my feeling that I was in the right place was confirmed. After my first practice, I was allowed to give all the lessons in the second semester. It was very exhausting, but I was very happy. In addition, I was very fortunate to have a very experienced mentor on my side. (Student-teacher 1, 2020)

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This article is a product of a larger study that sets out to examine student-teacher change in attitudes of becoming teachers in Austria and Kosovo starting from initial teacher education, during early stages of their teaching career as novice teachers, and to more advanced stages of their teaching career. The study examined the time effects within initial teacher education and how it influences student-teachers' attitudes and motives about the teaching profession.

The findings of this longitudinal study provide evidence that student-teacher attitudes and motivations for becoming teachers can change over time during the initial teacher education program in Austria and Kosovo. The results also confirm that the reasons behind the change in attitudes toward becoming teachers and the motivations for a teaching career choice in Austria and Kosovo are heavily influenced by their experience during teaching practice (in-school placement). Our findings reinforce the assumption that motivations for becoming teachers should not be seen as fixed to the time point when students enroll in initial teacher education programs. Our study confirms that initial teacher education plays a significant role in changing student-teacher attitudes and motives about the teaching profession. Our findings are consistent with the findings of König et al. [22] who confirmed that teaching motivations can change during initial teacher education and can be influenced by in-school opportunities. It should be noted that the study findings are based on subjective self-assessments and that systematic bias cannot be ruled out.

Moreover, our study findings support that the intrinsic motivation of the student-teachers about the teaching profession and teaching as a career choice is of great significance. Our study shows that extrinsic motives are important and subordinate to intrinsic ones. The most common reasons for choosing the teaching profession are explained with intrinsic motives, for example, a positive self-evaluation of their attributes and capabilities to be teachers and to work with children and adolescents. The diverse international research on motives for choosing a career among teacher training students has also come to similar results [8, 10–12]. Our findings emphasize that initial teacher education and in-school experiences as experienced by student-teachers fail to contribute as structures that influence extrinsic student motivations for teaching as a career choice. An explanation for this could be that students have dealt with conflicting mentoring experiences and the theory-practice gap, as elaborated in student-teacher reflections.

Although the findings from the Austria and Kosovo contexts are comparable, meaning that the findings from both contexts confirm that student-teacher motivations to become teachers decrease during their initial teacher education programs, some contextual variables need to be outlined for both countries. In Kosovo, more theoretical and academic programing is implemented, which led students to rightly confirm the prevailing theory-practice gap. This situation is similar to Germany and other contexts with a similar conceptual orientation of teacher education [9, 22], which indicates that the transformation of the current role of initial teacher education and teaching practice can enhance student-teacher motivations for the teaching profession. On the contrary, the context of organizing teaching practice and in-school opportunities in the Austrian context of initial teacher education is more practice-oriented. As a result, our findings have shown that student-teachers in Austria reflected more positive feedback on how enriching they found teaching practice to be and how indirectly such experiences influence their motivations to become teachers and contribute to society. This practice orientation of teacher education can also be found in Switzerland [22] and has confirmed that a clinical conceptual orientation of teacher education enhances student-teacher motivations for a teaching career choice.

The statistically collected values indicate a high, subjectively perceived, ability conviction even before the initial training of the student-teacher. This is also confirmed by the results of the teacher-related self-concept category. High values in this category can also indicate an overestimation of one's teacher-specific abilities before starting their studies. This result is comparable in two contexts and is exemplified by individuals (future student-teacher) intrinsic motivations for becoming future teachers. In the literature, this result is documented with the explanation that individuals have already been faced with teacher-related tasks before and have been praised for the way they have managed such complex and challenging teaching tasks (i.e., giving private lessons and explaining things to classmates, explaining well and interestingly conveying contents, considering teaching as an existing task, and evaluating their skills highly for teaching work, among others) [9, 11, 12, 15, 22].

When measuring student-teacher attitudes over three years of their studies, show that their attitudes regarding the teaching profession have changed during initial teacher education (including their exposure during teaching practice). This means that motives and attitudes are affected when compared in a sample with three time periods. The reasons for these changes can be traced back to practical experience, but also reflection processes during initial teacher education programs. Therefore, there should be prospects for reflection on suitability for the teaching profession, in the sense of a profession, throughout the course of study.

In conclusion, although for a long time, it was assumed that the motivation for choosing a teaching career is a “time-stable construct,” our study showed that student-teacher motivations for choosing a teaching career are primarily intrinsic and change over the course of teacher education studies. Therefore, a distinct implication of the findings of our study is to show that the motivations and intentions of student-teachers to become teachers are not “time-stable” and change over a longer survey period. The study findings provided insights for initial teacher education institutions on how to design and deliver programs in order to better facilitate student-teachers path toward becoming teachers. As part of this complex process of becoming a teacher, initial teacher education programs, in addition to providing the quality program on campus, must provide meaningful in-school opportunities that facilitate the development of student-teacher identity that can easily transition to meeting the demands of the teaching profession.

5.1. Limitations and Future Research. Even though this study offers a solid scientific contribution, we transparently recognize some limitations. First, the study only examines changing student-teacher attitudes of becoming teachers and motives for a teaching career choice in Austria and Kosovo during initial teacher education over three years. Second, the study focuses only on the time-effect variable. Further research could track teachers in later stages of their career to understand changes in attitudes and motives of becoming teachers in Austria and Kosovo during the early stages of their teaching career as novice teachers and to more advanced stages of their teaching career and continuous professional development. In the later stages of this longitudinal study, other variables could also be analysed to shed light on student-teacher attitudes and motivations about the teaching profession.

Data Availability

The data file for the research conducted is available and will be made available upon request to all parties interested in cross-examining the data.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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