

Career Orientations of Pre-Service Teachers: A Comparative Study of Russian and Indian Students

Roza Valeeva¹, Manpreet Kaur Bagga², Faina Kremen³, Sergei Kremen⁴,
Gulfiya Parfilova⁵

¹ Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Kazan, Russia;

Liaoning Normal University, Dalian, China

E-mail: valeykin@yandex.ru

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8312-4054>

² Partap College of Education, Ludhiana, India

E-mail: moneypreet74@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3177-6093>

³ Smolensk State University, Smolensk, Russia

E-mail: fmkremen@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5451-4347>

⁴ Smolensk State University, Smolensk, Russia

E-mail: skremen@yandex.ru

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6162-9986>

⁵ Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Kazan, Russia

E-mail: parfilova2007@mail.ru

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2936-652X>

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Abstract

The problem of teacher shortages is currently global, and researchers from various countries are studying the factors influencing students' preferences for the teaching profession and their career plans. Comparative studies of motivations for choosing teacher education reveal consistent and culturally specific characteristics that allow us to incorporate the positive experiences of different countries into the design and improvement of national teacher training programs. This comparative study focuses on the initial career orientations of first-year pre-service teachers from Russia and India, examining the motives, interests, and aspirations that underpin their commitment to the profession. Using E. Schein's Career Anchors Test and the author's questionnaire, we identified the common and specific features in the career orientations of 240 students receiving pedagogical education at two Russian universities (Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University and Smolensk State University) and at Partap College of Education in Ludhiana (India). Russian and Indian pre-service teachers share similar socio-demographic characteristics and identify Service, Stability, and Lifestyle integration as the career orientations that define the teaching profession. The difference lies in the greater certainty of Russian students' career choices. The findings offer insights into the professional orientations of pre-service teachers in distinct cultural contexts and highlight factors that may influence their long-term satisfaction with the teaching profession.

Keywords: career orientation, teacher-training education, Schein's Career Anchor Test, motivation, Russia, India.

Карьерные ориентации будущих учителей: сравнительное исследование российских и индийских студентов

Роза А. Валеева¹, Манприт Каур Багга², Фаина М. Кремень³,
Сергей А. Кремень⁴, Гульфия Г. Парфилова⁵

¹ Казанский (Приволжский) федеральный университет, Казань, Россия;
Ляонинский педагогический университет, Далянь, Китай
E-mail: valeykin@yandex.ru
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8312-4054>

² Партапский колледж образования, Лудхиана, Индия
E-mail: moneypreet74@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3177-6093>

³ Смоленский государственный университет, Смоленск, Россия
E-mail: fmkremen@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5451-4347>

⁴ Смоленский государственный университет, Смоленск, Россия
E-mail: skremen@yandex.ru
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6162-9986>

⁵ Казанский (Приволжский) федеральный университет, Казань, Россия
E-mail: parfilova2007@mail.ru
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2936-652X>

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Аннотация

Проблема дефицита педагогических кадров в настоящее время носит глобальный характер, и исследователи из разных стран занимаются изучением факторов, влияющие на предпочтение педагогической профессии и карьерных планов студентов. Сравнительные исследования мотивации выбора педагогического образования выявляют инвариантные и культурно специфические особенности, которые позволяют учитывать положительный опыт разных стран в проектировании и совершенствовании национальных программ профессиональной подготовки учителей. Данное сравнительное исследование посвящено первоначальным карьерным ориентирам будущих учителей первого года обучения из России и Индии, а также изучению мотивов, интересов и стремлений, лежащих в основе их приверженности профессии. Использование опросника карьерных якорей Шейна и авторской анкеты выявило общее и особенное в карьерных ориентациях 240 студентов, получающих педагогическое образование в двух российских вузах (Казанском (Поволжском) федеральном университете и Смоленском государственном университете) и в Партапском колледже образования (Лудхиана, Индия). Будущие педагоги России и Индии обладают схожими социально-демографическими характеристиками и выделяют среди карьерных ориентаций, определяющих педагогическую профессию, Служение, Стабильность и Интеграцию стилей жизни. Различия заключаются в большей определенности в своем профессиональном выборе у российских студентов. Полученные результаты позволяют понять профессиональные ориентации будущих педагогов в различных культурных контекстах и выявить факторы, которые могут повлиять на их долгосрочную удовлетворенность профессией учителя.

Ключевые слова: карьерные ориентации, педагогическое образование, тест Э. Шейна «Якоря карьеры», мотивация, Россия, Индия.

Introduction

Teacher shortages and crises in teacher education are observed throughout the world. Concerns over teacher shortages began emerging nearly forty years ago, as experts advised that a persistent lack of teachers might undermine the effectiveness of elementary and secondary education (Darling-Hammond, 1984). The reasons for the turnover of teaching staff are varied: retirement, health conditions, family obligations, transfer to another field, etc. (UNESCO, 2023) and by 2030, about 69 million new teachers will be needed to meet basic educational needs in the World (UNESCO, 2022). Recent studies further identify recurring themes such as wage gaps (Allegretto & Mishel, 2020; Templeton et al., 2022), stress and burnout (Shillingford-Butle et al., 2012), and a flat career structure (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022) in teaching, which force teachers to consider alternative career paths and indicate a persistent need to address these systemic issues.

To minimize the problem of leaving the profession, it is necessary to understand how career orientations influence various stages of teachers' professional self-determination: from choosing a profession to establishing themselves in professional activity.

Career orientation largely determines the motivation to enter and stay in the teaching profession, which is especially significant against the backdrop of low pay, limited career progression, and insufficient respect for the occupation.

Amid a severe and protracted teacher shortage, governments around the World are being forced to take urgent measures to both attract young people to teacher education programs and retain young teachers in the profession.

Russia and India are members of BRICS, an informal intergovernmental association of large countries with dynamically developing economies. The BRICS countries are actively developing student and faculty exchanges, implementing network educational programs, and conducting joint research projects. These initiatives promote the internationalization of education, the transfer of best practices, and the development of innovative teaching models. Teacher training is the foundation of educational quality in the BRICS countries (Singh, 2024).

Our study examines the career aspirations of future teachers in Russia and India, reflecting growing research interest in educational cooperation between the BRICS countries, many aspects of which remain understudied (Potashin et al., 2024), including teacher training education.

Despite the fact that our countries have different historical and cultural experiences, they share common challenges characteristic of the global educational agenda, as well as unique aspects of the development of teacher education in each country. In recent decades, our countries have been continuously reforming their educational systems, aimed at creating their own national models.

Globalization processes at the beginning of the 21st century led to the transition of Russian higher education to a two-tier system, enshrined in the Federal Law (2012) "On Education in the Russian Federation". Following Russia's withdrawal from the Bologna Process in 2022, an experiment began to create a sovereign model of higher education, focused on reviving the traditions of Soviet education while taking modern conditions into account.

The Indian education system was shaped by a unique, ancient culture and the British colonial legacy. India, with the third-largest higher education system in the world, has the lowest gross enrollment ratio among G20 countries (Naik et al., 2024), and the proportion of out-of-school students at every level of education is significantly higher than in other

BRICS countries, in part due to a shortage of teachers (Gubina, 2023). At the turn of the century, India adopted a series of legislative acts (the 2002 Constitutional Amendments, the Right to Education Act of 2006, etc.) aimed at increasing access to education for all segments of the population and transitioning the Indian higher education system from the European to the national model (Radchenko, 2019). These changes were enshrined in the National Education Policy (2020) of India, a comprehensive reform of the country's education system.

This study will help to identify how cultural and systemic factors shape career expectations, satisfaction, and persistence in the teaching profession; to contribute to the understanding of career orientation in teacher education by comparing the motivations of pre-service teachers in Russia and India. By identifying and analysing the career values that drive pre-service teachers in these distinct cultural and educational contexts, this research provides insights into strategies that may strengthen teacher commitment and retention in both countries. It further addresses a critical gap in comparative research by exploring how pre-service teachers' career orientations align or conflict with the realities of their respective educational systems, offering a foundation for policy recommendations that can better support career alignment and stability in teacher education.

Literature Review

In recent years, career orientation has become an area of keen interest in educational research, including in the context of teacher education. Research on career choice motivation among prospective teachers is most often considered within the framework of Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles et al., 1983), Social Cognitive Career Theory, which emphasizes the integration of personality variables and contextual factors that shape individual educational and professional choices (Lent et al., 1994), and John Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice (Holland, 1959). There is a growing trend in research to apply person-centered approaches to career choice motivation research, aimed at identifying specific patterns that facilitate or hinder successful completion of teacher education programs (Stellmacher et al., 2025).

Career choice motivation, encompassing a range of personal, professional, and internal factors that shape an individual's commitment to the teaching profession and guide their career choice (Watt et al., 2012), is among the key factors and considerations central to an individual's decision to pursue a teaching career (Stellmacher et al., 2025). The FIT-choice (Factors Influencing Teaching Choice) model developed by Watt and Richardson (2007), based on Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles et al., 1983), integrates three motivational profiles: intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic. They reveal interest in teaching, perceptions of competence and self-efficacy regarding teaching, and their interaction with the teaching environment and the perceived social value of teaching (Thompson-Lee et al., 2025). Adolescents' expectations regarding future careers tend to persist over time (Forgasz & Leder, 2017).

Our study is based on Schein's Career Anchor Model (Schein, 1990). Career orientation, as defined by Schein, is an element of self-awareness encapsulates the fundamental values and motives that drive an individual's professional choices and satisfaction. Schein's Career Anchor Model outlines key career orientations such as professional competence, managerial competence, autonomy, and workplace stability each representing distinct motivational patterns that influence career paths. In teacher education, these orientations are particularly significant as they help to understand what draws individuals to the teaching profession and what sustains their commitment to it and helps in facing the challenges of the profession. Career preferences are not universally fixed but are often shaped by cultural, social, and contextual factors, as well

as the university where the profession was acquired (Valeeva et al., 2024a). This has led to a growing body of international research that examines how pre-service teachers' career orientations are influenced by cultural expectations and societal values, potentially impacting their career decisions and satisfaction levels. Cross-cultural studies suggest that teachers' motivations can vary significantly between countries, influenced by social values, economic conditions, and institutional structures (Klassen et al., 2011). For instance, studies comparing teacher motivations in Western and Asian countries have shown distinct differences; while Western pre-service teachers may prioritize autonomy and creativity, Asian pre-service teachers often value stability and societal respect (Klassen et al., 2008). This comparative perspective is essential to understanding how cultural contexts shape the career orientations of pre-service teachers and inform their professional journeys.

Researchers suggest that when pre-service teachers perceive the profession as unstable or lacking long-term support, it can lead to disillusionment and a shift in their career orientation, with many opting for alternative career paths (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

Research has shown that pre-service teachers who intend to pursue a career in education are primarily driven by intrinsic and altruistic motives and a commitment to their future profession. However, this commitment changes throughout their studies (Valeeva et al., 2024b; Wang et al., 2021), and a decline in interest in the teaching profession is often observed (Thompson-Lee et al., 2025), which may result in leaving university (See et al., 2022) or early in their professional careers (Maaranen et al., 2026). Teachers' social status and income vary significantly across countries, and therefore, the factors influencing career choices in teaching may differ in less developed regions (Guo & Hau, 2024). Thus, Bergmark et al. (2018) showed that intrinsic and altruistic motivations are more common in so-called "developed countries" than in developing countries, where external motivations are more prevalent. However, studies of motivation for choosing teacher education conducted in Russia and India (Chandran et al., 2024; Valeeva et al., 2022) do not fully correlate with these data. First-year students are more likely to exhibit intrinsic and altruistic motivation, which is influenced by demographic factors: gender, social class, type of school, and undergraduate major. Moreover, students from low-income backgrounds demonstrate stronger intrinsic and altruistic motivation compared to those from more affluent backgrounds. They also exhibit high levels of extrinsic motivation.

Given the cultural and contextual factors that influence career orientations, it is crucial to understand how pre-service teachers in different countries view the profession and what motivates them to stay or leave.

B. Singh (2024) notes common problems and shortcomings characteristic of teacher education in the BRICS countries: a lack of infrastructure and information and communication technologies; low salaries for pedagogical institution staff; teachers' low social status in society, weak job security, and career advancement opportunities; increased oversight and corrupt practices; the commercialization of institutions; a focus on diplomas; and others. However, each country also faces unique characteristics, both in the motivations for choosing this profession and in the teacher training system.

In Russia, the system of higher pedagogical education is implemented in various higher educational institutions, but most teacher training programs are offered at classical and pedagogical universities. Despite significant organizational and substantive differences characteristic of different types of educational institutions (status, location, training program, contingent, technical capabilities, etc. (Valeeva et al., 2024a), training in them is carried out within the framework of a single Federal State Educational

Standard, which ensures the formation of identical competencies and a high average level of graduates. Russian education policies have increasingly focused on improving teacher professionalisation, yet issues like inconsistent support, low salaries, and limited career growth remain, affecting teacher retention (Lazareva & Zakharov, 2020).

The teacher education system in India is highly diverse and heterogeneous. It faces significant challenges in maintaining the quality and relevance of its programs (Singh, 2024) and suffers from bureaucratization, outdated teaching methods, inadequate integration of technology, and corruption (Malik & Hooda, 2022). Furthermore, regional and national characteristics within each state of India greatly influence teacher education (Shkunov & Radchenko, 2021). P. Batra (2014) argues that teachers' professional activities in India are heavily shaped by the culture and social ethos of their preparation, and that their work and value are also viewed and assessed within this framework. The National Education Policy (2020) notes that "the quality of teacher education, recruitment, placement, working conditions, and empowerment of teachers are not up to the required standards, and consequently, the quality and motivation of teachers are not achieving the desired indicators" and points to the need to restore "high esteem for teachers and elevate the status of the teaching profession to inspire the best to choose the teaching profession for the best future for children and the nation". This document defines uniform minimum standards for teachers across the country, roles and competencies for teachers at various levels, and provides a system for evaluating their performance. However, the document is of a general advisory nature, and the decision on the implementation of educational policy remains with states, institutions, and schools. Menon and Brackin's (2021) study provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by Indian teachers, such as low pay, limited recognition, and restricted autonomy, factors that contribute to high attrition rates. Their findings suggest that addressing these issues could improve job satisfaction and retention by aligning the teaching environment more closely with the career motivations of educators.

In India, as in Russia, the majority of teachers are women (over 90%). However, in the orthodox Indian social structure, women are still viewed with disdain (Singh, 2024), which also affects the status of teachers in local society and, consequently, the motives for their career choice. In India, studies have highlighted that factors such as societal respect, job stability, institutional contextual factors, teacher turnover, and work environment significantly influence career choices among teachers (Tehseen & Hadi, 2015), especially those from rural and semi-urban backgrounds.

In Russia, teacher education faces similar challenges with contextual distinctions. Research indicates that the career orientations of Russian pre-service teachers are strongly associated with their motivational drivers and professional traits. Those who consciously choose the teaching profession not only regard it as socially significant but also demonstrate a greater dedication to their own personal and professional development. Such individuals are more willing to confront difficulties, develop organizational abilities, and exercise initiative in their professional duties (Valeeva et al., 2024a). These orientations shape how students approach teaching as a profession, influencing their commitment, goals, and career satisfaction.

This comparative study seeks to offer insights into how these future educators' values align with their career motivations and how these motivations may be supported to foster a committed, professional teaching workforce. We can better appreciate the role of cultural expectations in shaping professional goals and satisfaction. Consequently, tackling the factors that lead to teacher attrition and ensuring that career pathways correspond to educators' internal motivations may prove essential for stabilising and reinforcing the global teaching workforce.

By investigating the motivations of pre-service teachers in Russia and India, this study adds to a growing literature that seeks to harmonise teacher education programmes and working conditions with the professional aspirations of future teachers, thereby fostering their long-term dedication to the profession.

Purpose and objectives

This study aims to identify and compare the career orientation preferences of first-year pre-service teachers at two Russian universities – Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University and Smolensk State University and first-year students at Partap College of Education Ludhiana, India.

The objectives of the study are:

- 1) to compare the socio-demographic characteristics of Russian and Indian students, as well as their professional identity;
- 2) to compare the career orientation preferences of Russian and Indian students;
- 3) to identify universal and culturally specific patterns of career orientations in the teaching profession.

Methodology

Participants

The study participants were first-year students pursuing a bachelor's degree in pedagogical education at Russian and Indian educational institutions (Table 1). The selection of students at the initial stage of their education was not random: career orientations that determine preferences in a profession (in this case, teaching) are formed quite early, already during the period of choosing an educational trajectory, and remain quite stable over a long period of time (Schein, 1990). Therefore, the study of first-year students, on the one hand, reveals the basis for their professional and pedagogical choice, and on the other, has predictive potential for determining the characteristics of their professional development. On the Russian side, students from two different universities took part: federal (Kazan Federal University – KFU) and regional (Smolensk State University – SmolSU). On the Indian side, students from the regional college – Partap College of Education in Ludhiana, affiliated with a large national university – Panjab University, Chandigarh. The sample included 240 students, selected using purposive sampling to ensure a representative sample of first-year students in the Faculty of Education. The differences in the age of respondents from Russian and Indian educational institutions are due to the distinct characteristics of their national education systems. Based on data on the influence of place of study on career orientation (Valeeva et al., 2024a), to increase the reliability of the comparison between the Russian and Indian samples, the study included students from regional universities in addition to federal university students. This is because the place of professional education for Indian students also has a strong regional connection, unlike federal universities, which attract a wide range of applicants from various regions of Russia and abroad.

To determine the career preferences of students from Russia and India, we employed E. Schein's Career Anchors Test, adapted for Russian-speaking respondents by Vinokurova and Chiker. This instrument identifies professionally attractive features based on respondents' values, interests, and social attitudes, including Professional Competence, Management, Autonomy, Stability, Service, Challenge, Lifestyle Integration, and Entrepreneurship. In the Russian adaptation, the Stability scale is further divided into Job Stability and Residence Stability. For this study, the instructions were clarified: the assessment statements were to be applied to the teaching profession. This provided insight

into the specific motivational orientations that influence career choice and commitment to the teaching profession.

Table 1. *Characteristics of participants*

<i>Organization</i>	<i>KFU</i>	<i>SmolSU</i>	<i>PCE</i>
Number of participants	78	82	80
Training program	Preschool Education, Primary Education and Foreign (English) Language, Additional Education and Foreign (English) Language	Russian Language and Literature, Two foreign languages (English, French), (German, English)	Primary teacher education
Average age (years)	18.59	18.45	22.63

Methods and procedures

To determine the socio-demographic characteristics of students and the specifics of their professional self-determination, a special questionnaire (in Russian and English) was developed in addition to Schein's questionnaire. The study was conducted online, was voluntary, and adhered to the principles of ethics. When completing the "The Career Anchors Test", students rated 40 statements on a Likert scale, reflecting their degree of agreement with each aspect of their career orientation. Responses to the questionnaire required multiple-choice selection. The collected responses were subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis using statistical methods. Frequency distributions were used to compare sociodemographic characteristics and career intentions, and mean values were determined across groups using inferential statistical methods to compare career orientations across scales.

Results

A review of the socio-demographic characteristics (Table 2) of the sample shows similar gender parameters regardless of the country, which underlines the fact of the widespread feminization of the teaching profession.

Table 2. *Socio-demographic and motivational-professional characteristics of interviewees, %*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Traits</i>	<i>Russia</i>		<i>India</i>
		<i>KFU</i> (<i>n</i> =78)	<i>SmolSU</i> (<i>n</i> =82)	<i>PCE</i> (<i>n</i> =80)
Gender:	female	91.03	95.12	91.25
	male	8.97	4.88	8.75
Form of education:	budgetary	85.90	64.63	-
	extra-budgetary	14.10	35.37	100
Family income:	affluent	11.54	15.85	11.25
	average income	78.21	69.51	68.75
	low-income	10.25	14.64	20
Place of residence:	city - regional center	60.26	57.32	63.75
	town/city - raion center	25.64	37.80	
	rural area	14.10	4.88	36.25

Variable	Traits	Russia		India
		KFU (n=78)	SmolSU (n=82)	PCE (n=80)
University of enrollment:	own region	53.85	75.61	77.50
	other region	46.15	24.39	22.50
Motive for choosing of education:	conscious	37.18	65.86	41.25
	random	62.82	34.15	58.75
Availability of teaching experience:	no experience	48.72	35.37	78.75
	experienced	51.28	64.63	21.25

Similar indicators can also be noted for the socioeconomic status of students' families: in both countries, students come from middle-income families, although the Indian sample has a higher proportion of students from low-income families. These data show particularly similar indicators for regional universities across the countries. These institutions also have similar geographic characteristics of respondents: the majority of students are from the local region or state, but there is also a small proportion from neighboring regions, reflecting regional mobility in teacher education. The Indian sample includes significantly more students from rural areas than the Russian sample. This is partly due to differences in the urban-rural population ratio across countries, but it's also possible that the teaching profession in India serves a greater social mobility function than in Russia. This is also confirmed by the willingness of Indian students to pay for their education despite their families' low socioeconomic status. Equal access to teacher education is ensured for some students through various forms of partial financial support through government scholarships or fee concessions based on socio-economic criteria.

More significant are the differences in the reasons for choosing a professional education. The survey focused on conscious versus random selection of a major. The data obtained revealed more similar indicators between the Russian federal university and the Indian college, but these figures are explained by different factors. The federal university is a prestigious, highly ranked institution that attracts applicants from many regions. Accordingly, the motive for entering the university, in a highly competitive environment, prevails over the choice of major (Valeeva et al., 2024a). The regional university (SmolSU) enrolls more students who consciously chose a teaching profession. More than half of the Indian students have an extrinsic motivation for admission, which, on the one hand, speaks to the importance of obtaining an education and, on the other, to the uncertainty of their professional identity. Another explanation for the extrinsic motivation behind Indian students' choice is the strong influence of traditional factors such as family. Parents view teaching as a more socially acceptable, secure, and family-compatible profession for females, who make up the bulk of the student body.

Meanwhile, Russian students are significantly more likely to report having had prior teaching experience, which, according to research, is also a significant factor in consciously choosing a teaching profession (Watt & Richardson, 2007). More than half of Kazan Federal University students and two-thirds of Smolensk State University students responded that they had taught classes to elementary school students, assisted teachers at school with events, and worked as camp counselors. In the Indian sample, only a fifth of respondents mentioned such experiences.

Regarding work plans after graduation, the majority of respondents from both countries associate their future with work in the field of education. More than 60% of Russian students have a generally positive attitude toward the teaching profession, and more than a third have formed career plans already in their first year. Indian students

already intend to work as school teachers upon admission. Most consider government or aided schools, where job security and social respect are relatively high. In both countries, obtaining a teacher education provides fairly broad employment opportunities.

Comparison of career orientations revealed differences in the Russian and Indian samples (Table 3).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the results of the Career Anchors questionnaire

Scale	Russia				India	
	KFU (n=78)		SmolSU (n=82)		PCE (n=80)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Professional competence	6.00	1.28	6.21	1.75	5.18	1.08
Management	6.59	1.88	6.13	2.02	4.64	1.25
Autonomy	7.27	1.39	6.70	1.86	4.94	1.26
Stability:	6.73	1.50	6.59	1.35	5.41	1.18
<i>Job stability</i>	7.88	1.57	8.12	1.68	-	-
<i>Stability of place of residence</i>	5.58	2.14	5.05	1.93	-	-
Service	8.12	1.42	8.25	1.47	5.46	1.11
Challenge	6.01	1.54	5.80	1.95	5.49	1.18
Lifestyle integration	7.66	1.27	7.70	1.52	5.41	1.05
Entrepreneurship	6.59	1.84	5.44	2.07	5.24	1.21

Russian students' career aspirations for the teaching profession are more diverse. The highest scores among students at both universities (over 7 points) are for the following anchors: Service, Job Stability, and Lifestyle Integration. This means that Russian students view teaching as an activity rooted in values and aimed at the public good, while also offering a stable job with social guarantees and a flexible schedule that allows them to balance their personal life. KFU students also score higher on Autonomy, Management, and Entrepreneurship, which, when compared with the sample characteristics identified above, underscores their greater autonomy, desire for independence, and ambition for their future careers. Indian students' career aspirations are less diverse and average. Given that many first-year students entered the teaching program without an initial desire to work as teachers, it can be assumed that their familiarity with the profession is just beginning, and their career aspirations are not yet fully developed. Moreover, a trend toward similar orientations is evident: Service, Stability, and Lifestyle Integration, which may indicate the presence of a specific career profile characteristic of the teaching profession, regardless of cultural differences. Indian students also have relatively high scores on the Challenge anchor, indicating that they perceive the teaching profession as challenging, requiring a willingness to constantly overcome obstacles. This is likely explained by the specific social status and nature of teaching in India, where the teaching continues to hold social respect and moral prestige, especially in rural and semi-urban contexts. While the profession may not always be associated with high financial rewards, government teaching positions are considered stable and desirable.

Discussion

The study's findings provide insight into the factors shaping the career orientations of pre-service teachers in India and Russia. The findings reveal both commonalities and culturally specific characteristics, an understanding of which is crucial for improving

teacher training in an international context. The similar sociodemographic characteristics of the Russian and Indian samples generally indicate the popularity and accessibility of teacher education in our countries, as well as the perception of this profession as predominantly female (Singh, 2024). Moreover, the motives influencing the choice of teacher training education include not only internal but also external factors related to random circumstances. Therefore, when organizing the educational process, special attention should be paid to developing internal motivations for teaching, based on an understanding of the essence of teaching, and the development of interest and a positive attitude toward it. In this context, the identified career orientations hold significant potential for future professional development. In both samples, student preferences reflect not only an understanding of the social status and working conditions of teachers, which correlate with the extrinsic benefits of the profession (Watt et al., 2012), but also an altruistic motivation (Chandran et al., 2024; Valeeva et al., 2022), linked to socially significant values. The predominant career orientations in this study – Service, Job Stability, and Lifestyle Integration – are consistent with the results of research conducted at six Russian universities (Valeeva et al., 2024b), allowing us to identify these orientations as reflecting the substantive and organizational aspects of the teaching profession. The significance of these anchors aligns well with the Indian socio-cultural and labour-market context. These anchors reflect students' preference for stable employment, social contribution, and work-life balance rather than entrepreneurial risk-taking.

Supplementing these results with data from the Indian sample generally confirms the universality of the teaching profession's essence, regardless of national and cultural contexts. Special attention is paid to the average indicators for the orientation of Professional Competence, which also require the improvement of national and international programs for the professional training of teachers, which should be aimed at developing effective teaching skills, as well as prioritizing the competencies of professional and pedagogical reflection and self-development.

Conclusion

The study identified both similar parameters and unique characteristics in the contextual and psychological characteristics of pre-service teachers in Russia and India. In both countries, teaching is predominantly chosen by female students from middle-income families. In the Indian sample, a third of students come from rural areas, while in the Russian sample, urban areas significantly predominate.

The choice of teaching is driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations among students in both countries. Extrinsic motivations reflect the widespread availability and accessibility of teacher education, as well as the importance of higher education in society. Russian students demonstrate greater awareness of the teaching profession and a greater sense of professional self-determination, reflecting the high social significance of the teaching profession in Russian society and an earlier process of professional self-determination. This is also confirmed by the more differentiated career orientations of Russian students compared to their Indian counterparts. However, in general, the orientations preferred in both samples (Service, Stability, Integration of Lifestyles) are largely the same, which indicates a similar perception of the teaching profession in different cultures.

This study underscores the influence of cultural and contextual factors on the career orientations of pre-service teachers in Russia and India. Understanding these differences is valuable for designing teacher training programs that align with the career motivations and aspirations of students in diverse cultural contexts. Given the impact of career orientation on professional satisfaction and retention, these findings contribute to the

larger discourse on improving teacher education to foster a committed and motivated teaching workforce.

Conclusion of the Ethics Committee

The study in Russia was conducted in accordance with article 20 of the Federal Law of 29.12.2012 No. 273-FZ (as amended on 29.12.2025) “On Education in the Russian Federation” (as amended and supplemented, entered into force on 01.01.2026), part 3.1. The study in India was conducted in accordance with the “Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research involving Human Participants”.

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