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Exploring Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching Profession Preferences and Teaching Status

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Abstract

The study was conducted with 230 pre-service teachers who study in different departments (Primary Education, Turkish and Social Studies Education, Mathematics and Science Education). This study aims to determine the perceptions of the professional preferences and teaching status of pre-service teachers studying in different departments. The correlational survey model was used as a research design. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-Tests were used to analyze the data. The current study discussed the professional preferences of the pre-service teachers in the dimensions of “intrinsic” and “altruistic”, the dimensions of their professional status “teacher and the teaching profession value”, “the importance given to the teaching profession” and “cases affecting the teaching profession”. Pre-service teachers' teaching profession preferences and perceptions of teaching status were examined according to gender, department, and the place of living for a long time. Findings show that there are high levels of relationship between the reasons for choosing a teaching profession and the perceptions of professional status.

Key Words

Pre-service teachers • Teaching status • Teaching profession preference

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Concepts

Achieving social identity and educating a nation's new generations can only be achieved with teachers in a systematic way. Teachers, who have an education process following the requirements of the teaching profession, acquire intellectual competence with the necessary knowledge and skills, and who will serve the new generations with this knowledge and skill, play an important role in raising people who have adopted the culture, values, norms, and rules of the society. In addition, teachers, who have an important responsibility to provide the necessary education for the progress of society, are members of a profession as old as human history. The concept of "profession", which means a job carried out to earn money in return for serving with the qualifications based on systematic knowledge and skills gained through a certain education (TLA, 2019), means raising the human capital needed by the society in the teaching profession. Professions have the necessary skills to put them into practice. The professional skills needed for teaching are connected with the combination of knowledge and skills related to versatile and different disciplines (Hoyle, 2001).

Due to the transformation of teaching as a profession and the change in social needs in recent years, teachers should be equipped with new qualifications (Whitty, 2006; Lawn, 2011). Due to the changing nature of teaching, gaining the necessary features and perspectives in addition to the existing qualifications of the teaching profession is significant. Teacher training with state control is due to the need of societies to train the needed manpower. Persons who stand out in the teaching profession based on the understanding of professionalism and who will do this profession should have the specified characteristics. These features consist of having professional knowledge, professional skills, attitudes, and values. Professional skills include skills such as classroom management, measurement and evaluation, planning, and applying methods and techniques. Professional knowledge can be knowledge about providing education, knowledge of the professional field, legislation, and regulations. In addition, it is crucial because it adopts national, spiritual, and universal values, develops attitudes in the light of these values, and has characteristics that make people valuable (General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development, 2017). In addition, they must have the necessary qualifications in terms of academic, social, and personality traits. Having competence in the field, increasing intellectual accumulation, developing communication skills, developing social resilience and awareness, respecting different cultures, being attentive to universal and national values, thinking critically, having a universal thinking system, solving problems and conflicts, being open to innovations and able to adapt improvements and follow current developments (Hiebert et al., 2014).

The current study aims to investigate the pre-service teachers' preferences for the teaching profession and the perceptions of professional status and to reveal the relationship between them by utilizing measurement tools on the subject applied to the students. It is significant to investigate the factors in which the professional preferences of the measurement tools are formed, the factors affecting the choice of the teaching profession, and the level of relationship between professional status and professional choice. This study is essential for determining the current situation of pre-service teachers who study in the different departments of the faculty of education. When the relevant literature was examined, studies on choosing a profession has generally been evaluated in terms of economic factors, however, these studies examined whether it is suitable for individual interests and abilities (Hotaman, 2011; Wildes, 2004). Positive perceptions of professional status and professional preferences are effective in developing a person's belonging to the profession and determining professional performance.

Professional status, which represents the acceptance of the teaching profession in society, affects productivity by increasing the motivation of people who prefer this profession (Carless, 2005; Chellen & Nonkoo, 2010; Ehrhart & Makransky, 2007; Sawyer, 2006,).

Professions have emerged as a result of the division of work required by the social, cultural, economic, technological, and political structure of societies. Professional groups, which are perceived differently in different societies and have various social statuses, are among the leading tools that determine the social position of people (De Wet, 2016). Social positions, roles, and values attributed to individuals are formed through statuses (Ceylan, 2011). Professional statuses, which are determined depending on economic conditions in societies, achieve different qualities with living conditions depending on their cultural and social characteristics. Among the most important factors affecting the perceptions of status in the teaching profession are good role models among teachers. In particular, the teacher model that students encounter during their first school years is the first impression that a person develops toward the teaching profession (Montecinos & Nielsen, 1997; Trujillo & Hardfield, 1999). While the status of the teaching profession is high in many societies, the meaning attributed to the teaching profession in our country is positive, but it is not considered at a high level as a professional status (Ünsal, 2018). Different factors affect professional status. Factors such as the working conditions and economic conditions of the profession can be given as examples.

Rationale and Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the reasons for pre-service teachers' choice of the teaching profession and their perceptions of the status of the teaching profession and the relationship between them. In line with these purposes, the following research questions were formulated in the study:

RQ1: What are the pre-service teachers' preferences for the teaching profession and their perception of a professional status?

RQ2: What are the pre-service teachers' preferences for teaching profession?

RQ3: What are the pre-service teachers' perceptions of the teaching profession status?

RQ4: Do pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching profession preference and professional status differ according to the variables of gender, department, and place of living?

RQ5: Is there a relationship between pre-service teachers' preferences for the teaching profession and their perceptions of professional status?

Method

Research Design

The current study analyzed the relationship between pre-service teachers' profession preferences and their perceptions of teaching status. The correlational survey model was used in the study. A correlational survey aims to investigate the state and level of change between two or more variables (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

Research Sample/Study Group/Participants

The study group consists of pre-service teachers who study at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Faculty of Education, in the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. Sample selection was determined by a simple random sampling method. 250 pre-service teachers studying in the departments of Primary Education, Turkish and Social Sciences Education, Mathematics and Science Education. Incomplete and incorrectly filled data were excluded from the study, and analyses were carried out with 230 data. Demographic information about pre-service teachers is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Pre-service Teachers

Gender	N	%
Female	169	73.47
Male	61	26.52
The Place of Living	N	%
Village	35	15.21
Town	95	41.30
City center	99	43.04
Department	N	%
Primary Education	134	58.26
Turkish and Social Sciences Education	45	19.56
Mathematics and Science Education	51	22.17

When the sampling of the study is examined, 169 of the pre-service teachers (73.47%) are female and 61 (26.52%) are male. 35 of the pre-service teachers (15.21%) lived in the village, 95 (41.3%) in the town, and 99 (43.04%) in the city center for a long time. 134 (58.26%) of them are studying in the Department of Primary Education, 45 (19.56%) in Turkish and Social Sciences Education, and 51 (22.17%) in Mathematics and Science Education.

Research Instruments and Processes

This study investigated the relationship between the professional preferences of pre-service teachers studying in different departments and their teaching profession status. The Teaching Career Selection Reasons Rating Scale (TCSRRC) developed by [Bursal and Burdur \(2013\)](#), was applied to determine the teaching profession preferences of pre-service teachers. The scale consists of 2 dimensions, “altruistic and intrinsic”, and 22 questions. The scale, which consists of 14 items for the first factor and 8 items for the second factor, was prepared in a 5-point Likert format. Perception Scale Towards the Status of the Teaching Profession developed by [Meirkulova and Gelişli \(2021\)](#), was also used to determine the perceptions of teaching status. The scale has three factors “teacher and the teaching profession value”, “the importance given to the teaching profession”, and “the cases affecting the teaching profession”. The scale, which consists of 11 items for the first factor, 8 items for the second factor and 6 items for the third factor, was prepared with a 5-point Likert type scale.

Data Analysis

Incomplete and incorrectly coded studies were excluded from the 250 data by the researcher, and 230 data were included in the analysis. Analyses were performed using the SPSS-23 program. The skewness and kurtosis values regarding whether the study data showed a normal distribution were examined.

Table 2

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test on Pre-service Teachers' Scales of Profession Preference and Teaching Profession Status Perceptions

	N	Kurtosis	Skewness
Teaching Profession Preference Scale Scores	230	-.657	.319
Teaching Profession Status Perceptions	230	-.737	.329

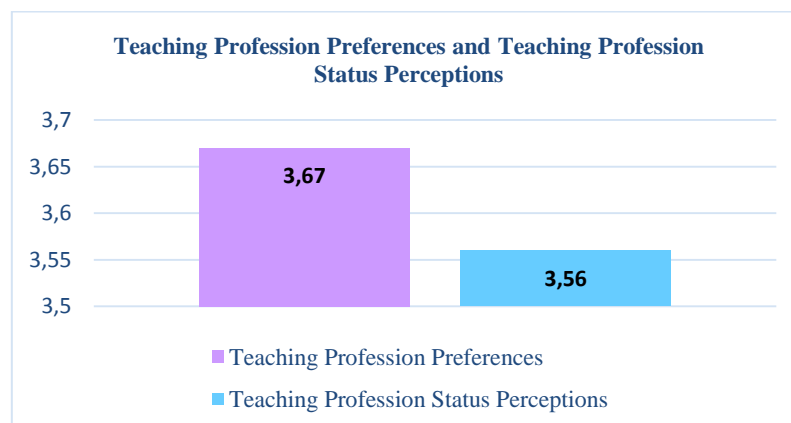
When Table 2 is examined, the normality assumptions, kurtosis, and skewness values of the data are shown. While the values were between -.627 and .319 in the teaching profession preference scale, the values about the status perceptions of the teaching profession were between -.737 and .329 and showed a normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2013). The Correlation (Pearson) technique was utilised to identify the relationship between pre-service teachers' teaching profession preference and the perceptions of professional status. To test whether the perceptions of pre-service teachers' perception of profession preference and teaching status change according to gender, the t-Test was utilised. One-Way Analysis of Variance was conducted to analyze whether the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their profession preference and professional status differ according to the place of living and the department.

Results

Mean Scores of Teaching Profession Preferences and Statuses

Figure 1

Pre-service Teachers' Profession Preferences and Teaching Profession Status Perceptions



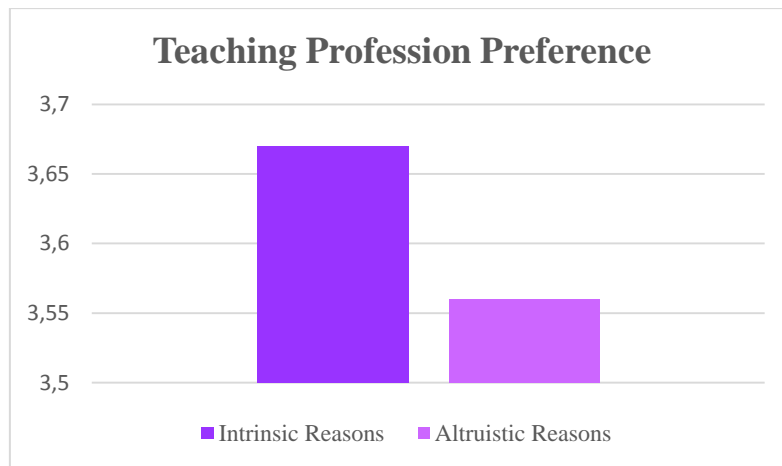
The pre-service teachers' profession preferences and their perception of the status of the teaching profession are above the mean and high. The mean score obtained by the pre-service teachers from the scale of teaching

profession preferences ($M= 3.68$) was determined as the scale mean score regarding the perception of the status of the teaching profession ($M= 3.56$).

Teaching Profession Preference

Figure 2

Teaching Profession Preferences of Pre-service Teachers

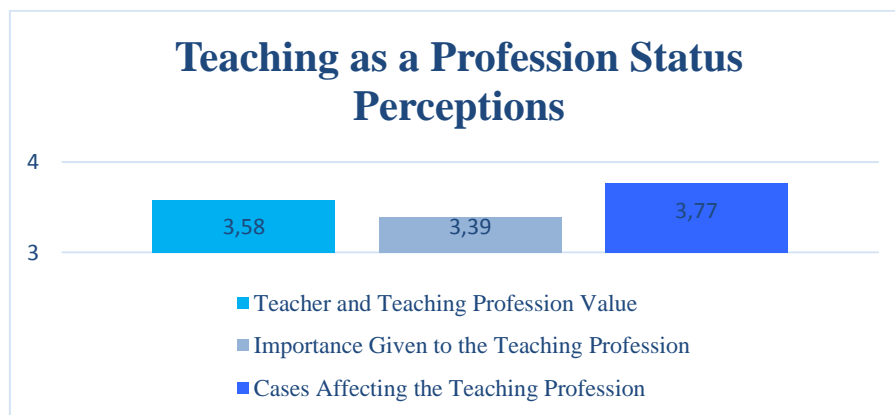


The reasons of preferring the teaching profession of the pre-service teachers were analyzed in two dimensions: “altruistic and intrinsic”. Pre-service teachers have the highest scale point mean in the special reasons dimension from the scale of reasons for choosing a profession.

Teaching Profession Status Perceptions

Figure 3

Mean Scale Scores of the Status Perceptions of the Teaching Profession



The perceptions of the status of the teaching profession of the pre-service teachers were analyzed in three dimensions: “teacher and teaching profession value, importance given to the teaching profession, cases affecting the teaching profession”. Pre-service teachers have the highest scale point mean in the dimension of issues affecting the teaching profession from the professional status perception scale.

Investigation of Perceptions of Teaching Profession Preference and Status in Terms of Different Variables

This part examined the pre-service teachers' profession preferences and perceptions of teaching profession status according to gender, department, and place of living. Findings are presented in tables below.

Table 3

T-Test for Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Preference and Status by Gender

	Gender	N	M	S	sd	t	p
Profession Preference	Female	169	3.78	.822	228	3.20	.005
	Male	61	3.38	.842			
Teaching Status	Female	169	3.65	.763	228	2.81	.002
	Male	61	3.32	.857			

** $p < .05$

The t-Test results found a significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-service teachers regarding their professional preferences and perceptions of their teaching status according to gender. The mean score of the female-service teachers from the reasons for choosing a profession rating scale ($M=3.78$) was higher than male pre-service teachers ($M=3.38$). The mean score of the female pre-service teachers from the perception scale of their teaching status ($M=3.65$) was higher than male pre-service teachers ($M=3.32$).

Table 4

ANOVA Test for Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of Profession Preference and Status According to the Department

	Variance	Sum of squares	Mean squares	sd	F	p	Significance
Professions Preference	Between groups	12.434	6.217	2	9.352	.00	Primary Education/ Turkish and Social Sciences Education
	Within-group	150.909	.665	227			Primary Education/ Science and Mathematics Education
	Total	163.343		229			
Teaching Status	Between groups	13.361	6.681	2	11.333	.00	Primary Education/ Turkish and Social Science Education
	Within-group	133.813	.589	227			
	Total	147.174		229			

** $p < .05$

There was a significant difference between the scale scores of the pre-service teachers' profession preference [$F(2,227)= 3.69$] and their perception of teaching profession status [$F(2,227)= 3.56$] according to their department. According to Games Howell test, which was used to analyze which groups of the pre-service teachers had a significant difference in their profession preferences. The mean expression ($M=3.87$) of the pre-service teachers studying in the primary education department were higher than the others. According to the

Scheffe test, which was applied to determine between which groups the pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching status were significantly different, the scale score mean of the pre-service teachers studying in the primary education department ($M=3.75$) were higher than the other pre-service teachers.

Table 5

ANOVA Test for Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Preference and Status According to the Place of Living

	Variance	Sum of squares	Mean squares	sd	F	p	Significance
Profession Preference	Between groups	6.200	3.100	2	4.47	.018	City center-village
	Within-group	157.143	.692	227			
	Total	163.343		229			
Teaching Status	Between groups	5.11	2.556	2	4.08	.012	
	Within-group	142.06	.626	227			
	Total	147.17		229			

** $p < .05$

According to the place of living of the pre-service teachers, there was a significant difference between the scale scores of the reasons for choosing the teaching profession [$F(2,227)= 3.67$] and the perception of the status of the teaching profession [$F(2,227)= 3.56$]. The results of the Games Howell test show that the scale score mean of the pre-service teachers living in the city center ($M=3.88$) were higher than the other pre-service teachers. The Games Howell test shows the pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching status were significantly different, and the scale score mean of the pre-service teachers living in the city center ($M=3.83$) were higher than the others.

Investigation of the Relationship Between Perceptions of Teaching Profession Preference and Status

This part revealed the relationship between the pre-service teachers' reasons for preferring the teaching profession and the mean score of the general and sub-dimensions of their perception of professional status by calculating the Pearson Product Moments Correlation coefficient. The results of the analysis are presented in tables below.

Table 6

Teaching Profession Preference and Perceptions of Profession Status Correlation Analysis Results

	Profession Preference	Teaching Profession Status Perceptions
Profession Preference	1	.775**
Teaching Profession Status Perceptions	.775**	1

A simple linear correlation analysis was used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the reasons for choosing the teaching profession and the perceptions of the teaching status of pre-service teachers. There is a significant and positive relationship between pre-service teachers' perceptions of their profession preference and teaching status ($r=.775$).

The Pearson Product Moments correlation coefficient analyzed the relationship between the reasons for preferring the teaching profession regarding the sub-dimensions and the general score mean of the perceptions of teaching status. The results of the analyzes are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

The General Mean of Reasons for Preferring the Teaching Profession and the Results of Correlation Analysis of Scale Scores Related to the Dimensions of Perceptions of Teaching Status

Teaching Status	Profession Preference	
	Teacher and Teaching Profession Value	.706**
	The Importance Given to the Teaching Profession	.658**
	Cases Affecting the Teaching Profession	.723**

According to the simple linear correlation result conducted to analyze the relationship between pre-service teachers' teaching status sub-dimensions and the reasons for preferring the teaching profession, the most significant relationship was between teaching status and teaching profession preferences is in the dimension of "cases affecting the teaching profession". A significant relationship was also found in all sub-dimensions.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was examined to investigate the relationship between the overall score mean regarding the sub-dimensions perceptions of teaching status and the reasons for choosing the teaching profession. The results of the analyzes are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

The Results of Correlation Analysis of the General Mean of Perceptions of Teaching Status and Scale Scores Related to the Dimensions of Teaching Profession Preference

Teaching Status	
Profession Preference	Intrinsic Reasons
	Altruistic Reasons

As a result of the simple linear correlation process, the most significant relationship between teaching status and teaching profession preferences was in the intrinsic reasons, while a significant relationship was found in all sub-dimensions.

Table 9

Profession Preference and Teaching Status Scale Scores Correlation Analysis Results

	Intrinsic Reasons	Altruistic Reasons
Teacher and the Teaching Profession Value	.702	.673
The Importance Given to the Teaching Profession	.645	.642
Cases Affecting the Teaching Profession	.713	.700

Table 9 shows the relationships between pre-service teachers' teaching profession preferences and the dimensions of their perceptions of professional status. The highest correlation was found between the dimension of "cases affecting the teaching profession" of the status perceptions of the teaching profession and the "intrinsic

reasons" dimensions of the teaching preference scale ($r=.713$). The lowest correlation was found between the "importance given to teaching profession" dimension of the status perceptions of the teaching profession and the "altruistic reasons" dimensions of the teaching preference scale ($r=.642$).

Discussion, Conclusion & Suggestions

The mean scores of the pre-service teachers on the scale of reasons for preferring the teaching profession were at a high level. Pre-service teachers studying in various departments have higher scores in the dimension of intrinsic reasons, which is among the reasons for preferring the teaching profession. It is related to the fact that the qualifications suitable for the requirements of the teaching profession, which is expressed as the intrinsic reason, are suitable for the individual characteristics of the individuals. The reasons that pre-service teachers consider for preferring the teaching profession is important in terms of they love teaching, they want to reflect the ideal teacher characteristics, and the individual characteristics of the pre-service teachers. Similarly, Şener and Gündüzalp (2020) investigated the reasons for the teaching profession preferences of students who received pedagogical formation for the teaching profession. Their research was carried out on the reasons for preferring the teaching profession. They argued that factors such as finding himself successful in teaching, love of children, being a teacher in his dream job, and the fact that teachers' working conditions are more comfortable than many other professions are effective in the choice of teaching. Montecinos and Nielsen (1997) argued that the reasons why pre-service teachers prefer the teaching profession are that they encounter role model teachers who left positive and impressive traces in the past. Different from the results of the previous study, Saylan et al. (2020) noted that environmental reasons are effective in pre-service teachers' profession preferences. Yılmaz and Doğan (2015) highlighted that the reasons for choosing the teaching profession are related to the characteristics that teachers should have, which can be expressed as intrinsic reasons, and their characteristics are compatible with each other and their competence in innovations suitable for current developments. Similarly, Irsaliev et al. (2019) conducted a study on why young people choose the teaching profession. According to the research findings, many people show interest in the teaching profession, that it is perceived as a positive social status, and that the teaching profession requires development and change that will allow the person to develop himself. Chakraborty and Modal (2014); Musa and Bichi (2013) examined the of pre-service teachers attitudes on the teaching profession and concluded that pre-service teachers' attitudes on the teaching profession are positive. Everton et al. (2007) indicate that the preferences of the teaching profession are related to the fact that the profession is respected by all segments of society.

According to the findings, pre-service teachers have high perceptions of their teaching profession status. When the sub-dimensions were examined, the mean score of the scale in the dimension of "cases affecting the teaching profession" was higher. It is argued that the effects of this are due to reasons such as the individual characteristics of the people who will make a teaching profession are suitable for the teaching profession, and the teaching profession is open to the development and change of professional skills in many fields. Dolton and Marcenaro-Gutierrez (2013) examined teacher status characteristics in different countries and concluded that the teaching profession has a high status characteristic as a social acceptance. Özdemir and Orhan (2019); Doğan (2018) stated that according to teachers' views, the perception of the status of the teaching profession is negative compared to previous years, the prestige of the teaching profession has been lost and the professional image has

become worse. Concerning this, the new regulations on the authority and duty areas of the teaching profession have an impact. [Hargreaves et al. \(2007\)](#) highlighted that in many countries, perceptions of the status of the teaching profession have changed negatively, and accordingly, the former importance of the teaching profession has disappeared.

According to [Yurdakal \(2019\)](#), the image of teaching and the profession respected by society are effective in the choice of profession of pre-service teachers. [Ulutas \(2017\)](#); [Bek \(2007\)](#) examined the social roles and status of teachers in their studies and noted that roles such as social changes and orientation to the environment are taken in a broad framework. Despite this, they stated that teachers' perception of status is low.

Female pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching profession preference and teaching status were higher than male pre-service teachers. Related to this case, [Çelenk \(1988\)](#), [Saracaloğlu \(1991\)](#), and [Demirci and Soran \(2001\)](#) found that female pre-service teachers have more positive perspectives toward the teaching profession. [İpek \(2015\)](#) also added that female teachers do this by assimilating into the teaching profession more and establishing a strong bond. Some studies argue that teaching preferences do not differ according to gender ([Musa & Bichi, 2013](#); [Korkmaz, 2009](#)), which is different from the results of the study.

The pre-service teachers' perceptions of profession preference and professional status who study in the department of early childhood education were higher than the pre-service teachers' education in other departments. First of all, female teachers with mother characteristics are suitable for teachers working at the class level with younger students. However, there are effects such as diversity in early childhood studies and the opportunity to work interdisciplinary, and the diversity in terms of different studies and courses. [Hall and Langton \(2006\)](#), who reached different results from the study, prepared a project on teaching status. They concluded that the status perceptions of the teaching profession are low, and the perceptions of teaching status are higher for secondary education teaching and lower for pre-school teaching.

The profession preference and teaching status perceptions of the pre-service teachers living in the city center for a long time are higher than the pre-service teachers living in the town and village. [Yaman et al. \(2013\)](#) analyzed the socioeconomic status of the teaching profession in the social structure in their research and found that the perception of the professional status of pre-service teachers living in big cities is higher. The result can be related to the high number of good teacher examples encountered by pre-service teachers living in the big city and the number of teachers in the family environment.

The positive and significant relationship was found between pre-service teachers' professional preferences and their perception of teaching status. People with positive perceptions of teaching profession status are more likely to choose teaching as a priority in their profession preferences. This can be related to the examples and experiences that create positive attitudes on the teaching profession. According to [Aydemir \(2021\)](#) identified a positive and significant relationship between the attitudes of pre-service teachers about the teaching profession and their level of altruism. According to the results of the study, there is a relationship between the reasons for choosing teaching and perceptions of professional status, and the profession, events, and situations that are accepted in the society are more exemplary, and therefore, the probability of students to choose the teaching profession increases. For this reason, it is significant to determine the professional status perceptions of pre-service teachers and to reveal the expectations and dreams of the society for the teaching profession. Therefore,

the study can be carried out with the students of the education faculty of a university in a city with different characteristics. Determining which pre-knowledge pre-service teachers make their preferences while choosing the teaching profession will update the educational content to be presented to pre-service teachers, and will enable the presentation of programs and training that will cover the developments of the age in this field. In this context, future research can be done on the reasons for choosing the teaching profession, and perceptions of professional status should be made by qualitative research by conducting in-depth interviews with students.

Ethic

The study was approved Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University School of Graduate Studies on 14.04.2022 within the scope of the decision numbered “08/41” for the study titled “Exploring Pre-service Teachers’ Perceptions of Teaching Profession Preferences and Teaching Status” with the number of 2022-YÖNP-0294.

Author Contributions

All of the authors have contributed equally to this article.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare there is no conflict of interest in this study.

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