Prospective Classroom Teachers' Reasons for Choosing the Teaching Profession and Their Preferences for Their Work Lives

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Abstract

This research examined the factors that affect the decision of prospective classroom teachers to choose teaching as a profession and their preferences regarding work-life balance. A case study design, one of the qualitative research methods employed in this study, The participants consisted of 20 prospective classroom teachers who took the teaching practice course in the 2021–2022 academic year at a state university. A semi-structured interview form was used for data collection, and the data was analyzed through content analysis. Findings revealed that prospective classroom teachers' preference for the profession is influenced by their love for the profession, working conditions, the love and interest shown by their former teachers, and communication with children. Their preferences are also influenced by their discovery that they can teach children something, their desire to contribute to the development of future generations by serving people in the basic education stage, their families' supportive behaviors, and their experiences of the profession in their university years. In terms of their preferences for their work lives, most of the teacher candidates expressed a desire to become classroom teachers and work in this field, while it was found that some teacher candidates experienced dilemmas regarding their work lives due to studying or working in different fields. This research emphasizes the need to improve working conditions for teachers and develop teacher training programs that focus on teacher candidates' affective aspects.

Keywords: Teacher, Classroom teacher, Profession, Career choice

Introduction

One of the greatest challenges in industrialized societies is career choice due to the limited observation and experience opportunities for individuals to become acquainted with different professions. Individuals who work in crowded workplaces today carry out their tasks without seeing the whole production process. In such a society, parents have limited opportunities to introduce their children to various professions. Choosing one's profession freely is a necessary aspect of being a contemporary individual (Kuzgun, 2017). The choice of profession is one of an individual's most important decisions, which is difficult due to the large number of professions. Deciding on an appropriate profession in which individuals can realize and develop themselves is important (Tuzcuoğlu, 1994). In career decisions, many interrelated factors and conditions are at play (Kuzgun, 2017). Career choice means the choice of a way of life for individuals. Profession determines with whom an individual will communicate and defines the framework of their life (Dardağan and Hesapçıoğlu, 1997). The definition of the concept of the profession needs to be examined here.

According to Kuzgun (2019), "a profession is a set of activities based on systematic knowledge and skills acquired through specific education, established by society's rules, to produce useful goods or services for people and earn money in return" (p. 2). Although earning a livelihood is one aspect of the definition of a profession, it is not the only reason. The essence of a profession is to satisfy oneself by using hidden powers to produce something. Since professions are categorized based on the level of education and the nature of the professional task, professions based on university education are expert professions (Kuzgun, 2019). Teaching is a profession that requires a high level of competence and carries responsibility for human life (Ministry of National Education, 2017). Education is a requirement to keep pace with the developing world. One of the crucial elements of the education system in contemporary societies is the need for teachers to be trained to meet changing social processes with appropriate quality and quantity (Aslan et al., 2012). Despite the quality of the

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objectives and content of education and teaching, the lack of adequate qualifications among teachers, who guide the realization of these objectives, causes a failure to achieve the expected developments in education (Sünbül, 2003).

Teachers contribute to the development of individuals and help shape the future and the world. According to UIS Director Silvia Monto, the quality of education systems depends on teachers, who need education, resources, and support to perform their jobs well (UNESCO, 2016). As in other professions, the process of selecting to be a teacher starts with enthusiasm for the desired profession, followed by the qualities required and opportunities provided by the profession, which shape the career choices. This in turn leads to commitment to the profession when the requirements of the chosen profession are met (Kuzgun, 2019).

In examining the reasons why teachers choose their profession in various studies, Yurdakal (2019) has put forward the working conditions of the family and environment. Buldur and Bulsal (2015) determined that the preference for teaching as an ideal profession was altruistic. Yılmaz and Doğan (2015) found that the most important factor in determining career choices was their harmony with the individuals' personalities and a satisfactory placement score. When examined in terms of internal and external factors, Buldur et al. (2021) found that internal factors were more dominant. Koşar (2018) categorized the reasons for choosing the teaching profession. The intrinsic factors include a love for children, compatibility with personality, leadership, and lifelong learning, while the extrinsic factors include the sanctity of the profession, service to society, social status, modeling, family, and score. Bergmark et al. (2018) found that multiple motivations, previous school experiences, and newly established pedagogical identities were crucial for teacher training and career choices. While Yüce et al. (2013) identified external, internal, and altruistic motivations that influenced teacher candidates' decisions to become teachers, they found that external and altruistic motivations were more influential, followed by internal motivations. In their study conducted on teacher candidates in Ireland, Hennessy and Lynch (2017) identified learning and teaching experiences and perceived abilities as the most influential factors in choosing the teaching profession. Unlike other countries, the study revealed that the strong influence of learning and teaching experiences in the country in question was due to its subject-based knowledge transfer. Keck Frei et al. (2017) concluded that working with children and young people was the most important predictor of choosing the teaching profession as a career for males. Mankki and Kyrö-Ämmälä (2021) found that the most demotivating reasons for teacher candidates before their entry into the profession were the difficulties of being accepted, the challenges of the profession, limited career opportunities, the dilemma of vocational programs offering insufficient diversity, insecure careers, and the media as a source of demotivation. Mašková et al. (2022) found that the highest motivation category was a love for children and a desire to work with them, followed by supporting the education journey of others, the meaningfulness of the teaching profession, the perception of it as a secure profession, its ability to make a social contribution, and a love for the profession. The current study seeks to uncover additional and distinct categories to understand the reasons why teacher candidates choose the teaching profession. Understanding the reasons for choosing the teaching profession is crucial for determining the programs of education faculties and the attitudes of teacher candidates towards the profession. The results obtained from existing and future studies are important in determining where Turkey stands internationally in terms of career choices.

The teaching profession, unlike many other professions, involves constant communication and interaction with people. While teachers have formal relationships with their students defined by laws and regulations, these relationships are primarily emotional in nature. This is why everyone has an unforgettable teacher, usually their first teacher (Çelikten et al. 2005). This study aims to identify the reasons why classroom teacher candidates choose the teaching profession and their preferences regarding their working lives. To this end, the following questions guided the current study:

1. What are the reasons for prospective classroom teachers to choose the teaching profession?
2. What are the preferences of prospective teacher candidates regarding their working lives?

Method

Research Model

The qualitative research method was used to determine the reasons for prospective classroom teacher candidates' preference for the teaching profession and their preferences for their working lives. Qualitative research aims to examine how people make sense of their lives. In this process, a deductive approach, from specific to general, is followed, and the findings resulting from qualitative research are supported by excerpts from participant data, demonstrating a highly explanatory structure (Merriam, 2013). A case study design was used in the current research. In case studies, a deep focus is placed on revealing the topics covered in the scope and providing clarity in the understanding of situations (Yin, 2017), and one of the most important features of case studies is the limitation of the situation (Merriam, 2013).

The current research was approved by the ethics committee of Firat University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, with meeting number 2022/09 and decision number 08, on May 6, 2022. The necessary permissions were obtained from the deanery of the university's education faculty for the implementation of the research.

Study Group

Purposive sampling was used in the current study. According to Patton (2018), purposive sampling aims to provide an in-depth and insightful understanding of rich cases to achieve the main objective of the research. Combining methods in research enhances the strength of the study by providing variation.

The current research used two types of purposive sampling, namely criterion sampling and maximum variation sampling.

Examining and evaluating all cases that satisfy pre-determined criteria of importance is known as criterion sampling (Patton, 2018). In this study, the criteria were 4th-grade level education and having taken the teaching practice course. To achieve maximum variation from a small sample, various qualities and criteria are identified to begin with (Patton, 2018).

For the study group, various matrices were determined, including gender, age, foreign nationality, and grade average. Teacher candidates were selected according to these matrices and their other characteristics, such as major and work experience. The study group consisted of 20 prospective classroom teachers who took the teaching practice course in the 2021–2022 academic year at a state university. Table 1 provides the characteristics of the teacher candidates included in the study group.

Table 1. The characteristics of the prospective classroom teachers

Participant	Gender	Birth	Grade Average	Foreign nationality	Working	Studying in different major
MS1	Female	1992	3.79	No	Yes	Yes
MS2	Female	1996	3.12	No	No	Yes
MS3	Male	2000	3.02	No	Yes	Yes
MS4	Female	1996	3.35	No	No	No
MS5	Female	1998	3.06	No	No	No
MS6	Female	1998	3.52	No	No	No
MS7	Male	1999	2.74	No	Yes	No
MS8	Female	2000	3.30	No	No	Yes
MS9	Male	1998	3.03	No	No	Yes
MS10	Male	1998	3.04	No	No	No
MS11	Male	1998	3.13	No	No	No
MS12	Female	2000	2.66	No	No	No
MS13	Male	2000	3.60	No	No	No
MS14	Female	1999	2.46	No	No	No
MS15	Female	1998	2.50	Yes	No	No
MS16	Male	1999	3.52	No	No	No
MS17	Female	2001	3.00	No	No	No
MS18	Female	1998	2.59	Yes	No	No
MS19	Male	1999	2.72	No	No	No
MS20	Female	2000	3.72	No	Yes	Yes

Table 1 shows that there are 12 female and 8 male teacher candidates according to the gender matrix. The percentage of male teacher candidates in the 4th-grade teacher training program is 24%. However, in this study, this ratio was determined to be 40%, considering other matrices. In terms of age, students were selected for the study group according to their ages in the program. The highest birth year in the program is 1992, while the lowest is 2001. There are two teacher candidates born in 1996, seven born in 1998, four born in 1999, and five born in 2000, as well as two foreign students and three teacher candidates who work a continuous job. Six teacher candidates studying in a different department are also included in the study group.

Data Collection Instrument

The semi-structured interview approach was used as a data collection tool in the research.

Research questions form the basis of qualitative research and are created in two ways: primary and related questions. In a study, one or two primary questions may be identified. Primary questions are generally worded in a general manner without restricting participants' opinions. These primary questions can be followed by sub-

questions (Creswell, 2017a). The interview form ensures the scope of all dimensions and questions related to the research problem, adhering to the predetermined topics or areas of the research problem (Yildirim & Şimşek, 2021). In this research, the interview form used as a data collection tool includes 11 open-ended questions on topics related to the research problem. The number of questions set in the form is also within the recommended limit for qualitative research. These questions' topics include prospective teachers' preferences for their future work life, reasons for choosing the profession such as loving the profession, working conditions, teachers they encounter, ÖSYM-YÖS scores, love for children, passion for learning and teaching, service to people, general and special talents, family, and other factors. Prospective teachers were asked to evaluate these specified topics. Every question in the research was developed after examining the relevant literature and gathering the opinions of elementary school teachers, prospective elementary school teachers, and experts in the field.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

In the research process, the data collection process began by providing information about the research to the identified participants. The time and place for the interviews were pre-planned. A volunteer form was used to obtain the necessary permissions from the participating teacher candidates. Data was collected through face-to-face interviews, which lasted a minimum of 14 minutes and a maximum of 40 minutes, with an average duration of 25 minutes for all participants. The interviews were recorded, and codes were used to identify participants without revealing their identities. Content analysis was employed to analyze the data, which involves reducing and interpreting the qualitative data to identify key consistencies and meanings (Patton, 2018).

The research analysis followed Creswell's (2017b) established steps for data analysis. First, the interview data was transcribed into digital text for the analysis, which was conducted with qualitative data analysis software. The data was read repeatedly, broken down into sections, and coded. A simplified coding approach was used instead of numerous codes, and the codes were categorized thematically. The codes were reviewed with a second coder to address inconsistencies, and both natural and theory-based codes were used. According to Creswell (2017b), natural codes rely on the words and phrases used by the participants during the interview, and excerpts were included in the research to reflect the essence of the participants' thoughts.

Findings

The first research question was related to the determination of the reasons why prospective class teachers choose the teaching profession, and sub-questions were formulated to address this question. Table 2 provides the answer to the first sub-question of the study, which is the effect of loving the profession on the decision of teacher candidates to choose teaching as a profession. Two themes were identified for this theme: "effect of loving the profession "and "no effect of loving the profession". The former theme included the following codes: "Ability to do the job, benefit, children, doing paid teaching, modeling, and negative modeling." The latter theme included the following codes: " lack of communication with children; not differentiating the major; choosing a different profession; rational choice". 14 participants expressed their views under the theme of the effect of loving the profession, while 6 participants expressed their views under the theme of no effect of loving the profession.

Table 2. Effect of loving the profession

	Themes-Codes	Participants
Theme	Effect of loving the profession	MS1, MS2, MS3, MS4, MS5, MS6, MS7, MS12, MS13, MS15, MS16, MS18, MS19, MS20
Codes for the effect of loving the profession	Ability to do the job	MS2, MS3, MS7, MS13, MS15, MS16, MS18, MS20
	Benefit	MS4, MS19
	Children	MS1, MS2, MS4, MS5, MS7, MS12, MS15, MS16, MS18, MS19, MS20
	Doing paid teaching	MS1
	Modeling	MS4, MS6, MS7, MS13, MS18
	Negative modeling	MS15
Theme	No effect of liking the profession	MS8, MS9, MS10, MS11, MS14, MS17
Codes for no effect of loving the profession	Lack of communication with children	MS14
	Not differentiating the major	MS10, MS11, MS17
	Choosing a different profession	MS9
	Rational choice	MS8, MS9, MS14

Regarding the "children" code under the theme of the effect of loving the profession, teacher candidates expressed the following views:

MS16: "Teaching is a very important profession. We need to love the profession. I chose teaching because I am aware of this and I love the profession. Teaching can provide us with the environment to love children. We need to love children as well."

MS20: "The reason why I love the profession is primarily because of children. We will be in contact with them throughout the profession."

The following views have been expressed regarding the "modelling" code:

MS6: "The way my mother taught me the lessons and how helpful it was for me inspired me to show the same thing to my siblings, and I realized that I could transfer and share my knowledge. My love for teaching started like this."

MS4: "Actually, primary school had a bit of an impact on me. I loved my class teacher very much. You know how a person can have an idol or a role model? She was my idol. That had an impact.

The following views have been expressed regarding the "benefit" code:

MS19: "Another factor was that I wanted to choose this profession to raise conscious and beneficial individuals to society, or rather, to our future society, who are both beneficial to themselves and their environment, and to raise individuals who have good morals."

Regarding the no effect of loving the profession theme, the following views have been expressed under the "not differentiating the major" code:

MS17: "I don't think I made a very conscious choice before choosing this profession. Firstly, I chose to go wherever the score from the university entrance exam took me."

MS10: "When I was making my choice, I didn't have any knowledge about teaching in a classroom. Or, to put it more accurately, it didn't matter to me whether it was teaching in a classroom or another field."

Under the "lack of communication with children" code, the following opinion has been expressed:

MS14: "...since there were no young children in my family and everything was according to what I said, I couldn't tolerate a child's voice, so I didn't choose to become a classroom teacher, but it was an unconscious decision since I am young."

According to Table 3, there are two themes named "affected working conditions" and "unaffected working conditions" regarding the influence of working conditions on the career choices of prospective classroom teachers. Under the affected conditions theme, the following codes were constructed: "family life, no subordinate-superior relationship, employment, gender, economic benefits, different places of residence, open to development, peaceful profession, readiness for the profession, social profession, status, holidays, working hours, working with children, employee rights." Under the unaffected conditions theme, the following codes were constructed: "Gender, economic factors, desire for a different profession, different places of residence, working hours".

Table 3. The effects of working conditions in the profession

	Themes-Codes	Participants
Theme	Affected Conditions	MS1, MS2, MS3, MS4, MS5, MS6, MS7, MS8, MS9, MS10, MS11, MS12, MS16, MS17, MS18, MS19, MS20
Affected Working Conditions Codes	Family life	MS4, MS7, MS8, MS10
	No subordinate-superior relationship	MS19
	Employment	MS2, MS8, MS12, MS17
	Gender	MS5, MS17, MS20
	Economic benefits	MS1, MS3, MS4, MS5
	Different places of residence	MS16, MS20
	Open to development	MS6, MS10, MS18
	Peaceful profession	MS8, MS9
	Readiness for profession	MS5
	Social profession	MS2, MS6
	Status	MS4, MS6
	Holidays	MS1, MS4, MS5, MS6, MS8, MS9, MS11, MS12, MS17, MS19, MS20
	Working hours	MS4, MS5, MS7, MS8, MS10, MS17, MS18, MS19, MS20
	Working with children	MS2, MS4, MS6
	Employee rights	MS1
Theme	Unaffected Conditions	MS3, MS6, MS7, MS9, MS10, MS11, MS13, MS14, MS15, MS16, MS17, MS18

Unaffected Working Conditions Codes	Gender	MS6
	Economic factors	MS9, MS10, MS11, MS13, MS16, MS17, MS18
	Desire for a different profession	MS14
	Different places of residence	MS3, MS15
	Working hours	MS13, MS16

Teacher candidates expressed their opinions about some conditions being effective and some conditions being ineffective in the working conditions of the profession; they were coded under both themes. The reason for this is that teacher candidates expressed their opinions in both the affected and unaffected conditions themes. Teacher candidates mostly expressed their views on the holiday code under the affected conditions theme. Under the unaffected conditions theme, they mostly expressed their views on economic factors. The following are some of the views expressed regarding the holiday code under the affected conditions theme:

MS9: "There is an attractive side to teachers having more holidays..."
MS11: "You work on weekdays and don't work on weekends. Besides, I have a 3-month vacation. These kinds of effects also have a positive effect, and they played an influential role in my choice of this profession."
Regarding the "gender" code under the affected conditions theme, the following are some of the views expressed:
MS20: "I think teaching is the best profession for women. The advantages provided to female teachers in working conditions are also very useful, and being a school, being an institution, it is a little more protected environment."
MS5: "I think it is a profession that is more suitable for women."
The views on the economic benefits code under the affected working conditions theme are as follows:
In MS3, it says, "Of course you do it because you enjoy it, but the salary is important to make a living."
In MS1, "I compared the salary of a paid teacher with that of a regularly appointed teacher. That's where I was economically affected."
Under the theme of unaffected working conditions, the following opinions were expressed in the economic factors code:
In MS18: "I never thought about the economic impact."
In MS13: "Also, there is not a particularly high amount compared to other professions economically, so these factors did not influence my preference."
Under the theme of unaffected working conditions and the desire for different professions, the following opinions were expressed in the code:
In MS14: "I had never even thought about it because it wasn't in my plan. There are summer and February vacations; I will work half a day, and I can spend time with my family and my home. Those criteria didn't even come to mind. Because that wasn't my plan. I wanted to study law."

Table 4 shows three themes for the question "What is the impact of teachers choosing the teaching profession?". Under the "positive example" theme, the following codes emerged: "conformity, support, influence, love-interest, raising, and guidance". Under the "negative example" theme, there are "negative behaviors, no response to problems, constant change, distance, and "lack of communication" codes. Under the theme of no teacher effect, only one student expressed an opinion.

Table 4. Effects of (former) teachers on choosing the teaching profession

Themes-Codes		Participants
Theme	Positive Example	MS2, MS3, MS4, MS7, MS8, MS9, MS10, MS11, MS12, MS13, MS15, MS16, MS17, MS18, MS19, MS20
Positive	Conformity	MS20
Examples	Support	MS8, MS12, MS15, MS16
Codes	Influence	MS4, MS8, MS16, MS17, MS18, MS19
	Love-Interest	MS2, MS3, MS4, MS8, MS9, MS10, MS11, MS12, MS13, MS15, MS16, MS17, MS18, MS19, MS20
	Raising	MS12, MS17, MS19
	Guidance	MS3, MS8, MS9, MS10, MS12, MS16
Theme	Negative Example	MS1, MS6, MS13, MS14, MS15, MS20
Negative	Negative behaviors	MS1, MS14, MS15
Example	No response to problems	MS13, MS14
Codes	Constant change	MS20
	Distance	MS6, MS14
	Lack of communication	MS6, MS20

Theme	No Effect of Teacher	MS5

Since teacher candidates expressed their opinions on both positive and negative example themes, their opinions are found in both themes. The most commonly expressed code under the positive example theme is "love-interest," while under the negative example theme, the "negative behaviors" code is found. Under the positive example theme, the opinions regarding the "love-interest" code are:

In MS2: "Of course, it happened. We loved our classroom teacher, and our connection was very strong. So, I've always wanted to be a teacher since then."

In MS4: "Our teacher was like a child with us, playing games and being like us, so she didn't just teach us and leave. When we had a problem or something, she was always interested in us. So her influence is a factor in my choosing the teaching profession."

The opinions of the participants on the "guidance" code under the positive example theme are as follows:

MS12: "I talked about it during the preference period. Can I do it? You have known me since my childhood, and you are in contact with my family. Am I suitable for this profession? I talked with her about it. She was very happy about my choice, and when she said I could do it and it would be suitable for me, I leaned towards this profession."

MS3: "Thanks to my classroom teacher, he helped me a lot in taking this profession. I thought I could do it in the best way after seeing him. Can I do it? Yes, I can do it in the best way." I came to this conclusion by making a self-assessment".

The opinions of the participants on the "conformity" code under the positive example theme are presented below:

"Of course, like everyone else, my classroom teacher has had a great influence on me in choosing this profession. When I remember him and the other students, I usually associate this profession with memories from those times. For example, we had done this in first grade, and we had done that in second grade, and I make connections to those times."

Opinions on the negative behavior code under the negative example theme are as follows:

In MS1, "I said to myself that I would be a teacher, not like them. On the contrary, I will be a teacher who understands children. So, I was influenced by how I can turn a little negative into a little positive and chose this profession."

MS14: "Some students are affected by their teachers and say we'll be teachers like you in the future. This is not the case in my situation."

The following are the opinions of only one participant under the "no effect of the teacher" theme:

In MS5, "I thought entirely about myself. I did not have a teacher who had a great influence on my life. My class teacher did not have much influence."

According to Table 5, two themes named "loving classroom teaching" and "preference" were created regarding the effect of ÖSYM-YÖS exam scores on choosing the teaching profession. Under the theme of "not liking classroom teaching," 8 people expressed their opinions; under the theme of "preference," 12 people expressed their opinions. Under the "loving classroom teaching theme, goal-oriented work and the only preference as a profession are the codes. Under the preference theme, the following are the determined codes: dilemma in departmental choice, choosing a department outside of the goal, horizontal transition, preference according to a high score, the dilemma in choosing teaching departments, and second choice preference".

Table 5. Effects of ÖSYM-YÖS Exam Scores

Themes-Codes		Participants
Theme	Loving Classroom Teaching	MS2, MS3, MS4, MS6, MS15, MS16, MS19, MS20
Loving Classroom Teaching Codes	Goal-oriented work	MS6, MS16, MS19
	The only preference as a profession	MS2, MS3, MS4, MS15, MS20
Theme	Preference	MS1, MS5, MS7, MS8, MS9, MS10, MS11, MS12, MS13, MS14, MS17, MS18
	Dilemma in departmental choice	MS7, MS18
	Choosing a department outside of the goal	MS17
Preference Codes	Horizontal transition	MS9
	Preference according to a high score	MS11, MS14
	Dilemma in choosing teaching departments	MS1, MS8, MS10
	Second choice preference	MS5, MS12, MS13

Under the theme of loving classroom teaching, the most frequent code is "the only preference as a profession," whereas under the "preference" theme, the most frequent codes are Dilemma in departmental choice and Second choice preference. The views of participants on loving classroom teaching are as follows:

MS15: "They told me to choose engineering or another department because, like, there are more opportunities to work in them. For example, being a doctor can be a good choice. Because my score was already high, but I said no. I chose to be a classroom teacher."
MS2: "I chose to become a classroom teacher just because I love it. My choice had nothing to do with my high exam score."
Some of the participants' opinions on the "Dilemma in choosing teaching departments " code under the preference theme are as follows:
MS1: "I had a high score, so my score was already enough. I was undecided between preschool and classroom teaching. Then, I think my previous experiences had little influence. I chose classroom teaching."
MS8: "My goals were bigger, and I came here with the influence of the score I received. Turkish language teaching was ahead of other teaching departments in general."
Regarding the preference according to a high score, MS14 stated, "At that time, the best department that I could enter with my score was classroom teaching."

According to Table 6, three themes were created on the effect of loving children on choosing the teaching profession for classroom teacher candidates. Under the "communication with children" theme, the following codes emerged: understanding, caring for children, wonder in children, siblings, and desire to work with children. Under the "education targeting children" theme, two codes emerged: "teaching" and "raising children." Under the "no effect of loving children" theme, there is a code called "not being used to children." Teacher candidates expressed their views on both themes of "communication with children" and "education targeting children" and were therefore coded in both themes.

Table 6. The effect of loving children

Themes-codes		Participants
Theme	Communication with children	MS1, MS4, MS5, MS6, MS7, MS8, MS9, MS10, MS12, MS13, MS15, MS16, MS18, MS19, MS20
Communication with children Codes	Understanding	MS1, MS6, MS12, MS13, MS15, MS20
	Caring for children	MS5, MS9, MS10, MS12, MS16, MS19
	Wonder in children	MS8, MS10
	Siblings	MS6, MS7, MS12, MS15, MS19
	Desire to work with children	MS16, MS18
Theme	Education targeting children	MS1, MS2, MS3, MS5, MS6, MS7, MS8, MS9, MS10, MS11, MS13, MS15, MS17, MS19, MS20
Education targeting children Codes	Teaching	MS1, MS2, MS3, MS5, MS6, MS7, MS8, MS9, MS10, MS11, MS13, MS15
	Raising Children	MS7, MS15, MS17, MS19, MS20
Theme	No effect of loving children	MS14
No Effect of Loving Children's Codes	Not being used to children	MS14

In the theme of communication with children, the most prevalent views are on "caring for children" and "communication with children". In terms of education targeting children, opinions have been expressed on the codes of "teaching" and "raising children".
MS15: "I love children very much. My relationship with them is very good; I can communicate with them."
MS6: "I get along well with children; I love them, and my profession already requires it."
In the theme of communication with children, there are views on the code of "siblings":
MS19: "I have a little brother who affected me. When I entered the department, my brother was about 2 years old."
MS12: "I was always surrounded by children. We were seven siblings. Actually, our home was always like a children's home, there were always young children around."
In terms of education targeting children, there are views on the code of "teaching":
MS3: "As far as teaching is concerned, since my childhood, I have always taught and shown things to my siblings and cousins."
MS7: "I used to help my siblings in their lessons, activities, and performances. Seeing my brother's excitement when he learned to count was great."
Regarding the no effect of loving children code, a participant's view is below:

MS14: "When I chose my profession, my love for children had no effect, as there were no young children in my family and I am not accustomed to children around me in my family."

Table 7 shows the themes and codes for the impact of passion for learning and teaching on the preferences of prospective classroom teachers in choosing their profession. The following themes emerged: Emotion, discovering that I can teach, reflection, research, problem-solving, love for reading, leadership, social impact And learning to teach. The code of "unawareness" emerged under the no-effect theme.

Table 7. The effect of teaching-learning passion

Themes-codes		Participants
Theme		MS1, MS2, MS3, MS4, MS5, MS6, MS7, MS8, MS9,
	Desire to teach-learn	MS10, MS11, MS12, MS13, MS15, MS16, MS18,
		MS19, MS20
	Emotion	MS4, MS5, MS6, MS7, MS8, MS9, MS10, MS16, MS19
	Discovering that I can teach	MS1, MS3, MS4, MS7, MS8, MS10, MS11, MS12, MS13, MS16, MS19, MS20
	Reflection	MS4, MS12
Desire to teach-learn codes	Research	MS1, MS6, MS8, MS11, MS16, MS20
	Problem-solving	MS6
	Love for reading	MS1, MS6, MS11, MS18
	Leadership	MS7
	Social impact	MS9, MS16, MS20
	Learning to teach	MS20
Theme	No effect	MS14, MS17
No effect codes	Unawareness	MS17

Under the desire to teach-learn theme, the code "discovering that one can teach" was expressed the most. Under the no-effect theme, a prospective teacher expressed the code "unawareness." Regarding the views on the "discovering that I can teach" code, the following participants' excerpts exemplify the case:

MS4: "My siblings had an influence. My siblings would come and ask questions, and that had an impact on me. My uncle's children were in grades 2 and 3, and I started teaching them. That was when I realized that it was nice to teach someone something. That was when I discovered it.
MS16: "I can say that I discovered that I could teach both while playing games and while teaching games. Of course, this reached an even higher level in high school. I gained experience at a young age."
Regarding the views of teacher candidates on the "emotion" code, the following excerpts can be given:
MS10: "When students respond to you when they learn, you feel happy and feel that you have done something."
MS5: "It is a really nice feeling to be able to convey something to the person in front of you and to pass something on to them."
Regarding the "research" code, the following participants' excerpts can illustrate the case:
MS16: "Classroom teachers should not stop learning new things. They need to study and research their areas, and I have also conducted a lot of research. I received support and talked to relevant teachers. I think this is necessary."
MS8: "I love learning, and I love doing research."
Regarding the code "unawareness" under the "no effect" theme, the following excerpt can be given:
MS17: "After starting my internship, I realized that I also have something for teaching after the process I went through in the faculty. When I think about the past, I notice it. Actually, I became aware of it then; I was not aware of it before. To be honest, I realized it during the process."

According to Table 8, three themes were identified for pre-service teachers in choosing their profession based on the effect of serving others: serving the community, serving the future, and no effect. Under the "serving society" theme, there are codes including sharing, assuming responsibility, benefit, serving the country, and values skills. Under the "serving the future" theme, the following codes emerged: influencing, raising the next generation, shaping life, and basic education. The pre-service classroom teacher who is in the "no effect" theme was coded as having no effect on questions about their choice of future profession except for the influence of family. Since pre-service classroom teachers expressed their opinions on both the "serving society" and "serving the future" themes and their sub-codes, they were coded in both themes and sub-codes.

Table 8. The effect of serving the people

Themes-Codes		Participants
Theme	Serving the Community	MS1, MS2, MS3, MS6, MS7, MS8, MS9, MS10, MS11, MS12, MS13, MS16, MS17, MS18, MS19, MS20
	Sharing	MS6
	Assuming responsibility	MS8, MS16
Serving the community Codes	Benefit	MS1, MS3, MS7, MS8, MS9, MS10, MS11, MS16, MS17, MS18, MS19, MS20
	Serving the country	MS2, MS7, MS8, MS12, MS16
	Values-Skills	MS12, MS13, MS19
Theme	Serving the Future	MS2, MS3, MS4, MS5, MS7, MS8, MS9, MS10, MS12, MS13, MS15, MS17, MS19
	Influencing	MS8, MS9
Serving the future Codes	Raising the next generation	MS7, MS8, MS10, MS12, MS13, MS15, MS19
	Shaping life	MS3, MS5, MS7, MS10, MS17
	Basic education	MS2, MS3, MS4, MS5, MS7, MS9, MS10, MS12, MS17
Theme	No effect.	MS14

The most commonly expressed code regarding "serving the community" is "benefit", while in the theme of "serving the future", the code is "basic education". Regarding the "benefit" code, the opinions of teacher candidates are as follows:

MS19: "I do not think there is a more useful profession, nor do I think there is one."

MS10: "If you want to make a difference in society, if you want everything to be better, it starts with primary education."

Regarding the "serving the country" code, the opinions of teacher candidates are as follows:

MS2: "I want to serve my country in any way, wherever and however it may be. This has a very big impact."

MS8: "I am a citizen of this country, as are many of our heroes who served this country in some way, and I believe that I also need to serve them."

The opinions on the "basic education" code under the theme of "serving the future" are as follows:

MS9: "You cannot have much of an impact on a high school student. Their personalities are already formed during adolescence, yes, but after a certain point, you can't have much of an effect. But I chose to become a classroom teacher because I think we can have more of an impact on elementary school children."

MS7: "You will be teaching 30 people, and you will be educating them all at once, maybe up to four. You will be creating a fundamental character and temperament in the student."

The opinions on the "raising the next generation" code are as follows:

MS13: "Actually, by raising future generations, we are also serving them. I chose this profession with awareness of this."

MS10: "If you raise 40 students well, then these 40 students will go on to raise more in their lifetime. They will raise different people, and thus society will improve. You can serve one person outside, but you will be serving 40 people there. You should think that those 40 people can serve 40 more people."

According to Table 9, two themes have been identified for class teacher candidates' preference for the profession in terms of general and specific abilities: "has an effect" and "no effect". Fifteen teacher candidates expressed their opinion that their general and specific abilities have an effect, while five stated that they have no effect. The "have an effect" theme includes codes such as "patience", "empathy", "communication", "teaching", "problem-solving", "persuasion", "creativity", "observation", "leadership", and "art language". The "no effect" theme includes the code "not believing oneself to be talented".

Table 9. The Effects of General and Specific Abilities

Themes-codes		Participants
Theme	Has an effect	MS1, MS3, MS5, MS6, MS7, MS8, MS9, MS10, MS12, MS13, MS15, MS16, MS17, MS19, MS20
	Patience	MS1, MS3
Has Effect Codes	Empathy	MS1, MS9
	Communication	MS1, MS6, MS7, MS8, MS9, MS12, MS15, MS16, MS17
	Teaching	MS3, MS6, MS8, MS10, MS13, MS19

	Problem-solving	MS5, MS7, MS8, MS15
	Persuasion	MS6
	Creativity	MS6, MS8
	Observation	MS7, MS16
	Leadership	MS7
	Art-Language	MS20
Theme	No effect:	MS2, MS4, MS11, MS14, MS18
No Effect Codes	Not believing to be talented	MS2, MS11

Under the desire to teach-learn theme, the code "discovering that one can teach" was expressed the most. Under the no-effect theme, a prospective teacher expressed the code "unawareness." Regarding the views on the "discovering that I can teach" code, the following participants' excerpts exemplify the case:

MS4: "My siblings had an influence. My siblings would come and ask questions, and that had an impact on me. My uncle's children were in grades 2 and 3, and I started teaching them. That was when I realized that it was nice to teach someone something. That was when I discovered it.

MS16: "I can say that I discovered that I could teach both while playing games and while teaching games. Of course, this reached an even higher level in high school. I gained experience at a young age."

Regarding the views of teacher candidates on the "emotion" code, the following excerpts can be given:

MS10: "When students respond to you when they learn, you feel happy and feel that you have done something."

MS5: "It is a really nice feeling to be able to convey something to the person in front of you and to pass something on to them."

The opinions regarding the "problem-solving" code are as follows:

MS8: "Although teaching may seem like a monotonous profession, there may be situations that require sudden solutions in people. I think I am capable of producing sudden solutions."

MS15: "Don't go for an immediate solution."

Opinions related to the "not believing to be talented" code under the no effect theme are as follows:

MS2: "I don't really think I'm very talented in this regard."

MS11: "I don't have any special talents."

The opinion of the teacher candidate regarding the "art-language" code is as follows:

MS20: "I think I have talent in all areas, such as painting, music, dance, and language."

According to Table 10, three themes, "supportive," "personal decision," and "family preference," were created for the influence of family on choosing the profession of classroom teacher candidates. While the "mother" and "father" codes are under the "supportive" theme, the code " choosing a major difference from the family's desire" is under the "own decision" theme, and the "relatives" and "father" codes are under the "family preference" theme.

Table 10. Effects of parents

Themes-codes		Participants
Theme	Supportive	MS1, MS3, MS4, MS5, MS6, MS9, MS13, MS15, MS16, MS18, MS19, MS20
Supportive Codes	Mother	MS3, MS6, MS9, MS16
	Father	MS1, MS4, MS5
Theme	Own decision	MS2, MS7, MS10, MS11, MS12, MS17
Personal decision Codes	Choosing a major different from the family's desire	MS11, MS12
Theme	Family preference	MS8, MS14
Family preference Codes	Relatives	MS8
	Father	MS14

The "mother" code is the most commonly expressed view under the "supportive" theme. The opinions of teacher candidates regarding the mother code are as follows:

MS16: "My mother has contributed greatly to my life. She always wanted me to become a teacher, of course. I cannot say that my family did not have a great influence on my decision to choose this department. Of course, it was also my own desire, but I can say that my family supported me a lot."

MS3: "Especially my mother's approach, thinking that I could be an educator and saying things like 'you can teach, organize, and do it yourself' influenced me a little. I also wanted it for myself, thanks to her."

The opinions of teacher candidates regarding "choosing a major different from the family's desire" under the "own decision" theme are as follows:

MS11: "I chose this department because, of course, my family wanted me to study theology."

MS12: "My mother always preferred law, thinking that I could study law by preparing for another year and maybe getting better grades. I wanted to choose my department from my first year, and it was the department I wanted."

Regarding the "family preference" theme, the teacher candidate's view on the "relatives" code is as follows:

MS8: "Especially not only my parents but also my uncle had a great influence. Their continuous words such as 'teaching is a very beautiful profession; you explain it so well; children listen to you; you will be comfortable' had a great effect."

According to Table 11, four themes influence the choice of profession of classroom teacher candidates: "liking the school environment", "goals for the profession", "university-student life", and "no other factors". Under the "liking the school environment" theme, there are codes such as "childhood period" and "experiencing the profession". Under the "goals for the profession" theme, there are codes such as "instilling love and respect for the profession" and "different education systems". Under the "university-student life" theme, there are codes such as "easy reading conditions", "desired profession", and "having the department in their own city".

Table 11. Other effective factors

Themes-codes		Participants
Theme	Liking the School Environment	MS1, MS2, MS6, MS12, MS20
Liking school environment Codes	Childhood period	MS12, MS20
	Experiencing the profession	MS1, MS2
Theme	Goals for the profession	MS3, MS7, MS13, MS15
	Organizing the negatives	MS3, MS15
Goals for the profession Codes	Instilling love and respect for the profession	MS7
	Different educational systems	MS13
Theme	University-student life	MS2, MS4, MS9, MS11, MS18
	Easy reading conditions	MS9, MS18
University-Student life Codes	Desired profession	MS2, MS4, MS9
	Having the department in their own city	MS11
Theme	No other factors.	MS5, MS8, MS10, MS14, MS16, MS17, MS19

The views of teacher candidates on the code "experiencing the profession" under the theme of "liking the school environment" are as follows:

MS1: "Paid teaching was really the turning point for me. I said to myself, 'I am now sure that I should be a teacher, and I should be here."

MS2: "I started teaching a lot while studying engineering. When I realized this, I felt that I wanted to pursue this profession and that I was happy here. That's why I was able to leave engineering.

Under the theme of "goals for the profession," the views of teacher candidates on the code "organizing the negatives" are as follows:

MS3: "A person who has received an education, for example, but is doing things that they shouldn't be doing or contradicting themselves. Some rights and wrongs should be taught in education. I want to be one of those who can say those things and do them. I chose this profession to regulate the negatives myself.

MS15: "Maybe it could be to defend or support children."

Under the theme of "university-student life," the views on the code "desired profession" are as follows:

MS2: "Studying engineering didn't have a direct effect, but I realized that this wasn't the only profession I wanted to pursue and started thinking about it."

MS4: "At that time, we started our internships in the second year. I looked and realized that I couldn't do it; I didn't like the hospital environment. Then I talked to my family and said, I want to be a classroom teacher."

In keeping with the "no other factors" theme, the teacher candidates stated during the interview that there were no other factors besides the ones asked about.

According to Table 12, the themes of "classroom teacher," "choice dilemma," and "classroom teaching field" are present in the career preferences of classroom teacher candidates. The theme of classroom teacher includes the codes "transition from a different profession," "state-rural schools," and "state-private doesn't matter." The choice dilemma theme includes the codes "classroom teaching," "graduate studies," "desire to study in a

different department," and "different profession." The classroom teaching field theme includes the codes "post-graduate education" and "academician."

Tablo 12. Preferences related to working lives

Themes-codes		Participants
Theme	Classroom Teacher	MS3, MS4, MS5, MS6, MS8, MS10, MS11, MS12, MS13, MS14, MS15, MS16, MS17, MS19, MS20
Classroom teacher Codes	Transition from a different profession	MS3
	State-rural schools	MS6, MS8, MS12, MS13, MS14, MS16, MS17, MS19
	State-private doesn't matter	MS5, MS15
Theme	Choice Dilemma	MS1, MS2, MS7, MS9, MS18
	Classroom Teaching	MS1, MS2, MS7, MS9, MS18
Choice dilemma Codes	Graduate studies	MS1, MS2
	Desire to study a different major	MS2, MS7, MS9, MS18
	Different profession	MS7, MS9
Theme	Classroom Teaching Field	MS3, MS4, MS5, MS6, MS8
Classroom teaching field Codes	Post-graduate education	MS3, MS4, MS6, MS8
	Academician	MS4, MS5

Classroom teacher candidates expressed their views on the "state-rural schools" code the most under the theme of "classroom teacher." Their views on this code are as follows:

MS12: "I want to work in rural schools. Since I grew up in the village, I think I won't have a hard time there, and when I look around even today, there are still a lot of issues with educating girls in my village and the villages I know. Maybe I can change this where I go. I say that I came from among you and I am still among you, and I think I can change this, so rural schools will be my first choice."

MS6: "I really want to be a rural teacher because it is very gratifying for me to be able to reach out to and benefit children in the village. I want to work in this area."

The opinions of teacher candidates on the code "desire to study in a different department" are as follows under the theme of "choice dilemma":

MS18: "I want to study nursing in a different department. I want to study nursing while teaching."

MS2: "If I struggle too much, I can quit and study at a new university again."

The opinions on the code "post-graduate education" under the theme of "classroom teaching field" are as follows:

MS3: "I want to do a master's degree in elementary school teaching. I want to learn the profession perfectly before starting."

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MS4: "In the beginning, I want to work for a few years and then do a master's degree in elementary school teaching for about 5 years."

It is observed that teacher candidates who did not think about or were hesitant about choosing the classroom teaching department express their opinion that their choices for their careers were shaped in their last year at their department. The opinions regarding this finding are as follows:

MS14: "Definitely classroom teaching. If they presented me with the department that is my dream right now, I wouldn't go."

MS17: "I realized many things, and frankly, I liked it and discovered that it was inside me."

Discussion and Conclusion

The reasons for prospective teachers choosing the teaching profession and their preferences regarding their professional lives are crucial in shaping their attitudes towards the profession, professional identities, and career choices. In this study, the reasons for choosing the teaching profession were examined in terms of various influencing factors, and their preferences for their working lives were identified. The reasons for prospective teachers choosing the teaching profession and their preferences for their working lives are influenced by various factors. In this study, the reasons for prospective teachers choosing the teaching profession were evaluated in terms of their love for the profession, working conditions, encountered teachers, ÖSYM-YÖS scores, love for children, passion for teaching and learning, service to others, general and specific abilities, family, and other factors. The reasons for choosing the profession were primarily evaluated in terms of the impact of loving the

profession. Two themes emerged when prospective classroom teachers were asked about the effects of loving the profession on their decision. It was seen that teacher candidates mostly expressed opinions in favor of the "effect of loving the profession" theme. There are studies in the literature that support the results of this research, when the effect of loving the field and profession is examined (Çakır and Akkaya, 2017; Eret Orhan and Ok, 2014; İncikabı et al., 2016; Mašková et al., 2022; Özçakmak and Köroğlu, 2015). Some prospective teachers expressed opinions in favor of the "effect of lowering the profession" theme. Atıcı (2013) also concluded that half of the prospective teachers in the study group did not like the profession. Therefore, different studies can be conducted in the future that are related to the reasons for choosing the teaching profession.

When prospective teachers were asked about the effect of working conditions on the profession, two themes emerged: "affected and unaffected conditions". As affected conditions, "holidays and working hours" were the most commonly expressed codes. Teacher candidates stated that their working hours and holidays were influential in their decision to choose the teaching profession. In the research conducted by Yurdakal (2019) and Azman (2012), it was stated that working hours played a role in choosing the teaching profession. According to TALIS 2018 data, the factor of "work hours and the work schedule allowing me to spend time on personal responsibilities" was expressed as "very important" by about half of the teachers (Ceylan et al., 2020).

When examining the views of teacher candidates regarding the economic returns of working conditions, some express the existence of an economic benefit, while others argue that economic factors do not affect their choice. Buldur and Bulsal (2015) found that economic factors did not have an impact on the preferences of teacher candidates, whereas Beşoluk and Horzum (2011) stated in their research on the desire to become a teacher that job security, good economic conditions, and working conditions enable individuals to pursue the teaching profession. According to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) data for 2017, the starting salaries of primary school teachers in Turkey are close to the OECD average, but as their professional seniority increases, they fall behind the OECD average. In Can's (2019) study, which identified factors that hinder the professional development of teachers, working conditions, economic issues, and the status of the profession were mentioned as obstacles. This study also indicates that teacher candidates consider the effects of working conditions when choosing the profession. Therefore, it is important to improve these working conditions for young people to pursue the teaching profession and for their professional development.

Two themes have been created regarding the influence of former teachers on the career choices of teacher candidates: "positive and negative examples." The positive examples emphasized the love and interest code among the former teachers. Teacher candidates stated that they were influenced by their teachers and their guidance. Çakır and Akkaya (2017) also found that the reason for choosing the teaching profession is due to guidance and influence, similar to this finding. In contrast, Deniz and Görgen's (2019) study found no influence from the presence of a teacher in the family or teacher role models. Teacher candidates under the negative example theme expressed encountering negative behaviors and communication problems with their teachers, but they stated that they would turn the negatives into positives if they became teachers. Şahin et al. (2019) conducted a study on teacher candidates who took an elective course called "love education" in the field of educational sciences at a state university and concluded that love is the most basic need and supports the child's development in educational environments. The study also found that teacher candidates were influenced by the behaviors their teachers showed them when choosing their profession. Therefore, arrangements can be made in teacher training programs to develop teacher candidates' affective aspects.

When examining the views of teacher candidates on the effects of the ÖSYM-YÖS score on their career choices, two themes emerged: "loving classroom teaching and preference." Some teacher candidates stated that their only choice and goal was teaching because it was their profession of choice. However, they mostly expressed their dilemmas about their choices in line with their preferences, stating that they made choices based on their scores. Yılmaz and Doğan (2015) and Buldur et al. (2021) studies also found the effect of placement scores on the career choices of teacher candidates. Karabacak and Uzun's (2014) study found a relationship between teacher candidates' sensitivity to the teaching profession and their ranking in choosing the profession. Mankki and Kyrö-Ämmälä (2021) identified pre-entry demotivators among teacher candidates, which include impasses as a professional program due to limited career opportunities and inadequate diversity. Can's (2017) study concluded that centralized exams affect a significant portion of society, direct education to rote learning, and sideline the functions of education programs. Therefore, based on the results of this study, a process-focused approach should be adopted instead of a results-focused approach, and vocational education should be strengthened to train teachers and improve their qualifications.

Teacher candidates express the impact of loving children on their career choices through themes such as "communication with children, education targeting children, and no effect of loving children." Children are considered one of the fundamental factors that contribute to their professional satisfaction. Previous studies in the field also support the findings of this study that the love for children is a significant reason for choosing the teaching profession (Karademir and Yılmaz, 2020; Kılıç, 2022; Koşar, 2018; Mašková et al., 2022). Kolucki and Lemish (2011) state that communication is one of the most critical rights of children. Communication with

children should be supported to acknowledge them as individuals, listen to their voices, ensure access to information, facilitate their expression of cultural identity, and promote their development. The study indicates that teacher candidates recognize the effectiveness of communication with children in their career choices. Strengthening communication with children through various pre-professional activities for teacher candidates can be beneficial for fostering this relationship.

Regarding the impact of the passion for teaching and learning, two themes have been identified: "desire to teach-learn and no effect". Teacher candidates express their willingness to teach when they discover they can teach and enjoy research and reading. Studies in the field support these results, indicating that the desire to work with children and educate others is among the most crucial factors in choosing a teaching career (Hennessy and Lynch, 2017; Low et al., 2017; Keck Frei et al., 2017; Mašková et al., 2022; Watt et al., 2012). Aydın and Tekneci (2013) found that working in the field had an impact on teacher candidates' attitudes toward the profession. In Çakmak and Kayabaşı's (2017) study, "loving to teach" was among the reasons for choosing the teaching profession. Aktürk (2012) found that those who love the teaching profession are more open to learning. When examining the impact of serving others, three themes have been identified: "serving the community, serving the future, and no impact." Among teacher candidates, the most commonly expressed benefit to the community under the theme of serving the community is serving the country. The importance of basic education in raising future generations is emphasized in the theme of serving the future. In the literature, the motivations for choosing teaching as a profession among teacher candidates include supporting the welfare and development of society (Kılcan et al., 2014), social utility values (Topkaya and Uztosun, 2012), and making a social contribution and shaping the future (Richardson and Watt, 2006; Watt et al., 2012). According to Bozbayındır (2019), factors influencing the status of teaching as perceived by teacher candidates include the profession being chosen by qualified individuals and its service to people. According to TALIS 2018 data, the most important reason for choosing the teaching profession in Turkey is the ability to serve society (85.77%), whereas this percentage is 64.59%, 52.53%, and 37.69% in the OECD, "PISA Best Europe," and "PISA Best Asia" groups, respectively (Ceylan et al., 2020). Future studies on teacher candidates should examine the effects of different cultures and contexts.

The effects of the general and specific abilities of teacher candidates have been categorized into themes of "has an effect" and "no effect". Teacher candidates who expressed their views on the "has an effect" theme emphasized the influence of their communication, teaching, and problem-solving skills (Kahyaoğlu and Kırıktaş, 2017; Watt et al., 2012). The presence of teacher candidates' abilities and their awareness of their abilities have influenced their professional preferences.

When examining the influence of family in the career choices of teacher candidates, there are three themes: "supportive, personal decision, and family preference." Teacher candidates indicated that their families were supportive, and both parents influenced their career choices. In addition, some candidates made their decision entirely based on their family's preference or their own decision. In the literature, studies (Yurdakal, 2019; Koşar, 2018) show that the family factor influences the career choices of teacher candidates. Özcan and Eranıl (2018) investigated the relationship between the attitudes of high school seniors towards the teaching profession and the attitudes of their parents. While the students had a high level of positive attitude towards the teaching profession, there was no relationship between their attitudes and their parents' attitudes. Therefore, various activities can be organized to direct students toward the teaching profession and promote its recognition.

When asked about the factors that influenced their preferences, teacher candidates identified the themes of "presence of influence" and "absence of influence." Those who expressed the "presence of influence" theme emphasized the impact of their communication, teaching, and problem-solving skills the most (Kahyaoğlu and Kırıktaş, 2017; Watt et al., 2012). The possession of certain skills and awareness of those skills also affected their professional choices.

Regarding other factors that influenced their preferences, teacher candidates identified the themes of "liking the school environment," "goals for profession," "university-student life," and "no other factors." The majority of teacher candidates stated that there were no other factors influencing their choice of profession.

Through the examination of the reasons for prospective teachers choosing the teaching profession, it has been found that loving the profession is an important factor. They are influenced by the working conditions of the profession they will encounter in the future. The attitudes and behaviors of previous teachers they have encountered, as well as the love and interest they have received from them, influence their choices. The desire to work with children, the passion for teaching, and the desire to serve the community are also contributing factors. It has been concluded that families are generally supportive when choosing a profession, and they are primarily influenced by their parents. It has also been found that centralized exams have an impact on selecting a profession.

When it came to their career preferences, teacher candidates expressed the themes of "classroom teacher," "choice dilemma," and "classroom teaching field." They expressed a desire to become classroom teachers and work primarily in government and rural schools. According to the TALIS 2018 survey, 64.69% of teachers in Turkey consider teaching their first career choice, while the OECD average is 63.73%, PISA Best Europe is

57.68%, and PISA Best Asia is 81.03% (Ceylan et al., 2020). In a study by Beşoluk and Horzum (2011), 69% of teacher candidates stated that they wanted to become teachers; 17.4% considered teaching an option only if they were assigned to it; 2.2% wanted to become teachers but found it difficult; and 11.4% did not consider teaching a career choice. It was observed that some teacher candidates who did not consider or were hesitant to choose the classroom teaching department as their major ended up choosing it as their preferred career after reaching their final year. According to Kılıç (2022), when given the chance to choose a second profession, teacher candidates showed the highest preference for teaching again. However, some teacher candidates expressed a dilemma about their career choices, with some stating a desire to study a different major or pursue a different profession. The "choice dilemma" theme revealed that teacher candidates who studied a different major or worked in a different field had more dilemmas regarding their future careers. Some teacher candidates expressed a desire to pursue postgraduate education and become academics in the field of elementary education. The research demonstrates the preferences of prospective teachers for the teaching profession and their preferences regarding their working lives. Based on this, academic and professional counseling services can be provided to prospective teachers to help them progress more successfully in their fields.

The reasons for prospective teachers choosing the teaching profession and their preferences for their working lives are crucial in terms of their approach to the profession and various other factors. As seen in the results of this research, just like the influence of many factors on the reasons for choosing the profession and preferences for working lives, when the literature on the field is examined, it is observed that the reasons for choosing the profession and preferences for working lives can also be influenced by multiple factors. In studies examining their relationship with professional attitudes, Nalçacı and Sökmen (2016) found a positive correlation between the reasons for choosing the profession, while Şata et al. (2022) identified a correlational relationship between career choice and professional image. Kozak et al. (2020) found a relationship between pre-service teacher identity and career choice. According to the TIMSS (2015) data, based on the satisfaction index of teachers with their professions, mathematics teachers have higher proportions of students who are "satisfied or very satisfied" with their profession. Similar results have been obtained for science teachers as well (Yıldırım et al., 2016). It is important for teachers to willingly pursue their profession for the future of students and school environments. Looking at the conducted research, it is evident that the reasons for prospective teachers choosing the teaching profession and their preferences for their working lives are highly significant in terms of their attitudes towards the profession, professional identities, and career choices. This research examined the factors that affect the decision of prospective classroom teachers to choose teaching as a profession and their preferences regarding work-life balance. The reasons for choosing the teaching profession and preferences for work-life balance are crucial in shaping prospective teachers' attitudes towards the profession, professional identities, and career choices. The current study identifies the importance of willing teachers to perform their professions for future students and school environments, and the study also highlights various factors, including the effect of loving the profession, working conditions, former teachers, and ÖSYM-YÖS score on career choices. To sum up, this research emphasizes the need to improve working conditions for teachers and develop teacher training programs that focus on teacher candidates' affective aspects.

Conflicts of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Ethical Approval

The ethical approval for the research was obtained from the Fırat University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee with meeting number 2022/09 and decision number 08 on May 6, 2022. The necessary permissions were also obtained from the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Education of the university where the research was conducted.

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