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Investigating the Relationship Between Perceived Career Barriers and Occupational Anxiety of Preservice Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to identify and establish the relationship between preservice teachers' perceived career barriers and their occupational anxiety levels. The study was conducted with a total of 401 preservice teachers studying different undergraduate level programs/departments at the education faculties of various state universities in Turkey in the spring semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. In this study which was designed on the relational survey design, one of the quantitative research methods, the "Perceived Career Barriers Scale", "Occupational Anxiety Scale" and "Personal Information Form" designed by the researchers were utilized as data collection tools. The data used in the study was collected online via the "Google Forms" after the required permissions were obtained. It was found that the data analyzed on SPSS were in normal distribution and the t-test, ANOVA, Hochberg and Pearson analyzes were all applied. In the results, it was established that the preservice teachers' perceived career barriers were at a low level and their occupational anxiety were at a medium level. Furthermore, positive and low-level significant relationships were identified between preservice teachers' perceived career barriers and their occupational anxiety levels. The results reveal that preservice teachers' anxiety levels augmented the potential barriers such as lack of ability, interest, motivation and inadequate preparation.
Keywords: Perceived career barriers, occupational anxiety, teacher education.

Öğretmen Adaylarının Algılanan Kariyer Engelleri ve Mesleki Kaygıları Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi

ÖZ

Bu araştırmada öğretmen adaylarının algılanan kariyer engelleri ile mesleki kaygı düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemek amaçlanmıştır. Araştırma, 2022-2023 eğitim-öğretim yılının bahar döneminde Türkiye'nin çeşitli devlet üniversitelerinin eğitim fakültelerinde öğrenim gören 401 öğretmen adayı ile yürütülmüştür. Nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden ilişkisel tarama deseni üzerine tasarlanan çalışmada veri toplama aracı olarak, "Algılanan Kariyer Engelleri Ölçeği", "Mesleki Kaygı Ölçeği" ve araştırmacılar tarafından tasarlanan "Kişisel Bilgi Formu" kullanılmıştır. Veriler, gerekli izinler doğrultusunda "Google Formlar" aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. SPSS üzerinden analizi yapılan veriler, normal dağılıma uygun bulunarak t-test, ANOVA, Hochberg ve Pearson analizleri uygulanmıştır. Elde edilen bulgularda, öğretmen adaylarının, algılanan kariyer engellerinin düşük düzeyde, mesleki kaygılarının ise orta düzeyde olduğu belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca, öğretmen adaylarının algılanan kariyer engelleri ile mesleki kaygı düzeyleri arasında pozitif yönde ve düşük düzeyde anlamlı ilişkiler bulunmuştur. Sonuçlar, öğretmen adaylarının özellikle yetenek, ilgi, motivasyon eksikliği ve yetersiz hazırlanma gibi olası engellerin kaygı düzeyini arttırdığını ortaya koymaktadır.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Algılanan kariyer engelleri, mesleki kaygı, öğretmen eğitimi.

Introduction

The challenges faced in achieving career goals are commonly referred to as perceived career barriers. To be precise; perceived career barriers (PCB) defined as events or circumstances that make it more difficult for an individual to advance in their career (Swanson and Woitke, 1997). In this study,

PCB are defined as the challenges that preservice teachers encounter while trying to attain and maintain their teaching career.

Research indicates that different studies classify PCB in various ways. For example, some studies categorize these barriers into internal and external barriers (Creed et al., 2004; Lent et al., 2000; McWhirter et al., 2007). Internal barriers are personal factors such as lack of motivation or ability for career goals. In contrast, external factors refer to environmental factors, including family demands, financial issues, and limitations in employment opportunities. While some studies on PCB present unexpected positive outcomes (Hirschi et al., 2013; Lindley, 2005) suggesting that these barriers can be challenging in career development, they are generally viewed as a negative aspect of career progression (Hirschi et al. 2013). In line with this negative consideration, PCB have been linked to career stress (Gündoğdu, 2021; Nadir, 2023), career planning process (Cardoso and Moreira, 2009; Güldü and Kart (2017), professional results (Lamba, 2003), professional satisfaction (İnandı et al., 2022), professional attitude and aspirations (Creed et al., 2009; Doğan and Çoban, 2009; Jackson et al., 2006) and psychological resilience (Timur, 2022). Despite the increased number of studies on PCB, the studies focusing on barriers of teaching career are limited.

The existing studies in literature are insufficient to produce a comprehensive understanding of the role that PCB plays in career development. These barriers are generally examined in particular contexts, such as gender inequalities or the experiences of minorities (Leon, 2009; Luzzo and McWhirter, 2001; McWhirter, 1997; Mori, 2004). On the contrary, it is crucial to note that PCB are not the sole factors influencing career development. For example, occupational anxiety can also significantly impact career progression along with perceived barriers. This study focuses on both perceived career barriers and occupational anxiety among preservice teachers, analyzing the relationship between the two. This dual focus is one of the study's strongest aspects.

Occupational anxiety (OA) refers to a worker's reaction when faced with work demands and pressures that exceed their resources, needs, abilities, and knowledge, ultimately surpassing their capacity to manage (Desouky and Allam, 2017). Teaching, as an occupation, is both physically and mentally challenging, making OA particularly common among teachers. They expend considerable energy in their daily lesson preparations while also balancing personal and familial commitments (Cooper et al., 2005). Research on OA experienced by teachers and preservice teachers has identified several related factors. It is linked to depression (Bozkurt, 2004), personality characteristics (Çelik and Şengül, 2017; Ghait and Shaaban, 1999), self-efficiacy (Avcı, 2023; Güngör and Gül, 2021; Kafkas et al., 2010), burnout syndrome (Bozgün and Akın-Kösterelioğlu, 2018), psychological well-being (Sarıtaş, 2019), job finding stress (Güçlü et al., 2023), attitude towards teaching (Erdoğan, 2021), achievement orientation (Gözler et al., 2017) and career compatibility (Gerçek, 2018). Considering the research on OA, no study has been found linking OA with PCB. In this respect, the current research has a unique quality that will contribute to the field. This study aims to explore the relationship between preservice teachers' PCB and OA. The research questions are:

1. What level are preservice teachers' PCB and AO at?
2. Do preservice teachers' PCB and OA levels differ significantly based on gender, grade level and grade point average?
3. Is there significant a relationship between PCB and OA?

Teacher Education in Türkiye

Teaching in Türkiye is defined as "a special profession that requires comprehensive preparation in content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and general culture (MoNE, 2024a). In this regard, teacher candidates must hold at least a bachelor's degree. Teacher education is primarily offered through a four-year undergraduate program in Education Faculties at universities, under the supervision of the Higher Education Council [HEC] (2018). These programs consist of courses

distributed across three key domains: content knowledge (50%), pedagogical knowledge (30%), and general culture (20%). In addition to graduates of Faculties of Education, students from other university faculties may also pursue a teaching career by completing a one-year pedagogical training program, either during or after their undergraduate studies. Upon completion, they receive a pedagogical formation certificate, which qualifies them to apply for teaching positions (HEC, 2021).

Following the enactment of the revised Teaching Profession Law on October 10, 2024 (MoNE, 2024a); new regulations have been introduced for individuals wishing to enter the teaching profession. According to this law, both graduates of education faculties and holders of pedagogical formation certificates can become teacher when they successfully complete preparatory training offered by the newly established National Education Academy. To be admitted to the National Education Academy, teacher candidates must undergo a two-session evaluation process (MoNE, 2024b). First, they must take the Academy Entrance Exam. This exam consists of multiple-choice questions that assess verbal and numerical ability, Turkish history and geography, educational foundations, and the structure and legislation of the national education system. Second, they must complete the Teaching Field Knowledge Test. Both exams are administered by The Measuring, Selection and Placement Center. For subject areas that require field-specific expertise, the admission score is calculated by combining 50% of the Academy Entrance Exam score with 50% of the Teaching Field Knowledge Test score. For teaching positions requiring foreign language proficiency, the final score is based on 50% of the Academy Entrance Exam and 50% of a Foreign Language Proficiency Test. For all other branches, only the Academy Entrance Exam score is taken into consideration (MoNE, 2025a).

The preparatory training provided by the National Education Academy consists of theoretical and practical courses, designed in accordance with the national teaching competencies framework (MoNE, 2024a). The duration of the training is three terms for graduates of education faculties and four terms for graduates of other faculties. At the end of the training, candidates are assessed based on a composite score, calculated as 40% from theoretical coursework and 60% from practical training. Those who successfully complete the training are appointed as teachers for a probationary period of three years, based on their success score and in line with their preferences. Placement is determined based on their final success scores at the National Education Academy and stated preferences. The participants in this study are undergraduate students from various departments within the Education Faculties at two different state universities in Türkiye.

The number of teacher candidates appointed by MoNE varies each year. Table 1 demonstrates the number of applications and appointments of teacher candidates in Türkiye over the last five years (Strategy Development Directorate, 2021; 2022; 2023; 2024; 2025). Additionally, MoNE has announced plans to appoint 15.000 teacher candidates in 2025 (MoNE, 2025b). Considering the statistics of the last five years, it can be said that there is a significant gap between the applicants and the appointed ones.

Table 1
The Appointment of Teacher Candidates in Türkiye in The Last 5 Years

Year	The number of applications	The number of appointments	The rate of appointments
2020	102.759	41.139	40.03
2021	81.460	21.407	26.28
2022	73.133	34.682	47.42
2023	169.304	50.348	29.74
2024	47.036	20.126	42.79

Method

Research Design

This study explores the relationship between preservice teachers' PCB and OA, using a relational survey design. This approach explains the relation between two distinct quantitative variables through a correlation coefficient (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Employing this approach, researchers can investigate an existing situation without intervening and consider the relationships between variables (Creswell, 2017). As a result, the findings enhance our understanding of the factors contributing to this complex issue (Mertens, 2010).

Study Group

The study involves 401 preservice teachers studying at the education faculties of two state universities in Türkiye during the 2022-2023 academic year. The convenient sampling method is employed to form the study group, as this approach provides easier access to participants (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Participants' demographic characteristics are summarized in Table 2, which presents frequency and percentage distributions.

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Personal Information		**N**	**%**
Gender	F	326	81.3
	M	75	18.7
Age	18-20	154	38.4
	21-24	214	53.4
	25 +	33	8.2
Grade level	First	130	32.4
	Second	115	28.7
	Third	101	25.2
	Fourth	55	13.7
Grade Point Average (GPA)	Less or 2.00	11	2.7
	Between 2.00 and 2.49	49	12.2
	Between 2.50 and 2.99	136	33.9
	Between 3.00 and 3.49	166	41.4
	3.50 and more	39	9.7
Program Studied	Middle School Mathematics T.	109	27.2
	Preschool T.	93	23.2
	Science T.	50	12.5
	Primary School T.	35	8.7
	English Language T.	27	6.7
	Social Studies T.	21	5.2
	Special Education T.	21	5.2
	Guidance and Psychological Counselling T.	17	4.2
	Turkish Language T.	8	2.0
	French Language T.	7	1.7
	Art T.	7	1.7
	Computer and Instructional Technologies T.	6	1.5
	Total	401	100

According to Table 2, it is seen that 81.3% of preservice teachers are female (F), and 18.7% of them are male (M). In grade level distribution, the highest participation is in first grade (32.4%) and the lowest participation is at fourth grade level (13.7%). 41.4% of preservice teachers has GPA scores ranging between 3.00 and 3.49 while 2.7% of them has GPA scores ranging between 2.00 and below. Among the programs, the highest participation belongs to Middle School Mathematics Teaching (27.2%) and Preschool Teaching (23.2%) while the lowest participation belongs to the Computer and

Instructional Technologies Teaching (1.5%), Art Teaching (1.7%) and French Language Teaching (1.7%).

Data Collection Tools and Procedure

Perceived Career Barriers Scale (PCBS) and Occupational Anxiety Scale for Prospective Teachers is employed to gather research data. Additionally, demographic information regarding the participants' gender, grade level, general point average, and study program is collected.

Perceived Career Barriers Scale (PCBS)

This measurement tool, developed by Sürücü (2011), is designed to measure people's perceived career barriers. PCBS is a 5-point Likert scale, consisting of 33 items with eight sub-scales: gender discrimination, lack of aptitude and interest, lack of motivation and inadequate preparation, difficulties regarding professional education and working conditions, the future of the profession and labor market limitations, personal problems, moving, and the influence of family and environment. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for PCBS is .92, indicating excellent reliability, while the test-retest reliability is .75. For sub-scales, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient values vary between .92 and .53 (Sürücü, 2011). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for PCBS is .90 in the current study.

Occupational Anxiety Scale for Prospective Teachers (OAS)

The scale developed by Cabı and Yalçınalp (2013) comprises 45 items organized into eight sub-scales. These sub-scales depend on the anxiety oriented towards job, personal development, occupational exam, adaptation, socio-economic, student/communication, colleague and parent, and school management. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for these sub-scales range from .67 to .94. Overall, OAS has a Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of .95 (Cabı and Yalçınalp, 2013). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for OAS is .94 in the current study.

Data Analysis

SPSS version 24 was used to analyze the data. To specify the appropriate tests, preliminary analyses for normality were performed. The skewness and kurtosis values fell within the range of +1.5 to -1.5 (Tabachnick et al., 2013), indicating a normal distribution (Table 3). To compare preservice teachers' PCB and OA based on gender, an independent samples t-test was used. Additionally, a one-way analysis of variance was applied to determine preservice teachers' PCB and OA based on grade level and grade point average (GPA) variables. For the groups that showed significant differences, Hochberg test, recommended for groups that are not similar in size (Field, 2024, s. 388), was employed to identify which specific group or groups were responsible for the difference. A significance level of .05 was determined. Lastly, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was utilized to examine the relationship between preservice teachers' PCB and OA.

Table 3
Skewness and Kurtosis Values of Scale Data

	Descriptives	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**
Perceived Career Barriers Scale	Perceived Career Barriers Scale (Total)	.320	-.251
	Gender	1.077	.765
	The future and labor market	.391	-.543
	Professional education and working conditions	.879	.619
	Aptitude and interest	.798	.350
	Motivation and inadequate preparation	.520	-.254
	Moving	.904	.101
	Personal problems	.541	-.337
	Family and environment	.192	-.528

	Occupational Anxiety (Total)	.064	-.742
Occupational Anxiety Scale	Job	.155	-1.065
	Socio-economic	-.372	-.606
	Student/communication	.021	-.957
	Colleague and parent	.352	-.866
	Personal development	.000	-1.163
	Occupational exam	-.683	-.346
	Adaptation	028	-1.007
	School management	.055	.706

Ethic of Resarch

Ethics committee approval was obtained from the "Bursa Uludağ University Social and Humanities Publication Ethics Committee" during the session held on October 27, 2022 with protocol number 2022-09. Data was gathered online via “Google Forms” after obtaining the required permissions. Participants were enlightened about the study and joined voluntarily. Data collection took place over one month, from May 17 to June 19, 2023.

Results

This study aims to investigate the relationship between preservice teachers' perceived career barriers and occupational anxiety. The descriptive statistics of the scales are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4
Preservice Teachers' Perceived Career Barriers and Their Occupational Anxiety Levels

Scales	**Sub-scales**	**N**	$\bar{X}$	**SD**
Perceived Career Barriers	PCBS (Total)	401	2.14	0.59
	Gender	401	1.67	0.70
	The future and labor market	401	2.53	1.09
	Professional education and working conditions	401	2.06	0.86
	Aptitude and interest	401	2.07	0.89
	Motivation and inadequate preparation	401	2.38	0.97
	Moving	401	2.01	1.05
	Personal problems	401	2.05	0.83
	Family and environment	401	2.56	1.01
Occupational Anxiety	Occupational Anxiety (Total)	401	3.02	0.90
	Job	401	2.84	1.10
	Socio-economic	401	3,39	1,02
	Student/communication	401	3.08	1.14
	Colleague and parent	401	2.61	1.13
	Personal development	401	2.96	1.25
	Occupational exam	401	3.66	1.16
	Adaptation	401	2.95	1.06
	School management	401	3.02	1.19

As far as Table 4 is concerned, preservice teachers’ total mean score obtained from the PCBS is 2.14. For sub-dimensions, the highest mean score belongs to the influence of family and environment (X = 2.56); and the lowest mean score belongs to gender discrimination (X = 1.67). The total mean score obtained from the OAS is 3.02. Regarding the scales, the highest mean score belongs to socio-economic oriented anxiety (X=3.39); and the lowest mean score belongs to colleague and parent oriented anxiety (X = 2.61). The t-test results regarding preservice teachers’ PCB and OA based on gender are illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5
T*he t-Test Results Regarding Preservice Teachers' PCB and OA Based on Gender*

Scales	**Sub-dimensions**	**Gender**	**X**	**SD**	**t**	**p**
Perceived Career Barriers	Gender	F	1.65	0.70	-0.93	.34
		M	1.74	0.73		
	The future of the profession and labor market	F	2.50	1.02	-0.85	.36
		M	2.62	0.91		
	Professional education and working conditions	F	2.03	0.87	-1.40	.16
		M	2.18	0.78		
	Aptitude and interest	F	2.05	0.89	-1.15	.25
		M	2.18	0.87		
	Motivation and inadequate preparation	F	2.38	1.00	6.00	.95
		M	2.37	0.86		
	Moving	F	2.03	1.09	.815	.41
		M	1.92	0.90		
	Personal problems	F	2.00	0.83	-2.36	.18
		M	2.26	0.82		
	Family and environment	F	2.60	1.03	1.70	.89
		M	2.38	0.95		
Occupational Anxiety	Job	F	2.91	1.10	2.58	.00*
		M	2.55	1.04		
	Socio-economic	F	3.47	1.02	3.23	.00*
		M	3.05	0.95		
	Student/communication	F	3.18	1.14	3.89	.00*
		M	2.62	1.00		
	Colleague and parent	F	2.68	1.13	2.64	.00*
		M	2.30	1.10		
	Personal development	F	3.02	1.25	1.95	.04*
		M	2.71	1.19		
	Occupational exam	F	3.77	1.14	4.15	.00*
		M	3.17	1.13		
	Adaptation	F	3.10	1.20	3.06	.00*
		M	2.64	1.08		
	School management	F	3.02	1.06	2.80	.00*
		M	2.64	0.98		

When Table 5 is examined, results showed that preservice teachers' scores obtained from the PCBS do not differ significantly by gender. However, preservice teachers' scores obtained from the OAS are concerned, it is obvious that preservice teachers' scores obtained from all sub-dimensions differ significantly by gender ($p < .05$). These results demonstrated that female (F) preservice teachers have higher anxiety levels than male (M) preservice teachers. Results of the ANOVA implemented to identify the effect of grade level on preservice teachers' perceived career barriers and occupational anxiety are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6
The ANOVA Results Explicate Preservice Teachers' PCB and OA Based on Grade Level

Scales	Grade level	N	X	SD	F	p
Perceived Career Barriers	First	130	2.16	.56	.135	,93
	Second	115	2.15	.64		
	Third	101	2.13	.60		
	Fourth	55	2.11	.55		
Occupational Anxiety	First	130	3.04	.93	1.521	.20
	Second	115	2.95	.94		
	Third	101	3.15	.91		
	Fourth	55	2.86	.71		

Results revealed that there is no significant difference in preservice teachers' PCB and OA scores based on grade level (p>.05). ANOVA was performed to determine whether preservice teachers' PCB and OA differ according to GPA. Results are illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7
The ANOVA Results Explaining Preservice Teachers' PCB and OA According to GPA

Scales	Variables	Point Averages	X	SD	F	p	Sig. Diff.
Perceived Career Barriers	Gender	2 or less (1)	2.00	0.71	3.52	.00	1>4
		2.00 – 2.49 between (2)	1.91	0.83			2>4
		2.50 – 2.99 between (3)	1.72	0.65			2>5
		3.00 – 3.49 between (4)	1.55	0.68			3>4
		3.50 and more (5)	1.61	0.71			
	The future of the profession and labor market	2 or less (1)	2.63	1.24	2.70	.03	2>4
		2.00 – 2.49 between (2)	2.85	1.05			3>4
		2.50 – 2.99 between (3)	2.61	0.95			
		3.00 – 3.49 between (4)	2.37	0.99			
		3.50 and more (5)	2.46	1.01			
	Professional education and working conditions	2 or less	2.11	0.61	1.15	.33	
		2.00 – 2.49 between	2.23	0.85			
		2.50 – 2.99 between	2.11	0.83			
		3.00 – 3.49 between	1.98	0.88			
		3.50 and more	1.96	0.90			
	Aptitude and interest	2 or less (1)	2.90	1.28	5.28	.00	1>4
		2.00 – 2.49 between (2)	2.28	1.05			1>5
		2.50 – 2.99 between (3)	2.16	0.86			
		3.00 – 3.49 between (4)	1.96	0.80			
		3.50 and more (5)	1.78	0.77			
	Motivation and inadequate preparation	2 or less (1)	2.65	0.91	4.84	0.00	1>5
		2.00 – 2.49 (2)	2.61	0.92			2>5
		2.50 – 2.99 between (3)	2.56	0.95			2>3
		3.00 – 3.49 between (4)	2.23	0.98			
		3.50 and more (5)	1.98	0.91			
	Moving	2 or less	2.27	0.84	0.26	.903	
		2.00 – 2.49 between	1.97	0.91			
		2.50 – 2.99 between	2.00	1.06			
		3.00 – 3.49 between	2.03	1.12			
		3.50 and more	1.92	1.01			

		2 or less (1)	2.54	0.67	3.16	.014	2>5
	Personal problems	2.00 – 2.49 between (2)	2.31	0.96			
		2.50 – 2.99 between (3)	2.08	0.82			
		3.00 – 3.49 between (4)	1.93	0.81			
		3.50 and more	1.99	0.77			
		2 or less	1.86	0.86	1.55	.186	
	Family and environment	2.00 – 2.49 between	2.55	1.09			
		2.50 – 2.99 between	2.53	0.94			
		3.00 – 3.49 between	2.63	1.03			
		3.50 and more	2.60	1.10			
		2 or less	3.13	1.28	0.71	.581	
	Job	2.00 – 2.49 between	2.72	1.13			
		2.50 – 2.99 between	2.93	1.06			
		3.00 – 3.49 between	2.82	1.10			
		3.50 and more	2.70	1.13			
		2 or less	3.38	0.79	0.31	.87	
	Socio-economic	2.00 – 2.49 between	3.39	1.12			
		2.50 – 2.99 between	3.38	0.99			
		3.00 – 3.49 between	3.36	1.04			
		3.50 and more	3.56	0.98			
		2 or less	3.33	1.16	0.85	0.49	
	Student/communication	2.00 – 2.49 between	2.86	1.19			
		2.50 – 2.99 between	3.10	1.13			
		3.00 – 3.49 between	3.14	1.10			
Occupational Anxiety		3.50 and more	2.94	1.23			
		2 or less	2.90	1.36	0.73	.567	
	Colleague and parent	2.00 – 2.49 between	2.42	1.08			
		2.50 – 2.99 between	2.64	1.15			
		3.00 – 3.49 between	2.66	1.09			
		3.50 and more	2.49	1.27			
		2 or less	3.40	1.08	0.50	.729	
	Personal development	2.00 – 2.49 between	2.82	1.34			
		2.50 – 2.99 between	2.95	1.22			
		3.00 – 3.49 between	2.97	1.25			
		3.50 and more	3.00	1.26			
	Occupational exam	2 or less	3.45	1.37	0.27	.893	
		2.00 – 2.49 between	3.70	1.23			
		2.50 – 2.99 between	3.60	1.07			
		3.00 – 3.49 between	3.71	1.15			
		3.50 and more	3.69	1.34			
		2 or less	2.90	1.43	0.07	.99	
	Adaptation	2.00 – 2.49 between	3.02	1.28			
		2.50 – 2.99 between	3.02	1.10			
		3.00 – 3.49 between	3.01	1.22			
		3.50 and more	3.10	1.28			
		2 or less	2.81	1.28	0.29	.87	
	School management	2.00 – 2.49 between	2.83	1.05			
		2.50 – 2.99 between	2.97	1.08			
		3.00 – 3.49 between	2.99	1.00			
		3.50 and more	2.88	1.21			

When Table 7 is examined, results showed that preservice teachers' gender discrimination, lack of aptitude and interest, lack of motivation and inadequate preparation, and personal problems scores differs significantly according to their GPA scores. ($p<.05$). Hochberg test results revealed that preservice teachers with a GPA of 2 and below have higher gender discrimination scores than others.

Similarly, preservice teachers with a GPA between 3.00 and 3.49 have higher gender discrimination scores than those with a GPA of 3.50 and above. Results highlighted that the preservice teachers with a GPA of 2 or less and between 2.00 and 2.49 have higher future of the profession and labor market limitations scores than those with a GPA between 3.00 and 3.49. According to lack of aptitude and interest, preservice teachers with a GPA of 2 and below have higher scores than those with a GPA of 3.00 and 3.49, and 3.50 and above. Related to lack of motivation and inadequate preparation, it was found that preservice teachers with a GPA of 2 and below have higher scores than those with GPA of 3.50 and above while preservice teachers with GPS of 2.00 and 2.49 acquire higher scores than those with GPS of 2.50 and 2.99, and 3.50 and above. Additionally, preservice teachers with a GPA between 2.00 and 2.49 obtain higher personal problem scores than those with a GPA of 3.50 and above. Nevertheless, results highlighted that preservice teachers' OA do not differ significantly in terms of their GPA.

The results of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis, which was conducted to identify the relationship between preservice teachers' PCB and OA, are illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8
Correlation Analysis Results Illustrating the Relationship Between Perceived Career Barriers and Occupational Anxiety

Scale and Sub-Dimensions		**Job**	**Socio-economic**	**Student /Communication**	**Colleague and Parent**	**Personal Development**	**Occupational Exam**	**Adaptation**	**School Administration**	**Occupational Anxiety (Total)**
Gender	r	.135**	.043	.079	.152**	.143**	.027	.109*	.082	.129**
Future of the Profession and Labor Market	r	.138**	.212**	.066	.091	.076	.159**	.229**	.054	.160**
Professional Education and Working Conditions	r	.038	.043	.006	.030	.047	.030	.033	.023	.029
Aptitude and Interest	r	.248**	.091	.166**	.214**	.163**	.057	.205**	.067	.215**
Motivation and Inadequate Preparation	r	.270**	.147**	.225**	.181**	.185**	.139**	.214**	.057	.248**
Moving	r	.049	-.065	.002	.061	.024	.022	.011	.053	.022
Personal Problems	r	-.028	.052	.075	.005	.011	.018	.018	.029	-.015
Family and Environment	r	.054	.154**	.078	.042	.033	.116*	.134**	.013	.093
Perceived Career Barriers (Total)	r	.199**	.160**	.118*	.163**	.146**	.104*	-.214	.064	.196**

Correlation analysis results revealed that there is a low-level and positive relationship between gender discrimination and the anxiety oriented towards job (r = .135); colleague and parent (r = .152); personal development (r = .143); and adaptation (r = .109). Also, it was found that there is a low-level and positive relationship between the future of the profession and labor market limitations and the anxiety oriented towards job (r=.138; p<.01); socio-economic (r=.212; p<.01); occupational exam (r=.159; p<.01); and adaptation (r=.229; p<.01). Similarly, results highlighted that there is a low-level and positive relationship between lack of aptitude and interest and the anxiety oriented towards job

(r=.248); student/communication (r=.166); colleague and parent (r=.214); personal development (r=.163); and adaptation (r=.205).

It was found that there is a positive, low-level, and significant relationship between lack of motivation and inadequate preparation and the anxiety oriented towards job (r=.270); socio-economic (r=.147); student/communication (r=.225); colleague and parent (r=.181); personal development (r=.185); occupational exam (r=.139); and adaptation (r=.214. Furthermore, it was clearly obvious that there is a low-level and positive relationship between the influence of family and environment and the anxiety oriented towards socio-economic (r=.154; p<.01); occupational exam (r=.116; p<.05); and adaptation (r=.134; p<.01). Results showed that there is no significant relationship between the AOS and its sub-scales, and difficulties regarding professional education and working conditions, moving, and personal problems. Moreover, it was found that there is a positive, low-level, and significant relationship between the total score of PCBS and sub-scales of OAS excepting adaptation oriented and school management-oriented anxiety. The total scores obtained from the PCBS and the OAS were examined, it was found that there is a low-level and positive relationship between the two scales (r=196, p≤.0.01).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the relationship between PCB and OA of preservice teachers. Despite the relatively low level of career barriers, the first striking result of this study is high family and environmental reasons leading preservice teachers to perceive career barriers. Preservice teachers mentioned that they were directed to other professions by their high school teachers and family members. This is because other professions like medicine, law, and engineering have high respect (Pişkin and Parlar, 2021) and financial return (Aslan, 2023) in Türkiye. Furthermore, the rise in violence experienced by teachers in recent years (Bulut and Gürkan, 2022), unsupportive learning environment (Birmingham, 2009), the diminishing prestige of the teaching profession, especially in the recent years (Akpınar, 2013), and the changes in curricula and textbooks due to political issues (Azar, 2011) may also be the reasons for the direction to other professions.

Teacher education originated from the need to educate a literate generation in the past while the goal has evolved to nurturing an inquisitive, conscious, and culturally developed generation today (Eacute and Esteve, 2000; Thandi and Sethi, 2009). Additionally, preservice teachers identified the future of the teaching profession and labor market constraints as the second biggest career barrier. The preservice teachers were not pleased with the salary of the teaching profession in Türkiye which is below average compared to the OECD average (Demirel-Yazıcı and Cemaloğlu, 2022). In previous studies, teachers have stated that the economic benefits of the teaching profession are lower than those of other professions (Alkar et al., 2023). Also, they reported that the teaching profession has limited job and employment opportunities. Teachers have two-way career choices in Türkiye that are working in state schools appointed by MoNE after completing the National Education Academy (MoNE, 2024a) or working in working in private schools (Han and Mahzoun, 2018). Besides, previous statistics reported a significant gap between the number of applications made by teacher candidates who graduated from education faculties or had a pedagogical formation certificate and the number of those appointed by the Ministry of National Education each year in Türkiye (Strategy Development Directorate, 2021; 2022; 2023; 2024; 2025), alongside the consistent changes in appointment conditions (MoNE, 2024a). Lastly, preservice teachers stated low level of respect in society. In Türkiye, the teaching profession is perceived as less respected compared to other professions such as medicine, law, and engineering (Pişkin and Parlar, 2021).

This study found that grade level does not influence pre-service teachers' perceived career barriers, aligning with previous research (Gündoğdu, 2021; Timur, 2022). Unlike previous studies that showed female preservice teachers tend to perceive more career barriers than males (Cardoso and Marques, 2008; Gündoğdu, 2021; Luzzo and McWhirter, 2001; McWhirter, 1997; Raque-Bogdan et al., 2013; Sarsıkoğlu and Bacanlı, 2019), our study found no gender-based difference in pre-service teachers' PCB. Also, this study highlighted that preservice teachers with high academic achievements perceive fewer career barriers than others. This may be due to the positive effects of consistent and

intentional work, which decrease preservice teachers' stress and eliminate their career barriers (İnandı et al., 2022).

Aligned with Bozdam's (2008) study, this study showed that preservice teachers had a moderate level of OA. First, they reported a moderate to high level of occupational exam-oriented anxiety and mentioned their anxiety about getting low marks and not being appointed. This result can be attributed to the significant gap between the number of applications made by teacher candidates who graduated from education faculties or had a pedagogical formation certificate and the number of those appointed by the Ministry of National Education (Strategy Development Directorate, 2021; 2022; 2023; 2024; 2025). Second, they highlighted socio-economic oriented anxiety by stating some economic hardships like the inability to meet their family's needs, to maintain their life standards, and to join social and cultural activities due to their low income (Demirel-Yazıcı and Cemaloğlu, 2022). They also mentioned the limited social and cultural activities and the unsuitable classroom environment in the place where they will be appointed. According to the Regulation on Teacher Appointment and Replacement (MoNE, 2015), teachers are firstly appointed to places that are disadvantageous in terms of population, geographical location, socioeconomic development level, health, and transportation in Türkiye. Lastly, preservice teachers are more anxious about communication with students and school administration which can arise from the lack of experience in educational institutions and the limited contact with students and administrators (Atmaca, 2013; Gerçek, 2018).

This study revealed that gender is a determinant variable in preservice teachers' professional anxiety, with women experiencing more professional anxiety than men (Arslan et al., 2023; Bozkurt, 2004; Liu, 2008; Şahin, 2019; Taşğın, 2006). This finding is supported by societal perceptions that predominantly identify the teaching profession with women (Drudy, 2008) and the high number of female teachers (Griffiths, 2006). According to Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) in 2018, 63% of teachers in OECD countries and 55% in Türkiye are women. However, contrary to these findings, some studies indicate that the level of professional anxiety does not differ significantly by gender (Ajeenah, 2022; Ghaith and Shaaban, 1999).

In conclusion, a significant positive relationship was found between PCB and OA of preservice teachers. This indicates that barriers likely to be faced by preservice teachers affect their anxiety levels. Specifically, barriers related to lack of ability and interest, lack of motivation, and inadequate preparation impact preservice teachers' OA more than other factors. Previous research showed that career barriers negatively affect decision-making self-efficacy (Quimby and O'Brien, 2004) and optimism about career (Mori, 2004). They also lead to early or wrong vocational decisions (Lent and Brown, 1996) and career indecision (Leon, 2009), coming with increased career stress (Choi and Jung, 2018; Gürpınar et al., 2021; İnandı et al., 2022; Nadir, 2023).

Limitations

Although this study made contributions to educational research and practice, it also has some limitations. First, this study was conducted in the context of Türkiye. To make an international generalization, further studies can include preservice teachers from different countries. Second, the participants of our study were preservice teachers who did not have any teaching experiences therefore they can have sided perspectives. This study can be replicated with teachers. Third, this study used quantitative data. However, each preservice teacher or teacher has a different background that requires qualitative data to deeply understand the reasons behind their perceived stress and occupational anxiety.

Contribution Rate of Researchers

The study was conducted and reported with equal collaboration of the researchers.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Algılanan kariyer engelleri, bireyin kariyerinde ilerlemesini zorlaştıran olaylar veya koşullar olarak tanımlanmaktadır. İç ve dış engeller olarak sınıflandırılan algılanan kariyer engellerinde iç engeller, kariyer hedefleri için motivasyon veya yetenek eksikliği gibi kişisel faktörlerdir. Dış engeller ise aile talepleri, mali konular ve istihdam olanaklarındaki sınırlamalar gibi çevresel faktörleri ifade eder. Bu konuda yapılan çalışmalar söz konusu engellerin kariyer gelişiminde zorlayıcı olabileceğine işaret etmektedir. İlgili literatür incelendiğinde algılanan kariyer engellerinin; kariyer stresi, kariyer planlama süreci, mesleki sonuçlar, mesleki memnuniyet, mesleki tutum ve psikolojik dayanıklılık ile ilişkilendirildiği görülmektedir. Ancak bu çalışmalardaki niceliksel artışın karşısında öğretmen kariyerinin önündeki engellere odaklanan çalışmalar sınırlıdır. Literatürdeki mevcut çalışmalar, algılanan kariyer engellerinin kariyer gelişiminde oynadığı rolün kapsamlı bir şekilde anlaşılması için yetersiz kalmaktadır. Bu engeller genellikle toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizlikleri veya azınlıkların deneyimleri gibi belirli bağlamlarda incelenmektedir. Diğer taraftan kariyer gelişimini etkileyen tek faktörün olmadığını belirtmek çok önemlidir. Örneğin, mesleki kaygı, algılanan engelleri ve kariyer ilerlemesini önemli ölçüde etkileyebilmektedir.

Mesleki kaygı, bir çalışanın kaynaklarını, ihtiyaçlarını, yeteneklerini, bilgisini ve nihayetinde yönetme kapasitesini aşan iş taleplerini ve baskılarla karşılaştığında verdiği tepkiyi ifade eder. Bir meslek olarak hem fiziksel hem de zihinsel olarak zorlayıcı olan öğretmenlik mesleği, mesleki kaygıyı özellikle öğretmenler arasında yaygın hale getirmektedir. Söz gelimi öğretmenler, günlük ders hazırlıklarında önemli ölçüde enerji harcarken aynı zamanda kişisel ve ailevi yaşantılarını da dengelemektedir. Mevcut çalışma bu kapsamda öğretmen adaylarının hem algılanan kariyer engellerine hem de mesleki kaygılarına odaklanmakta ve ikisi arasındaki ilişkiyi analiz etmektedir. Bu temel amaç çerçevesinde tasarlanan araştırma soruları aşağıda verilmiştir:

1. Öğretmen adaylarının algılanan kariyer engelleri ve mesleki kaygı düzeyleri nasıldır?
2. Öğretmen adaylarının algılanan kariyer engelleri ve mesleki kaygı düzeyleri cinsiyet, sınıf düzeyi ve not ortalamasına göre anlamlı farklılık göstermekte midir?
3. Öğretmen adaylarının algılanan kariyer engelleri ve mesleki kaygı düzeyleri arasında anlamlı bir farklılık var mıdır?

Yöntem

Mevcut çalışmada, öğretmen adaylarının algılanan kariyer engelleri ile mesleki kaygıları arasındaki ilişki, ilişkisel tarama deseninde yürütülmüştür. Araştırma 2022-2023 eğitim-öğretim yılı bahar döneminde Türkiye'deki iki devlet üniversitesinin eğitim fakültelerinde öğrenimlerini sürdüren 401 öğretmen adayı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışma grubunun oluşturulmasında araştırmacılar için erişilebilirliğin daha kolay olması nedeniyle uygun örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. İlgili veriler, Algılanan Kariyer Engelleri Ölçeği (AKEÖ), Mesleki Kaygı Ölçeği (MKÖ) ve Kişisel Bilgi Formu ile sağlanmıştır. SPSS üzerinden yapılan analizlerde bağımsız örneklemler t-testi, tek yönlü varyans analizi (ANOVA), Hochberg testi ile Pearson Momentler Çarpımı Korelasyonu analizi kullanılmıştır.

Bulgular

Araştırmada öğretmen adaylarının algılanan kariyer engelleri ölçeğinden aldıkları puan ortalamasının X=2.14 olduğu; alt boyutlar arasında en yüksek ortalamanın "Aile ve çevre etkisi" alt boyutuna (X=2.56); en düşük ortalamanın "Cinsiyet ayrımcılığı" alt boyutuna (X=1.67) ait olduğu görülmektedir. Mesleki Kaygı ölçeğinin tamamından elde edilen ortalama, X=3.02'dir. Mesleki Kaygı ölçeğinin alt boyutları arasında en yüksek ortalama "Ekonomik/Sosyal merkezli kaygı" alt boyutu (X=3.39); en düşük ortalama ise "Meslektaş ve veli merkezli kaygı" (X=2.61) alt boyutlarına aittir. AKEÖ ve MKÖ arasındaki toplam puana bakıldığında aralarında pozitif yönde ve düşük düzeyde (r=

196) anlamlı ($p \leq .0.01$) bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Analizlerde öğretmen adaylarının AKEÖ'den elde ettikleri ortalama puanların cinsiyete göre anlamlı bir şekilde farklılaşmadığı görülmüştür ($p>0.5$). Öğretmen adaylarının MKÖ'den elde ettikleri puanlar incelendiğinde ise "ekonomik/sosyal merkezli kaygı", "öğrenci/iletişim merkezli kaygı", "meslektaş ve veli merkezli kaygı", "kişisel gelişim merkezli kaygı", "atanma merkezli kaygı", "uyum merkezli kaygı" ve "okul yönetimi merkezli kaygı" alt boyutlarından aldıkları puanların cinsiyete göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir şekilde farklılaştığı belirlenmiştir ($p< .05$). Bulgular, kadın öğretmen adaylarının erkek öğretmen adaylarına göre daha yüksek kaygı düzeyine sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Ayrıca bulgularda öğretmen adaylarının algılanan kariyer engelleri ve mesleki kaygı düzeyleri ile öğrenim gördükleri sınıf düzeyi arasında anlamlı bir farklılığın olmadığı saptanmıştır ($p>.05$). Öğretmen adaylarının AKEÖ'nin "cinsiyet ayrımcılığı", "yetenek ve ilgi azlığı ile ilgili engeller", "motivasyon eksikliği ve yetersiz hazırlanma" ile "kişisel problemler" alt boyutlarından elde ettikleri puanlarının not ortalamalarına göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir şekilde farklılaştığı belirlenmiştir ($p<.05$).

Sonuç, Tartışma ve Öneriler

Araştırmada öğretmen adaylarının kariyer engelleri düşük düzeyde bulunmuştur. Kariyer engelleri arasında öne çıkan ailesel ve çevresel nedenler ise öğretmen adaylarının kadın ağırlıklı olması ile ilişkilendirilebilir. Nitekim Türkiye gibi ataerkil toplumlarda ev işleri ve çocuk bakımı kadının öncelikli sorumluluğu olarak görülmektedir. Araştırmada cinsiyetin ve sınıf düzeyinin algılanan kariyer engelleri üzerinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir etkisinin olmadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Diğer yandan, öğretmen adaylarının algılanan kariyer engellerinin not ortalamalarına göre farklılık gösterdiği ve bu sonuçların not ortalaması yüksek öğretmen adayları lehine olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bu sonuç göstermektedir ki düşük not ortalamasına sahip öğretmen adayları daha fazla kariyer engeli algılamaktadır. Araştırmada, öğretmen adaylarının mesleki kaygılarının orta düzeyde olduğu ve bu kaygıyı en fazla atanma merkezli kaygı olarak yaşadıkları saptanmıştır. Mevcut çalışmada, meslektaş ve veli merkezli kaygılar ise en düşük seviyededir. Öğretmen adaylarının henüz bir kurumda çalışmıyor olmaları dolayısıyla öğrenci velileri ve meslektaşlarıyla iletişimde olmadıkları göz önüne alındığında söz konusu sonuçlar daha anlamlı hale gelmektedir. Elde edilen bulgular cinsiyetin öğretmen adaylarının mesleki kaygı düzeylerini etkilediğini ve kadın öğretmen adaylarının erkek öğretmen adaylarından daha fazla mesleki kaygı yaşadığını göstermektedir. Öğretmen adaylarının algılanan kariyer engelleri ile mesleki kaygı düzeyleri arasında pozitif yönde ve düşük düzeyde anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Bu sonuca göre, kariyer alanında karşılaşma olasılığı bulunan engeller öğretmen adaylarının kaygı düzeylerini etkilemektedir. Son olarak bu çalışma öğretmen adayları ile gerçekleştiği için bazı sınırlılıklara sahiptir. Bu bağlamda çalışmanın resmi ve özel okullarda görev yapan öğretmenlerle de gerçekleştirilmesi önerilebilir.