

Has COVID-19 changed pre-service teachers' perceptions of the profession? Yes, but not necessarily in bad ways

by Kendra Wells & Lia Daniels

Factors Influencing Teaching

Choice: Teaching choice is made up of *demands* and *returns* of the profession (Richardson & Watt, 2006).

Pandemic Teaching: Teaching became unpredictable and harder work during the pandemic (Bascia, 2022). Pre-service teachers watched changes from the sidelines. Their perceptions might have changed too.

Research Questions:

1. Reflecting on shifts to the profession resulting from COVID-19, what profiles of career fit (demand/return) characterise pre-service teachers?
2. How do the resultant profiles differ on commitment to the profession, value of school belonging (VoB), teaching efficacy, and career anxiety?

Methods: We administered a survey through a participant pool measuring demand, return, and career outcomes. We recruited 146 pre-service teachers: 104 identified as women; 87 were white.

Analysis:

1. EFA, descriptives, correlation matrix
2. K-means clustering (demand and return)
3. ANOVAs to analyze cluster differences on career outcomes

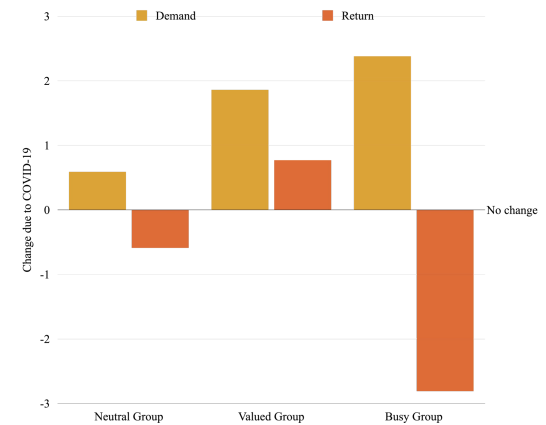


Although pre-service teachers felt that teaching became harder during the pandemic, they remained committed to the profession.



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Cluster Means:



ANOVA Results:

| Career Outcomes | Scale range | Neutral Group | Valued Group | Busy Group |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| Commit. | 1-10 | 8.56 | 8.72 | 8.63 |
| VoB | 1-7 | 4.26 | 4.97 | 4.51 |
| Efficacy | 1-5 | 3.43 | 3.50 | 3.41 |
| Career Anxiety | 1-5 | 2.67 | 2.90 | 3.15 |

Note: bold denotes mean difference ($p < .05$).

Discussion & Implications:

- Demand overall increased, but clusters were characterised by changes to return.
- Although significant cluster differences appeared for VoB and anxiety, commitment and efficacy were equal across clusters, highlighting that changes to demand and return will not worsen the existing teacher shortage.
- Researchers are encouraged to utilise person-centred analyses to obtain a unique perspective of their data.