Career Readiness Among Senior Pre-service Teachers: Implications for Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT:

Preparing pre-service teachers to meet professional demands is essential for a successful transition into teaching. This study examined the career readiness of 230 fourth-year pre-service teachers at Northwest Samar State University. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected through a validated structured questionnaire covering five dimensions: career confidence and aspirations, preparation and competence, job market awareness, external and financial influences, and future plans and intentions. Descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted using frequency, percentage, standard deviation, weighted mean, and ANOVA. Findings showed that respondents felt strongest in preparation and competence, reflecting confidence in their coursework and practicum experience. They expressed clear intentions to take the licensure examination, pursue further studies, and teach in underserved areas. Moderate confidence was observed regarding securing a teaching job, navigating job market challenges, and maintaining financial stability in the teaching profession. Significant differences in career readiness emerged based on age, program enrolled, and household income, while sex and licensure plans showed no influence. The study emphasizes the need to strengthen mentorship, career guidance, and job placement initiatives, particularly for financially challenged students. Enhancing curricula and institutional support is crucial to equip pre-service teachers for professional realities and foster the future-proofing of teacher education in the 21st century.

Keywords: career readiness, pre-service teachers, teacher education, descriptive research, professional preparation

INTRODUCTION

Teaching demands not only mastery of content and pedagogy but also strong career readiness, enabling pre-service teachers to transition confidently into professional practice. Career readiness involves confidence, competence, job market awareness, and the ability to navigate financial and external challenges (NACE, 2015), making it especially critical for senior pre-service teachers nearing graduation.

In today's dynamic educational landscape, teacher education must produce competent, resilient, and adaptable educators. Career readiness is a key marker of whether graduates can thrive amid teacher shortages, high attrition, and limited growth opportunities globally (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017; OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2019). In the Philippines, program oversaturation and shortages in Science, Mathematics, and TLE, coupled with financial and societal pressures, complicate the path to professional teaching (Bautista, Bernardo, & Ocampo, 2018; CHED, 2017; World Bank, 2021; Fraser & Taylor, 2022).

Despite its importance, career readiness remains underexplored locally, with most studies focusing on academic or licensure outcomes. This study examined senior pre-service teachers' career readiness across multiple dimensions, explores demographic influences, and identifies differences by personal and academic characteristics. The findings aim to guide future-oriented curriculum design, career guidance, mentorship, and policy initiatives, supporting the development of teachers prepared for 21st-century challenges.

OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to:

1. Determine the profile of pre-service teachers in terms of

1.1 age,

1.2 sex,

1.3 program enrolled,

1.4 licensure examination plan, and

1.5 household monthly income;

2. Assess the level of career readiness of pre-service teachers across five dimensions:

2.1 career confidence and aspirations,

2.2 preparation and competence,

2.3 job market awareness,

2.4 external and financial influences, and

2.5 future plans and intentions;

3. Examine whether there is significant difference in the level of career readiness when pre-service teachers are grouped according to their profile; and

4. Draw implications of the findings for teacher education.

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis was tested in this study:

HO1: There is no significant difference in the level of career readiness of respondents when they are grouped according to their profile.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Career readiness among pre-service teachers has gained increasing attention in global and local contexts, as it serves as a critical indicator of how effectively teacher education programs prepare future educators for professional practice. It encompasses not only mastery of pedagogy and subject content but also self-efficacy, adaptability, and awareness of career pathways and challenges (NACE, 2015; OECD, 2021).

Career Confidence and Aspirations

Career confidence and aspirations form the foundation of teacher career readiness. According to Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017), teacher candidates who view teaching as a meaningful and fulfilling profession are more likely to persist in the field and demonstrate higher job satisfaction. Intrinsic motivation, shaped by personal values

and professional identity, strongly influences career commitment (Fraser & Taylor, 2022). In the Philippine context, Bautista, Bernardo, and Ocampo (2018) emphasized that confidence levels among pre-service teachers are affected by perceived employment stability and the societal status of teachers. The Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS, 2024) further noted that teacher confidence often fluctuates due to job market imbalances, oversupply in certain disciplines, and the competitive nature of public school employment.

Preparation and Competence

Preparation and competence refer to the extent to which teacher education programs equip students with the skills and knowledge required for effective classroom practice. Darling-Hammond (2010) highlighted that structured coursework and immersive practicum experiences are central to developing pedagogical competence and professional confidence. Similarly, Cochran-Smith et al. (2016) argued that reflective teaching, practical exposure, and strong mentorship relationships lead to holistic professional growth. In local studies, Laguador (2014) and Zeichner (2012) found that practicum experiences significantly enhance classroom management, lesson planning, and assessment competencies among pre-service teachers. This suggests that experiential learning bridges theory and practice, shaping teachers' readiness to manage real-world classroom challenges.

Job Market Awareness

Job market awareness is another essential dimension of career readiness. It includes understanding employment opportunities, recruitment processes, and the broader dynamics of the teaching profession. According to the OECD (2021), teacher education institutions play a pivotal role in preparing graduates to navigate the job market by providing career counseling and exposure to employment networks. Guo (2017) observed that globalization has expanded opportunities for teachers to work abroad, increasing the need for international job awareness and adaptability. In the Philippines, Darling-Hammond (2017) and PIDS (2025) reported that while graduates often express enthusiasm for teaching, many lack practical knowledge of hiring systems and job search strategies, highlighting the need for stronger institutional career support.

External and Financial Influences

External and financial factors also play a critical role in shaping pre-service teachers' career decisions. UNESCO (2019) emphasized that socio-economic conditions and compensation levels significantly influence teacher motivation and retention. Fraser and Taylor (2022) noted that financial stability and perceived career prestige determine whether new graduates remain in teaching or pursue alternative professions. Orbeta, Esguerra, and Tullao (2016) found that in the Philippines, family expectations and financial pressures are strong determinants of career choice among education students. Similarly, low starting salaries and limited mobility often discourage young professionals from entering or staying in the teaching profession (World Bank, 2018). These factors suggest that external conditions must be addressed through supportive policies, competitive compensation, and benefits packages to sustain teacher commitment.

Future Plans and Intentions

Future career intentions reflect the forward-looking aspect of teacher readiness. Darling-Hammond (2010) noted that teachers who exhibit clear professional goals—such as obtaining licensure, pursuing graduate studies, and serving in underserved areas—are more

likely to demonstrate resilience and long-term engagement. Fraser and Taylor (2022) and UNESCO (2019) emphasized the importance of continuous professional development as a means of sustaining teacher growth and adaptability. Locally, Bautista, Bernardo, and Ocampo (2018) observed that while many Filipino pre-service teachers plan to enter the teaching profession, some remain open to alternative careers due to financial uncertainties and job saturation. Hence, long-term professional planning should be supported through structured guidance, mentoring, and policy initiatives that align with labor market realities.

The reviewed literature and studies collectively underscore that teacher career readiness is a multidimensional construct encompassing psychological, pedagogical, economic, and contextual factors. Global and local evidence consistently highlights that while pre-service teachers often possess strong intrinsic motivation and competence, their readiness is moderated by external influences, financial considerations, and varying access to career guidance. These findings affirm the need for holistic teacher education programs that not only develop instructional competence but also cultivate professional identity, confidence, and adaptability. Strengthening institutional support, career counseling, and policy frameworks can therefore ensure that graduates transition successfully into the teaching profession and sustain long-term commitment.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to profile pre-service teachers (age, sex, program enrolled, licensure plan, household income) and assess their career readiness across five dimensions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Descriptive statistics (weighted mean, standard deviation) summarized the data, while one-way ANOVA examined differences in readiness across profile variables, providing insights for enhancing teacher preparation programs (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Walker, 2014).

Respondents and Sampling

The respondents consisted of 230 graduating pre-service teachers from various programs at Northwest Samar State University (NwSSU), including Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd); Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) majors in English, Filipino, Values Education, Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies; Bachelor of Physical Education (BPED); Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education major in Information and Communication Technology (BTLED-ICT); and Bachelor of Technical-Vocational Teacher Education major in Food and Service Management (BTVTED-FSM). Total enumeration sampling technique was employed, as all graduating pre-service teachers from these programs during Academic Year 2024–2025 were included in the study.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire developed from existing literature on teacher career readiness (Darling-Hammond, 2010; UNESCO, 2019; World Bank, 2018). The questionnaire was composed of two sections: the first focused on demographic information such as age, sex, program enrolled, licensure examination plan, and household monthly income, while the second consisted of the career readiness scale covering the five dimensions.

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale.

To ensure accessibility and convenience, the instrument was deployed through Google Forms, which allowed respondents to complete the survey using their personal devices at their preferred time. The online format also minimized logistical challenges in distribution and collection, ensured real-time recording of responses, and reduced potential data entry errors.

Validation of the Instrument

Before the main data collection, the instrument underwent pilot testing with a separate group of pre-service teachers from NwSSU who were not part of the 230 respondents. The pilot test aimed to ensure the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the items. Feedback from this process was used to refine the instrument prior to its distribution to the main respondents. Reliability analysis of the pilot data yielded an overall Cronbach's α of 0.861, indicating high internal consistency. By dimension, the mean reliability coefficients were: Career Confidence and Aspirations (0.8534), Preparation and Competence (0.8433), Job Market Awareness (0.7977), External and Financial Influences (0.8292), and Future Plans and Intentions (0.8625). These results confirm that the instrument demonstrates acceptable to strong reliability across all dimensions, supporting its validity as a measure of pre-service teachers' career readiness. According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), Cronbach's alpha values of 0.70 and above indicate acceptable reliability, while values exceeding 0.80 reflect good internal consistency, suggesting that all dimensions of the instrument demonstrate acceptable to strong reliability. These results confirm that the instrument is a reliable and valid measure of pre-service teachers' career readiness (Cronbach, 1951; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to summarize the respondents' demographic profile and levels of career readiness. To test for significant differences in career readiness across profile variables, a one-way ANOVA was conducted at the 0.05 level of significance. All statistical analyses were carried out using Jamovi version 2.2.6 (The Jamovi Project, 2023).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was embedded in the Google Form, requiring respondents to confirm agreement before proceeding to the survey. Respondents were assured that their participation or non-participation would not affect their academic standing or any institutional privileges.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained by coding responses and avoiding the collection of personally identifiable information. Google Form settings were configured to restrict multiple entries and prevent the recording of email addresses or other identifiers, ensuring respondent privacy. Data were stored securely in a password-protected account and were accessible only to the researchers. Results were reported in aggregate form to prevent the identification of individual participants. Moreover, participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. These

measures ensured that the study adhered to ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and justice, as outlined in the Philippine National Ethical Guidelines for Health and Social Science Research (Philippine Health Research Ethics Board, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

Tables 1 to 5 present the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, program enrolled, licensure examination plan, and household monthly income, respectively.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

in terms of Age

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
20–21 years	90	39.10
22–23 years	120	52.20
24+ years	20	8.70
Total	230	100
Mean	22.45	
SD	2.053	

Table 1 shows that most respondents were 22–23 years old (120, 52.20%), followed by 20–21 years (90, 39.10%), and 24+ years (20, 8.70%) (PSA, 2023). The mean age was 22.45 years (SD = 2.05), indicating a cohort mostly within the typical graduation age, with a small proportion of older students adding diversity.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

in terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	156	67.83
Male	74	32.17
Total	230	100

Table 2 shows that most respondents were female (156, 67.83%) and 74 (32.17%) were male (PSA, 2023). This aligns with the global and Philippine trend of female predominance in teacher education, with male respondents adding gender diversity to the sample.

Table 3: Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms

of Program Enrolled

Program Enrolled	Frequency	Percentage
BEED	26	11.30
BPED	23	10.00
BSED – English	27	11.74
BSED – Filipino	28	12.17
BSED – Science	26	11.30
BSED– Social Studies	26	11.30
BSED– Values Education	27	11.74
BSED –Mathematics	25	10.87
BTLED - ICT	15	6.52
BTVTED - FSM	7	3.04
Total	230	100

Table 3 indicates that most respondents were enrolled in BSED–Filipino (28, 12.17%), BSED–English and BSED–Values Education (27, 11.74% each), with BEED, BSED–Science, and BSED–Social Studies close behind (26, 11.30% each). BSED–Mathematics (25, 10.87%) and BPED (23, 10.00%) were slightly smaller, while technical-vocational programs had fewer respondents: BTLED–ICT (15, 6.52%) and BTVTED–FSM (7, 3.04%). This distribution reflects the national trend of higher enrollment in general

and secondary education programs compared to technical-vocational tracks (DepEd, 2025).

Table 4: Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Licensure Examination Plan

Licensure Examination Plan	Frequency	Percentage
Planning to Take After Gaining Work Experience	16	6.95
Planning to Take Immediately After Graduation	171	74.35
Undecided	43	18.70
Total	230	100

Table 4 reveals that most respondents (74.35%) planned to take the licensure examination immediately after graduation, 18.70% were undecided, and 6.95% preferred to gain work experience first. These findings indicate strong motivation among graduates, while highlighting the need for targeted career counseling and flexible support programs to assist those who are undecided or delaying licensure.

Table 5: Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Household Monthly Income

Household Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
₱10,001–₱20,000	44	19.13
₱20,001–₱30,000	7	3.04
Above ₱30,000	9	3.91
Below ₱10,000	170	73.91

Data in **Table 5** indicate that most respondents (73.91%) came from households earning below ₱10,000 per month, while only 3.04% reported monthly incomes above ₱20,000. All respondents benefited from the government's Free Tuition Program, highlighting their reliance on public support to access higher education. These findings underscore the need for strengthened support mechanisms—scholarships, stipends, affordable licensure review programs—and targeted career readiness guidance to help students from low-income families navigate financial and educational challenges, fostering competent and resilient future educators.

Level of Teacher Career Readiness of the Respondents

Tables 6 to 10 present the respondents' level of teacher career readiness across five dimensions: career confidence and aspirations, preparation and competence, job market awareness, external and financial influences, and future plans and intentions, respectively.

Table 6: Level of Teacher Career Readiness of the Respondents in terms of Career Confidence and Aspirations

Career Confidence and Aspirations	WM	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I feel confident that I will secure a teaching job after I graduate.	3.23	0.180	Moderate
2. I am committed to starting a teaching career after graduation.	3.47	0.652	Moderate
3. I believe that teaching is a meaningful and fulfilling career.	4.53	0.392	Very High
4. I would still choose teaching even if I were offered a higher salary in another field.	3.43	0.859	Moderate
5. I aspire to become a school leader (e.g., master teacher, principal) in the future.	3.79	0.507	High
Overall	3.69	0.518	High

Interpretation: Very High (4.50–5.00), High (3.50–4.49), Moderate (2.50–3.49), Low (1.50–2.49), and Very Low (1.00–1.49)

Table 6 shows that respondents generally exhibited a **high level of career confidence and aspirations** (WM = 3.69, SD = 0.518, High). Teaching was perceived as a meaningful and fulfilling career (WM = 4.53, SD = 0.392, Very High), reflecting strong intrinsic motivation (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). Confidence in securing a teaching job was **moderate** (WM = 3.23, SD = 0.180, Moderate), likely due to perceived job market imbalances (Bautista, Bernardo, & Ocampo, 2018; PIDS, 2024, 2025). Aspirations for leadership roles (WM = 3.79, SD = 0.507, High) and commitment to start teaching immediately after graduation (WM = 3.47, SD = 0.652, Moderate) were forward-looking but slightly tempered by financial considerations (WM = 3.43, SD = 0.859, Moderate; Fraser & Taylor, 2022; PIDS, 2025). These findings highlight the need for enhanced career guidance, job placement support, and policies that address both confidence and financial concerns in teacher education (UNESCO, 2019; PIDS, 2024).

Table 7: Level of Teacher Career Readiness of the Respondents in terms of Preparation and Competence

Preparation and Competence	WM	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. My coursework has prepared me well for classroom teaching	4.27	0.818	High
2. I feel confident in my ability to manage a classroom effectively	4.18	0.908	High
3. I am able to create and deliver effective lesson plans.	4.17	0.685	High
4. I feel capable of assessing and evaluating students' learning outcomes	4.22	0.151	High
5. My practice teaching experience has helped me feel ready to teach in a real classroom.	4.43	0.222	High
Overall	4.25	0.557	High

Interpretation: Very High (4.50–5.00), High (3.50–4.49), Moderate (2.50–3.49), Low (1.50–2.49), and Very Low (1.00–1.49)

Results **in Table 7** indicate that respondents reported a **high level of preparation and competence** (WM = 4.25, SD = 0.557, High), with practice teaching experience rated the highest (WM = 4.43, SD = 0.222, High), highlighting the critical role of experiential learning in teacher preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Competence in lesson planning (WM = 4.17, High) and classroom management (WM = 4.18, High) was slightly lower, suggesting areas for continued growth. Assessment and evaluation skills were also perceived as **high** (WM = 4.22, SD = 0.151, High), reflecting confidence in measuring student learning outcomes (Laguador, 2014; Zeichner, 2012). These findings underscore that pre-service teachers are generally well-prepared, but ongoing enhancement of coursework and practicum—integrating theory, practice, and reflective learning—is essential for developing holistic teacher competence (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016).

Table 8: Level of Teacher Career Readiness of the Respondents in terms of Job Market Awareness

Job Market Awareness	WM	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I know where and how to apply for teaching jobs in my area.	3.52	0.400	High
2. I am aware of the application process for public school teaching positions	3.57	0.993	High

3. My college university has provided adequate career counseling or guidance	3.99	0.561	High
4. I believe there are good job opportunities for new teachers in the Philippines.	3.56	0.264	High
5. I am considering applying for teaching jobs abroad after graduation.	3.60	0.413	High
Overall	3.65	0.526	High

Interpretation: Very High (4.50–5.00), High (3.50–4.49), Moderate (2.50–3.49), Low (1.50–2.49), and Very Low (1.00–1.49)

Table 8 shows that senior pre-service teachers generally exhibited a **high level of job market awareness** (WM = 3.65, SD = 0.526, High). The highest rating was given to the adequacy of career counseling provided by their university (WM = 3.99, SD = 0.561, High), highlighting the importance of institutional support in preparing graduates for the job market (OECD, 2021). Respondents also reported high awareness of the application process for public school teaching positions (WM = 3.57, High) and confidence in local teaching opportunities (WM = 3.56, High), while interest in applying abroad (WM = 3.60, High) reflects the global mobility trend among teachers (Guo, 2017). The slightly lower score on knowing where and how to apply for jobs (WM = 3.52, High) indicates the need for more practical, hands-on job search preparation, consistent with Darling-Hammond's (2017) emphasis on teacher education fostering both professional competence and career readiness.

Table 9: Level of Teacher Career Readiness of the Respondents in terms of External and Financial Influences

External and Financial Influences	WM	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I believe the salary of public school teachers is enough to support a modest lifestyle.	3.34	0.187	Moderate
2. My decision to teach is influenced by financial considerations.	3.53	0.706	High
3. My family's expectations affect my career decisions.	3.69	0.691	High
4. I am willing to relocate for a teaching job	3.67	0.595	High
5. Government scholarships or incentives encourage me to pursue teaching.	3.38	0.509	Moderate
Overall	3.52	0.537	High

Interpretation: Very High (4.50–5.00), High (3.50–4.49), Moderate (2.50–3.49), Low (1.50–2.49), and Very Low (1.00–1.49)

Findings in Table 9 indicate that respondents generally reported a **high level of influence from external and financial factors** on their career readiness (WM = 3.52, SD = 0.537, High). Among the factors, family expectations were rated the highest (WM =

3.69, High), highlighting the significant role of familial influence on career decisions (Orbeta, Esguerra, & Tullao, 2016). Willingness to relocate for a teaching job (WM = 3.67, High) and financial considerations (WM = 3.53, High) further shaped career choices, reflecting both flexibility and economic realities (UNESCO, 2019; Fraser & Taylor, 2022). Moderately rated factors, such as satisfaction with teacher salaries (WM = 3.34, Moderate) and the influence of government scholarships or incentives (WM = 3.38, Moderate), suggest some ambivalence regarding financial stability. These findings underscore the importance of providing stronger institutional support, competitive compensation, and targeted incentives to sustain motivation and attract qualified teachers.

Table 10: Level of Teacher Career Readiness of the Respondents in terms of Future Plans and Intentions

Future Plans and Intentions	WM	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I plan to take the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) immediately after graduating.	4.32	0.061	High
2. I am interested in pursuing a master's degree in education.	3.79	0.064	High
3. I see myself teaching in the next five years.	3.85	0.712	High
4. I am willing to teach in rural or underserved areas if needed.	3.84	0.783	High
5. I might shift to another profession if better opportunities become available.	3.91	0.083	High
Overall	3.94	0.341	High

Interpretation: Very High (4.50–5.00), High (3.50–4.49), Moderate (2.50–3.49), Low (1.50–2.49), and Very Low (1.00–1.49)

Results in Table 10 show that respondents generally reported a **high level of future plans and intentions** for their teaching careers (WM = 3.94, SD = 0.341, High). Most respondents planned to take the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) immediately after graduation (WM = 4.32, High), reflecting strong professional commitment (Darling-Hammond, 2010). They also intended to remain in the teaching profession, including willingness to teach in rural or underserved areas (WM = 3.84–3.85, High), and expressed interest in pursuing graduate studies (WM = 3.79, High) to enhance professional growth (Fraser & Taylor, 2022; UNESCO, 2019). However, the openness to shifting to another profession if better opportunities arise (WM = 3.91, High) indicates considerations related to financial and professional stability (Bautista, Bernardo, & Ocampo, 2018). These findings highlight the importance of providing **licensure support, career guidance, and policies that ensure long-term sustainability and motivation in the teaching profession.**

Table 11: Summary of Overall Level of Teacher Career Readiness of the Respondents

Career Readiness Components	Overall Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Career Confidences and Aspirations	3.69	0.518	High
Preparation and Competence	4.25	0.557	High
Job Market Awareness	3.69	0.526	High
External and Financial Influences	3.69	0.537	High
Future Plans and Intentions	3.94	0.341	High
Overall	3.85	0.496	High

Interpretation: Very High (4.50–5.00), High (3.50–4.49), Moderate (2.50–3.49), Low (1.50–2.49), and Very Low (1.00–1.49)

Table 11 shows that respondents exhibited an overall *high* level of teacher career readiness (WM = 3.85, SD = 0.496). *Preparation and Competence* ranked highest (WM = 4.25), reflecting the strong foundation provided by coursework and practicum experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2010). High ratings in *Career Confidence and Aspirations* and *Future Plans and Intentions* indicate sustained motivation and professional commitment (Fraser & Taylor, 2022; UNESCO, 2019). Likewise, *Job Market Awareness* (WM = 3.69) suggests adequate exposure to employment opportunities, while *External and Financial Influences* (WM = 3.69) highlight the role of family expectations and economic considerations. These results underscore the need for strengthened institutional support, particularly through enhanced **compensation and benefits packages**, career guidance, and continuous professional development to ensure long-term commitment in the teaching field (Orbeta, Esguerra, & Tullao, 2016; PIDS, 2024; OECD, 2021).

Difference in Level of Career Readiness of Respondents

According to their Profile

Table 12: Difference in Level of Career Readiness of Respondents according to their Profile

Profile Variables	F	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	1.800	0.028	Reject Ho	Significant
Sex	1.190	0.321	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Program Enrolled	2.880	0.026	Reject Ho	Significant
Licensure Examination Plan	0.852	0.570	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Household Monthly Income	2.860	0 .027	Reject Ho	Significant

Results in Table 12 reveal significant differences in career readiness by age (F = 1.800, p = 0.028), program enrolled (F = 2.880, p = 0.026), and household income (F = 2.860, p = 0.027), indicating that maturity, specialization, and socio-economic background

influence confidence and outlook. Younger students may be less certain, while older or more experienced students show stronger commitment (Fraser & Taylor, 2022). Program differences reflect subject-specific readiness amid teacher oversupply and STEM shortages (Bautista, Bernardo, & Ocampo, 2018), and income impacts financial expectations and career decisions (UNESCO, 2019). No significant differences were observed by sex ($F = 1.190$, $p = 0.321$) or licensure plan ($F = 0.852$, $p = 0.570$), suggesting these factors do not strongly affect readiness. These findings highlight the need for policies responsive to socio-demographic diversity while ensuring equitable support to strengthen career readiness.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that senior pre-service teachers at Northwest Samar State University demonstrated a high level of career readiness across all dimensions—career confidence and aspirations, preparation and competence, job market awareness, external and financial influences, and future plans and intentions. Among these, preparation and competence ranked highest, underscoring the effectiveness of coursework and practicum in building essential teaching skills. Respondents also exhibited strong professional commitment and motivation to pursue licensure, graduate studies, and long-term engagement in the teaching profession.

However, moderate confidence in employment prospects and financial stability indicates continuing concerns about job availability and the economic sustainability of the profession. Significant variations in readiness across age, program, and household income further highlight how maturity, specialization, and socio-economic background shape pre-service teachers' career outlook and preparedness.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) enhance career guidance, mentorship, and job placement programs to strengthen pre-service teachers' confidence and facilitate their transition to employment. Collaborations with DepEd, local governments, and private schools may be expanded to support placement initiatives, particularly in priority areas such as STEM and technical-vocational education. Moreover, increasing access to scholarships, stipends, and affordable licensure review programs can help address financial barriers that hinder career progression.

Curricular reforms could also integrate career readiness competencies including financial literacy, job search strategies, and professional resilience to complement pedagogical training. Finally, sustained policy interventions that promote competitive compensation, comprehensive benefits, and continuous professional development are vital to ensure teacher retention, enhance job satisfaction, and uphold the long-term sustainability of the teaching profession.

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