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THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEPTION OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION ON THE INTEREST IN BECOMING A TEACHER: A CASE STUDY OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how teachers' perceptions influence individuals' interest in choosing a profession as a teacher. The aim is to uncover the impact of these perceptions on the interest in becoming a teacher, with the expectation that the findings will provide new insights for teacher recruitment strategies in the future and enhance the quality of education. The results are expected to offer recommendations for designing teacher professional development programs and serve as a reference for future researchers in exploring other factors influencing interest in becoming a teacher. The research type used is quantitative research with the dependent variable being the interest in becoming a teacher, and the independent variable being teachers' perceptions. The population in this study consists of students from the Economic Education Department, Faculty of Economics, Universitas Negeri Medan, class of 2021. The sample in this study is 70 students. Due to the relatively small population size, a saturated sampling technique was used. Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire, and data analysis was performed using simple regression. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights into how teachers' perceptions impact students' career choices. By understanding these perceptions, education stakeholders can develop targeted strategies to improve teacher recruitment and retention. Moreover, the results could guide the creation of policies and programs aimed at improving the image of the teaching profession, thereby attracting more individuals to consider teaching as a viable and rewarding career. The study also has the potential to influence educational institutions and policymakers in designing more effective teacher professional development initiatives.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and rapid development, the teaching profession plays a crucial role in shaping the personalities and knowledge of future generations. Choosing a career as a teacher is one of the most important decisions in an individual's life (Portillo & Fernández-baena, 2020; Spinath & Spinath, 2005). In the context of education, teachers are central to forming the next generation of citizens who will contribute to society. However, the interest in the teaching profession has shown fluctuations over time. Several factors may influence this, including perceptions of the profession itself (Wagemans et al., 2012). These perceptions can stem from personal experiences, the working environment, and the recognition or rewards received by teachers. Understanding how teachers' perceptions impact their interest in becoming educators is essential, as

this directly correlates with the availability and quality of teachers in the future (Dolcos, 2020; Hoyle, 2021). The perceptions that teachers hold about their profession can potentially shape the decisions of future educators in choosing teaching as a career. Thus, it is important to examine in greater detail the impact of teachers' perceptions on the interest in the teaching profession.

In many countries, including Indonesia, attracting qualified and dedicated individuals into the teaching profession has become increasingly difficult (Ghofur & Rachma, 2021; Wahyu et al., 2017). This challenge is influenced by various factors, such as the public's perception of the teaching profession, working conditions, and the reward system available to teachers. In this context, understanding teachers' perceptions can offer insight into what those on the front lines of education truly want (Fauzi et al., 2020; Susanto & Farozin, 2018). Is it an improvement in working conditions, better salaries, or greater recognition and appreciation from society? By exploring these factors, we can better understand the needs and expectations of teachers, which will ultimately help in formulating effective strategies to not only increase interest in teaching but also to retain and improve the quality of those already in the profession.

This research focuses on how teachers' perceptions of their profession influence an individual's decision to pursue a career in teaching (Kansanen, 1999). The central question of this study is whether positive or negative perceptions are more dominant in affecting the decision-making process (Hopmann, 2007; Siregar, 2016). The problem is, therefore, to investigate the extent to which these perceptions shape career choices and how they can be leveraged to encourage more individuals to consider teaching as a viable and rewarding profession. The novelty of this research lies in its exploration of how different perceptions of the teaching profession can either attract or deter potential teachers. While existing studies have explored general factors influencing career choices, few have specifically focused on the relationship between teachers' own perceptions and the interest in entering the teaching profession (Leyton-Román et al., 2020; Loewenberg Ball et al., 2008; Zuo et al., 2012). This gap in the literature is significant because it offers new insights into the motivations behind career decisions, particularly within the context of a profession that is essential for the future of education. The study addresses this gap by investigating not just external factors such as salary or working conditions but also the internal perceptions that shape the outlook of potential teachers.

This study aims to uncover the influence of teachers' perceptions on the interest of individuals in becoming teachers. By understanding this relationship, it is hoped that new insights can be provided regarding future teacher recruitment strategies, which can contribute to the improvement of the education system (Ferri, 2020; Patjas et al., 2021; Taubert, 2019). By recognizing the factors that positively or negatively affect teachers' perceptions, this research aims to offer practical recommendations for designing programs that can help attract individuals into the teaching profession and enhance the overall quality of education.

Furthermore, the significance of this research extends beyond just the recruitment of teachers. The results could serve as a foundation for educational institutions and policymakers to create strategies that address the concerns and expectations of teachers, thereby improving retention rates and job satisfaction (Munna & Kalam, 2021; Sayed Munna & Kalam, 2021). In a time where the demand for quality educators continues to rise, understanding and addressing the perceptions of teachers is crucial for the continued success of educational systems worldwide. This research is also expected to offer valuable recommendations for educational institutions in designing teacher professional development programs (Jeffery, 2020). These programs could be focused on improving the perceptions of the profession by addressing the concerns of teachers, increasing the recognition of their roles, and ensuring that their work environment is conducive to growth and development. By enhancing the perception of the teaching profession, these programs could help foster a sense of pride and commitment among teachers, thereby increasing the likelihood of attracting and retaining high-quality individuals in the field.

Hence, this study addresses a critical issue in the education sector by examining how teachers' perceptions influence individuals' decisions to pursue a teaching career. By focusing on the internal factors that shape career choices, this research aims to provide valuable insights into teacher recruitment and retention strategies. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of policies and programs that can enhance the teaching profession's image, improve working conditions, and ultimately raise the quality of education.

2.   METHOD

This study adopts a comprehensive quantitative approach that focuses on examining the relationship between two key, complex variables (Cresswell, 2012). The dependent variable being investigated is the interest in becoming a teacher, which is not only viewed as a result of individual internal factors but also influenced by the participants' perceptions of the teaching profession, which acts as the independent variable. The research design takes into account the dynamic interaction between students' perceptions of the teaching profession and their interest in pursuing a career as a teacher. This approach provides a more in-depth understanding of how perceptions shape career decisions.

To ensure a thorough representation of the target population, the study employs a saturated sampling technique, which involves selecting a sample that encompasses a variety of characteristics within the population being studied. By using this method, the findings are expected to be more generalizable and reliable, reflecting the diverse experiences and views of the participants (Krishnaswamy et al., 2012). The population in this study consists of students from the Faculty of Economics at Universitas Negeri Medan, specifically those majoring in Economics Education. The sample selected for this research includes 70 students, ensuring that the study covers a wide array of individual characteristics, which provides a well-rounded understanding of the factors influencing students' career interests.

Data collection for this study was conducted through a well-structured questionnaire, specifically designed to measure students' perceptions of the teaching profession and their interest in becoming teachers. The questionnaire includes items that assess various dimensions of perception, such as teachers' competencies, rights, and obligations, drawing from the framework developed by (Beck & Kosnik, 2002). This allows the study to capture a comprehensive view of how students perceive the role and value of teachers. The interest in becoming a teacher is also measured through three distinct psychological dimensions: cognition (knowledge), emotion (feelings), and conation (intention). These three dimensions provide a multi-faceted view of how students' psychological and emotional states shape their career preferences.

The measurement of perceptions through these indicators enables the study to examine how students view the teaching profession in a holistic manner, including their understanding of the teacher's competencies, rights, and responsibilities. This helps to uncover deeper insights into how these factors influence the decision to pursue teaching as a career. Furthermore, measuring students' interest through the three dimensions of cognition, emotion, and conation introduces additional complexity to the analysis, as it considers the underlying psychological processes that contribute to career decisions. These dimensions allow the study to explore not just the intellectual understanding of the profession, but also the emotional attachment and personal motivation that drive individuals to choose teaching.

In terms of data analysis, the study uses simple regression analysis to quantitatively assess the relationship between students' perceptions of the teaching profession and their interest in becoming teachers (Ramsay & Silverman, 2015). This statistical method is appropriate for examining how one variable (perception) influences the other (interest), and it provides clear insights into the strength and nature of this relationship. The regression analysis is aimed at understanding the extent to which students' views on the teaching profession impact their career preferences, while accounting for the various internal and external factors that may shape their decisions. This approach allows the study to present a clear, data-driven picture of how perceptions translate into career interest, offering valuable implications for teacher recruitment strategies.

By focusing on both the independent variable (teachers' perceptions) and the dependent variable (students' interest in teaching), the study seeks to identify significant patterns and factors that can help improve strategies for attracting and retaining qualified teachers. The use of regression analysis allows for a nuanced understanding of the influence of perceptions, providing a solid foundation for further exploration into how perceptions of the teaching profession can be shaped and improved to attract more individuals to the field. In summary, this study employs a robust research design that integrates a comprehensive measurement approach with sophisticated data analysis techniques, ensuring that the findings contribute meaningfully to the understanding of how perceptions of the teaching profession impact career choices.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before delving into the detailed analysis of the results, it is important to highlight the statistical tests conducted to assess the underlying assumptions and relationships within the data. These tests, including normality, linearity, heteroscedasticity, and hypothesis testing, provide crucial insights into the structure and significance of the variables in the study. The analysis employs a series of regression models to understand how the perception of the teaching profession influences the students' interest in becoming a teacher. The results of these tests will be elaborated in the following tables and will guide the interpretation of the study's findings.

From the output above, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.200; since 0.33 > 0.05, H0 is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables, namely the perception of the teaching profession and the interest in becoming a teacher, follow a normal distribution. Based on the results of the ANOVA analysis presented in the table, the Sig. Deviation from Linearity value is 0.143, which is greater than the established significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted. This means there is no sufficient evidence to reject the assumption that the relationship between the perception of the teaching profession and the interest in becoming a teacher is linear. From the Coefficients table, the Sig. value is 0.808, which is greater than 0.05, so H0 is accepted. Hence, it can be concluded that there is no issue of heteroscedasticity in the model used in this study.

In the B column, the constant value is 29.221, and the regression coefficient for the perception of the teaching profession is 0.740. Therefore, the regression equation is Y = 29.22 + 0.740X, which means: a. With a constant (a) of 29.22, it can be concluded that when the perception of the teaching profession (X) is 0, the average interest in becoming a teacher (Y) is 0.740 units. b. The regression slope of 0.740 indicates that every increase of 1 unit in the perception of the teaching profession (X) will result in an increase in interest in becoming a teacher (Y) by 0.740 units. The positive regression coefficient shows a positive relationship between the perception of the teaching profession and the interest in becoming a teacher, meaning that the higher the perception of the teaching profession, the higher the interest in becoming a teacher.

The R value in the model summary table of simple regression is 0.735. Furthermore, the R-square value of 0.540 indicates that about 54% of the variation in the interest in becoming a teacher can be explained by the variation in the perception of the teaching profession. The remaining 46% is attributed to other factors not examined in this study. Based on the hypothesis testing with the t-test calculation, the t value obtained is 5.735, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.70113. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. This indicates that there is a significant effect of the perception of the teaching profession on the interest in becoming a teacher among the students of the 2021 Economics Education cohort.

The results of this study offer significant insights into the relationship between students' perception of the teaching profession and their interest in pursuing a career as a teacher. The analysis, including tests of normality, linearity, heteroscedasticity, and hypothesis testing, suggests a robust model that links students' perceptions of the teaching profession to their interest in becoming a teacher. These findings are crucial for understanding how perceptions of the teaching profession influence students' career choices and are discussed in relation to existing theories and research in the field.

The normality test indicates that both the perception of the teaching profession and the interest in becoming a teacher follow a normal distribution (Asymp. Sig. = 0.200), confirming the suitability of using parametric statistical methods such as regression analysis. This finding is consistent with the general assumption in quantitative research that data should be normally distributed to ensure the validity of statistical inferences (Cizek, 2020). The acceptance of the null hypothesis in the normality test strengthens the argument that the data meet the assumptions necessary for reliable analysis. The linearity test, with a Sig. Deviation from Linearity value of 0.143, supports the assumption of a linear relationship between the perception of the teaching profession and the interest in becoming a teacher. This result aligns with previous research that has suggested a positive and linear relationship between attitudes toward the teaching profession and the likelihood of choosing teaching as a career (Hammer, 2006). The linear nature of this relationship underscores the importance of fostering positive perceptions of the teaching profession to increase students' interest in pursuing it as a career. The finding that there is no evidence of a non-linear relationship between the two variables is significant because it suggests that interventions aimed at improving perceptions of teaching may have a straightforward, predictable effect on students' career intentions. This is in line with the theory of planned behavior, which posits that attitudes toward a behavior (in this case, becoming a teacher) directly influence the intention to engage in that behavior (Gunayasa et al., 2023; Jazuli, 2022).

The absence of heteroscedasticity, as evidenced by the Sig. value of 0.808, implies that the variance of residuals in the regression model is constant across different levels of the independent variable. This is an important finding as heteroscedasticity can lead to inefficiencies in parameter estimation and affect the reliability of the regression results (Unaenah & Sri Wulandari, 2022). The lack of heteroscedasticity further strengthens the validity of the regression analysis used in this study. The regression analysis reveals a positive and significant relationship between students' perceptions of the teaching profession and their interest in becoming a teacher. The regression equation (Y = 29.22 + 0.740X) indicates that a one-unit increase in the perception of the teaching profession leads to a 0.740-unit increase in students' interest in becoming a teacher. This supports the hypothesis that students' attitudes toward the profession influence their career intentions, aligning with the findings of various studies that have emphasized the impact of teacher perceptions on career choice (Cardon et al., 2002). The coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.540) indicates that about 54% of the variation in students' interest in becoming a teacher can be explained by their perceptions of the teaching profession. This suggests that while the perception of the profession is a significant factor in influencing career choice, other variables such as personal values, family influence, and social factors may also play a role in shaping students' decisions (Mulyadi, 2019). The remaining 46% of the variation could be attributed to factors not explored in this study, highlighting the need for further research to explore other potential influences on students' career intentions.

The t-test results, with a t-value of 5.735, confirm the statistical significance of the relationship between the two variables. Given that the t-value exceeds the critical value of 1.70113, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This finding underscores the significance of perceptions of the teaching profession as a determinant of students' interest in teaching. The results are consistent with the

theory of social cognitive career theory, which posits that individuals' career interests are shaped by their beliefs about their ability to succeed in a particular profession and the perceived desirability of the profession (Qiu et al., 2022).

The results of this study demonstrate that students' perceptions of the teaching profession play a significant role in shaping their interest in becoming a teacher. The positive relationship between these two variables suggests that efforts to improve students' views of the teaching profession could potentially enhance their interest in pursuing teaching as a career (Mandal & Mete, 2023; Porta et al., 2024). This has important implications for teacher education programs and policies aimed at attracting more individuals to the teaching profession. Based on these findings, it is recommended that educational stakeholders, including policymakers and educators, focus on improving the public image of teaching, highlighting its importance and the rewards it offers, to foster greater interest in the profession. Additionally, further research is needed to explore other factors that contribute to students' career decisions, including socio-cultural influences and individual personality traits, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing career choice in education. In summary, this study provides valuable insights into how perceptions of the teaching profession influence students' career aspirations, offering a foundation for future research and interventions aimed at improving the teaching profession's attractiveness to potential candidates.

4.   CONCLUSION

In a more comprehensive analysis, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the perceptions of Economics Education students at Universitas Negeri Medan regarding the teaching profession and their interest in becoming a teacher. When students have a positive view or perception of the teaching profession, it encourages their interest in choosing a career as a teacher. A positive perception of the teaching profession can serve as a strong motivating factor in encouraging students to pursue a teaching career, as it provides them with a clearer understanding of what is expected in the profession and how they can contribute to society through their role as a teacher.

On the other hand, if students have a negative view or low perception of the teaching profession, it can serve as an obstacle in motivating them to choose this profession. In this case, negative perceptions may lead them to seek other careers that are perceived as more attractive or with better development potential. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions like Universitas Negeri Medan to raise students' awareness and knowledge about the teaching profession, as well as provide them with direct experiences that can help them better understand what is expected from this profession. In doing so, it can enhance their interest in becoming teachers and improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

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