

The Perception of Teacher Well-being and Its Implications on the Interest of UNIMED Biology Education Students to Become a Teacher

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the interest and perceptions of teacher welfare among 52 respondents. Quantitative analysis revealed that 69.2% of respondents are highly interested in becoming teachers, while 30.8% are moderately interested. These findings reflect a strong commitment from the younger generation toward the teaching profession, despite significant concerns about financial welfare. Qualitative analysis identified two main themes: financial welfare and personal motivation. Many respondents felt that the salary they receive is not proportional to the responsibilities they bear, while intrinsic motivation, such as a desire to contribute to education, serves as a major driving factor in choosing this career. This study aligns with previous findings emphasizing the importance of financial welfare in job satisfaction for teachers but also offers new insights by highlighting personal motivation as a decisive factor. The conclusion of this research suggests that greater attention to teachers' financial welfare is necessary to attract high-quality individuals to the teaching profession and to create a better learning environment. Recommendations for policymakers include increasing compensation and support for teachers while considering their intrinsic motivations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher well-being is defined as a positive state that encompasses mental, physical, and social health. Purwaningrum (2020) state that teacher well-being is the result of alignment between environmental factors and the needs and expectations of individuals. Research by Mashudi (2017) shows that a positive perception of teacher well-being can enhance job satisfaction and motivation to teach. Teacher well-being is also closely related to students' perceptions of the teaching profession. Krisnawati et al. (2024) found that the perception of teacher well-being significantly influences students' interest in becoming teachers, with the research results showing a significant positive relationship between the two variables.

Research by Serni, & Saragih (2023) shows that the perception of teacher well-being has a significant impact on students' interest in choosing a career as a teacher. The study shows that there are the positive relationship between perceptions of well-being and the interest in becoming a teacher. Yunus & Iskandar (2024) also revealed that there is a positive relationship between the perception of teacher well-being and students' interest in becoming teachers.

This research emphasizes the importance of perceptions of well-being in attracting students to choose a career in education. Furthermore, Nurranto et al. (2017) explain how perceptions of school leadership and well-being affect teacher performance and have implications for education. This shows that positive perceptions of well-being not only influence interest but also the professional performance of educators.

Factors influencing teacher well-being perceptions include work environment, social support, and financial conditions. Wahyuni & Setiyani (2017) highlight the impact of family environment on students' perceptions of teacher well-being, which can influence their decision to pursue a career in education. Mashudi (2017) explore how teachers' social well-being can affect their motivation to teach. Rizkia et al (2023) demonstrate the importance of emotional well-being in influencing students' interest in becoming educators. Social support has also been proven to be an important factor in shaping prospective teachers' perceptions of well-being. Oktaviani & Yulianto (2015) show that social support can influence perceptions of well-being and prospective teachers' interest in teaching.

For Biology Education students at UNIMED, it is important to understand how their perceptions of teacher well-being can affect their career decisions. If students have a positive view of teacher well-being, such as regarding fair salaries and social support, they are more likely to be interested in pursuing a teaching career. Research by Azizah & Nurkhin (2022) provides insight into how students' perceptions of well-being affect their career choices. Additionally, Martínez-Moreno & Petko (2024) also discuss changes in perceptions in the digital era and their impact on motivation to become teachers.

The perception of teacher well-being has a significant impact on students' interest in becoming educators. By understanding the factors influencing these perceptions, educational institutions like UNIMED can design programs that support the professional development and well-being of future teachers. This is expected to increase students' interest in pursuing careers in education. Although many studies have discussed the relationship between perceptions of teacher well-being and the interest in becoming a teacher, there is still a knowledge gap regarding the specific context of Biology Education students at UNIMED. Many students may not fully understand the working conditions and rights of teachers, which could influence their views on the profession. Moreover, the methodological approach commonly used in previous research often focuses on quantitative methods without exploring students' subjective experiences in depth.

The study is expected to provide new insights into the factors influencing students' interest in pursuing a teaching career, as well as offer recommendations to universities and policymakers to enhance the attractiveness of the teaching profession among students. The results of this research are expected to enrich existing literature and contribute positively to the development of education in Indonesia.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods design that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore perceptions of teacher welfare and its implications for the interest of Biology Education students at Universitas Negeri Medan (UNIMED) in becoming teachers. The population of this study consists of all students enrolled in the Biology Education Study Program at UNIMED. A random sample was drawn from this population, with a total of 52 students participating in the study. The instruments used include a questionnaire comprising both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions utilize a Likert scale (1-4) to measure the students' interest in becoming teachers after graduation, with response options ranging from "Not Interested at All" to "Highly Interested." Additionally, the questionnaire includes open-ended questions inviting respondents to provide short answers or paragraphs about the factors influencing their interest in becoming teachers. An example question is: "What is the main factor influencing your decision to pursue a teaching career?" Other open-ended questions assess perceptions of teacher welfare, including financial, emotional, and social aspects. For instance, one question asks: "Would you be satisfied with the salary earned by teachers in Indonesia, considering information from social media, family members who are teachers, or other sources?"

Data were collected through the random distribution of questionnaires to students. The questionnaires were distributed online using platforms such as Google Forms, and students were given five days to complete them. Once data collection was completed, all responses were compiled for further analysis. Data analysis techniques varied depending on the type of data. Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical software such as Excel. Descriptive analysis was conducted to describe the demographic characteristics of respondents and their overall perceptions of teacher welfare. Meanwhile, qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. Transcripts of responses from the open-ended questions were thoroughly reviewed to identify key themes related to perceptions of teacher welfare and respondents' motivation to become teachers.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

After conducting research using a mixed-methods approach, which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the perceptions of teacher well-being and its implications on the interest of Biology Education students at Universitas Negeri Medan (UNIMED) in becoming teachers, with the distribution of questionnaires as the research tool, a total of 52 Biology Education students participated in this study. Of these 52 students, the average age is 21 years, with the majority being female. Out of the 52 respondents, 32 are female and the remaining 20 are male. The results of the data analysis based on these 52 respondents can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Number of Respondent	Percentages
Total Respondents	52	100%
Age		
- Average Age	21 years old	
Gender		
- Male	20	38.5%
- Female	32	61.5%

3.1.1. Quantitative Result

The results of the research from the responses of 52 students regarding their interest in becoming teachers show that the majority of students have a high level of interest in becoming teachers, as seen from the percentage, which is 62.9%, while those with only moderate interest make up 30.8%. In other words, of the 52 students who participated in the study, only 16 students had a moderate interest in becoming teachers, while the other 32 students were highly interested in pursuing a career as a teacher. The following table illustrates this.

Table 2. Interest in Becoming a Teacher

Categories	Number of Respondent	Percentages
Very Interested	36	69.2%
Interested	16	30.8%

**Figure 1.** Interest in Becoming a Teacher

3.1.2. Qualitative Result

The qualitative data was obtained from the transcripts of open-ended questionnaire responses, which were analysed using thematic analysis techniques. The main themes that emerged related to perceptions of teacher well-being and their motivation to become teachers are as follows: (1) Financial Well-being: Many respondents expressed that teachers' financial well-being is inadequate, with some stating that the salary they receive is not proportional to the responsibilities they carry; (2) Personal Motivation: Respondents emphasized that personal intention is a key factor in choosing a profession as a teacher. They feel driven by the desire to contribute to education and the development of future generations. Below is an area chart representation illustrating the theme of teacher well-being perceptions.

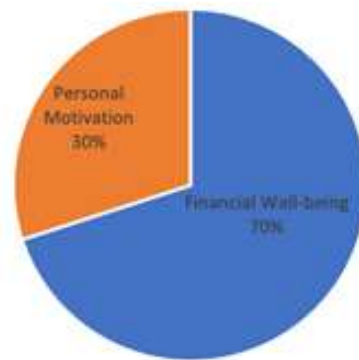


Figure 2. Teacher Well-being Perceptions

The results of this analysis indicate that although there is a high interest in becoming a teacher, there are significant concerns regarding financial well-being. This aligns with previous studies that show financial well-being is an important factor in teacher job satisfaction (Ingersoll, 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Herzberg's Two-Factor Motivation Theory states that certain factors can influence job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. In this context, salary and benefits (hygiene factors) can lead to dissatisfaction if they are inadequate, while intrinsic motivation, such as the desire to teach and contribute to society (motivator factors), can enhance satisfaction.

From this analysis, it is found that the majority of respondents have a high interest in becoming teachers, but also have concerns about their financial well-being. Personal motivation is the main driving force behind their decision to pursue a career in education. This study highlights the importance of greater attention to teacher well-being in order to attract more qualified individuals into the teaching profession.

3.2. Discussion

The analysis of data from 52 respondents provides significant insights into the interest in becoming a teacher and their perceptions of teacher well-being. This study reveals that the majority of respondents (69.2%) are highly interested in becoming teachers, while 30.8% are moderately interested. These findings suggest that there is a committed younger generation eager to contribute to the field of education, although they also express concerns about their financial well-being. The novelty of this research lies in its combination of both quantitative and qualitative analysis, offering a holistic picture of the motivations and concerns of prospective teachers. Many previous studies have tended to focus on only one aspect, either interest or financial well-being, while this study combines both to provide a more in-depth understanding.

The findings of this study align with the work of Ingersoll (2001) and Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2010), which show that financial well-being is an important factor in teacher job satisfaction. However, this study adds a new dimension by demonstrating that, despite a high level of interest in becoming a teacher, concerns about salary and benefits still persist. Some previous studies may not have emphasized personal motivation as a key driver in choosing teaching as a profession.

In this study, respondents highlighted the importance of self-driven intentions and a desire to contribute to education as their primary reasons for pursuing a career in teaching. This suggests that intrinsic motivation may be a stronger determining factor than previously acknowledged in the literature. The differences in findings between this study and previous research may be attributed to varying social and economic contexts. For example, in some countries or regions, the teaching profession may be more socially and financially valued

compared to others, which could influence individuals' perceptions of the career. Additionally, changes in education policy and recognition of the important role of teachers in modern society may affect the interest of younger generations in pursuing careers in education. With growing awareness of the importance of quality education, more individuals may feel motivated to become teachers, despite financial challenges.

These findings have important implications for education policymakers. It is crucial for governments and educational institutions to address the financial well-being of teachers in order to attract more qualified individuals into the profession. Furthermore, supporting the personal motivation of prospective teachers through professional development programs can enhance job satisfaction and improve teacher retention in the field.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that the interest in becoming a teacher among respondents is very high, but it is accompanied by significant concerns regarding financial welfare. Intrinsic motivation, such as the desire to contribute to education, serves as the main driving force for them to choose this career. However, the financial challenges they face may potentially reduce the appeal of the teaching profession, which could hinder efforts to attract qualified individuals into the field of education.

The importance of improving teacher welfare cannot be overlooked, given their vital role in shaping the next generation. Therefore, better policies regarding compensation and support for teachers are needed, including professional development programs that can enhance their skills and motivation. With these measures, it is hoped that the teaching profession will be more valued and appealing, while also having a greater positive impact on the quality of education in the future. This study also opens opportunities for further exploration of the factors that influence career decisions in the field of education.

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