

AN ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDENTS' INTEREST IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION

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ABSTRACT

The teaching profession in Indonesia is highly esteemed, yet it faces challenges in attracting widespread interest. Students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) at Tadulako University, particularly those in the English Education program, are projected to become future educators. However, not all of them share an equal level of interest in the profession. Several factors, such as external influences and perceptions regarding the prestige of the profession, significantly affect their career choices. This study aims to analyze the interest of English Education students in the teaching profession after completing the Educational Profession course. Understanding their level of interest in detail and exploring the role of teachers in the modern era is crucial. This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey design. The research subjects were seventh-semester students of the English Education program who had completed the Educational Profession course during the 2023/2024 academic year, totaling 161 individuals. At least 50% of this population was randomly selected to participate as the study sample. The research instrument was a closed-ended questionnaire using a 4-point Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree—to measure students' interest in the teaching profession. The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the percentage for each item and describe the general interest of English Education students in becoming teachers.

Keywords: *interest; profession; teacher; teaching profession; educational profession*

INTRODUCTION

According to Law No. 20 of 2003, Chapter II Article 3 on the National Education System, education in Indonesia functions to shape character and develop the potential of students to become high-quality individuals. To improve the quality of national education, various developments must be carried out within the education sector itself. In this regard, the role of educators and education personnel is clearly essential in enhancing educational activities. Among them, teachers hold a crucial role in developing the quality of education (Sukma, Karlina, & Priyono, 2020). Teachers interact directly and frequently with students in schools, making them key figures in the educational process, particularly within school environments (Wahyuni & Setiani, 2018). Teaching is a profession that involves the responsibility and effort of educating, instructing, guiding, directing, training, and evaluating students to help realize the goals of national education.

The teaching profession is one of the most favored careers in Indonesia. In addition to being considered noble, it also offers high job security. As education remains a fundamental sector—encompassing schools and institutions across various levels—there will always be a demand for teaching professionals. Therefore, it is no surprise that this profession continues to attract interest. Public trust in the importance of the teacher's role in the learning process appears to remain unwavering (Suseno, 2020).

However, over time, teaching is no longer regarded as a top-choice profession by many. A key reason for this is the lack of social and financial appreciation for teachers. From a financial perspective, other jobs are often perceived as more prestigious and lucrative. Moreover, the heavy workload and the complex challenges in the education sector may also discourage interest in the profession.

Students enrolled in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) at Tadulako University—specifically those in the English Education Study Program—are expected to become future educators. They are equipped with several education-related courses that serve as important assets for their professional development. One such course is the Educational Profession course, which aims to provide comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the teaching profession. In addition, this course also plays a role in increasing students' interest in becoming teachers.

Nevertheless, not all students enrolled in FKIP aspire to become teachers in the future. A study by Rahmadiyani, Hariani, and Yudiono (2020) revealed that some students in education programs chose their field based on parental advice, peer influence, or because graduates from education programs are eligible to work both in education and non-education sectors. This supports the idea that students in education programs do not necessarily have a genuine interest in becoming teachers.

Another study by Nani and Melati (2020) showed that some education graduates preferred to work in companies, private or state-owned banks, and non-educational institutions. This suggests that non-educational sectors still play a significant role in absorbing the workforce, including those with educational backgrounds. Employment in these sectors is often perceived as more prestigious

than the teaching profession. This aligns with Hurlock's (2010) assertion that a person's interest in a particular profession is influenced by factors such as parental attitudes, job prestige, admiration for certain individuals, personal ability, gender compatibility, autonomy at work, cultural stereotypes, and personal experiences.

Based on initial identification by the research team, no previous research has specifically examined students' interest in the teaching profession in the researchers' own academic environment. This oversight may stem from the persistent stereotype that students enrolled in teacher education programs are automatically interested in becoming teachers. Therefore, the research team was motivated to conduct a study within FKIP at Tadulako University, particularly focusing on English Education students who are currently taking or have completed the Educational Profession course.

The purpose of this study is to analyze English Education students' interest in the teaching profession after they have completed the Educational Profession course. The urgency of this research lies in its potential to provide a detailed understanding of student interest in teaching and to enhance awareness of the teacher's role in the modern era.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey design. The purpose of the study was to examine the interest of English Education students—who possess an educational background—in pursuing a career as teachers, one of the expected graduate profiles of the English Education Study Program (English Education Program Self-Evaluation Report, 2023). The research subjects were students of the English Education Study Program who were enrolled in the Educational Profession course during the odd semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, totaling 161 individuals. From this population, at least 50% were randomly selected to serve as the sample.

The data collection instrument was a closed-ended questionnaire that employed a 4-point Likert scale, consisting of:

- (1) Strongly Disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Agree
- (4) Strongly Agree

This scale was used to measure students' level of interest in the teaching profession. Data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires to selected participants. Each respondent answered items designed to reflect various aspects of interest in becoming a teacher. After collection, the responses were tabulated and processed for analysis. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, aimed at determining the percentage for each item in the questionnaire. The

results were then described in detail to depict the level of interest among English Education students regarding the teaching profession.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved the collection of data through the distribution of questionnaires to students of the English Education Study Program at Tadulako University. All participants were enrolled in the Educational Profession course during the odd semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. Of the total 161 students in the population, 85 responded to the survey, representing 52.79% of the population.

The findings are presented by item, describing students' responses to each statement on their interest in the teaching profession. Each item was measured using a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

1. General Interest in Becoming a Teacher

A total of 63 students (74.1%) indicated agreement or strong agreement with the statement, "I have a strong interest in becoming a teacher." The remaining 22 students (25.9%) disagreed. This result shows that while the majority are inclined toward teaching, a significant minority are considering other professions.

2. Interest in Learning How to Be a Good Teacher

In response to the statement, "I actively learn tips on how to become a good teacher," 77.6% of students agreed or strongly agreed, while 22.4% did not. This shows students' general enthusiasm for self-improvement in teaching.

3. Interest in Teacher Training Seminars

When asked whether they are interested in teacher training seminars, 64.7% responded affirmatively, while 35.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This suggests that some students are less engaged in external professional development.

4. Interest in News About the Teaching Profession

Of the respondents, 74.1% expressed interest in news related to the teaching profession, and 25.9% did not. This demonstrates overall awareness and attention to developments in the field.

5. Confidence in Becoming a Good Teacher

A majority of students (77.7%) reported confidence in their ability to become good teachers, while 22.4% indicated a lack of confidence in their teaching potential.

6. Commitment to Teaching Despite Other Offers

Only 34.1% of students said they would still choose teaching even if offered another job, while 65.9% expressed a willingness to explore alternative careers. This points to a level of uncertainty and practical consideration among students.

7. Belief in the Future of the Teaching Profession

An overwhelming 82.4% of students agreed that teaching remains a promising profession in the future, while 17.6% did not share this belief.

8. Value of Pedagogical Knowledge

A total of 94.1% agreed that the more they know about teaching, the more useful it will be for their future careers. Only 5.9% did not share this view.

9. Engagement With Teaching-Related Developments

While 60% of students reported regularly following information about teaching, 40% did not, showing a divide in engagement levels.

10. Impact of University Education

A total of 68.2% of respondents believed that their university education has strengthened their interest in teaching, while 31.8% disagreed.

11. Confidence in Managing Students

Of the students surveyed, 67% expressed confidence in their pedagogical skills, whereas 33% lacked such confidence.

12. Interest in Designing Lesson Plans (RPP)

Regarding the statement on creating lesson plans, 72.9% expressed interest, while 27.1% were uninterested or unsure.

13. English Language Mastery

In terms of subject matter expertise, 69.4% reported sufficient mastery of English content, while 30.6% did not.

14. Confidence in Developing Student Potential

While 60% of students felt confident in developing students' potential, 40% remained uncertain.

15. Ability to Adapt to Educational Trends

An impressive 84.7% believed they could keep up with modern trends in education, with only 15.3% expressing doubt.

16. Confidence in Curriculum Implementation

Similarly, 84.7% believed they could implement instruction in alignment with the national curriculum. Only 15.3% disagreed.

17. Financial Concerns and Career Commitment

In response to the statement, "If a teacher's salary is not enough, I will seek a side job without leaving the profession," 78.8% agreed, while 21.2% disagreed.

18. Use of the Internet for Professional Exploration

A total of 76.4% said they use the internet to explore the teaching profession. The remaining 23.5% did not.

19. Teaching as a Dream Career

Only 54.2% of students considered teaching their dream job, while 45.9% did not.

20. Interest in Working in the Education Sector

Lastly, 65.9% of respondents expressed a desire to work in the education sector (including both teaching and non-teaching roles), while 34.1% preferred other fields.

A synthesis of the overall responses is presented in Figure 1, which shows the total percentage of respondents selecting each level of agreement with the statement: “I am interested in becoming a professional teacher.”

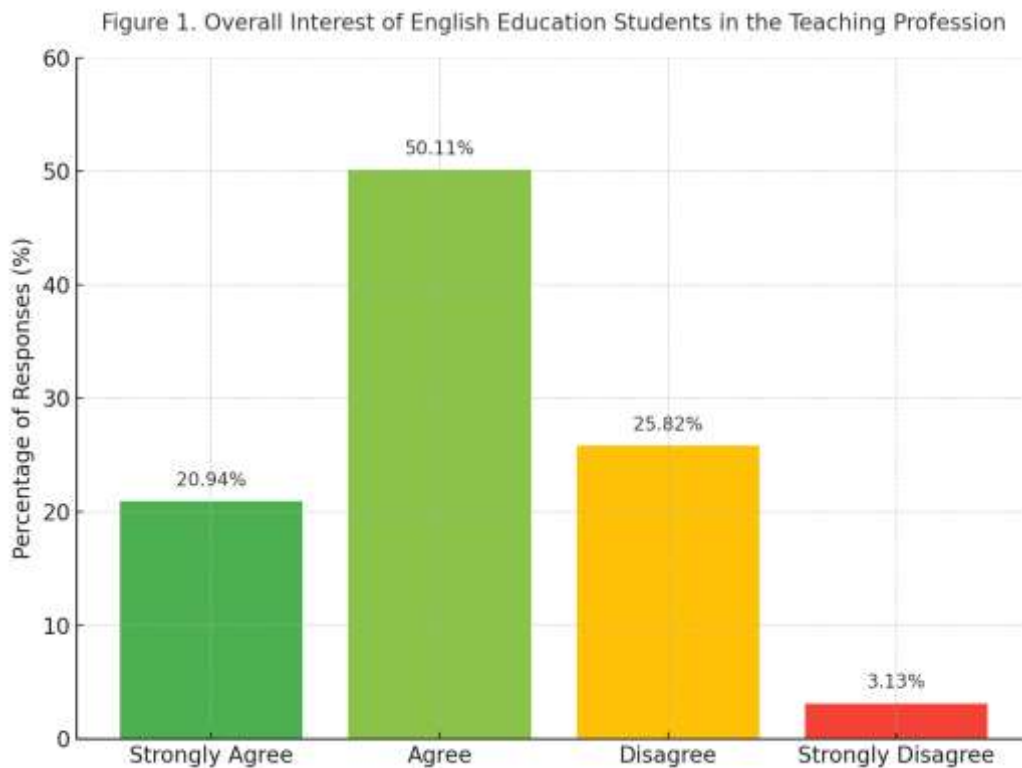


Figure 1
Overall Interest of English Education Students in the Teaching Profession.

As shown in Figure 1, a total of 71.05% of students expressed interest in becoming professional teachers. Meanwhile, 28.95% reported disinterest. This indicates that while the majority of students align with the objectives of the English Education Study Program to produce competent and dedicated educators, there remains a substantial portion of students who are hesitant or exploring other career pathways.

As discussed in the previous section, interest in becoming an English teacher can be defined as an internal attraction to the teaching profession—especially as an English teacher at various school levels—that originates from within the individual and is reflected in a strong desire to pursue teaching. In this context, the high level of interest among English Education (PSPBI) students in becoming teachers aligns with one of the core objectives of the study program: to produce future educators who are guided by faith, character, pedagogical competence, subject mastery, and English language proficiency, as outlined in the Academic Manuscript of FKIP UNTAD (2020). Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that students' professional aspirations are still in line with the study program's goals and continue to support their achievement.

To explore this interest more deeply, the research team included an open-ended question to understand the various reasons behind PSPBI students' career preferences—both for those who were interested in the teaching profession and those who were not. One of the most frequently expressed reasons for pursuing a career in teaching was that it is seen as a noble and meaningful profession:

Student DPA : *“I’m interested in becoming a teacher because I believe teaching is a very noble profession. If we become good teachers, we will be remembered and rewarded. Also, when I’m married, I’ll have more time for my family. I think being a teacher helps me learn patience.”*

Student FPA : *“I want to become a teacher because I think being an educator is a noble way to help educate the nation.”*

Another reason given was family influence and role modeling:

- Student K : *"I want to become a teacher because many of my family members are teachers, and I look up to them as my role models."*
- Student NHI : *"I want to follow in my grandfather's footsteps. I see teaching as a noble job—sharing knowledge with others is meaningful."*

Others were driven by a desire to serve marginalized or remote communities:

- Student T : *"I want to become a teacher because education in remote areas is still very limited. I want to dedicate myself to teaching in regions like Papua and share my knowledge there."*
- Student SRDM : *"I want to be an English teacher because there are no English teachers in my village. I want to build children's interest in the language."*

However, several students indicated that they were not interested in teaching, primarily due to economic reasons:

- Student WP : *"I'm not interested in becoming a teacher because the salary isn't sufficient to support a future livelihood."*
- Student ST : *"The salary is lower than that of a factory worker, and teachers need a lot of patience and must explain material clearly. It's too demanding."*
- Student IM : *"I want to become a lecturer. I'm not interested in being a school teacher due to the low salary."*

A number of students also cited self-doubt and lack of confidence in their ability to meet the responsibilities of teaching:

- Student RDP : *"I'm not interested in becoming a teacher because it's a big responsibility. You have to be patient and be a role model for students. That's hard."*
- Student D : *"I'm not sure I want to be a teacher because I still doubt my teaching ability."*

These findings align with prior research by Dewi and Fajri (2023), who explored the motivations and identity formation of pre-service English teachers in Indonesia. Their study identified personal interest, family influence, and social perceptions as key factors shaping career aspirations. Similarly, the high percentage of PSPBI students in this study who reported intrinsic motivation and admiration for role models echoes their conclusion that both internal values and socio-cultural factors shape the development of professional identity.

Additionally, this study supports the work of Rahmadiyahani, Hariani, and Yudiono (2020), who found that not all education students entered their program out of a desire to teach. External factors such as parental guidance, employment flexibility, and the perceived prestige of other professions also played roles. Your current research confirms this finding, with many students expressing interest in other professions due to financial concerns or uncertainty about their teaching abilities.

Furthermore, Nani and Melati (2020) emphasized the role of self-efficacy in mediating students' professional interests. In the present study, those who reported low confidence in their ability to teach tended to reject the idea of becoming a teacher. This suggests that even when the educational environment promotes teaching as a noble and valuable path, students' personal beliefs about their competence can significantly influence their career direction.

In summary, both the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study are in line with national and international literature on teacher motivation and career decision-making, reinforcing the idea that a complex mix of ideals, identity, economic reality, and confidence shapes student interest in the teaching profession.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the interest of English Education students at Tadulako University in pursuing a career as professional teachers after taking the *Educational Profession* course. The findings, based on questionnaire responses from 85 seventh-semester students, revealed that a significant majority—71.05%—expressed positive interest in the teaching profession. Most

respondents indicated confidence in their teaching ability, awareness of the importance of pedagogical knowledge, and a desire to follow developments in the education sector.

Nonetheless, the results also uncovered that 28.95% of students expressed disinterest or uncertainty about becoming teachers. Factors contributing to this hesitation included concerns about salary, professional prestige, lack of confidence in teaching skills, and alternative career aspirations. These findings are consistent with previous studies that emphasize both intrinsic and extrinsic factors affecting students' career choices.

Overall, the results show that the *Educational Profession* course has a positive impact on shaping students' perceptions of the teaching profession. However, the existence of mixed attitudes also signals the need for broader institutional support, career guidance, and real-world teaching experiences to help students make informed professional decisions.

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