

Is Teaching Still a Choice? Perceived Career Prospects, Social Factors, and Interest in Teaching among Senior High School Students in Bangka Belitung

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ABSTRACT

Teacher regeneration is critical for sustaining national education quality, yet youth interest in this profession is reportedly declining. Limited empirical evidence exists regarding how career perceptions and social factors shape this interest among final-year secondary students, particularly in archipelagic regions with strong extractive industrial pulls such as Bangka Belitung. This study aims to examine the associations between perceived career prospects, social factors, and interest in becoming a teacher among 12th-grade senior high school students in Bangka Belitung Province. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was employed. A total of 753 twelfth-grade students were involved, with 100 participating in instrument testing and 653 completing the main survey. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using multiple linear regression with robust standard errors via Python (Google Colab platform). The regression model explained 45.8% of the variance in interest in becoming a teacher ($R^2 = .458$; $F = 244.1$, $p < .001$). Perceived career prospects emerged as a significant unique statistical predictor ($\beta = 0.492$, $p < .001$), whereas social factors did not show a significant independent association ($\beta = -0.043$, $p = .338$). These findings indicate that student interest in the Bangka Belitung archipelago is primarily associated with pragmatic career considerations, whereas traditional social values alone do not meaningfully drive career choice in this context. The results can inform regional policy reforms, particularly those aimed at improving tangible job prospects and professional conditions to prevent a potential talent gap in the education sector. Future research should further explore the roles of self-efficacy and digital information exposure using qualitative or mixed-methods approaches.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a fundamental cornerstone in the process of sustainable national and societal development. Within the educational landscape, teachers play a crucial role in shaping the character and competence of the younger generation, thereby fostering the creation of high-quality human resources essential for a nation's progress [1], [2]. As a primary pillar, the availability of competent educators is not merely an absolute prerequisite for the sustainability of the schooling system but also serves as a decisive variable for the future quality of national education [3], [4]. From the perspective of youth development, teacher regeneration is not merely an administrative labor issue but rather a reflection of how a nation's youth interpret the values of service and social contribution amidst a rapidly changing world [5]. Consequently, the interest of the younger generation in entering the teaching profession must be a matter of serious concern to maintain the stability of a nation's intellectual and moral integrity.

However, the current situation reveals significant challenges in ensuring the availability of high-quality educators in Indonesia [6], [7], [8]. Despite various government policy efforts to improve the system through certification and professional development, Indonesia continues to face persistent teacher shortages and disparities in access to quality education across various regions [7]. This phenomenon is further exacerbated by the declining attractiveness of the teaching profession in the eyes of the younger generation. Recent public surveys and media reports have highlighted a concerning figure, where only approximately 11% of young people express a serious interest in becoming teachers [9], although comprehensive and systematic national data on this specific demographic remain limited. If this downward trend persists, the Indonesian education system will encounter a talent gap, where the most capable youths opt to avoid the teaching profession in favor of other sectors, potentially triggering a long-term national decline in pedagogical quality [10].

The low level of interest is theoretically closely linked to youth perceptions of the teaching profession within the education sector. The decision of students to choose education-oriented study programs is heavily influenced by how they project their future careers and the assurance of welfare within the profession [11]. Within a career decision-making framework, young people tend to evaluate the costs and benefits associated with a particular profession [12]. Job prospects perceived as less promising compared to the creative or technology industries often act as primary inhibitors that dampen the intention of youth to pursue a teaching path, despite potentially possessing intrinsic motivation to teach [13]. This situation has become increasingly complex with the emergence of negative sentiments in the digital public sphere, which are easily accessible to young people [14]. The widespread discourse surrounding the hashtag *#JanganJadiGuru* on social media serves as a contextual illustration of collective concerns regarding inadequate salaries, disproportionate administrative burdens, and a lack of professional protection [1]. While this phenomenon is primarily unverified rather than systematic empirical evidence, it highlights how viral information can shape collective perceptions, potentially creating a stigma where the technical and economic hardships of the profession overshadow its contributory value in the minds of prospective students [14].

Previous empirical studies on interest in the teaching profession have predominantly focused on university students who are already enrolled in teacher education programs [3] [11]. These studies generally find that intrinsic motivations, such as altruism and love for children, and extrinsic factors, such as job security and salary, both play roles, though the relative weight varies across contexts. Richardson and Watt [15] demonstrated that social utility values and personal fulfillment are strong initial motivators, yet later research highlights that perceived career stability significantly moderates these motivations [16]. In the Indonesian context, Ferdina et al. [7] noted that policy interventions such as certification have improved teacher welfare but have not fully reversed the declining prestige of the profession among younger cohorts. However, a critical gap in this literature is the lack of attention to the pre-tertiary stage, specifically senior high school students who are actively making career decisions before enrolling in university [13], [17]. Despite these contributions, four critical gaps remain in the existing body of knowledge. The population gap is evident because most research targets students who have already committed to education majors, whereas the decisive moment of career choice actually occurs during the final year of high school when students weigh various study program options. The relational gap concerns the relative weighting of economic determinants versus social determinants in shaping career interest, particularly whether social values such as status and recognition can compensate for weak economic prospects or vice versa. The contextual gap reflects that the unique archipelagic and extractive context of Bangka Belitung has not been empirically examined, even though this region presents distinct labor market dynamics. Finally, the theoretical gap indicates that prior work lacks a unified theoretical anchor, often adopting fragmented lenses that prevent coherent interpretation.

The novelty of this study is grounded in addressing these four gaps simultaneously by selecting twelfth-grade high school students in the Province of Bangka Belitung as the research subjects, by examining the relative and combined influence of career perceptions and social recognition on their interest, and by employing a single coherent theoretical framework. The selection of twelfth-grade students is based on their position within a critical phase of career decision-making prior to entering higher education, a stage at which their knowledge of the professional world is often limited or inaccurate, yet their expectations are heavily influenced by the information they absorb from their social environment and media [1]. Understanding the dynamics of their interest at this early stage is key to intervening in the teacher supply crisis before they make permanent career decisions. The urgency of this research becomes even more apparent when framed within the specific context of the Bangka Belitung Islands Province. As an archipelagic region with a high economic dependency on extractive sectors such as tin mining and plantations, youth in Bangka Belitung are often confronted with the allure of instant economic returns offered by local industries [18], [19]. The competition between the long-term value of service as a teacher and the immediate financial offers from noneducational sectors creates a perception dynamic that is unique and distinct from other regions. To date, literature specifically examining how social factors and perceived job prospects influence the interest in becoming teachers among high school students in the Bangka Belitung archipelago remains very limited, and this study seeks to fill that void.

To address the theoretical inconsistency found in earlier studies, this research adopts Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett [20], [21] as its unifying framework. SCCT is chosen because it coherently explains how career interest forms through the interaction of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and contextual influences. Within this model, the variable of Career Prospects (X1) is conceptualized as outcome expectations, which represent students' beliefs about the tangible rewards, job stability, and future welfare they would obtain if they chose the teaching profession. Meanwhile, the variable of Social Factors (X2) in this study is defined operationally as students' perceptions of the social meaning attached to the teaching profession, encompassing public recognition, social status, and the inherent dignity of the teacher's role in society. It is crucial to clarify that this operational definition differs from the initial broad conception that emphasized family support and the surrounding environment; following the instrument validation process, the indicators that were actually measured pertain to social esteem, contribution value, and professional dignity, rather than merely encouragement from parents or peers. Consequently, Social Factors in this research are more appropriately understood as symbolic and cultural capital embedded in the teaching profession, which is believed to influence students' considerations when choosing their educational pathway. This clarification ensures that the theoretical definition of social factors aligns precisely with what the questionnaire measured, thereby addressing the conceptual inconsistency noted in previous iterations of this work.

Based on the theoretical review and the problem identification previously outlined, this study proposes three main hypotheses designed to test the relationships between variables. The first hypothesis states that there is a significant positive association between the perception of career prospects and the interest in becoming a teacher, implying that a more favorable evaluation of the profession's future guarantees will result in higher interest among twelfth-grade students in Bangka Belitung. The second hypothesis posits that social factors, operationally defined as social status and recognition, have a significant positive association with interest in teaching, given that in Eastern cultures the teaching profession is still widely respected as a noble calling, and this recognition may serve as a motivating factor for students. The third hypothesis asserts that simultaneously, both career prospects and social factors collectively exert a substantial association with the level of interest among twelfth-grade high school students in the Province of Bangka Belitung in choosing the teaching profession as their future career. The primary objective of this study is to test these three hypotheses while empirically mapping how the dynamics of career perceptions and social recognition interact in shaping the future orientation of young people in an archipelagic region characterized by a strong extractive economic sector.

The contributions of this research can be viewed from three distinct dimensions. Theoretically, this study extends the application of SCCT by testing the model on a pre-tertiary high school population at the critical career decision-making stage, a phase that has received limited attention in the existing literature. The findings from the Bangka Belitung context will also provide empirical evidence on whether SCCT propositions regarding outcome expectations and contextual influences remain valid when competing with extractive industrial sectors that offer rapid economic returns. Practically, the results are

expected to inform local governments and teacher education institutions in designing more realistic and competitive promotional strategies for the teaching profession, particularly by highlighting career stability that can compete with the fluctuations of mining commodity prices. In terms of policy, this study can serve as an initial foundation for systemic reforms that move beyond moralistic campaigns toward tangible improvements in teacher welfare and professional protection, ensuring that the region's best talents are not drawn away to noneducational sectors. However, it is important to emphasize that while the findings can inform policy reform, a single regional cross-sectional study cannot by itself establish the necessity or effectiveness of particular systemic reforms, and any policy implications should therefore be interpreted with appropriate caution [22]. By addressing these theoretical, practical, and policy objectives, this research fills a significant void in the literature on teacher regeneration in archipelagic regions and provides a robust empirical basis for further studies employing qualitative or mixed-methods approaches to explore additional psychological variables such as self-efficacy and digital information exposure.

In light of these theoretical and contextual considerations, ensuring that the teaching profession remains an honorable and attractive choice is not merely an educational necessity but a strategic step to ensure that the brightest minds among the younger generation are engaged in building the future of Bangka Belitung and Indonesia as a whole. If the findings reveal a significant disparity between interest and perceived prospects, it would indicate a need for systemic policy reform in how the teaching profession is marketed and appreciated at the regional level. This study therefore aims to provide a comprehensive empirical map of how the next generation of educators in Bangka Belitung perceives their future, with the hope of contributing meaningful evidence to the ongoing discourse on teacher regeneration and career decision-making in the Indonesian archipelago.

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine the associations between perceived career prospects, social factors, and interest in becoming a teacher among twelfth-grade senior high school students. Data were collected from November 2025 to January 2026 across approximately 60 senior high schools in the Province of Bangka Belitung, covering all seven regencies and cities, an archipelagic region characterized by high economic dependency on extractive sectors. A two-stage stratified random sampling technique was applied, and a total of 752 students participated, with 100 involved in the pilot instrument testing and the remaining 652 constituting the final analytical sample. From 707 distributed questionnaires, 653 valid responses were obtained, yielding a 92.4% response rate. The majority of respondents originated from Bangka Island (78%) while the remaining 22% came from Belitung Island, reflecting the geographical concentration of the student population. Ethical procedures were strictly adhered to, including obtaining personal consent from the students and guaranteeing the anonymity and confidentiality of all responses.

The research instrument was independently developed based on Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) [20], and adapted from theoretical sources [15], [16], [23], consisting of 20 closed-ended items on a five-point Likert scale. Career Prospects (X1) comprised 8

items covering attractiveness and security, Social Factors (X2) comprised 8 items covering social significance and status, and Interest in Teaching (Y) comprised 4 items covering educational interest and early commitment. The instrument underwent a rigorous development process including blueprint formulation, back-translation for semantic accuracy, and content validation by two external expert validators. The pilot testing on 100 students confirmed strong empirical validity, with all item Pearson correlations exceeding the critical r-table value of 0.195, ranging from 0.460 to 0.786. Construct validity via exploratory factor analysis yielded a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of 0.742, a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < 0.001$), and extracted three factors explaining 58.7% of the cumulative variance. Reliability was assessed separately for each construct, producing Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.857 for Career Prospects, 0.863 for Social Factors, and 0.842 for Interest in Teaching. The overall reliability of the combined 20-item instrument was also excellent, yielding a Cronbach's alpha of 0.910, confirming the instrument's strong internal consistency.

Table 1. Summary of Variable Structures and Indicators

Variables	Dimensions	Indicators	Item Number	References
Career Prospects in the Teaching Profession (X1)	D1. Attractiveness and Sustainability	Interest and Future Relevance	1, 2, 3, 4	[15]; [16]; [23]; [26]
	D2. Security and Well-being	Financial Stability and Welfare	5, 6, 7, 8	
Social Factors of the Teaching Profession (X2)	D3. Social Significance	Contribution and Value of Service	9, 10, 11, 12	[26]; [27]; [28]; [29]
	D4. Status and Recognition	Social Respect and Dignity	13, 14, 15, 16	
Interest in Teaching (Y)	D5. Educational Interest	Study Interest and Career Choice	17, 18	[20]; [30]; [31]
	D6. Early Commitment	Willingness for Training and Professional Effort	19, 20	

Data analysis was performed using multiple linear regression with Python via Google Colab, an approach selected for its flexibility in handling large datasets and the high accuracy of its integrated statistical libraries [24]. The use of computational statistical approaches in educational research has increasingly become a reliable method for handling large-scale datasets [25]. Prior to hypothesis testing, classical assumption diagnostics were conducted to ensure the regression model met the necessary conditions for valid inference. The analysis proceeded in three stages. In the preliminary stage, normality was examined through residual plots supported by the large sample size, linearity was assessed through scatterplots, multicollinearity was evaluated using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) with all values below the threshold of 10, and heteroskedasticity was tested using the Breusch-Pagan test, which was addressed through robust standard errors (HC3). Cook's distance confirmed no influential observations exceeded the threshold of 1.0. In the second stage, multiple linear regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses regarding the associations of Career Prospects and Social Factors with Interest in Teaching, both partially and simultaneously.

Finally, significance testing was conducted using t-tests for partial effects and F-tests for simultaneous effects, with a significance level of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$). The complete variable structure, dimensions, indicators, and item numbers are presented in Table 1.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

This section presents the findings obtained from the data analysis, including respondent characteristics, descriptive statistics, instrument quality evaluation, and hypothesis testing results. The analysis was conducted on the main sample of 653 twelfth-grade senior high school students in the Province of Bangka Belitung, drawn from approximately 60 schools across all seven regencies and cities. The majority of respondents originated from Bangka Island, accounting for 78 percent of the sample, while the remaining 22 percent came from Belitung Island, reflecting the demographic concentration of the student population in the region. In terms of gender distribution, the sample comprised 242 male students (32.22%) and 509 female students (67.78%), indicating a higher proportion of female participants. All respondents were in their final year of senior high school, placing them at a critical juncture for career decision-making prior to entering higher education.

Descriptive analysis was employed to provide a substantive overview of students' perceptions of the teaching profession and their level of interest in becoming teachers. Generally, both Career Prospects (X1) and Social Factors (X2) were perceived at relatively high levels, indicating that the teaching profession is still viewed as a stable and dignified career path by Grade XII students in the region. More critically, the Interest in Teaching variable (Y) also fell within the high category, with an overall mean score of 3.61. However, subtle variations across indicators suggest a degree of hesitation regarding the final decision to pursue professional teacher education. As shown in Table 2, all four indicators of Interest in Teaching were consistently rated as high, with mean scores ranging from 3.53 to 3.72, based on an interval calculation of 0.80. The highest mean was observed in the indicator of Professional Effort (Item 20, mean = 3.72), indicating that students who are interested in teaching are willing to strive to become competent professionals. Meanwhile, the lowest mean was found in Willingness for Training (Item 19, mean = 3.53), suggesting that the commitment to undergo professional teacher training still requires reinforcement amidst the economic realities of the region's extractive sector.

Table 2. Description of Mean Scores for Interest in Teaching (Y)

Indicators	Item Statement	Mean	Category
Y1 Study Interest	17. Considerations in choosing a teacher education program	3,64	High
Y2 Career Choice	18. Teaching as the current career choice	3,55	High
Y3 Willingness for Training	19. Willingness to undergo professional teacher training	3,53	High
Y4 Professional Effort	20. Striving to become a professional teacher	3,72	High

Scale 1,00 - 5,00

Prior to hypothesis testing, the research dataset underwent a series of preliminary analyses to ensure the adequacy of the regression model. Based on the pilot testing involving

100 students, all 20 items (P1 to P20) were declared valid, with Pearson correlation coefficients (*r* score) ranging from 0.460 to 0.786, all of which significantly exceeded the critical *r* table value of 0.195 at a significance level of 0.05. In addition to meeting validity requirements, the research instrument demonstrated a high level of internal consistency. The overall Cronbach's alpha for the combined 20-item instrument was 0.910, substantially exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.60, confirming that the instrument is highly reliable and suitable for further data collection.

The classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure that the regression model met the necessary conditions for drawing valid scientific conclusions. The normality assumption was assessed by examining the distribution of the model residuals, and although the statistical significance values showed some deviation, visual inspection of the normal probability plot revealed a reasonably symmetrical bell-shaped distribution. Given the large sample size of 653, the Central Limit Theorem supports the robustness of the regression estimates. The multicollinearity assumption was evaluated using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values. Although the VIF values were relatively high, this is considered common in social science research where individual perceptions tend to be interrelated, and all VIF values remained well below the critical threshold of 10, with tolerance values exceeding 0.10, confirming that multicollinearity did not distort the regression coefficients. The linearity assumption was examined through scatterplots of the standardized residuals against the predicted values, which did not reveal any systematic curvilinear patterns. The heteroskedasticity assumption was tested using the Breusch-Pagan test, and to ensure variance stability and unbiased inference, the study employed the Heteroskedasticity-Consistent Covariance Matrix Estimator (HC3) as a modern standard procedure. This robust standard error approach confirms that all testing results are free from heteroskedasticity bias. Additionally, Cook's distance was examined to detect influential observations, and no cases exceeded the threshold of 1.0, indicating that no single observation exerted undue influence on the regression coefficients.

After all prerequisites were met, hypothesis testing was conducted to analyze the associations between Career Prospects (X1) and Social Factors (X2) with Interest in Teaching (Y). The results of the multiple linear regression analysis are presented in Table 3. The regression model was statistically significant, with an *F*-statistic of 244.1 and a probability value ($p < 0.001$), indicating that simultaneously, Career Prospects and Social Factors exert a very strong and significant influence on students' interest in pursuing a teaching career. The model effectively explains 45.8 percent of the variance in student interest in Bangka Belitung ($R^2 = 0.458$), suggesting that the two predictors collectively account for nearly half of the variability in the dependent variable.

However, the partial analysis reveals a more nuanced picture. Career Prospects (X1) emerged as the sole significant determinant, with a standardized coefficient (β) of 0.4924 and a *p*-value of less than 0.001. This demonstrates that the interest of high school students in Bangka Belitung is heavily dictated by their perceptions of the security, stability, and future well-being of the teaching profession. In contrast, Social Factors (X2) showed no significant independent influence, with a coefficient (β) of -0.0431 and a *p*-value of 0.338, exceeding the significance level of 0.05. These findings suggest that economic factors and

career clarity play a more vital role in students' career decision-making compared to social environmental support, status, or recognition.

Table 3. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Independent Variable	Coefficient (β)	t-Statistic	Sig. (p)
(Constant)	0,2381	0,332	0,740
Career Prospects (X1)	0,4924	10,599	0,000
Social Factors (X2)	-0,0431	-0,958	0,338
R-Squared	0,458		
F-Statistic	244,1		
Prob (F-Statistic)	$8,32 \times 10^{-80}$		

*Significance level $\alpha < 0,05$

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study present a complex portrait of how the youth in the Bangka Belitung archipelago perceive their professional future. Based on the multiple linear regression analysis, it was found that, simultaneously, perceptions of career prospects and social factors exert a significant influence on the interest of Grade XII high school students in Bangka Belitung to pursue a teaching career, explaining 45.8 percent of the variance in interest. However, the core finding of this research lies in its partial analysis, revealing that only Career Prospects (X1) holds a significant independent influence, while Social Factors (X2) proved to have no significant independent impact. This phenomenon warrants further theoretical and in-depth contextual investigation to understand why the social values traditionally associated with the teaching profession are beginning to lose their appeal among future educators.

The dominance of Career Prospects as the sole determinant reflects a paradigm shift in career decision-making among the youth. Referring to Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) as proposed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett [20], [21], an individual's interest is heavily influenced by outcome expectations, which are tangible in nature. This is strongly supported by a recent meta-analysis of 20 empirical studies involving 10,527 participants, which found that outcome expectancy has a significant moderate-to-large association with teaching career interest ($r = 0.43$), while social support demonstrates a significant moderate association ($r = 0.35$) [32].

Students in regions with specific characteristics like Bangka Belitung tend to engage in rational calculations that prioritize financial stability, job security, and the long-term sustainability of the profession. This pragmatic orientation is understandable given that teacher performance itself is a multifaceted construct influenced by factors such as job satisfaction, trust, and leadership support [33], suggesting that efforts to attract and retain quality teachers must go beyond improving starting salaries to encompass broader professional support and institutional trust. This is highly logical given the unique geographical and economic conditions of the Province of Bangka Belitung. As a region heavily dependent on extractive sectors such as tin mining and plantations, young people in this area are exposed to the immediate economic allure offered by local industries. When faced with a choice between long-term service as a teacher, with its frequently debated welfare risks, and the quick income from the mining sector, students tend to prioritize professions that provide the most concrete guarantee of economic security [34]. The

significant coefficient of Career Prospects ($\beta = 0.4924$, $p < 0.001$) empirically confirms that students' interest is predominantly shaped by their assessment of whether the teaching profession can deliver stable income, job security, and professional development opportunities. This aligns with findings from a cross-national study across 39 educational systems which found that environmental factors, including family support and teacher enthusiasm, significantly influence adolescents' expectations for teaching careers [35], [36], [37].

The finding that Social Factors do not have a significant influence presents an intriguing anomaly, especially when contextualized within Eastern cultures that typically uphold the dignity of the teaching profession. This is particularly concerning given the increasingly complex roles teachers are expected to fulfill. Ahmadi et al. [38], found that school principals' leadership and teacher performance have significant positive influences on students' 21st-century learning characteristics, highlighting the critical role teachers play in developing future-ready skills. When social recognition alone is insufficient to attract students to the profession, the risk of losing capable educators who could shape these competencies becomes a systemic threat to educational quality. The non-significant impact of social status and recognition ($\beta = -0.0431$, $p = 0.338$) suggests that the nobility of the teaching profession is no longer a sufficiently powerful commodity to mitigate financial concerns. This aligns with contemporary realities, where information regarding low salaries for non-permanent teachers and heavy administrative burdens is widespread in the digital public sphere [14], [39], [40], [41]. Wang, Wang, and Lin [42], found that pre-service teachers' negative perceptions of teaching as a career are often derived from concerns about workload, work-related stress, low salary, and declining social status, suggesting that even those who have committed to teacher education experience significant doubts. The emergence of negative sentiments, such as the discourse surrounding the hashtag *#JanganJadiGuru* on social media, has created a perception where the technical and economic hardships of the profession overshadow its altruistic values. Linda et al. [1], documented that this phenomenon on social media highlights collective concerns related to demands for fair salaries, proportional teacher workloads, and appropriate recognition, creating a "reverse halo effect" where negative aspects of the profession overshadow its nobility.

For Grade XII students on the brink of transitioning to higher education, this viral information becomes a primary reference point that overrides social motivation or family support. This is alarming because teachers are essential not only for content delivery but also for developing foundational competencies. Wulan et al. [43], demonstrated that teachers act as facilitators and motivators in developing students' reading habits, a role that requires sustained commitment and pedagogical skill. If the most capable students avoid the teaching profession, the education system risks losing the very individuals who could most effectively cultivate these essential learning habits in future generations. The descriptive analysis provides additional insight into this phenomenon. While the Interest in Teaching variable generally falls into the high category across all indicators, with mean scores ranging from 3.53 to 3.72, the slightly lower scores in Career Choice (Item 18, mean = 3.55) and Willingness for Training (Item 19, mean = 3.53) compared to Professional Effort (Item 20,

mean = 3.72) indicate that their commitment still requires reinforcement amidst the economic realities of the region's extractive sector. These high scores across all indicators confirm that, psychologically, students in Bangka Belitung possess a strong willingness to become professional educators and are prepared to undergo the necessary training pathways. However, the variations in scores indicate that their commitment is not yet fully solidified.

The contextual dynamics of Bangka Belitung warrant specific attention. As an archipelagic region with a high economic dependency on extractive sectors, youth in Bangka Belitung are often confronted with the allure of instant economic returns offered by local industries. The competition between the long-term value of service as a teacher and the immediate financial offers from non-educational sectors creates a perception dynamic that is unique and distinct from other regions. This study provides empirical evidence that to increase interest in teaching, interventions cannot rely solely on moralistic campaigns regarding unsung heroes. Instead, reform must target the improvement of tangible job prospects, encompassing decent salary systems, professional protection, and the simplification of administrative burdens, so that the teaching profession regains healthy competitiveness against the local industrial sectors. The R^2 value of 0.458 indicates that nearly half of the variance in student interest is explained by the two predictors, leaving considerable room for other variables that were not examined in this study. This suggests that future research should explore additional determinants such as self-efficacy, digital information exposure, family background, and prior teaching experiences, as suggested by recent studies applying the FIT-Choice framework in the Indonesian context [44], [45].

Theoretically, this research extends the application of Social Cognitive Career Theory by demonstrating that in regions with a strong pull from extractive industries, economic variables (prospects) act as a primary filter before social variables can play a role. This finding nuances the SCCT framework by suggesting that contextual supports and barriers may not operate uniformly across all settings; in economically distinctive regions like Bangka Belitung, outcome expectations related to financial stability may overshadow the influence of social recognition and cultural values. Zhang and Guo [35], similarly found that the specific influencing factors for teaching career expectations varied across different economies, suggesting that contextual factors moderate the applicability of SCCT propositions. Martínez-Moreno and Petko [46], further demonstrated that student teachers who prioritize job security also tend to value social contribution, indicating that these motivations are not mutually exclusive but rather interact in complex ways depending on individual and contextual factors. Consequently, the marketing strategy for the teaching profession in archipelago regions must be repackaged. Teacher Education Institutions, such as *Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan* (LPTK), and local governments need to highlight the career stability of certified teachers and the *Pendidikan Profesi Guru* (PPG) program as a more secure future guarantee compared to the fluctuations of mining commodity prices. An emphasis on clear and modern career pathways will help offset the negative stigma that has historically hindered the interest of the younger generation in Bangka Belitung from entering the world of education.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the associations between perceived career prospects, social factors, and interest in becoming a teacher among twelfth-grade senior high school students in the Province of Bangka Belitung. The findings confirm that simultaneously, both career prospects and social factors significantly explain 45.8 percent of the variance in students' interest in pursuing a teaching career. However, the partial analysis reveals that only career prospects emerged as a significant unique statistical predictor, while social factors showed no significant independent association. These findings directly answer the research question by demonstrating that students' interest is primarily shaped by pragmatic considerations related to financial security, job stability, and future welfare, whereas social recognition and status alone do not meaningfully drive career choice in this context.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in extending the application of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) to a pre-tertiary student population in an archipelagic region characterized by a strong extractive economic sector. The findings nuance the SCCT framework by suggesting that contextual supports and barriers do not operate uniformly across all settings; in economically distinctive regions like Bangka Belitung, outcome expectations related to financial stability may overshadow the influence of social recognition and cultural values. This study also fills a significant gap in the literature by providing empirical evidence from a region that has been largely overlooked in previous research on teacher regeneration and career decision-making.

From a practical and policy perspective, the findings suggest that efforts to increase interest in the teaching profession cannot rely solely on moralistic campaigns emphasizing the nobility of the profession. Instead, systemic reforms must target tangible improvements in teacher welfare, career path certainty, professional protection, and administrative simplification to ensure that the teaching profession remains competitive against local industrial sectors that offer immediate economic returns. Teacher Education Institutions and local governments should highlight the career stability of certified teachers and the PPG program as a more secure future guarantee compared to the fluctuations of mining commodity prices.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences, and the observed associations should be interpreted as correlational rather than causal. Second, the geographical concentration of respondents on Bangka Island (78%) limits the generalizability of the findings to the entire province, particularly to Belitung Island and smaller outer islands. Third, the R^2 value of 0.458 indicates that more than half of the variance in student interest remains unexplained, suggesting that other important determinants were not captured in this study.

Future research should address these limitations by employing longitudinal or mixed-methods designs to explore the causal mechanisms underlying students' career decision-making. Specifically, future studies could explicitly test the roles of teacher-related self-efficacy, family support, subjective norms, expected salary, digital-media exposure, perceived job security, competing career opportunities, and socioeconomic background in shaping students' interest in becoming teachers. Such investigations would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological and contextual dynamics influencing

teacher regeneration in Indonesia, particularly in regions with unique economic characteristics.

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