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**Teaching is (not) a career priority for student teachers:
Empirical evidence from Indonesia**

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ABSTRACT

ITE plays a crucial role in preparing future teachers for the teaching profession. Indonesia has over 420 ITEs with various qualities. Despite a significant number of teacher graduates from ITE, previous studies have found that student teachers joining ITE do not necessarily mean they want to become teachers. However, the number of student teachers who prioritize teaching as their career intention remains unknown. This mixed-methods explanatory sequential design study seeks to determine the proportion of student teachers (N=409) of private and state universities in Indonesia who view teaching as a career priority and explore in-depth the rationale of students who intend or do not intend to become teachers (N=14). The study found that student teachers who choose to become teachers as their career priority are low (25.4% in the private university and 37% in the state university). Even though the findings indicate that the low interest in the teaching profession is not static and likely to change, a small percentage of student teachers interested in becoming teachers might impact the teacher competencies and retention rate. The findings indicate that teacher working conditions in Indonesia is one possible reason for the small proportion of student teachers prioritizing teaching as a career. Further discussion of the findings and context analysis will be included.

Keywords: career intention, student teacher, initial teacher education, Indonesia, mixed methods



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Introduction

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is an important institution aimed at preparing future teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to educate the younger generation. Given the dynamic nature of the teaching profession, its role also encompasses preparing student teachers to confront unforeseen adversities. A compelling illustration of these challenges emerged with the recent pandemic, forcing teachers worldwide to swiftly adapt to crisis-induced changes. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers encountered a mix of new and familiar hurdles. The existing literature highlights these universal challenges, which can be categorized into distinct areas. These include constraints stemming from limited online resources, inadequate facilities for connectivity and accessibility, challenges in effective teaching and learning, parental cooperation, and concerns regarding well-being issues (Castroverde & Acala, 2021; Hamsan, 2021; Lukas & Yunus, 2021; Mandapat & Farin, 2021; Ocampo & Solina, 2021; Rosalina et al., 2020; Shaheen & Hoque, 2021). Compounding these challenges, socio-economic issues have worsened the situation, leaving many parents struggling with financial constraints that prevent them from affording the necessary internet data to support online learning (Dewi et al., 2021; Lestiyawati & Widyantoro, 2020). During these challenges, teachers have learned valuable lessons. It has become evident that keeping up with fundamental technological pedagogical content knowledge and ICT skills is crucial (König et al., 2020). Moreover, the pandemic challenged the conventional assumptions underlying education, redefining what constitutes an effective teacher during such crises. Rather than being solely focused on student achievements, the notion of effective teaching during pandemics became associated with caring for students' well-being and adeptly managing uncertainty (Kim et al., 2021). This transformative shift not only redefines the role of teachers but also significantly reshapes perceptions about teacher education and the teaching profession as a whole. Thus, teacher education programs must possess adaptability and an explorative nature to effectively prepare teachers for the ever-changing and unforeseen challenges that emerge in the field of education. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, a range of studies have researched its impact on teacher education, triggering a compelling demand for enhancements in response to the complexities it introduced (Assunção Flores & Gago, 2020; Kidd & Murray, 2020; Mohamad Nasri et al., 2020; Panther et al., 2021; Quezada et al., 2020; Vancell, 2020). Moreover, the closure and downsizing of businesses resulting from the pandemic might have seemingly presented a sense of greater stability in the teaching profession. However, it is crucial to note that the attraction of the teaching profession is still shaped by diverse factors, including working conditions, socioeconomic backgrounds, and the structure of the educational system.

In Indonesia, perceptions of the teaching profession differ between societal and economic viewpoints. Socially, Indonesian teachers hold high status and receive considerable respect. They are esteemed in society and often considered role models, as exemplified by the saying "Guru, di gugu dan di tiru" (Teachers are listened to and followed). Additionally, from a religious perspective, teaching is associated with virtuous values. This societal recognition aligns with Indonesia's fifth-place ranking in the 2018 Global Status Index (Varkey Foundation, 2018). However, this esteemed societal position does not necessarily mean that it is a profession that parents encourage their children to enter, as only 32 % express definite or probable support, according to the report. Despite this noble recognition, from an economic perspective, the status of teachers remains low compared to other professions and their counterparts in different countries. Teaching is viewed as a demanding occupation with limited financial rewards. Chang et al. (2014) explained that this lower status is rooted in various factors, including educational qualifications, income levels, teacher competencies, motivation to become a teacher, and certification. Without addressing these concerns and elevating the status of teachers, aspiring teachers might not prioritize teaching as a career due to a perceived lack of prospects. The oversupply of teacher graduates from over 420 teacher education institutions with discrepancies in quality further exacerbates concerns about graduate competence. The perception of inadequacy among teacher education graduates and the scarcity of permanent teaching positions contribute to relatively lower teacher salaries, predominantly for non-civil servants and part-time teachers (World Bank, 2020). Consequently, many teachers seek secondary employment, often in occupations with lower status, such as tricycle or

motorcycle taxi drivers and street vendors (Jalal et al., 2009). This lack of perceived prospects has hindered community, teacher, and school leader support for the teaching profession (The Head Foundation, 2018). The phenomenon of teachers maintaining side jobs raises concerns about teacher quality, ineffective teaching, insufficient professional development, and low student achievement. These interconnected issues highlight the intricate challenges surrounding the teaching profession in Indonesia and emphasize the need for comprehensive reform to enhance its status and efficacy.

In various global educational contexts, the perception and status of the teaching profession vary significantly, influencing both teacher availability and the quality of education they provide. Across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, socio-cultural and religious norms tend to favor female teachers; however, concerns persist due to the shortage of female educators and their compromised status attributed to insufficient financial and non-monetary incentives (Ayyash-Abdo, 2000). In contrast, the teaching profession is considered rewarding in high-performing countries. For instance, in Finland, teaching ranks as a prestigious occupation, with teachers often enjoying lifelong careers within schools (Sahlberg, 2011). Similarly, Singapore positions teaching as an attractive, well-compensated profession, with most student teachers choosing to pursue it upon graduation (World Bank, 2010). Darling-Hammond (2017) affirms that teaching ranks as the most sought-after career among young people in Finland and Singapore. In the UK, policy efforts to attract and retain teachers have focused on sustainability rather than recruitment, emphasizing the need to cultivate high-quality ITE programs to support new teachers in navigating challenges and remaining dedicated to their profession (Hulme & Wood, 2022). In these high-performing countries, teacher preparation is conceptualized as an ongoing continuum, with the admission process to ITE acting as the foundation for sustained commitment and ongoing endeavors to enhance the teaching workforce and professional standards.

Students enrolled in ITE programs are typically expected to enter the teaching profession. Nevertheless, researchers have identified numerous factors that influence these student teachers' career intentions, encompassing aspects such as job satisfaction, school policies, workload, prospects, interactions with parents, practicum experiences, and the learning environment within teacher education (Rots et al., 2014; Sinclair, 2008; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). Some student teachers who initially pursued ITE without the intention of becoming teachers might not choose teaching as their career path after graduating (Roberts et al., 2009). In addition, student teachers might choose teaching as their career intention but not as a priority but viewing it as a side job and a stepping stone to better opportunities or as a last resort (Suryani & George, 2021). The emphasis on teaching as a priority is significant due to its potential consequences; teachers balancing multiple jobs could inadvertently compromise teaching effectiveness and hinder students' learning processes (Muijs et al., 2014; OECD, 2005). Darling-Hammond (2000) highlights a positive correlation between teaching experience and teaching quality. This means that teachers who perceive teaching as a mere stepping stone to alternative careers might influence their teaching performance and contribute to higher turnover rates. However, it remains unclear whether those who consider teaching a backup option will eventually prioritize it as their chosen career path, especially when faced with the decision between teaching and other career avenues.

To address this gap in understanding, this study seeks to offer deeper insights into the career priorities of student teachers. This involves examining the reasoning behind their career intentions and considering the contextual factors that shape their decisions. In this regard, this study aims to specifically investigate student teachers in Indonesia, with a focus on identifying the proportion of individuals who exhibit strong motivation to commit to teaching as their primary career choice. Therefore, this research provides a clearer understanding of the extent to which teaching is prioritized among aspiring teachers in the Indonesian educational landscape. This purpose is translated into the following research inquiries:

- 1) What is student teachers' career intentions and the percentage of student teachers prioritizing teaching as a career priority?

- 2) What is student teachers' reasons for choosing or not choosing to be a teacher as their career intention?
- 3) Are there any differences in participants' views between private and state universities?

This paper is structured into several sections. This section begins by presenting the methodology and materials used, followed by an explanation of the sampling process. The subsequent section outlines the results obtained for each research question. In the Discussion section, the findings are analyzed in context, providing a comprehensive overview of the issue. Subsequently, this paper addresses the study's limitations and discusses its implications. Finally, the article concludes by summarizing key points and providing recommendations for future research.

Methods and Materials

A mixed methods explanatory sequential design was conducted to investigate student teachers' career intentions (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Initially, a descriptive survey was conducted to quantify the proportion of students interested in specific career intentions. Then, selected student representatives were interviewed. These interviews aimed to uncover the underlying reasons for students choosing to pursue teaching or opting for other paths. Through qualitative analysis, these interview findings provided explanations and deeper insights into the quantitative results. After the survey and interview findings are presented, a joint display will illustrate the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings, followed by meta-inferences. This technique, as described by Younas et al., (2021), offers a rigorous and transparent synthesis of both quantitative and qualitative findings, facilitating the generation of relevant insights. Mixed-method studies often featured joint displays and the US Federal Government recommended them as best practices for mixed-methods design (Creswell et al., 2011).

The questionnaire aimed to measure student teachers' career intentions, including options for roles such as teacher, entrepreneur, practitioner (e.g., tour guide or translator), researcher, and 'others' for unlisted career aspirations. Survey career choices were based on graduates' profiles in teacher education. It is important to note that in the questionnaire, roles such as lecturers are categorized as 'others' due to differences in job nature and workplace settings. In addition, participants selecting 'others' had the opportunity to specify their career intention if their choice was not in the provided options. For the qualitative strand, interviewees were asked about their career intentions and elaborated on their motivations (refer to Appendix A for survey and interview guidelines). After the quantitative data were gathered, the third- and fourth-year students who represented each class were interviewed to obtain the qualitative data. The survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to calculate the proportion of student teachers choosing a particular career. The interview data were analyzed using reflexive thematic data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019, 2020)

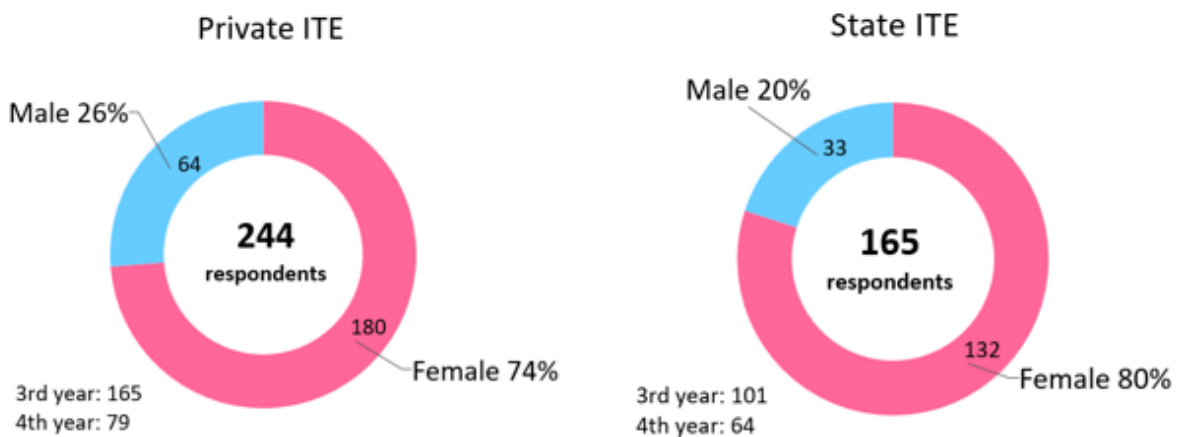
During the data collection phase, student teachers were provided with research information and consent forms as part of the survey. Participants were guaranteed the voluntary nature of their involvement, with the freedom to withdraw at any time. They were also assured that their data would be exclusively used for research purposes and their identities would remain anonymous. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the university ethics board. To maintain objectivity and prevent potential researcher bias, the researcher employed triangulation and had participants review the results. Throughout the study, the researcher maintained a reflexive approach to data analysis, keeping in line with the guidelines outlined by the British Educational Research Association (British Educational Research Association (BERA), 2018). Throughout the entire research process, the researcher prioritized the safety and well-being of the participants and emphasized the importance of data protection.

Sampling

The study was conducted in two undergraduate-level English teacher education programs located in urban areas, each affiliated with well-accredited universities. These universities, one private and one state institution, were intentionally chosen to represent different landscapes of higher education in Indonesia. This distinction is crucial because each type embodies specific characteristics. Specifically, state universities have a more competitive admission process, requiring candidates to excel in national entrance exams to secure a spot in these government-funded institutions. As a result, state universities are regarded with a higher level of prestige. Furthermore, the relatively modest tuition fees subsidized by the government, lead to a diverse student body from various parts of Indonesia. Conversely, private universities have greater autonomy in their admission procedures, including testing and selection protocols. However, these institutions typically have higher tuition fees than state universities. It is important to note that teacher education in both private and state universities generally falls under the Faculty of Education. At the program level, private and state teacher education programs have similarities in terms of educational qualifications (bachelor’s degree), program duration (four years), and structural framework (including coursework, practical fieldwork, and the composition of a mini thesis). Participants were chosen using purposive sampling. All third- and fourth-year students in private and state teacher education programs were invited to participate in the survey, resulting in a total of 409 respondents from both types of universities. In private ITE, the response rate was 94.9% (244 out of 257), while in state ITE, the response rate stood at 77.8% (165 out of 212). The overview of the survey respondents' demographics illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Demographics of Survey Respondents



The interview participants were selected to represent different classes within the university, and those who volunteered were then invited to participate in the interviews. These interviews uncovered the rationale behind the career intentions of 14 student teachers. It is important to highlight that this study primarily explored general career intentions and did not specifically investigate any differences in career intentions between male and female participants. The demographic details of the interviewees are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographics of Interview Participants

Interview (N=14)	Number of participants
Gender	
Male	2
Female	12
Year of study	
Year 3	8
Year 4	6
Teacher education program	
Private	8
State	6
Age	
20-21	8
22-23	6

Findings

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected to explore the students’ career intentions. In this section, the survey findings illustrate the proportion of student teachers’ interest in a particular career intention to answer research question one. After that, the survey findings will be grouped based on the category of teacher and non-teacher career intention to focus on the number of students who intend to become teachers. The interview findings will then explain student teachers’ reasons for becoming teachers or other career intentions to answer research question two. The differences between private and state teacher education to answer research question three will be discussed in every part of the result presentation and summarized in the integration of the findings.

Student Teachers’ Career Intentions

The survey results indicated that a relatively small proportion of student teachers, 25.4% for private and 37% for state teacher education, intended to pursue teaching as a career, implying that teaching was not the primary career choice for most student teachers. (see Table 2)

Table 2

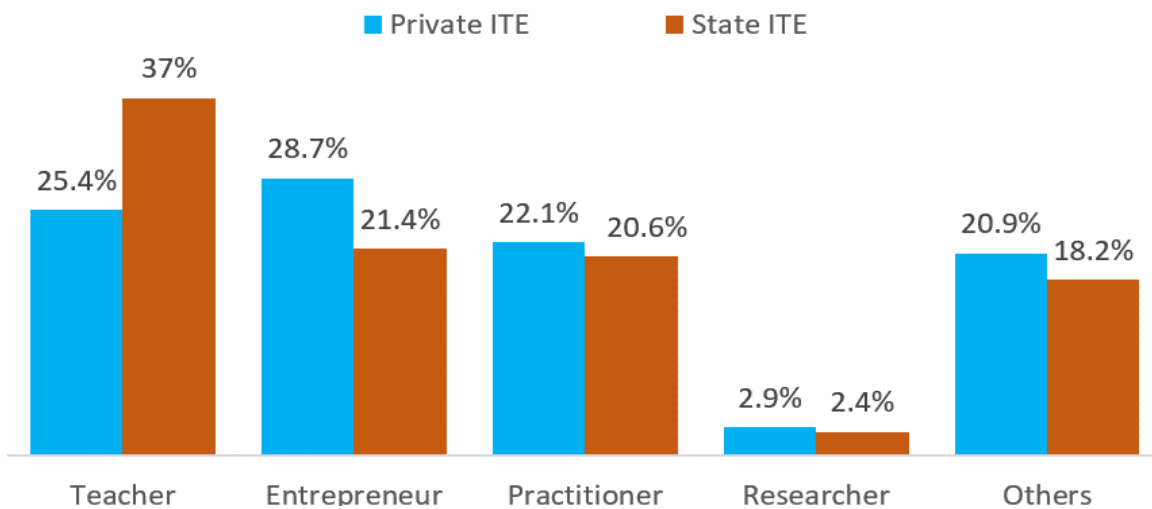
Questionnaire Results of Career Intention

Institution	Teacher	Entrepreneur	Practitioner	Researcher	Others
Private: 244	62	70	54	7	51
	25.4 %	28.7%	22.1%	2.9%	20.9%
State: 165	61	36	34	4	30
	37%	21.4%	20.6%	2.4%	18.2%

A comparison of all types of career intention results between private and state ITE is illustrated in Figure 2. The graph shows that while the teacher career intention in state ITE has a higher percentage than in private ITE, the portion of other career intentions in state ITE is lower than that in private ITE. In addition, even though teacher graduate profiles include researchers in the option, this is the least favorable career choice for ITE in both programs. Perhaps because being a researcher requires a postgraduate qualification and is not an immediate career option for a graduate from a bachelor’s degree program.

Figure 2

Findings of Career Intention at Private and State ITEs



The small number of student teachers prioritizing becoming a teacher is surprising, given that ITE was previously dedicated to preparing schoolteachers. This finding implies a shifting view on the role of ITE that is viewed not just as training for the job of being an English teacher. ITE is widely perceived as valuable, similar to a general higher education degree that provides a first-degree pathway that leads to various employment and self-employment options. However, when priorities are sorted from the

Figure 3

Career Priorities at Private and State ITEs

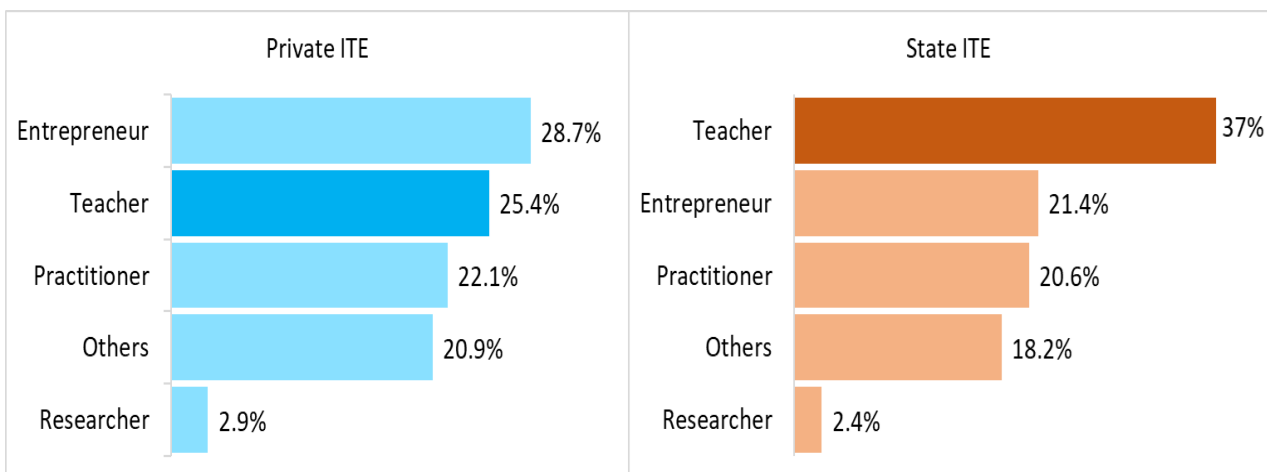
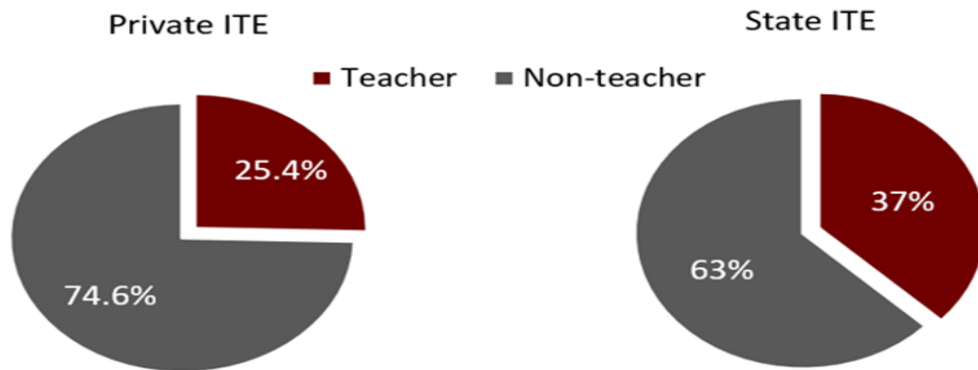


Figure 5

Findings of Teacher and Non-Teacher Career Intentions at Private and State ITEs



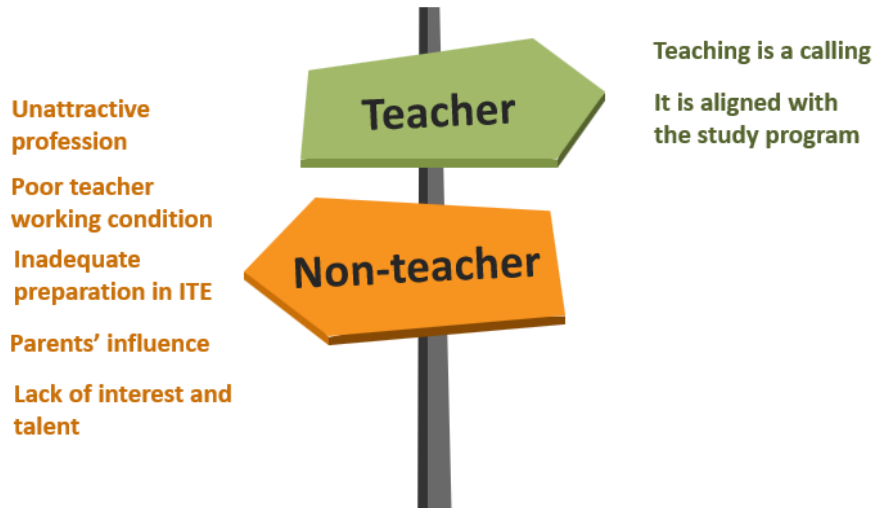
The results show that a small number of student teachers are interested in becoming teachers (25.4% in the private and 37% in the state ITE). Meanwhile, many student teachers were interested in non-teacher careers (74.6 % in the private and 63% in the state ITE). Following the survey, some participants volunteered for interviews to provide insights into their career intentions (N=14). These interviews complemented the survey data, offering a deeper understanding of their career motivations.

Justification of Student Teachers Regarding Their Career Intention

Most students did not consider being a schoolteacher a career priority. Seven of them were interested in the teaching profession as lecturers. The other five students planned to become researchers, employees, ministry staff, journalists, and curriculum developers. Only two of them wanted to become teachers. Similar to the survey results, the number of students who wanted to become teachers were also low in the interviews. The study did not find a particular pattern in the theme for student teachers' career intentions. Students had various reasons why they did not want to become teachers. The findings regarding the justification of student teachers' career intentions are presented and discussed under two sub-categories. First, students who want to become teachers consider that teaching is a calling and that the career chosen as a teacher is aligned with the study program. Second, student teachers who did not want to become teachers mentioned the reasons not to become a teacher, including being perceived as an unattractive profession, poor teacher working conditions, inadequate preparation in ITE, parents' influence, and lack of interest and talent. Figure 6 illustrates the main theme of the qualitative findings on why student teachers chose their career intention.

Figure 6

Justifications for Student Teachers' Career Intentions



Reasons for choosing to become a teacher. Students' voice in becoming a teacher is underrepresented in this study as they were only represented by two students. These students explained why they wanted to become teachers.

One student said that teaching was her calling, and she was destined to become a teacher. She added that fieldwork was the turning point in her passion for becoming a teacher.

“Since I had a teaching practicum, it’s like..., it appeared to me, maybe this is my destiny and my soul to become a teacher, and I feel more like devotion and responsibility for teaching..., educating students to be better. I had a calling since the fieldwork because I had never taught before, so I am excited about how to teach and handle students. In microteaching, our friends play the role of our students, and we are the teachers. It is less interesting for me because it is like a drama, pretending. In the fieldwork, we are really challenged on how to deal with students in the real world, not in a setup. I feel challenged...” (Student 5, State ITE).

For some students, practicum experience could discourage them from becoming teachers. The opposite effect could also occur, as shown in the quote above. The student teacher felt inspired to become a teacher after completing a teaching practicum.

Another student commented on the importance of focus and commitment to teaching as a career choice as the logical consequence of joining the teacher education program because it is aligned with the study program.

“Initially, it was a bit of shock anyway. It seems hard to teach so many students in a class. However, if we do not focus on our choice, what path do we want to take? So, if we have decided to join teacher education and then focus on being a teacher, we should look for ideas to make a change. In this sense, teaching has many techniques, so much more to explore, explore yourself, learn techniques and approaches that can be actualized in learning in the class, I just want to focus on that” (Student 6, State ITE)

Reasons for not choosing to become a teacher. Schoolteacher is considered as an unattractive profession for several reasons. The first reason is the perception of the nature of the school setting and

teaching, such as the fixed schedule. Student 1 is more interested in being a lecturer because of more flexibility in the teaching schedule.

“By being a teacher, you have to attend classes from Monday to Friday and be stuck in the routine and forget to improve yourself. I am just interested in being a lecturer. I think it is more flexible than the teacher. In my opinion, it is more fun to be a lecturer.” (Student 1, State ITE)

One student also highlighted the limited opportunities for improvement and professional development. She noticed that many senior teachers did not improve themselves as they felt secure in their positions as civil servants.

“I am an idealistic person, such as the lesson plan and things I want to do in the class, but if my senior colleagues are old and lazy to improve themselves, I tend to be influenced. I don’t want to be like that” (Student 4, State ITE)

One student added that a lack of professional development might cause the teaching practices to be dull and uninteresting.

“I saw how my friends taught in elementary school until senior high school, and it was not interesting. I think it is more interesting to be a lecturer” (Student 10, Private ITE).

In addition, being a teacher is considered ‘not challenging’ due to limited opportunities to explore new research activities.

“Being a teacher doesn’t have many research activities, and it’s not mandatory or not much. I like being a lecturer because of many aspects, starting from researching to improve our knowledge as someone in the realm of education to our opportunity to dig again into learning or knowledge about education itself. It is broader than the teacher.” (Student 7, Private ITE)

The second reason is teacher working conditions. One student mentioned that she lacked interest in becoming a teacher because of the complicated tasks and the administrative stuff a teacher had to do and the low income for non-civil servants.

“Being a schoolteacher is complicated because of teaching and administrative duties as making an assessment, input scores, and fulfilling the school vision and mission. All must be burdened on the teachers. You feel more secure if you are a civil servant. Otherwise, the salary is just below standard” (Student 13, Private ITE)

Inadequate preparation from teacher education was mentioned as another reason. One student mentioned that she felt unprepared because the program practices lacked the classroom context.

“Teaching demos in the program are expected to train us to be ready to teach, but during teaching demos from the beginning until the end of the semester, they were more like a presentation rather than teaching. So, I don’t feel ready if I have to teach in front of many students in the class” (Student 11, Private ITE)

Parents’ preferences were also a reason why student teachers chose a particular profession, as illustrated by this quote. Interestingly, this quote also represents a contrasting view of having a figure teacher in the family. A student feels inspired by her mother’s role as a teacher, and even her mother prefers her to other kinds of jobs.

“My mom wanted me to be a lecturer. Because I’ve seen the figure of a teacher from my mother, everything. So, I already have an idea of how I will proceed if I become a teacher or lecturer later. I can understand, and I have a picture of the job” (Student 3, State ITE).

On the contrary, having parents as teachers could also be a turnoff point for another student to join the teaching profession, as stated in this quote.

“This is actually the effect of my parents. I saw them both as teachers, I am the only child, and I think that being a teacher is complicated. Since I was in Junior High School, I have helped them. Sometimes they said, ‘Son, please help with this lesson plan, help this, help that...’ I even helped my mother with the correction; I also helped my father. Sometimes, when I am at home, I cannot do anything other than help them out. So, being a teacher is really complicated” (Student 9, Private ITE)

In addition to reasoning from the nature of the job, personal preferences such as interest and talent were also mentioned as the reason, as shown in this quote.

“I think I don’t have the talents to be a teacher, maybe I am just not interested, or maybe both!” (Student 8, Private ITE)

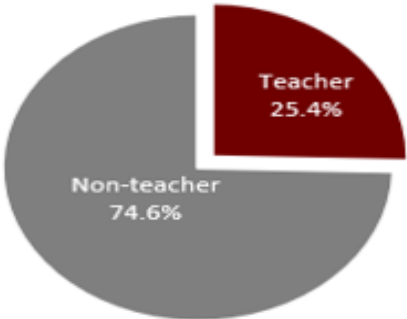
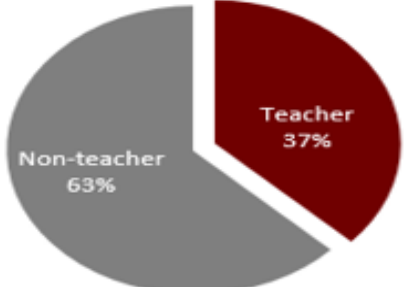
Apart from various reasons for not choosing a career as a teacher, most students were interested in becoming lecturers, as illustrated in the following quotes. Student teachers did not want to become teachers because of the difference in the nature of the job. Some students who wanted to become lecturers mentioned that being a university lecturer was perceived as a more attractive profession because it was more prestigious, had better pay, and had more possibilities to expand knowledge and career development. The findings indicated the possibility that student teachers had an interest in teaching. However, because of the perceived nature of the job, career opportunities, and teacher working conditions, they did not place teachers as a career priority. In the next section, a joint display will illustrate the integration findings of student teachers’ career intention from the survey and interviews and the differences between private and state teacher education.

Similarities and Differences in Student Teachers’ Career Intentions across Programs

The integration of the career intention findings is presented as a joint display in Figure 7. The survey results highlighted the division of the percentage of student teachers in which one part represents those interested in becoming a teacher and the other encompasses those inclined toward non-teacher roles. Interview excerpts provide the rationale for these choices. Meta-inferences further elaborate on and conclude the mixed-methods findings, addressing student teachers’ career intentions. Additionally, the findings illuminate both the commonalities and disparities in participants’ views on private and state teacher education.

Figure 7

Joint Display of Career Intention across the Program

Quantitative results showing the portion of student teacher's career intention	Qualitative interview excerpts explaining the rationale of the career intention choice	Meta inferences				
<p style="text-align: center;">Private University</p>  <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>Teacher</td> <td>25.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non-teacher</td> <td>74.6%</td> </tr> </table>	Teacher	25.4%	Non-teacher	74.6%	<p>Being a school teacher is complicated because of teaching and administrative duties.</p> <p>I think I don't have talents to be a teacher, maybe I am just not interested, or maybe both.</p> <p>I saw the way my friends teaching in the elementary till senior high school, it is not interesting, I think it is more interesting to be a lecturer.</p> <p>I don't feel ready if I have to teach in front of many students in the class.</p>	<p>The career intention of students to become a teacher in private teacher education is lower than state teacher education proven with the survey results which showing lower percentage. None of private students who were interviewed showed interest to have teacher as career intention. Private students perceived school teacher as complicated, uninteresting and lowly paid kind of job. Students also claimed personal reasons such as having no talents, no interest, or not ready.</p>
Teacher	25.4%					
Non-teacher	74.6%					
<p style="text-align: center;">State University</p>  <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>Teacher</td> <td>37%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non-teacher</td> <td>63%</td> </tr> </table>	Teacher	37%	Non-teacher	63%	<p>Maybe this is my destiny and my soul wants to become a teacher and I feel it is more like a devotion and responsibility for teaching.</p> <p>If we do not focus on our choice, what path do we want to take? so, if we have decided joining teacher education, then focus on being a teacher, we should look for ideas how to make a change.</p> <p>It is not flexible, by being a teacher, you have to attend the class from Monday to Friday and being stuck in the routine and forget to improve yourselves.</p> <p>My mom wanted me to be a lecturer.</p>	<p>The career intention of state students to become teachers is higher than private students as shown on the higher percentage in survey results. Two out of six students in the interview had high enthusiasm of being a teacher. They think it as a calling and consequence of joining teacher education. State students who did not want to become teachers perceived school teacher as boring and inflexible job. Personal reason such as parents' preference and personal style also became the reasons why they chose other kinds jobs as future career.</p>
Teacher	37%					
Non-teacher	63%					

Discussion

This study explored student teachers' career intentions to understand the extent to which they prioritize teaching as their career choice. The survey findings show a low proportion of student teachers who want to become teachers, and the proportion is lower in private than in state teacher education. One plausible explanation is that the private teacher education program examined in this study emphasizes a broader range of career opportunities for its graduates than solely teaching. This implies that students enrolled in English language education programs at private institutions of teacher education are not strictly limited to pursuing careers as teachers. Student teachers could also become entrepreneurs or practitioners in English education, such as tour guides or translators. The program's curriculum in private ITE also accommodates student teachers' other interests by providing subjects such as entrepreneurship, tourism, and translation studies. This finding confirms a previous study, which indicated that universities often advertise the possibility of working in non-teaching occupations to attract student teachers to join ITE (Suryani & George, 2021). The value of being a teacher might not be strongly promoted because ITE could not guarantee a teaching job for their graduates as any study program graduate can also fill in a teaching position and become certified as a teacher. Therefore, teacher education in Indonesia is perceived more as a standard higher education institution, allowing students to choose any job rather than specializing in one profession. The high number of student teachers who chose careers other than teaching indicates a phenomenon of low motivation to join the teaching profession. This phenomenon is also related to the admission process, which is relatively easy and does not filter out candidates who have no interest in teaching. Masbirorotni et al. (2020) found that the most common reason why student teachers join ITE is that they have no other choice. Some of them may see teaching as a side job with flexible hours or as a last resort when they fail to find other opportunities. Another study by Suryani (2017, 2020) revealed that out of 657 student teachers who planned to become teachers, 636 of them (79.30%) also planned to have a second job, with 530 students (66.08%) intending to work simultaneously. This phenomenon of viewing teaching as an option rather than a priority might have serious implications for the retention rate and effectiveness of teaching and learning in the classroom.

The interview findings reveal various factors that influence students' career intentions. Some of the factors that discourage them from choosing teaching are negative perceptions of the profession, poor working conditions, parental influence, unsatisfactory learning experiences in ITE, and lack of talent or interest in teaching. On the other hand, a student teacher who chose teaching as her career cited her sense of calling and the alignment between her education and her job as her motivations. The interview results also reveal that specific factors can produce opposite outcomes for different student teachers. For instance, parental influence can inspire some student teachers to follow their parents' footsteps as teachers, while it can discourage others who have witnessed the challenges and difficulties their parents faced as teachers. One aspect that has shown inconsistent results with previous studies is the effect of the teaching practicum on student teachers' career intentions. Sinclair (2008) reported a negative influence, while a student teacher in this study felt positive and discovered a passion for teaching during the practicum. Teaching practicums can influence the career intentions of student teachers, as demonstrated in the studies conducted by Azkiyah & Mukminin (2017), and Kuswandono (2014). It can also foster the development of teacher identity after the practicum (Anspal et al., 2019; Flores, 2020; Lutovac & Flores, 2021) and reveal the gap between student teachers' expectations and reality (Trent, 2019). This study also found that the learning experiences in ITE made some student teachers feel inadequate and unprepared for teaching. As a result, they lost confidence and doubted their self-efficacy and competency.

Student teachers' attitudes toward the teaching profession are influenced by their learning experiences in ITE, as previous studies have shown (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; DeAngelis et al., 2013; Rots et al., 2014). However, these attitudes are not fixed and may change during their ITE studies (Rots et al., 2012). Nevertheless, this study's findings are consistent with those of Roberts et al. (2009), who found that the proportion of student teachers who did not want to teach remained stable from the beginning to

the end of their studies. Moreover, this study sheds light on the reasons behind this lack of interest in teaching. It reveals that the students who did not intend to become teachers were those who did not join ITE to become teachers in the first place. Similarly, Suralaga et al. (2020) found that student teachers who join ITE merely to continue studying in higher education without any intention to become a teacher might not join the teaching profession because they do not commit to teaching. Hence, these studies indicate that the motivation for enrolling in ITE and the commitment of student teachers to the field of teaching are pivotal factors influencing their career decisions. Moreover, contextual factors, such as job opportunities and teacher working conditions in Indonesia, may also impact students' career intentions.

Job Opportunities as a Teacher

Policies, social, economic, and educational systems play a significant role in perceived employment opportunities. In Indonesia, teaching is an open profession. Graduates from any program, whether ITE (a four-year bachelor's degree for teacher education program) or other study programs, have the same opportunities to apply for PPG (Program Profesi Guru/Teacher Professional Education), a teacher training program for teacher certification. ITE graduates compete not only with other ITE graduates but also with graduates from other study programs who are interested in teaching jobs (Fibrianto & Yuniar, 2020). This policy may be one possible reason why ITE graduates anticipate job competition. Student teachers equip themselves with other skills and the possibility to do other kinds of jobs, such as being an entrepreneur. ITE also promotes non-teaching job opportunities to ITE candidates. Teaching is competitive, particularly for civil servants and permanent positions in urban areas. Although job opportunities are more open in rural and remote areas, poor infrastructure discourages teachers from committing to teach in those areas.

Teacher Working Condition

Teacher working conditions differ depending on the type of teaching position. In Indonesia, teachers are categorized into three types. The first category is civil servants who work permanently in state schools (for details about the statistics of schools and teachers, see Central Bureau of Statistics, (2021)). The civil servant position is attractive because it offers job security, undemanding work, short work hours (24 hours per week), and secure employment as they are entitled to work until 60 years of age and receive a pension from the government (Bjork, 2005). This secure position has a drawback, as civil servant teachers might lack the motivation to improve their professional development. Therefore, they are sometimes perceived as less advanced or creative than their private school peers. The second category includes private school teachers as non-civil servants with permanent positions in private fee-paying schools. Private school teachers' positions are also attractive, especially for those who work in a prestigious private school, because they are offered better pay and facilities. A highly paid teaching job in private schools comes with a consequence. Private school teachers are demanded to have good quality and performance as students have paid high school fees. Private school teachers are perceived to be more motivated for professional development because of constant supervision, and their permanent position is periodically evaluated. Nevertheless, it is common knowledge that private school teachers face more challenges when dealing with students in private schools because their characteristics differ from those in state schools (free of tuition) that implement a tight selection process.

The third category is part-time teachers, also called casual or honorary teachers. They are hired in a non-permanent position. This position is unattractive because part-time teachers have unsecured positions, poor welfare, and low pay. Part-time teachers usually only teach a few slots or a few hours weekly. Fresh graduates seeking teaching experience and teachers who have not yet secured a permanent position could fill this position. They hope that by working as honorary or part-time teachers, they will be offered a permanent position in the school foundation institution or an opportunity to apply as civil servants in the future. Those who view teaching as a stepping stone or a flexible second job might choose part-time teaching positions. Teaching is perceived as unattractive because secured

positions such as civil servant teachers are limited, similar to private teachers in highly reputable schools in big cities. This leaves a significant portion of in-service teachers with part-time positions. As an illustration, data from the Ministry of Education reports that by 2020, out of 937.228 teachers and non-civil servants, 728.461 are part-time teachers who are qualified but do not have permanent positions (Ministry of Education, 2021). Some part-time teachers have financial constraints due to low pay and uncertainty about their future; therefore, they have other jobs to make a living.

Teacher recruitment for civil servants is another main concern, especially for part-time teachers. Being a civil servant could be seen as the only hope of securing a position and better welfare. To accommodate this, the current policy stops centralized civil servant recruitment for teachers in 2021. It changes the system by recruiting civil servants into government employees through an employment agreement (Pangestuti et al., 2021). The government argues that the centralized recruitment, which then places the recruited civil servants in certain areas, is problematic because, after a few years, most of them request relocation to big cities or better areas, leaving some areas with few teachers. The new recruitment system applies an employment agreement, which can be extended based on the needs of teachers and their teaching performance. In comparison, civil servant teachers receive a pension, but teachers' employment with agreement does not have a pension scheme. The new scheme of government initiatives is expected to improve teacher welfare and quality.

The low proportion of student teachers prioritizing teaching raised concerns about ITE's effectiveness and factors that influence student teachers' career intentions, such as employment opportunities, perception of the teaching profession and teacher working conditions. This study confirms that in Indonesia, many student teachers join ITE without the intention of becoming teachers. For that reason, studies that explore student teacher motivation to teach, particularly in a context such as Indonesia, probably need to avoid assuming or making a sweeping generalization that all student teachers in ITE want to become teachers. The study may need to consider mapping the students' career intention before measuring factors influencing teaching among student teachers or exploring whether their motivation to teach is because of altruistic, extrinsic, or intrinsic factors. Measuring student teachers' motivation to teach from a population that may consist of some student teachers who do not intend to teach may result in misinterpretation, especially for the study context when the teaching profession is not seen as an attractive career intention.

Limitations and implications

The scope of this study is limited by the small and non-random sample of private and state universities. Thus, the results do not reflect the views of student teachers from different types of universities. Moreover, this study does not claim to represent the career intentions of teacher students in contexts other than Indonesia. However, this study may offer some insights for countries with similar situations. The findings of this study have both practical and theoretical implications. Policymakers may need to consider developing a coherent and continuous pathway for teacher education graduates to enter and remain in the teaching profession. This would enhance the perception of teacher education as a foundation for professional development and career advancement, rather than a mere recruitment strategy. Educators can also help emphasize and convey the importance of the teaching profession, especially considering government policies aimed at improving the working conditions of teachers. Hence, the teaching profession might be seen as an attractive and long-term career choice. This study strengthens the idea that personal values, environmental factors, teacher education, and contextual issues affect student-teacher career intention.

Conclusion

This study explores student teachers' career intentions and teaching as a career priority in private and state teacher education in Indonesia. This research contributes to a better understanding of student teachers' career priorities in Indonesia. The study found a low proportion of student teachers interested

in becoming teachers. The findings raise awareness about the critical role of teacher education in cultivating the value of being a teacher among student teachers and other relevant issues that affect their career intention, such as employment opportunities, perception of the teaching profession, and teacher working conditions. The contribution of this study in a broader context is to provide a deeper insight into the attractiveness of the teaching profession in developing countries such as Indonesia, which is still an issue due to some contextual factors. This study addresses the gaps in current research on how student teachers at ITE prioritize teaching as their career intention. Before this study, it was not easy to understand to what extent student teachers prioritize the teaching profession as a career intention because many studies reported that student teachers choose to become teachers because they view it as a side job and stepping stone for a better career. Future research is needed to investigate student teachers prioritizing teaching as their career intention with a larger sample and different study program backgrounds. Further research may also need to consider exploring factors from ITE that may influence student teachers' career intentions.

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Ethics Statement

In this study, all rules stated to be followed within the scope of the “Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive” were followed. None of the actions stated under the title “Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics”, which is the second part of the directive, have been carried out. The research was approved by the decision of the University of Bristol Ethics Committee with the number 82324.

During the writing process of the study titled “Teaching is (not) a career priority for student teachers: Empirical evidence from Indonesia”, scientific, ethical and citation rules were followed, no falsification was made on the data collected. The Editorial Board of the Journal of JESMA has no responsibility for all ethical violations. All responsibility belongs to me, and this study has not been sent to an academic publishing environment for evaluation.

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Appendix A

A Survey and interview question of this study

Survey question

What kind of profession you are interested in after graduating from teacher education?

- a. Teacher
- b. Entrepreneur
- c. Practitioner (such as tutor, tour guide or translator)
- d. Researcher
- e. Other

Please specify _____

Interview question

What kind of profession you are interested in after graduating from teacher education?

Why do you choose that kind of profession?

Why do you want/ do not want to become a teacher?

Appendix B

Other kinds of student teachers' career intention

Private ITE

1	Artist	14	Filmmaker	27	Lecturer	40	Master Degree
2	Astronaut	15	Football Manager	28	Lecturer	41	Ministry officer in curriculum
3	Cameraman	16	Graphic designer	29	Lecturer	42	Office employee
4	Chef	17	Hotel receptionist	30	Lecturer	43	Proof reader
5	Civil servant	18	Hotel worker	31	Lecturer	44	Public relation officer
6	Civil servant	19	Hotelier	32	Lecturer	45	Rector
7	Content creator	20	International relation officer	33	Lecturer	46	Reporter
8	Copywriter	21	Journalist	34	Make-up artist	47	Restaurant owner
9	Custom automotive builder	22	Lecturer	35	Makeup artist	48	Sports journalist
10	Editor	23	Lecturer	36	Manager	49	Tour guide
11	Expert in education	24	Lecturer	37	Master Degree	50	Traveller
12	Expert in parenting	25	Lecturer	38	Master Degree	51	Writer
13	Fashion designer	26	Lecturer	39	Master Degree		

State ITE

1	Attaché	11	Event organiser	21	Event organizer
2	Designer	12	Flight attendant	22	Event organizer
3	Diplomat	13	Content creator	23	Editor
4	Diplomat	14	Translator	24	Writer
5	Lecturer	15	Culinary business	25	Editor
6	Lecturer	16	Interpreter	26	Farmer
7	Lecturer	17	Linguist	27	Civil servant
8	Lecturer	18	Master Degree	28	Policeman
9	Lecturer	19	Employee	29	Radio announcer
10	Entertainer	20	Flight attendant	30	Reporter