At-Thullab: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah
Volume 10 Number 2 Year 2026
P-ISSN: 2579-625 e-ISSN: 2621-895X

The Relationship Between Perceptions of Teacher Welfare and Psychological Conflict Among Prospective Teacher Students in an Elementary School Teacher Education Program

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Abstract: Education quality is tied to the teaching profession, and teachers' welfare perceptions can influence prospective teachers' career evaluations. However, research on the link between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict among prospective elementary school teachers is limited. This study examines psychological conflict in relation to perceptions of teacher welfare, rather than only interest in entering the profession. The study included 64 second-semester students in the Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD) Study Program, selected through purposive sampling. The researchers collected data using Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed them using descriptive statistics, Spearman's rho correlation, and simple linear regression. The results showed a significant positive relationship between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict ($\rho = 0.428$, $p < 0.001$). Simple linear regression also indicated a significant statistical association ($B = 0.621$, $t = 5.168$, $p < 0.001$), with perceptions of teacher welfare explaining 30.1% of the variance in psychological conflict ($R^2 = 0.301$). These findings indicate that perceptions of teacher welfare are significantly associated with psychological conflict among prospective teacher students. The study highlights the importance of career guidance and professional identity development in teacher education.

Keywords: Perceptions of teacher welfare, prospective teacher students, psychological conflict

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DOI: http://10.30736/atl.v10i2.2893
Received 25 December 2025, Accepted 8 October 2026, Published 21 October 2026

A. Introduction

The teaching profession is a fundamental pillar of a nation's education system, and teachers' welfare is an important factor associated with the quality and sustainability of education (Hohensee & Weber, 2022; Lemon, 2021). Beyond instructional competence, teachers' economic security, social recognition, and career prospects may shape how individuals view the teaching profession as a career. Therefore, perceptions of the

conditions associated with the teaching profession may be related to how prospective teachers evaluate their future career choices and develop their professional identity.

In Indonesia, concerns regarding teachers' welfare remain particularly relevant among honorary teachers, many of whom receive incomes that may not adequately meet standard living needs (Fauzan, 2021; Setyawan et al., 2024; Wakhid, 2025). This contrasts with the ideal of teachers as a dignified, professionally supported occupation. Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers stipulates that teachers are entitled to income and welfare guarantees (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 Concerning Teachers and Lecturers, 2005). The gap between these normative expectations and the realities teachers experience may shape students' perceptions of the teaching profession and raise concerns about its economic and professional prospects (Polat, 2025; Stellmacher et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2023).

This issue is particularly relevant for students in the Elementary School Teacher Education program at Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta (UPY), where they prepare to enter the teaching profession as prospective elementary school teachers. For students in the early stages of teacher education, particularly second-semester students, preparing for the teaching profession also involves developing professional identity and career orientation. At this stage, students may begin to evaluate the realities and prospects of the teaching profession, including teachers' economic security, social recognition, and career prospects. Their perceptions of teacher welfare may therefore become an important consideration when evaluating whether the teaching profession corresponds with their professional expectations, personal aspirations, and perceived prospects.

Previous studies have examined perceptions of the teaching profession, teacher welfare, and prospective teachers' career intentions. For example, one study found that students' perceptions of the teaching profession were positively and significantly associated with their interest in becoming teachers, indicating that perceptions of the profession shape teaching career orientation. Other studies have similarly suggested that students' perceptions of the prospects of the teaching profession, including welfare and social recognition, may be associated with their decisions to pursue teaching careers (Agung & Santosa, 2017; Gunawan et al., 2023; Rindaningsih, 2022). However, findings concerning teacher welfare are not entirely consistent. Nurhasanah et al. (2022) reported that perceptions of the teaching profession were significantly associated with interest in becoming a teacher, whereas perceptions of teacher welfare were not. International research has also examined prospective teachers' well-being (Nurhasana et al., 2022). Alluru & Suneela (2023), in a study of 800 pre-service teachers in India, found moderate levels of well-being, with psychological well-being representing the lowest dimension and indicating the need for greater attention to prospective teachers' psychological needs (Alluru & Suneela, 2023). Similarly, a review of 103 empirical studies published between 2020 and 2024 reported a substantial increase in research on teacher well-being, while noting that most studies focused on teachers generally rather than specific groups such as pre-service teachers (Roksolyana, 2025).

Despite this growing body of research, a key gap remains in understanding how prospective teachers' perceptions of teacher welfare relate to their psychological experiences. Existing studies have predominantly examined in-service teachers or have

focused on general well-being rather than the psychological conflict experienced by prospective teachers (Capone et al., 2023; Heilbrunn & Klinkhard, 2024; Van Katwijk et al., 2023; Xiyun et al., 2022). Other studies have primarily investigated welfare or well-being in relation to students' intention or interest in becoming teachers, without examining psychological conflict in relation to prospective teachers' perceptions of teacher welfare. Consequently, empirical evidence regarding the relationship between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict among prospective teachers, particularly within Elementary School Teacher Education programs in Indonesia, remains limited (Nabila et al., 2023; Nurfauziah et al., 2023).

The relationship between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict can be understood by integrating the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, Kurt Lewin's concept of psychological conflict, and Leon Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory. From the JD-R Model perspective, economic security, social recognition, and future career prospects are important resources prospective teachers may consider when evaluating the teaching profession. These perceptions may interact with their professional expectations, ideals, and anticipated working conditions, creating psychological tension as they evaluate teaching as a career. Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory helps explain this tension as a discrepancy between beliefs or expectations about the teaching profession and perceptions of its actual or anticipated conditions. Meanwhile, Lewin's concept of psychological conflict provides a framework for understanding the competing psychological forces that arise when prospective teachers weigh professional ideals against considerations of economic security and prospects.

In this study, perceptions of teacher welfare are operationalized through salary and economic conditions, financial security, social appreciation, and future guarantees. At the same time, psychological conflict is reflected in career anxiety, doubts about choosing the teaching profession, the dilemma between professional ideals and economic needs, and uncertainty about the future. Thus, these three perspectives provide a complementary analytical framework for examining the relationship between prospective teachers' perceptions of teacher welfare and their psychological conflict.

Based on this gap, the present study offers a distinct perspective by examining psychological conflict rather than focusing solely on interest in or intention to enter the teaching profession. It specifically investigates the relationship between prospective teacher students' perceptions of teacher welfare and their psychological conflict within the context of an Elementary School Teacher Education program in Indonesia. By positioning psychological conflict as the outcome variable and integrating the JD-R Model, cognitive dissonance theory, and Lewin's concept of psychological conflict, the study extends the discussion of teacher welfare beyond career interest toward the psychological processes involved in prospective teachers' career formation and professional identity development.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict among prospective teacher students in the Elementary School Teacher Education program at Universitas PGRI Yogyakarta. The findings are expected to contribute to the literature on perceptions of teacher welfare and

the psychological experiences of prospective teachers. They may inform the development of career guidance and professional preparation in teacher education.

B. Method

This study employed a quantitative approach with an ex post facto correlational design. The study population comprised students of the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program, with 64 second-semester students selected through purposive sampling. The sample was selected because second-semester students are in the early stages of developing professional identity and career orientation as prospective teachers. The study consisted of two variables: perceptions of teacher welfare as the independent variable and psychological conflict among prospective teacher students as the dependent variable. Perceptions of teacher welfare were defined as students' assessments of the economic and professional conditions associated with the teaching profession, including salary and economic conditions, financial security, social appreciation, and guarantees and prospects (Haq, 2017; Utari & Helmayunita, 2024). Psychological conflict was defined as an inner conflict related to decisions concerning the teaching profession, reflected in career anxiety, doubts about choosing the profession, dilemmas between professional ideals and economic needs, and uncertainty about the future, based on the concepts of psychological conflict proposed by Kurt Lewin and cognitive dissonance by Leon Festinger (Grant et al., 2019).

Data were collected using a four-point Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of positive and negative statements developed from the indicators of each variable. The response categories were Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree. Before data collection, the instrument underwent validity and reliability testing to ensure the items adequately represented the intended constructs and provided consistent measurements (Alaydrus et al., 2023; Ingarianti & Suhariadi, 2022; Lutfiana & Lutfiana, 2023): economic conditions, financial security, social appreciation, and guarantees and prospects. Psychological conflict was measured through four indicators: career anxiety, doubts about choosing the teaching profession, dilemmas between professional ideals and economic needs, and uncertainty about the future.

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included the mean, percentage, and standard deviation. Prior to hypothesis testing, normality and linearity tests were conducted. The normality test indicated that the data for perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict were not normally distributed ($p = 0.026$ and $p = 0.001$, respectively). Therefore, Spearman's rho was used as the primary correlation analysis because it is a non-parametric method appropriate for examining the relationship between variables when the normality assumption is not met. The linearity test showed no significant deviation from linearity ($p = 0.427$), indicating that the relationship between the two variables followed a linear pattern. Simple linear regression was then conducted as a supplementary analysis to describe the linear association between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict and to

estimate the proportion of variance statistically explained by the model. The regression results were interpreted as statistical associations rather than causal effects, consistent with the ex post facto correlational design.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

Description of Research Data and Categorization of Variables

To summarise the study data, descriptive statistical analysis was performed on variables related to prospective teacher students' perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflicts. This analysis includes the minimum, maximum, standard deviation, and mean values to show trends in each research variable. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Red	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Perception of Teacher Welfare (X)	64	37.125	4.135	28.00	54.00
Psychological Conflict (Y)	64	34.359	4.682	26.00	51.00

Source: SPSS, 2026

This study included 64 valid samples with no missing data. Based on the descriptive statistical analysis, teacher welfare had a mean score of 37.1250 and a standard deviation of 4.13464, with scores ranging from 28.00 to 54.00. Psychological conflict has a standard deviation of 4.68150 and an average score of 34.3594, with a range from 26.00 to 51.00.

Teacher welfare perception data are categorized into three levels: low, medium, and high. This categorization aims to facilitate interpretation of students' perceptions of the welfare conditions of the teaching profession. The distribution of the category of teacher welfare perception is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Category Distribution of Teacher Welfare Perception

Category	Score Range	Frequency	%
Low	28-36	1	1.6
Moderate	37-45	62	96.9
High	46-54	1	1.6
Total		64	100.0

Source: SPSS, 2026

To examine the distribution of respondents, the continuous data were categorized into three levels: low, moderate, and high. Most respondents fell in the moderate category (62 respondents, 96.9%), while the low and high categories each included 1 respondent (1.6%). This indicates that most respondents perceived teacher welfare as moderate.

Psychological conflict was also categorized into low, moderate, and high levels. Most respondents were in the moderate category, with 60 respondents (93.8%), followed by the low category with 3 respondents (4.7%) and the high category with 1 respondent (1.6%). This indicates that most respondents experienced a moderate level of psychological conflict.

Table 3. Category Distribution of Psychological Conflict

Category	Score Range	Frequency	%
Low	26-34	3	4.7
Moderate	35-42	60	93.8
High	43-51	1	1.6
Total		64	100.0

Source: SPSS, 2026

A similar distribution pattern was also identified in psychological conflict, with most respondents in the moderate category (60 respondents; 93.8%). Meanwhile, 3 respondents (4.7%) were in the low category, and 1 respondent (1.6%) was in the high category. This indicates that most respondents experienced a moderate level of psychological conflict

Table 4. Case Processing Summary

Description	N	%
Included Cases	64	100.0
Excluded Cases	0	0.0
Total Cases	64	100.0

Source: SPSS, 2026

Based on Table 4, all 64 respondent cases (100%) can be analyzed, and no data were missing. This shows that the entire research data is complete and eligible for further analysis.

Prerequisite Test

The normality test is a prerequisite test used to determine whether the study data are normally distributed. The results of this test form the basis for determining the statistical analysis techniques used at the hypothesis-testing stage. Table 5 presents the normality test results for the two study variables.

Table 5. Results of Normality Test

Variable	N	Test Statistic	Sig	Decision
X	64	0.118	0.026	Not Normal
Y	64	0.149	0.001	Not Normal

Source: SPSS, 2026

The researchers performed analytical preparatory tests, including a normality test and a data linearity test, before testing the regression hypothesis. The researchers also used the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test with Lilliefors Significance Correction to conduct the normality test. The significance value (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) for teacher welfare perception was 0.026, and for psychological conflict it was 0.001. Therefore, the data for both variables are not normally distributed, as the significance values are below the $\alpha = 0.05$ threshold. The linear relationship shows that the two variables meet one of the important assumptions in regression analysis. Table 6 displays the linearity test results. Table 6 displays the linearity test results.

Table 6. Results of Linearity Test

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Linearity	415.718	1	415.718	27.052	0.000
Deviation from Linearity	258.111	16	16.132	1.050	0.427

Source: SPSS, 2026

Furthermore, using the ANOVA table, a linearity test was performed to determine the type of relationship between the free and bound variables. According to the results, the Deviation from Linearity aspect's significance value is 0.427. Since the significance value (0.427 > 0.05) is significantly higher than 0.05, it can be said that the link between teachers' perceptions of welfare and psychological conflict is significantly linear. Although the variables were not normally distributed, the linearity test showed no significant deviation from linearity (p = 0.427). Simple linear regression was retained as a supplementary analysis to describe the linear association between the variables, and its results were interpreted as statistical associations rather than causal effects.

The relationship between the perception of teacher welfare and the psychological conflict of prospective teacher students was analyzed using Spearman's rho correlation. This technique was chosen because the normality test showed the data were not normally distributed. Table 7 displays the correlation analysis findings.

Table 7. Spearman Correlation Test Results

Variables	ρ	Sig.	Interpretation
X and Y	0.428	0.000	Moderate Positive Correlation

Source: SPSS, 2026

The main findings in this study were obtained through testing the relationship hypothesis (correlation) and testing the relationship hypothesis (regression). Because the data were not normally distributed, correlation testing used the non-parametric method *Spearman's rho*. The analysis shows a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.428 between X and Y. The significance value (2-tailed) is 0.000. Because the significance value is below 0.01, the hypothesis that a meaningful association exists between the perception of teacher welfare and psychological conflict is empirically supported. A positive coefficient indicates a relationship consistent with the medium category's strength of connection.

Hypothesis Test

The feasibility of the regression model was tested through variance analysis (ANOVA) to determine whether the constructed model could substantially describe how the research variables related to one another. Table 8 displays the regression model feasibility test results.

Table 8. ANOVA Test Results (Regression Model)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	415.718	1	415.718	26.709	0.000
Residual	965.016	62	15.565		
Total	1380.734	63			

Furthermore, the relationship hypothesis was tested using basic linear regression analysis to determine the significance of the impact of perceived teacher welfare on Y. The model feasibility test results showed that the ANOVA table's goodness-of-fit (F) test yielded an F-count value of 26.709 at a significance level of 0.000. Importance values smaller than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05) prove that this regression model is feasible and valid for predicting bound variables.

The magnitude of the influence of teachers' perception of well-being on the psychological conflict of prospective teacher students was analyzed through regression coefficients. This analysis indicates the direction, strength, and importance of the free variable's effect on the constrained variable. Table 9 displays the regression coefficient analysis findings.

Table 9. Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	11.294	4.490	-	2.515	0.014
X	0.621	0.120	0.549	5.168	0.000

Source: SPSS, 2026

Based on Table 9, a constant value of 11.294 and a regression coefficient of teacher welfare perception of 0.621 were obtained. The positive coefficient indicates that teacher welfare perception is positively related to prospective teacher students' psychological conflict. With a t-value of 5.168 and a significance of 0.000 (< 0.05), the t-test findings showed that the perception of teachers' welfare had a favorable and significant association with the psychological conflict of prospective teacher students.

To provide a thorough overview of the correlation and regression analysis findings, a summary of the hypothesis testing outcomes is assembled. The information includes the analysis techniques used, the statistical values obtained, and decisions on the research hypothesis. Table 10 presents the hypothesis-testing summary.

Table 10. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Results	Decision
There is a significant relationship between teacher welfare perception and psychological conflict among prospective teachers	Spearman Correlation and Simple Regression	r=0.428; Sig.=0.000; t=5.168; Sig.=0.000	Accepted

Source: SPSS, 2026

Table 10 shows the outcomes of the Spearman correlation test and simple regression, which show that the research hypothesis is accepted. With a significance level of 0.000 and a correlation value of 0.428, there is a moderate positive link between the sense of teacher welfare and the psychological conflict of prospective teacher students. The regression results also revealed a significance level of 0.000 and a t-value of 5.168. The regression analysis indicated a significant linear association between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict ($B = 0.621$, $t = 5.168$, $p < 0.001$). The model explained 30.1% of the variance in psychological conflict ($R^2 = 0.301$).

Based on the results presented in the results section, the data empirically support the proposed research hypothesis. The correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive link between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict. The findings indicate a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict among prospective teacher students. The positive direction indicates that higher scores on perceptions of teacher welfare were associated with higher scores on psychological conflict in the present sample. This finding should be interpreted as an association, not evidence that perceptions of teacher welfare cause psychological conflict. This phenomenon shows a moderate functional attachment between the two variables in the field.

Furthermore, the regression analysis provides a deeper understanding of the pattern of statistical association. The regression equation Y = 11.294 + 0.621X shows that teachers' welfare perception is a positive predictor. The regression coefficient of 0.621 indicates students' psychological sensitivity to changes in perceptions of teacher welfare. The regression coefficient of 0.621 indicates a positive linear association between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict. This evidence is reinforced by the results of the t-test, where the t-count value of 5.168 is in the area of rejection of H0 (Sig. < 0.05), which means that the significant t-test result indicates that the linear association observed in the regression model is statistically significant ($t = 5.168$, $p < 0.001$).

Although the F-test and t-test showed that teachers' perception of well-being significantly influenced psychological conflict, the coefficient of determination (*R-squared*) was 30.1%. This fact indicates that the variability in psychological conflict can only be explained by 30.1% by the perception of teacher welfare in this regression model. The model statistically accounted for 30.1% of the variance in psychological conflict. In comparison, the remaining 69.9% was not explained by the predictor included in this model and may be associated with other factors not examined in this study. The descriptive grouping showed that most respondents were categorized as moderate in perceptions of teacher welfare (96.9%) and psychological conflict (93.8%).

This homogeneity is likely one reason the data variation is not dispersed, resulting in an abnormal distribution in the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. However, it still consistently shows a linear relationship. Overall, the findings indicate a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict among prospective teacher students.

Discussion

Relationship Between Perceptions of Teacher Welfare and Psychological Conflict

The findings demonstrate a moderate positive relationship between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict among prospective teacher students. This finding indicates that differences in students' perceptions of teacher welfare are associated with differences in the psychological conflict they experience when considering the

teaching profession. The relationship suggests that perceptions of teacher welfare represent one relevant dimension of prospective teachers' psychological experiences, although they do not fully explain the psychological conflict students experience. The psychological conflict identified in this study includes career anxiety, doubts about choosing the teaching profession, dilemmas between professional ideals and economic needs, and uncertainty about the future.

The positive direction of the relationship indicates that higher scores on perceptions of teacher welfare were associated with higher scores on psychological conflict in the present sample. This finding should not be interpreted to mean that better teacher welfare directly causes greater psychological conflict. Instead, the result suggests that perceptions of teacher welfare relate to how prospective teachers evaluate and reflect on the teaching profession and their future careers. For students who are still developing their professional identity, perceptions of salary and economic conditions, financial security, social appreciation, and future career prospects may become part of a broader process of career evaluation. This evaluation may involve considering both the professional ideals associated with teaching and the practical realities students anticipate encountering in the profession.

The supplementary regression analysis further supports a positive association between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict. This finding suggests that students who perceive teacher welfare differently may also experience differences in psychological conflict when considering the teaching profession. However, this relationship should be interpreted as an association rather than a causal effect, given the study's ex post facto correlational design. From the perspective of the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, perceptions of salary, financial security, social appreciation, and future career prospects may function as important occupational resources that students consider when evaluating the teaching profession. At the same time, these expectations may interact with professional ideals and anticipated career demands, potentially contributing to psychological tension during career evaluation.

These findings align with previous research showing that perceptions of the teaching profession are associated with students' career orientation and interest in becoming teachers (Kartal & Taşdemir, 2021; Tifani & Wahjudi, 2022). However, this study extends the discussion by examining psychological conflict rather than focusing exclusively on career interest or intention. Previous studies show that perceptions of the teaching profession can shape students' career considerations. At the same time, the present findings suggest that such perceptions may also be linked to internal tensions during the process of forming a professional identity. Thus, the relationship identified in this study provides a broader perspective on how prospective teachers evaluate the teaching profession before entering the workplace.

Explaining the Positive Relationship Between Perceptions of Teacher Welfare and Psychological Conflict

The positive direction of the relationship between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict requires careful interpretation. A higher perception of teacher welfare should not be understood as directly producing greater psychological conflict. Rather, the finding may reflect the role of perceived teacher welfare as information that prospective teachers use when evaluating the teaching profession and their future career. Previous research has shown that perceptions of the teaching profession are associated with students' career orientation and interest in becoming teachers (Kartal & Taşdemir, 2021; Tifani & Wahjudi, 2022). In the present study, however, the psychological response examined is not career interest but psychological conflict. This distinction matters because career evaluation may involve both attraction to the profession and uncertainty about whether it aligns with students' economic and professional expectations.

From the perspective of Kurt Lewin's concept of psychological conflict, this condition can be understood as the presence of competing psychological forces during career evaluation. Prospective teachers may feel positively drawn to teaching because of its educational, social, and professional values, while also weighing economic needs, career security, and prospects. The conflict therefore does not necessarily emerge because teacher welfare is perceived negatively. Instead, it may arise when students weigh considerations that differ in importance in their career decisions. This interpretation is consistent with the psychological conflict indicators examined in this study, particularly career anxiety, doubts about choosing the teaching profession, dilemmas between professional ideals and economic needs, and uncertainty about the future. Research on prospective teachers has also highlighted the importance of psychological experiences during professional preparation, including concerns about future roles and professional development (Van Katwijk et al., 2023).

Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory provides a complementary explanation for this relationship. Prospective teachers may hold positive beliefs about teaching as a meaningful and socially valuable profession while simultaneously developing expectations concerning adequate income, financial security, social recognition, and long-term career prospects. When these beliefs and expectations are perceived as difficult to reconcile, psychological tension may emerge. In this sense, the positive correlation found in the present study may reflect the extent to which students actively evaluate information about the teaching profession. Rather than indicating that favorable perceptions of teacher welfare necessarily produce psychological problems, the finding may suggest that welfare considerations become increasingly relevant as students reflect on the compatibility between their professional ideals and anticipated career conditions. Previous research has similarly shown that perceptions of the teaching profession are relevant to prospective teachers' career considerations. However, the outcomes examined have generally involved career interest or intention rather than psychological conflict (Kartal & Taşdemir, 2021).

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model further helps explain how perceptions of teacher welfare may be connected with prospective teachers' psychological experiences. Economic security, social recognition, and future career prospects can be viewed as resources that students expect from a sustainable profession. However, prospective teachers do not evaluate these resources in isolation. They may compare the resources they anticipate receiving with the demands, responsibilities, and uncertainties associated with teaching. Consequently, perceptions of teacher welfare may become part of a broader process of assessing whether the teaching profession is compatible with their personal expectations and professional aspirations. The relationship observed in this study therefore suggests an association between perceived occupational resources and psychological conflict during career evaluation, rather than a direct causal effect of welfare perceptions on psychological conflict. This interpretation is consistent with the broader JD-R perspective, in which job resources are considered relevant to individuals' psychological experiences in relation to occupational demands.

The positive relationship may also be understood in light of previous studies that have reported inconsistent relationships between perceptions of teacher welfare and interest in entering the teaching profession. Some studies have found significant associations between perceptions of the teaching profession and career interest. In contrast, others have reported that perceptions of teacher welfare were not significantly related to interest in becoming a teacher (Irwanto, 2019; Sutrisno et al., 2023). These differences suggest that the psychological relevance of teacher welfare may not be adequately captured by career interest alone. A student may remain interested in becoming a teacher while simultaneously experiencing doubts, anxiety, or uncertainty about the economic and professional realities of the occupation. Thus, the present finding may complement rather than contradict previous research by showing that teacher welfare perceptions can be associated with a different dimension of prospective teachers' career experience, namely psychological conflict. The distinction between career interest and psychological conflict is therefore important in interpreting the positive relationship identified in this study.

The findings indicate that perceptions of teacher welfare are significantly associated with psychological conflict among prospective teachers. This finding suggests that perceptions of teacher welfare may relate to the psychological conflict prospective teachers experience when considering the teaching profession. However, psychological conflict is multidimensional and cannot be fully explained by perceptions of teacher welfare alone. Other factors, such as intrinsic motivation, family support, teaching experience, perceptions of teachers' social status, job-market conditions, self-efficacy, and personal educational values, may also contribute to psychological conflict. However, these factors were not examined in the present study. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of a statistically significant association rather than a causal relationship.

Comparison with Previous Research and the Novelty of the Findings

Previous research can be broadly mapped into three related areas: perceptions of the teaching profession and career interest, teacher welfare or well-being, and the psychological experiences of prospective teachers. The first group of studies has primarily examined how students' perceptions of the teaching profession relate to their interest, intention, or career orientation toward becoming teachers. For example, studies indicate that perceptions of the teaching profession are relevant to students' career considerations and orientation toward the teaching profession (Kartal & Taşdemir, 2021). These findings align with the present study by showing that prospective teachers' perceptions of the teaching profession relate to their career-related psychological processes. However, the dependent variable in the present study differs, as it focuses specifically on psychological conflict rather than interest or intention to become a teacher.

A second group of studies has focused more specifically on teacher welfare or well-being and its relationship with students' interest in entering the teaching profession. The findings in this area are not entirely consistent. Some studies have reported significant relationships between perceptions of the teaching profession and interest in becoming a teacher. In contrast, other studies have found that perceptions of teacher welfare do not show a significant relationship with teaching career interest (Irwanto, 2019; Iskandar & Rasmitadila, 2024; Nurhasana et al., 2022). This variation suggests that the role of teacher welfare may depend partly on the outcome variable being examined. The present study contributes to this discussion by examining psychological conflict as an outcome associated with perceptions of teacher welfare, rather than treating career interest as the sole indicator of prospective teachers' responses to the teaching profession.

A third group of studies has examined the psychological well-being of prospective teachers more generally. For instance, Alluru & Suneela (2023) examined well-being among pre-service teachers, while the literature reviewed by Roksolyana (2025), indicates that research on teacher well-being has increased substantially but has predominantly focused on teachers in general rather than specific groups of prospective teachers. This study relates to this body of research because it also considers the psychological experiences of individuals preparing to enter the teaching profession. Nevertheless, it differs in its conceptual focus: rather than measuring general psychological well-being, the present study examines psychological conflict reflected in career anxiety, doubts about choosing the teaching profession, dilemmas between professional ideals and economic needs, and uncertainty about the future.

Based on this mapping, the novelty of the present study should be understood as a combination of its research focus, outcome variable, and educational context rather than as a claim that no previous study has examined any relationship between teacher welfare and prospective teachers. The study specifically examines the statistical relationship between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict among second-semester students in an Elementary School Teacher Education program. This focus brings together two areas that the literature has generally examined separately: perceptions of

the teaching profession (or teacher welfare) in relation to career interest, and the psychological experiences of prospective teachers. The present study therefore extends previous research by positioning psychological conflict as a distinct outcome relevant to prospective teachers' professional identity formation.

The findings also complement the existing theoretical discussion by integrating the Job Demands-Resources Model with Lewin's concept of psychological conflict and Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory. This theoretical integration provides a framework for interpreting how prospective teachers may evaluate occupational resources such as economic security, social recognition, and future career prospects while simultaneously negotiating professional ideals and personal expectations. Accordingly, the present study contributes not by claiming an entirely unexplored topic, but by providing empirical evidence of a moderate positive relationship between perceptions of teacher welfare and psychological conflict among prospective elementary school teachers.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that perceptions of teacher welfare are significantly associated with psychological conflict among prospective teacher students in the Elementary School Teacher Education program. The relationship is moderate and positive, indicating that perceptions of salary and economic conditions, financial security, social appreciation, and future career prospects are related to students' experiences of career anxiety, doubts about choosing the teaching profession, dilemmas between professional ideals and economic needs, and uncertainty about the future. However, the findings should be interpreted as a statistical association rather than a causal effect, because the study employed an ex post facto correlational design.

The main conceptual contribution of this study lies in positioning psychological conflict as an important dimension of prospective teachers' career formation. While previous studies have often examined perceptions of the teaching profession or teacher welfare in relation to career interest and intention, this study highlights the relationship between perceptions of teacher welfare and the internal tensions prospective teachers experience when considering their future profession. This perspective broadens the discussion of teacher welfare by linking occupational expectations to the psychological processes of professional identity and career formation.

This study has several limitations, including its relatively small sample, purposive sampling, and correlational design, which limits its ability to explain the psychological processes underlying the observed relationship. Future research should use larger, more diverse samples and consider mixed-methods or qualitative approaches to explore these processes in greater depth. Further studies may also examine other factors potentially associated with prospective teachers' psychological conflict, such as intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, family support, teaching experience, and perceptions of the teaching profession.

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