

Motivational Pathways to Primary Islamic Teacher Education: Toward an Integrative Model

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Abstract

This article examines students' motivational pathways in choosing the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme and proposes an Integrative Motivation Pathway Model for prospective Islamic primary teachers. Using a descriptive qualitative design at UIN Raden Intan Lampung, primary data were collected through open-ended questionnaires administered to 150 first-year students and semi-structured interviews with 10 purposively selected students and the Programme Secretary. Data were analyzed following Miles and Huberman's interactive model, supported by source and method triangulation. The findings show that internal motivational pathways are anchored in a combination of spiritual drive, professional interest in teaching, and aspirations for character-based self-development. Family support, programme image, a religious campus culture, lecturer influence, and perceived career prospects within Islamic educational institutions reinforce external pathways. Synthesising these pathways, the proposed model conceptualizes programme choice as an interlocking process in which spiritual, professional, and social dimensions converge from initial intention to sustained career commitment. The model extends the application of Maslow's and Herzberg's motivational frameworks within Islamic teacher education, offering practical implications for program governance and student motivation development.

Keywords: motivational pathway, Islamic teacher education, Maslow, Herzberg, Islamic education

Introduction

Higher education plays a strategic role in shaping superior, characterful, and competitive human resources, especially in preparing professional and integrity-driven educators in Islamic primary education institutions (Ifrohan and Rohman, 2025). In this context, student motivation becomes a crucial factor in determining the direction, enthusiasm, and success of the learning process, as well as influencing the quality of their academic decisions when choosing a study program (Sa'diyah and Mediatati, 2025). The Study Programme of Islamic Primary School Teacher Education at the Faculty of *Tarbiyah* and Teacher Training, Raden Intan State Islamic University, Lampung, is one of the important loci for the formation of prospective teachers of basic Islamic religion who will manage learning at the early formal education level.

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The phenomenon of an increasing number of students in the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Study Programme each year indicates a strong attraction to this study programme (Utari et al., 2024). However, this increase has not yet been fully balanced by the clarity and robustness of the motivation underlying their choices. Some students tend to choose the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Study Programme due to external factors, such as family influence, perceptions of job prospects, and the social image of the study programme, rather than solely because of an intrinsic drive to become professional educators in Islamic primary school (Suryani, 2021).

Several studies have mapped the motivations behind choosing education programmes. Quadlin (2020) shows the dominance of socio-economic determinants over stable personal interests. Liu and Macho-Stadler (2023) emphasise the strong support from family and expectations of employment opportunities as the main drivers of academic decisions. In terms of values, Al Hadi et al. (2025) demonstrate that multicultural education and Islamic moderation can shift prospective teachers' motivation towards self-actualisation and social responsibility. Complementing this direction, Fitriya et al. (2025) highlight the need to examine both intrinsic and extrinsic factors simultaneously in the selection of education study programmes. Nevertheless, most of these studies still focus on the general educational context and have not specifically explored how the configuration of these factors operates within basic Islamic education programmes such as Islamic Primary School Teacher Education.

In the context of Islamic education, several studies indicate that the choice to become a religious teacher cannot be separated from the unique combination of spiritual motivation, professional interest, and support from the socio-religious environment. Darmiah and Marvida (2024) found that Islamic education students often weigh between the idealism of devotion and pragmatic considerations related to the job market. Rodliyah et al. (2024) show that campus religious culture and learning practices that emphasise the value of moderation contribute to strengthening the religious motivation of prospective teachers. Meanwhile, Shofiyuddin et al. (2023) demonstrate that enhancing pedagogical capacity and religiosity among prospective madrasah teachers progresses in tandem with the development of a more reflective teaching career orientation. However, these studies generally still portray motivation as a collection of separate factors, such as a list of reasons for choosing a major or sources of support, without explaining how internal, external, and spiritual factors are organised within a comprehensive and dynamic motivational pathway from before to after the decision to choose the Study Programme of Islamic Primary School Teacher Education is made.

Starting from this gap, this research positions the motivation of Islamic Primary School Teacher Education students not merely as a series of driving and inhibiting factors, but as an integrative motivational pathway that connects intrinsic drives, external influences, and spiritual values in the decision-making process of choosing this study programme. Specifically, this study aims to identify and describe the internal and external

factors that shape students' motivation in selecting the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Study programme at State Islamic University of Raden Intan Lampung; as well as to formulate an integrative motivation pathway model that illustrates how these factors interact to form a commitment to becoming prospective teachers of the basic Islamic religion.

This research begins with the initial assumption that spiritual drive and interest in the teaching profession are at the core of motivation, which is then reinforced by family support, a religious campus environment, and perceptions of teaching career prospects. The primary question to be addressed here is: How is the motivation pathway of students in choosing the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Study Program formed through the interaction of internal, external, and spiritual factors? Therefore, this article is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of motivation studies in Islamic education, as well as to offer practical implications for programme management and the cultivation of motivation among prospective Islamic primary school teachers.

Literature Review

The motivation for choosing an education study programme essentially refers to a set of internal and external drives that influence students' decisions to select an academic path related to the teaching profession (Alvariñas-Villaverde et al., 2022). Such decisions are rarely singular but are the result of considering various overlapping factors, such as personal interest, socio-economic considerations, and career prospects calculations. Quadlin (2020) emphasises that in the process of choosing a major, socio-economic determinants such as study costs, scholarship opportunities, and social mobility imagination are often more dominant than stable personal interests. In the context of higher education, this means that the choice of an education major does not always reflect a well-considered vocational calling but is often a compromise between ideal desires and structural limitations (Zhang, 2025).

Liu and Macho-Stadler (2023) reinforces these findings by demonstrating that labour market characteristics and employment opportunity expectations are key variables shaping educational preferences; students tend to choose majors they perceive as offering better economic returns and more certain employment prospects. On the other hand, Darmiah and Marvida (2024) argue that intrinsic motivations, such as the desire to understand religion more profoundly and to serve as moral role models, continue to play a significant role. However, they are not always the primary factors articulated. Fitriya et al. (2025) emphasize that understanding the motivations behind choosing an education programme must consider the simultaneous relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, as the quality of learning and professional commitment improve when both types of motivation reinforce each other. Therefore, there remains room for a more comprehensive interpretation of the motivations behind choosing a major. However,

there is still a need to explicitly map how these factors are organised within a coherent motivational pathway.

In the context of Islamic education, student motivation is shaped not only by academic and economic considerations but also heavily influenced by spiritual values, religious practices, and the surrounding religious culture of the learning process (Horwitz, 2021). Al Hadi et al. (2025) explain that multicultural education and Islamic moderation can shift the orientation of prospective educators' motivation from merely academic achievement towards self-actualisation, social responsibility, and appreciation of diversity. Alongside this, Shofiyuddin et al. (2023), through a systematic review of religious moderation in higher education, found that internalising the values of tolerance and religious balance contributes to the development of more reflective and service-oriented student motivation. In the pedagogical realm, Sholeh et al. (2024) demonstrate how innovative learning media exhibition activities can foster the motivation of Islamic Religious Education students to develop creative learning media, which in turn strengthens their identity as prospective teachers who are productive and responsive to learners' needs.

More specifically, in the selection of basic Islamic education study programmes, there is a unique combination of spiritual motivation, professional interest, and support from the socio-religious environment (Rifat et al., 2020). Darmiah and Marvida (2024) found that students choosing Islamic education study programmes often find themselves caught between the idealism of devotion and pragmatic considerations of the job market. Students' motivations are not singular but represent a creative compromise between religious duty and family economic needs. Rodliyah et al. (2024) indicate that curriculum management integrated with *pesantren* culture contributes to the formation of graduates with strong religious commitment and professional readiness, something implicitly related to their initial motivation for choosing the Islamic education pathway. Meanwhile, Arif and Aziz (2023) highlight the importance of systematic Islamic Religious Education learning management in fostering a religious culture within educational institutions. Such a religious culture, if consistently present in higher education, becomes an important context that shapes and nurtures the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme students' motivation as prospective teachers of the basic Islamic religion.

Theoretically, the dynamics of motivation can be understood through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, two classic psychological frameworks widely used to explain motivated behaviour, including in the field of education. Maslow views human behaviour as driven by a hierarchy of needs, starting from physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation; higher needs become the main drivers when basic needs are relatively fulfilled (Lee and Sims, 2023). Kahfi et al. (2025) demonstrate the relevance of Maslow's theory in the context of Islamic educational institutions, particularly *pesantren*, emphasising that increasing teacher productivity is closely related to fulfilling needs for esteem, work

meaning, and self-actualisation as educators. On the other hand, Herzberg's two-factor theory distinguishes between motivators, such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and the work itself, and hygiene factors, including salary, working conditions, and organisational policies (Galanakis and Peramatzis, 2022). These hygiene factors, if neglected, can reduce satisfaction; however, if fulfilled, they do not automatically create high motivation. Manzano-Sánchez et al. (2021) assert that a supportive and prosocial organisational climate can strengthen the role of motivators in shaping positive behaviour, including within educational institutions.

In the study of Islamic educational motivation, both theories are being adapted to understand how psychological needs and environmental conditions intersect with religious values. Setyaningrum and Rahmania (2025) suggest that applying Maslow's theory in the *pesantren* environment necessitates the inclusion of a spiritual dimension as an essential element of teachers' self-actualization; not merely feeling successful professionally, but also perceiving the meaning of worship in their work. This aligns with the finding of Nasir and Rijal (2021), that religious culture and moderation in religion on campus can be understood as part of the hygiene factors and motivators that are distinctive within the context of Islamic education.

Based on this synthesis, it is necessary to develop a concept that maps out a list of motivational factors, as well as explaining the flow of how needs, values, and religious contexts interact in the decision-making process. This is where the study proposes the concept of an integrative motivation pathway, which combines intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and spiritual dimensions into a unified decision-making framework for selecting the Bachelor of Education in Islamic Elementary School Teaching Programme as a training program for basic Islamic religious education teachers.

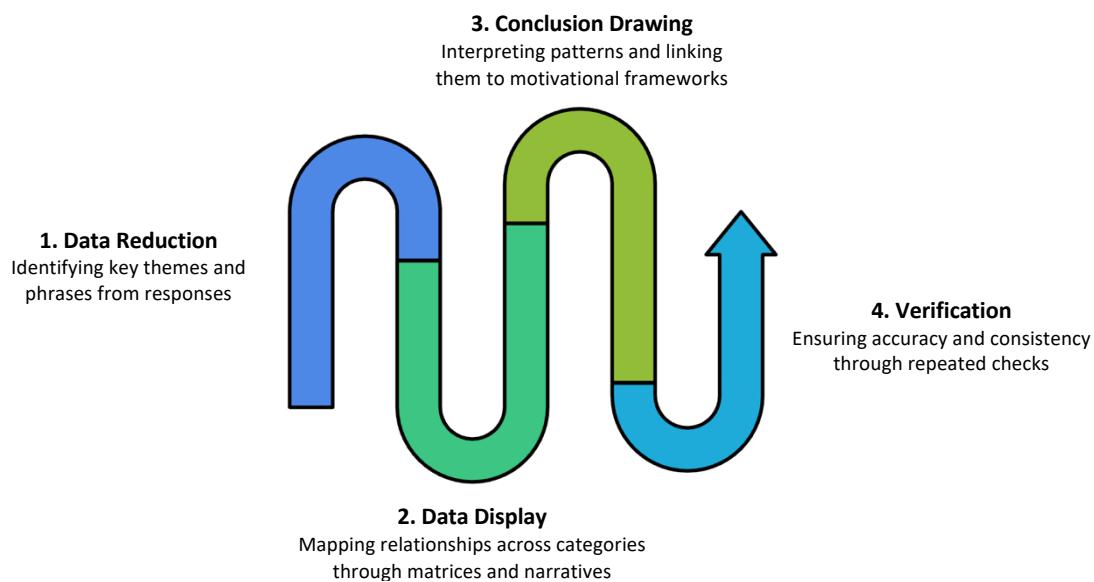
Method

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative design to develop an in-depth understanding of students' motivational pathways in choosing the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme. This approach was selected because the research problem is concerned not merely with identifying what motivating factors exist, but with explaining how these factors interact and crystallize into a meaningful decision-making trajectory for the participants. The research was conducted in the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme at the Faculty of *Tarbiyah* and Teacher Training, UIN Raden Intan Lampung, an institutional setting characterised by a strong academic-religious culture and a steady increase in annual student enrolment. Within this context, a descriptive qualitative design is particularly suitable for capturing subjective meanings, experiential narratives, and the dynamic integration of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and spiritual values that underlie students' decisions to pursue a career as prospective Islamic primary teachers.

The participants comprised the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme students and a key programme representative. Primary data were collected through a combination of open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The open-ended questionnaire was administered to 150 the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme students from the 2024 cohort to map the diversity of reasons and driving factors behind their programme choice. Based on questionnaire responses, 10 students were selected as key informants using purposive sampling, with selection criteria including variation in educational background, stated reasons for choosing programme, and willingness to provide rich and reflective accounts. In addition, the Programme Secretary was interviewed to provide an institutional perspective on recruitment policies, student profiles, and strategies for strengthening academic motivation within the programme. Secondary data were drawn from relevant institutional documents, including the programme profile, academic guidelines, and internal reports pertaining to student characteristics and motivation-building initiatives. Data collection was complemented by systematic documentation of the research process to strengthen the contextual basis of analysis and provide an audit trail of implementation.

Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, consisting of three iterative stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During data reduction, responses from the open-ended questionnaires and interview transcripts were subjected to open coding to identify salient keywords, phrases, and themes associated with internal motivation and external motivation. The next stage involved displaying the data through thematic matrices and descriptive narratives that mapped relationships across categories, thereby clarifying how these factors coalesced into an integrative motivational pathway. Conclusions were then developed through pattern interpretation and theoretically informed linkage to Maslow's and Herzberg's motivational frameworks, while continuously verifying emerging interpretations through repeated checks of the dataset and cross-informant comparison. Trustworthiness was ensured through source triangulation (students and the Programme Secretary), method triangulation (questionnaires, interviews, and documentation), and limited member checking with selected informants to confirm the alignment between the researcher's interpretations and participants' lived accounts. As a supplementary step, the study also conducted a bibliometric mapping using VOSviewer on recent publications concerning student motivation and Islamic education to strengthen the positioning of the field findings within current research trends; however, the primary analytical emphasis remained on the qualitative evidence generated within the programme.

Figure 1.
Achieving Motivational Insight



Note. Figure processed by the authors (2025).

Results and Discussion

Internal Motivational Drivers: From Spiritual Calling to Professional Interest

The examination of field data indicates that the internal motivation of students in the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme is significantly influenced by their personal interest in the teaching profession and a commitment to advancing Islamic education. Students explicitly stated that their primary reason for choosing the programme was an internal drive, driven by a personal interest in becoming a primary school teacher and a desire to contribute to Islamic primary education (Interview, 2025). This finding suggests that, for many students, teaching is not merely a career choice but a calling to take an active role in strengthening the foundations of religious education for younger generations. In other words, choosing the programme carries a vocational dimension, a commitment to teach while simultaneously serving.

This internal motivation does not emerge in a vacuum; instead, it is closely linked to students' educational backgrounds prior to entering higher education. The Programme Secretary noted that "the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme is in demand because many prospective students come from Madrasah Aliyah (MA) backgrounds, where they have already developed a strong foundation of Islamic values" (Interview, 2025). These prior religious learning experiences position the programme as the most linear and relevant pathway for continuing their orientation toward Islamic education. This institutional account is consistent with students' reflections that they became increasingly motivated to engage in the learning process due to the perceived

alignment between their personal interests and an academic environment they regarded as supportive and conducive. The evidence suggests that internal motivation is not only an initial intention at the point of entry, but is also sustained by a sense of fit between students' backgrounds, value commitments, and the programme's academic and religious climate.

From the standpoint of motivational theory, these findings suggest a shift in orientation from the satisfaction of basic needs to a focus on meaning-seeking and self-actualization (Al Hadi et al., 2025). Students expressed desire to contribute to Islamic primary education can be interpreted as a form of religiously framed self-actualization, in which inner fulfilment is derived from service and work understood as ibadah. Interview data (Interview, 2025) further show that the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme students' internal motivation is not reducible to professional ambition alone, but is rooted in Islamic values cultivated through earlier educational trajectories. Accordingly, internal motivation in the programme context functions as a meaning-oriented driving force: teaching is conceptualized not simply as employment, but as a pathway of self-realization within a framework of spiritual responsibility.

The Role of External Support Systems and Campus Environment

Beyond internal factors, the motivational pathways of Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme students are significantly strengthened by external support systems, particularly family and the broader social environment (Sholeh et al., 2024). Interview data indicate that many participants come from religious households, where family support plays a decisive role in guiding them toward Islam-based education. This support is not merely expressed as passive approval; instead, it functions as a normative endorsement that frames the programme as a reasonable and appropriate choice. More broadly, the relatively Islamic socio-cultural milieu surrounding students further reinforces the belief that the programme is socially valued and aligned with community needs, thereby providing an additional layer of legitimacy for their programme choice (Interview, 2025).

Importantly, this external support is subsequently sustained and amplified by the campus environment. Students repeatedly highlighted the accessibility and relational proximity of lecturers, as well as the presence of the departmental student association, such as *Himpunan Mahasiswa Jurusan* (HMJ), which supports their adaptation both socially and academically. Such adaptation is particularly consequential during the early stages of university life, when students typically require assistance in developing a sense of belonging and academic stability. The programme also institutionalises motivational reinforcement through structured development initiatives, including the Basic Proficiency Course, such as *Kursus Mahir Dasar* (KMD), training programmes, academic workshops, and community engagement activities (Interview, 2025). The Programme Secretary further emphasised that lecturers play a dual role; not only teaching, but also

shaping character and fostering motivation, which enables students to experience both a broad space for self-development and consistent guidance throughout their studies. Taken together, these accounts suggest that the campus operates not only as a site of instruction but also as an ecosystem that cultivates both professional and religious commitment.

These data illustrate the concurrent functioning of hygiene factors and motivators within Herzberg's paradigm from a theoretical perspective. Family support and the adaptive function of HMJ serve as stabilising factors that cultivate security and a sense of belonging, empowering students to maintain confidence in their decision to select and persist in the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme. In contrast, competence-building programs, including KMD, training activities, and academic engagement, serve as motivators that promote achievement, recognition, and the enhancement of professional skills. The collaboration between familial emotional support and institutional academic resources not only sustains motivation but also directs it towards a more profound and enduring dedication to the teaching profession (Interview, 2025). This external approach strengthens internal incentives and solidifies students' developing identities as future primary school teachers.

Revisiting Motivational Theories in the Context of Islamic Education

The current findings concerning the significance of spiritual motivation and service-oriented commitments provide a crucial counterargument to prevailing generalisations in the sociology of education that emphasise economic factors as the principal determinants in major life decisions. Research by Quadlin (2020), Liu and Macho-Stadler (2023) contends that program selection is often influenced by pragmatic labor-market considerations and expected financial gains, frequently to the detriment of stable personal interests. By contrast, the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme context at UIN Raden Intan Lampung reveals a different configuration, with narratives of seeking blessings and ibadah emerging as dominant rationales that exceed material cost-benefit calculations. This divergence suggests that within Islamic educational ecosystems, market logics do not operate in a fully determinative manner, because teaching is conceptualised not merely as a job but as a vocation imbued with eschatological significance. In this respect, the findings align more closely with Darmiah and Marvida (2024), who likewise demonstrate that service idealism remains a strong explanatory variable among students in Islamic higher education.

The internal motivational pathway contests the dominance of economic factors. In contrast, the external pathway concurrently validates and enhances the assertion that family serves as an essential support system in academic decision-making. The significance of parental endorsement aligns with Koçak et al. (2021) assertion that family serves as a safety net, influencing educational decisions. Nevertheless, the current study introduces a context-specific nuance; it asserts that support from family within the

programme is not predominantly based on aspirations for job stability or advancement, but is rooted in what participants characterised as a culture of piety. Parents support the programme not only because it may lead to employment opportunities, but also because it maintains a social and moral environment that they believe is safe (Interview, 2025). In this sense, family operates as a guardian of values rather than merely an economic advisor, an insight that sharpens how family support should be interpreted in religiously embedded communities.

Beyond the family sphere, the study also validates the role of the academic environment as a mechanism that sustains and consolidates student motivation over time. The conducive campus culture, lecturer accessibility, and the supportive role of student organisations (HMJ) correspond with recent findings by Rodliyah et al. (2024), who emphasise that religious campus culture and pedagogically innovative activities strengthen prospective teachers' professional identities. Empirically, participants reported feeling motivated by the lecturer's mentorship and the programme's development initiatives, suggesting that initial motivations, potentially fragile at the point of entry, can be consolidated into a more stable professional commitment through a supportive and nurturing institutional ecology. These findings collectively emphasise that motivation in Islamic education ought not to be regarded merely as an individual preference, but rather as an institutional process influenced and sustained by a comprehensive ecosystem of values, relationships, and organisational practices.

The Integrative Motivation Pathway Model and Future Directions

This study presents a conceptual framework known as the Integrative Motivation Pathway Model, which is based on the synthesis of internal and external findings. The concept posits that students' choices to enrol in the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme are not isolated incidents prompted by a singular predominant factor, but rather the result of the interplay among three interconnected dimensions: spiritual, professional, and social. The spiritual dimension embodies intentions of worship and service orientation; the professional dimension encapsulates a commitment to teaching and aspirations for personal growth; and the social dimension includes familial legitimacy and support, as well as reinforcement from the campus milieu. The elements function interdependently: professional ambitions are reinforced by spiritual significance and attain more stability through social validation, especially parental endorsement and a campus environment that supports religious beliefs. Decisional certainty arises when career aspirations, spiritual commitments, and social support converge harmoniously.

The paradigm delineates motivation as a continuum that evolves from an initial intention to a sustained commitment. Interview evidence indicates that this pathway frequently commences with familial foundations and madrasah educational trajectories, is catalysed by intrinsic motivations for service, and is subsequently maintained by

institutional supports such as religious campus culture, lecturer mentorship, and student organisational involvement (Interview, 2025). The academic environment of the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme serves as both a learning infrastructure and a method for sustaining motivation, so preventing its decline over the course of study. The model thus underscores a fundamental implication: motivation in Islamic education is inherently relational, thriving when societal and institutional frameworks constantly bolster individual piety.

These ideas possess management significance for program governance and, more generally, for Islamic higher education institutions (PTKIN). If spiritual commitments and environmental support significantly influence student motivation, program management must extend beyond the confines of academic curriculum creation. Program administrators should deliberately enhance the hidden curriculum by fostering a campus culture rooted in religious, humanistic, and supporting values as a component of their retention and student development efforts. Structured religious mentorship, participation in socially focused da'wah initiatives, and the enhancement of lecturers' positions as ethical exemplars can be included in a systematic framework for student support. Such interventions are crucial for facilitating the actualization of students' spiritual vocations, allowing graduates to cultivate not only pedagogical proficiency but also spiritually rooted resilience and a service-oriented professional ethos.

This study has limitations, notably its concentration on a single institution (UIN Raden Intan Lampung) and its qualitative design. While the findings provide depth, the structure of the motivational pathways revealed may differ in more diverse campus environments or in Islamic teacher-education programs located in varying socio-cultural contexts. Subsequent studies are thus recommended to evaluate the validity and stability of the Integrative Motivation Pathway Model, utilizing quantitative or mixed-method approaches with diverse populations across various PTKIN and other Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia. Subsequent research may investigate if the model functions differently across genders, considering potential discrepancies in the social construction of career meanings, familial support, and the negotiation between professional ambitions and spiritual ideals.

Conclusion

This study reveals that students' decisions to enrol in the Islamic Primary School Teacher Education Programme are driven by a multifaceted set of motivations, rather than a single primary motivation. The trajectory emerges from the convergence of intrinsic impulses, including a spiritual duty to serve (*ibadah*) and a steadfast professional dedication to teaching, as well as external factors such as familial support and a religiously supportive academic environment. The elements function interdependently: professional aspirations are enhanced by spiritual significance, whereas familial and institutional contexts supply the requisite legitimacy and stability for dedication. Consequently, in

contrast to numerous narratives regarding pivotal decisions in higher education that often emphasise economic rationality, the current findings reveal that for aspiring Islamic educators, spiritual values and a commitment to social contribution are the foremost determinants of academic decision-making.

This study builds on these results by applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory specifically to the context of Islamic teacher education. The results indicate that self-actualization among the program students is not solely individualistic or career-focused; rather, it is situated within a religious context, perceiving teaching not merely as a profession but as a vocation associated with da'wah and service. From Herzberg perspective, the religious significance associated with teaching and the quest for social recognition act as primary motivators, whereas familial support and institutional resources, including supportive faculty, student organisations, and developmental programs, function as hygiene factors that maintain commitment and mitigate uncertainty. The proposed Integrative Motivation Pathway Model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the impact of psychological needs, socio-cultural expectations, and theological convictions on motivation within Islamic higher education.

Although this research has its benefits, it also has its limitations. The emphasis on a singular Islamic higher education institution and its qualitative methodology limits the applicability of the findings for statistical generalization across various educational contexts. Subsequent research should investigate the stability of this integrative model through quantitative or mixed-methods approaches across various demographics and institutions, including State Islamic Universities (PTKIN) and private Islamic higher education providers. Higher education administrators must translate these insights into curriculum and student development strategies that explicitly foster spiritual-professional motivation, utilising reflective professional courses, structured field practice, mentorship, and a values-driven campus culture. This approach ensures that graduates achieve not only pedagogical competence but also resilience rooted in their essential spiritual vocation.

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