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The Influence of Digital Literacy, Teaching Experiences, Teaching Professional Perception, and Self-Efficacy as Mediating on Professional Competence as Prospective Teacher

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ABSTRACT

Phenomenon/Issue: The professional competence of prospective teachers in Indonesia remains below standards, as evidenced by low Teacher Competency Test (TCT) scores. Despite various training programs, many teacher candidates still struggle with essential teaching competencies, particularly in adapting to digital education and developing professional confidence.

Purpose: This study examines how teaching experience, digital literacy, and teaching professional perception influence professional competence among teacher candidates, with self-efficacy as a mediating variable. It aims to identify key factors that can enhance teacher preparation programs.

Novelty: This research innovatively integrates four crucial variables in teacher development and employs self-efficacy as a mediator, offering new insights into the psychological mechanisms behind professional competence formation.

Research Methods: Using a quantitative approach with PLS-SEM analysis, data were collected through online questionnaires from 131 Office Administration Education students at Universitas Negeri Semarang.

Results: All three independent variables significantly affected professional competence both directly and through self-efficacy mediation. Teaching experience showed the most substantial impact (β =0.37, p<0.01), followed by digital literacy (β =0.29, p<0.01) and positive teaching professional perception (β =0.24, p<0.05). Self-efficacy accounted for 32% of the variance in professional competence.

Research Contributions: The study provides empirical evidence for improving teacher education programs by emphasizing practical teaching experience, digital skills development, and positive professional socialization. It demonstrates how self-efficacy serves as a crucial psychological bridge between external factors and professional competence development.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays an important role in improving human quality of life because it is a means to develop knowledge and skills that are useful for society and the country. The government also places education as the primary key to improving welfare and the quality of human resources. According to Act Number

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20 of 2003, education aims to develop the potential of students through the active learning process. In this case, the teacher has a central role. According to Act Number 14 of 2005, the teacher is a professional educator who is responsible for various aspects of learning. Unfortunately, many teachers still have not developed their competence optimally because they consider that their duties only deliver materials. In fact, competence is a fundamental skill that teachers need to be able to work professionally. According to Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005, there are four main competencies of teachers: pedagogical, personality, social, and professional. All four must be developed so that they can contribute optimally to improving the quality of education.

Professional competence is one of the important competencies that teachers must possess to improve the quality of education and develop students. These competencies include mastery of learning materials and the ability to manage the learning process effectively. A Professional teacher is required to continue developing themselves in aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitude. Generally, professional competencies include the ability to master learning materials, plan and manage learning, use media and learning resources, and evaluate students' learning outcomes. Efforts to improve these competencies are important, considering that the quality of education highly depends on the quality of educators. However, based on the data from the Ministry of Education and Culture of 2021, the national average score on the Teacher Competency Test (TCT) is still below the standard, which is 53.02 compared to the target score of 55. The average professional competence score is 54.77, and the pedagogical is 48.94. The results from other instruments, such as the 2022 National Examination (NE), showed an average teacher score of 54.6. Moreover, the PISA score placed Indonesia 72nd out of 79 countries with a score of 371, which is significantly below the OECD average of 487 according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). These data show that improving teachers' professional competence is still a significant challenge in the educational field in Indonesia.

Low teachers' competence in Indonesia is caused by various factors, including lack of training, inconsistency of professional standards, low motivation, and graduates who are not adequately prepared for real-world teaching (Depdiknas, 2008). In fact, according to the Regulation of the Ministry of National Education Number 16 of 2007, teachers are required to have four main competencies that are interrelated. Teacher Training and Education Institutes (TTEI), as an institution appointed by the government through Act Number 14 of 2005, has an important role in preparing competent teachers. UNNES, through the Department of Economic Education, is committed to preparing high-quality prospective teachers, including the Study Program of Office Administration Education. From the results of a questionnaire on students of class 2021, it is found that 26.53% of students have not mastered professional competencies optimally. Although most of them are able to adapt materials to students' needs and understand the structure of Office Management and Business Service, there are still weaknesses in mastering various learning models. This indicates the requirement for improving professional competence development during college.

However, in practice, students still face various challenges in carrying out their roles as teachers, including difficulty in delivering materials that are relevant to current issues, limited ability to motivate students, and difficulty in preparing teaching materials and selecting learning methods. This indicates problems in improving the professional competence of prospective teachers and suggests the possibility of other contributing factors. *Universitas Negeri Semarang* (UNNES) has provided various supporting programs to develop students' competencies, such as the Teaching Practice Program (PLP), which involves observation activities, developing teaching materials, guided teaching, and reflection, which lecturers and mentor teachers supervise. Moreover, the *Kampus Mengajar* program is also a means for students to obtain direct experience outside campus in assisting teachers dealing with learning problems at school. Through these programs, students are expected to gain skills, responsibilities, and valuable experiences that support the development of professional teachers in the future.

The results of observation on 7th Office Administration Education students showed that their professional competencies are still not optimal, even though they have participated in programs such as *Kampus Mengajar, UNNES Lantip*, and *PLP* (Teaching Practice Program). This has led the researcher





to study factors influencing these competencies, including teaching experience, digital literacy, teaching professional perception, and self-efficacy as a mediating variable. Teaching experience is considered important because it provides the prospective teacher with the opportunity to hone their skill directly, as supported by the studies of Alamsyah et al. (2020) and Abdillah & Ismiyati (2017). However, different results were found by Nainggolan (2016). Moreover, digital literacy also has an important role in the era of educational digitalization because teachers are required to be able to access and manage digital information critically and effectively in the learning process. Studies by Anggresta et al. (2022) and Maulana et al. (2024) showed that digital literacy has a positive and significant influence. Maulana et al. recorded significant influence with a correlation coefficient of 0.721. In contrast, a study by Sari et al. (2024) concluded that there is no significant influence of digital literacy on the achievement motivation of MPLB students. This was proven by a t-count value lower than the t-table (0.34 < 1.98) and a significance of 0.73. From the difference in the results, it can be seen that the influence of digital literacy can depend on the context of the variable studied and the group of subjects involved.

The next factor influencing the professional competence of students as prospective teachers is the teaching professional perception. Perception is a process of understanding information received by the brain, and teaching professional perception can influence someone's motivation to pursue the job. Several studies show different results. Sholichah (2021) and Sukma et al. (2020) stated that teaching professional perception has a positive and significant influence on interest in being a teacher. However, Wahyuni and Setiyani (2018) found that teaching professional perception does not have a significant influence on interest in being a teacher. This difference shows that although teaching professional perception can influence the motivation and competence of prospective teachers, the influence can be influenced by other factors, such as individual background or environment.

The next factor influencing the professional competence of students as prospective teachers is self-efficacy, individuals' belief in their ability to complete specific tasks (Bandura in Efendi, 2013). In this context, self-efficacy refers to students' belief that they are able to carry out their roles as teachers properly. The results of the study by Anggraeni et al. (2024), Rizkia et al. (2024), and Rohmah (2022) show that self-efficacy has a positive and significant influence on the readiness or interest to be a teacher. This means that the higher the self-efficacy of students, the higher their readiness and competence as prospective teachers. In this study, self-efficacy was used as a mediating variable because many previous studies have demonstrated the direct positive influence of self-efficacy on professional competence. However, there is still limited study exploring its mediating role towards variables, such as teaching experience, digital literacy, and teaching professional perception.

This study aims to analyze the extent to which digital literacy, teaching experience and teaching professional perception influence students' professional competence both directly and through the mediation of self-efficacy. The issues raised included ten research questions that discussed direct and indirect relationships among the variables studied. The main objective of this study is to find out and analyze the influence of each variable on the professional competence of students as prospective teachers. To clarify the scope, this study is limited to students on 7th semester in the Office Administration Education in *Universitas Negeri Semarang* with a focus on three independent variables (teaching experience, digital literacy, and teaching professional perception), one mediating variable (self-efficacy), and one dependent variable (professional competence). The significance of this study is expected to be able to contribute theoretically in developing educational science and practically for higher education and students to improve the quality of prospective teacher graduates. In terms of originality, this study is a development of a previous study conducted by Gaib, dkk (2023) with updates in the use of more diverse variables and a more focused approach to professional competence and different research subjects, which are students, not teachers.





LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

This study uses a theory created by Bandura (1986), namely social cognitive theory. This theory focuses on how someone views learning with the results of observations and relationships between the environment, behaviour, and humans personally. This theoretical perspective views human behaviour as a component of a model that interacts to influence the components of the environmental situation, as well as the personal components of humans which include individual affection or emotion and cognition (Abdullah, 2019:86). Social cognitive theory is a theory that shows the idea that most human learning occurs in a social environment. This theory can create learning when someone is able to observe and imitate the behaviour experienced by other individuals. In other words, the information received is by paying attention to events obtained from the environment around the individual

Professional Competence

Professional competence, as referred to in the National Education Standard in Article 28 Paragraph (3) Point C, is the ability to master materials broadly and in-depth that enables teachers to guide students in achieving the competency standard established in the National Education Standard. According to Rifai'i and Anni (2018), professional competency is the ability to master learning materials broadly and in-depth that enables a teacher to assist students in achieving competence criteria established nationally. Hidayati (2022) argued that professional competence is the ability to master materials deeply by utilizing various communication and information technologies and providing guidance to students based on national standards.

Uno (2013: 69) stated that the professional competence of a teacher must have a broad knowledge of the subject matter that will be taught and mastery of methodology, which refers to the theoretical understanding that is able to select a learning method. Kunandar (2014) explained that professional competence is a teacher's ability to master learning materials deeply, including school subject curriculum materials and mastery of its scientific structure and methodology.

Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is an ability or skill mastered by each individual to understand various kinds of digital content. Based on Bawden in the Kemendikbud (2017:7), digital literacy comes from computer literacy and information literacy, so it is related to the ability to access, understand, and expand information. Moreover, Febliza and Oktariani (2020) also provide the idea that digital literacy is a life skill that not only includes digital and communication skills but also the ability to learn, socialize, and behave critically and creatively as part of digital competence.

Teaching Experience

According to Muslich (2007:13), teaching experience is a teacher's working period in carrying out their duties as educators in specific education based on an official assignment letter issued by an authorized institution (government / community-based educational organization). Widiyoko (2005) stated that, teaching experience is a collection of an individual's understanding of the events experienced while teaching so that they have been mastered by the individual.

Teaching Professional Perception

Teaching professional perception is an individual's or a group's perspective or understanding of the teaching profession. Based on Ibrahim (2014:29), teaching professional perception is the interpretation, assessment, and perspective of students regarding the teacher profession. Aini (2018) stated that students' perception regarding the teaching profession is a process of using individual knowledge and feelings to describe an object in an environment through the senses related to the teaching profession.

Self-Efficacy

Bandura in Istiono (2020) explained that self-efficacy is an individual's belief regarding their abilities to carry out tasks or actions required to achieve specific results. The term self-efficacy refers to belief in an individual's ability to organize and carry out actions to achieve optimal results. In line with Baharun et al. (2020), self-efficacy is an individual's belief in self-assessment related to their competence so that they are able to carry out tasks and responsibilities they face.





Hypothesis

The research can be formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Digital literacy influences positively and significantly on the professional competence of students as prospective teachers.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Teaching experience influences positively and significantly on the professional competence of students as prospective teachers.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Teaching professional perception influences positively and significantly on the professional competence of students as prospective teachers.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Self-efficacy influences positively and significantly on professional competence of students as prospective teachers.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Digital literacy influences positively and significantly on self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): Teaching experience influences positively and significantly on self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 7 (H7): Teaching professional perception influences positively and significantly on self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 8 (H8): Self-efficacy in mediating digital literacy influences positively and significantly on the professional competence of students as prospective teachers.

Hypothesis 9 (H9): Self-efficacy in mediating teaching experience influences positively and significantly on the professional competence of students as prospective teachers.

Hypothesis 10 (H10): Self-efficacy in mediating the teaching professional perception influences positively and significantly on the professional competence of students as prospective teachers.

METHOD

The type of the study was a quantitative study, where data collection and data analysis were conducted in the form of numbers, which were then analyzed in statistical form. This study was conducted on Office Administration Education students on 7th semester in *Universitas Negeri Semarang*. The population was 131 students. This study used professional competence (Y) as the dependent variable. The independent variables were teaching experience (X1), digital literacy (X2), teaching professional perception (X3), and self-efficacy (Z) as a mediating variable.

Professional competence was measured using indicators by Usman (2017:17-19), which were mastery of educational foundation, mastery of teaching materials, preparation of learning program, implementation of learning programs, and assessment of learning outcomes. The teaching experience (X1) variable was measured using indicators stated by Asril (2015), which were (1) learning preparation, (2) teaching practice, (3) preparing and developing learning media, (4) preparing and developing evaluation tools, (5) non-teaching activities. Moreover, digital literacy was measured using 8 indicators by Belshaw (2011). Teaching professional perception was measured using 3 indicators developed by Prastiani (2021). Self-efficacy as a mediating variable was measured using 3 indicators formulated by Bandura (1997): (1) Level, (2) Strength, (3) Generality.

Data collection was conducted by disseminating an online questionnaire to Office Administration Education students in the class of 2021. Research data were analyzed using PLS-SEM, which consisted of two sub-models: the outer model and the inner model (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). If the results of the convergent validity test show that AVE > 0.5 and discriminant validity in cross-loading > 0.7, each latent variable is considered valid. On the other hand, construct reliability is considered reliable if the composite reliability value is > 0.60. To estimate the relationship among variables in this study, the researcher examined the R-Square value and the significance level (two-tailed test). R-squared value is categorized into three categories: 0.67 is strong, 0.33 is moderate, and 0.19 is weak (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). Meanwhile, the relationship among variables is considered significant if the p-value is less than 0.05 (Hair et al., 2017).





RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

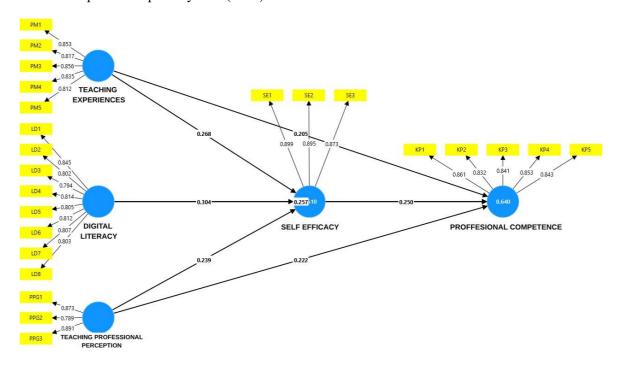
Results

The results of outer model analysis using SEM-PLS showed valid and reliable results with AVE value for convergent validity presented in Table 1 as follows: professional competence of 0.716, teaching experience of 0.697, digital literacy of 0.657, teaching professional perception of 0.726, and self-efficacy of 0.791. In this case, the AVE value was > 0.50 so that the variables and indicators used can be stated as valid. Moreover, cross-loading value in discriminant validity according to Figure 1 for all items had loading factor value of > 0.7 (KP1 = 0.861; KP2= 0.832; KP3 = 0.841; KP4 = 0.853; KP5 = 0.843; LD1 = 0.845; LD2 = 0.802; LD3 = 0.794; LD4 = 0.814; LD5 = 0.805; LD6 = 0.812; LD7 = 0.807; LD8 = 0.803; PM1 = 0.853; PM2 = 0.817; PM3 = 0.856; PM4 = 0.835; PM5 = 0.812; PPG1 = 0.873; PPG2 = 0.789; PPG3 = 0.891; SE1 = 0.899; SE2 = 0.895; SE3 = 0.873). The results of the reliability test, as seen in Table 1, showed that all constructs had good reliability. Cronbach's alpha value for each variable ranged from 0.813 to 0.925, indicating high internal consistency because all values were > 0.7. Moreover, the Composite Reliability value was also high, ranging from 0.838 to 0.939, indicating that indicators in each construct had strong consistency in measuring intended variables. Overall, the results of this reliability confirmed that the research instrument used has passed the reliability test.

Table 1.
CONSTRUCT RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Professional Competence	0.901	0.901	0.926	0.716
Digital Literacy	0.925	0.926	0.939	0.657
Teaching Experience	0.891	0.892	0.920	0.697
Teaching Professional Perception	0.813	0.838	0.888	0.726
Self-Efficacy	0.868	0.869	0.919	0.791

Source: The processed primary data (2025)



Source: The processed primary data (2025) Figure 1. MEASUREMENT MODEL





The results of the R-Square test in Table 2 show that R² of the professional competence variable had the highest R-Square value of 0.640. This indicates that the percentage of professional competence is explained by 64%, while the remaining 36% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study. Self-efficacy had an R-square value of 0.510, which means that the independent variable in this study is able to explain 51% of the variance in the dependent variable, while the remaining 49% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Table 2.
R-SQUARE AND R-SQUARE ADJUSTED

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Professional Competence	0.640	0.628
Self-Efficacy	0.510	0.499

Source: The processed primary data (2025) Figure 2. BOOTSTRAPPING TEST

The hypothesis of the study showed positive and significant results, as shown in the results of the bootstrapping test in Figure 2. Based on Table 3, the results of direct effect hypothesis testing show that all relationships between independent variables and both mediating and dependent variables are positive and statistically significant. This was indicated by t-statistic values, which all exceed 1.96, and p-values under 0.05, indicating that hypotheses H1 to H7 were accepted. This proves that teaching experience, digital literacy, and teaching professional perception, both directly and through self-efficacy, have contributed to improving the professional competence of students as prospective teachers.



Table 3. PATH COEFFICIENTS

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Digital Literacy -> Professional Competence	0.257	0.262	0.100	2.574	0.010
Digital Literacy -> Self- Efficacy	0.304	0.309	0.109	2.790	0.005
Teaching Experience -> Professional Competence	0.205	0.207	0.079	2.604	0.009
Teaching Experience -> Self-Efficacy	0.268	0.268	0.087	3.101	0.002
Teaching Professional Perception -> Professional Competence	0.222	0.221	0.100	2.230	0.026
Teaching Professional Perception -> Self- Efficacy	0.239	0.238	0.089	2.701	0.007
Self-Efficacy -> Professional Competence	0.250	0.244	0.073	3.403	0.001

Source: The processed primary data (2025)

Furthermore, the results of specific indirect effects in Table 4 show that self-efficacy significantly mediate the relationship between three independent variables (teaching experience, digital literacy, and teaching professional perception) and the professional competence of students as prospective teachers. This was indicated by the t-statistic value of ≥ 1.96 and p-value of < 0.05 in the three mediation paths. Thus, hypothesis H8, H9, and H10 was accepted. This means that self-efficacy not only acts as a direct influencing factor but also as a psychological mechanism that strengthens or mediates the influence of external factors on students' professional competence.

Table 4. SPECIFIC INDIRECT EFFECT

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Digital Literacy -> Self- Efficacy -> Professional Competence	0.076	0.074	0.033	2.281	0.023
Teaching Experience -> Self-Efficacy -> Professional Competence	0.067	0.067	0.034	1.983	0.047
Teaching Professional Perception -> Self- Efficacy -> Professional Competence	0.060	0.057	0.027	2.171	0.030

Source: The processed primary data (2025)

DISCUSSIONS

H1: The influence of digital literacy on the professional competence of students as prospective teachers.

Digital literacy has a significant influence on the professional competence of students as





prospective teachers. In this digital transformation era, students who are able to access, understand, and use information technology during the learning process will have a competitive advantage as prospective educators. This finding is in line with the study by Listiaji and Subhan (2021), which revealed that digital literacy learning significantly improves the ICT competence of prospective teachers in key aspects that support their professionalism, such as the understanding of ICT in education, organization, and administration, and professional teaching practice. Students who participate in digital literacy learning demonstrate a better understanding of ICT integration policies in learning, are able to manage the ethics of using technology in accordance with the regulations, such as ITE Law, actively use digital media for self-development, engage in professional forums, and write educative ideas through the digital platform. These abilities are integral parts of the professional competence of an educator in the 21st century. Therefore, digital literacy not only enhances technical skills but also fosters a professional attitude that is adaptive to the development of educational technology.

H2: The influence of teaching experience on the professional competence of students as prospective teachers.

Teaching experience has a significant influence on the professional competence of students as prospective teachers. Students who have teaching experience tend to be able to master materials, prepare instructional materials, and manage the learning process confidently and effectively. This result is in line with the study conducted by Harun et al. (2021), which demonstrates that teachers' working experience has a positive and significant influence on teachers' professional competence. In his study on vocational school teachers in Pohuwato Regency, a t-count value of 8.620 with a significance of < 0.05 was obtained, indicating that the longer an individual engages in the teaching profession, the more developed their professional competence. Harun et al. (2021) also emphasize that experience is not only from the length of teaching but also from teacher involvement in training, certification, and other professional interactions, which also strengthen professional competence. Thus, teaching experience functions as the accumulation of direct practical learning that enriches the understanding and pedagogical skills of an educator.

H3: The influence of the teaching professional perception on the professional competence of students as prospective teachers.

The teaching professional perception has a significant influence on professional competence. Students who perceive the teaching profession as a noble, important, and socially responsible job will be motivated to prepare themselves optimally. Positive teaching professional perception encourages intrinsic motivation in improving mastery of materials, pedagogical abilities, and professional ethics that reflect professional competence. This is in accordance with a study by Sukma et al. (2020), who demonstrate that students' teaching professional perception has a significant influence on their interest in being a teacher. The results of the t-test in this study showed a t-count value of 2.686, higher than the t-table of 1.989, so Ha was accepted, and Ho was rejected. This means that teaching professional perception plays an important role in fostering students' attitudes and professional readiness to carry out their roles as educators. Positive teaching professional perception includes appreciating the teacher's social role in educating the nation, understanding the educative and ethical tasks, and viewing teachers as agents of change, which will encourage students to be more proactive in developing self- competence. This becomes a foundation that fosters positive perception since early can be an important strategy in preparing competent and dedicated prospective teachers.

H4: The influence of self-efficacy on the professional competence of students as prospective teachers. Self-efficacy has a positive influence on professional competence. The results of this study demonstrate that students with high self-confidence in their abilities in designing learning, managing class, and facing challenges in the learning process tend to have higher levels of professional competence. Belief in their abilities encourages students to be more active in developing pedagogical and professional skills, such as preparing lesson plans, using interactive learning media, and practicing critical self-reflection. This result is emphasized by Prastiani and Listiadi (2021), who state that self-efficacy has a positive and significant influence on students' readiness to carry out the teaching profession. With strong self-efficacy, students are not only confident in facing educational tasks but also show high motivation to continue learning and innovate in teaching practice. This indicates that strengthening self-efficacy is one of the important elements in improving the professional competence of prospective educators.

H5: The influence of digital literacy on self-efficacy.





The results of the study prove that digital literacy has a significant influence on self-efficacy. Students with strong digital literacy tend to have higher self-confidence in facing the dynamics of 21st-century learning. The ability to understand, access, and use educational technology tools, such as learning management systems, interactive presentation applications, and educative social media, foster students' readiness and confidence in carrying out their roles as prospective professional educators. This is because digital literacy not only facilitates technical skills but also encourages skills of technology-based adaptability, problem-solving, and decision-making. This result is in line with the study by Kusyanti, Hendarman, and Suhardi (2024) that demonstrates that digital literacy has a direct positive influence on self-efficacy with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0,267$ and a significance value of p = 0,002. This means that good digital literacy will encourage individual's self-confidence in carrying out their professional tasks. Thus, strengthening digital literacy in students is not only important for technological skills but also for fostering strong self-efficacy in facing modern learning challenges. H6: The influence of teaching experience on self-efficacy.

Teaching experience also has a significant influence on self-efficacy. This finding shows that the more the students' teaching experiences, the higher their level of self-confidence in managing class, delivering materials, and addressing learning problems. The experiences gained, whether through field practice, being a teaching assistant, involvement in other teaching activities, and forming students' positive perceptions towards their capabilities. This is emphasized by Riahmatika and Widhiastuti, who state that teaching experience has a positive and significant influence on self-efficacy. The significance value in their study was 0.000, indicating that direct experience in teaching highly contributes to the formation of students' self-confidence to be a teacher. In this context, teaching experience functions as mastery experience that becomes the primary source of strengthening self-efficacy, as explained by Bandura. Therefore, field experience not only influences technical competence but also establishes an important psychological dimension in the readiness to be a professional educator.

H7: The influence of the teaching professional perception on self-efficacy.

The results of the study show that students who view the teaching profession positively tend to have stronger internal motivation, so their confidence in their capacity increases. Support for these results is also shown in the study by Maryamah et al. (2024), which states that teaching professional perception has a positive direct influence on self-efficacy with a regression coefficient value of 0.193 and significance of p = 0.000, indicating that the relationship is really strong and significant. This study emphasizes that the more positive the students' teaching professional perception, the higher their self-confidence in carrying out roles as educators. Therefore, a positive perception of the profession plays an important role in shaping students' self-confidence to carry out the teaching profession professionally and integrated.

H8: The influence of self-efficacy in mediating digital literacy on the professional competence of students as prospective teachers.

Digital literacy has proven to influence professional competence indirectly through self-efficacy. Students who have good digital skills are more confident in using various learning technologies and platforms, and this confidence strengthens their readiness to face the challenges of modern education. This finding is supported by the study by Sanggorani et al. (2025), which demonstrates that ICT literacy and self-efficacy have a significant influence on a teacher's creativity, which is part of professional competence. Mastering digital literacy not only improves technical skills but also encourages self-confidence to innovate and design more effective learning. Thus, self-efficacy is an important path that bridges the influence of digital literacy on strengthening the professionalism of prospective teachers.

H9: The influence of self-efficacy in mediating teaching experience on professional competence of students as prospective teachers.

Teaching experience has an indirect influence on professional competence through self-efficacy. Students who are more involved in teaching experience, such as PLP, tend to have higher self-efficacy, which then encourages the improvement of professional competency. The previous study by Tuti & Anasrulloh (2022) shows that PLP has a significant influence on self-efficacy (coefficient of 0.737), and self-efficacy has a strong influence on the readiness to be a teacher (coefficient of 0.711), which includes an aspect of professional competence. The indirect influence of PLP through self-efficacy (0.524) is significantly greater than its direct influence (0.141), demonstrating that self-confidence is the primary key to optimizing the impact of the teaching experience on the student's





professional competence.

H10: The influence of self-efficacy in mediating teaching professional perception on the professional competence of students as a prospective teacher.

Teaching professional perception has an indirect influence on professional competence through self-efficacy. Students with positive teaching professional perceptions usually also have stronger internal motivation. This positive perception fosters enthusiasm and confidence in pursuing a profession as an educator, which ultimately contributes to the improvement of competence. This is in accordance with Rahmawati and Sobri (2021), who state that teaching professional perception can form self-efficacy through the internalization of professional values. Students who view the teaching profession as a valuable profession will try to equip themselves optimally and believe that they are able to be better teachers.

Overall, this result confirms that self-efficacy is an effective mediating variable in bridging the influence of the three independent variables on professional competence. The presence of self-efficacy in the model not only strengthens the influence of each variable but also explains the psychological mechanism behind the relationship. This implies that the formation of students' self-efficacy, whether through real experience, mastering technology, or the internalization of professional value, is the primary key to producing competent teachers professionally.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the professional competence of students as a prospective teacher is significantly influenced by three main factors: (1) teaching experience that provides opportunities for direct development of pedagogical skills, (2) digital literacy that enables the use of technology in learning process effectively, and (3) positive teaching professional perception that improves intrinsic motivation. These three factors are influenced by the crucial role of self-efficacy as a mediator, where students' self-confidence towards their teaching abilities successfully strengthens the influence of each variable on professional competence. This finding highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach in the education of prospective teachers, which not only emphasizes technical proficiency through teaching practice and digital literacy but also considers psychological aspects, such as the formation of self-efficacy and positive teaching professional perception. The implication of this study shows that teacher education institutions should design integrated curricula, provide adequate field experience, and establish a positive mindset about the teaching profession to produce graduates who are ready to face educational challenges in the digital era.

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