

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IN INDONESIA: BENEFIT AND CHALLENGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews about benefit and challenges of teacher professional development in Indonesia. It also examines the types of Teacher Professional Program (known as Program Profesi Guru/PPG) which have been implemented by the government since the year of 2013. The teachers' professional program both for in-service teachers and Pre-service teachers propose to enhance teacher professional development especially to improve their knowledge and competencies. For these reasons, the ultimate goal is by having professional teacher; it will lead to the students' better achievement. Beside the benefits, this program also proposes many challenges. Lack of participants' proficiency in using ICT, Instructors' familiarity with the software, quality of the materials provided and availability of facilities are the challenges which are usually faced by in-service teachers. While for Pre service teachers, recruitment process is considered to be the main challenge since the policy government has evolved overtime, this condition causes many possibilities to use different regulation in the process of the recruitment over the year.

ABSTRAK

Tulisan ini mengulas tentang manfaat dan tantangan pengembangan profesional guru di Indonesia. Dikaji juga jenis-jenis Program Profesi Guru (yang dikenal dengan Program Profesi Guru/PPG) yang telah dilaksanakan pemerintah sejak tahun 2013. Program profesi guru baik guru masa jabatan maupun guru masa jabatan diusulkan untuk ditingkatkan pengembangan profesional guru terutama untuk meningkatkan pengetahuan dan kompetensinya. Oleh karena itu, tujuan akhirnya adalah memiliki guru yang profesional; hal ini akan membawa pada prestasi siswa yang lebih baik. Selain manfaatnya, program ini juga mempunyai banyak tantangan. Kurangnya kemahiran peserta dalam menggunakan TIK, keakraban instruktur dengan software, kualitas materi yang diberikan dan ketersediaan fasilitas merupakan tantangan yang biasa dihadapi oleh guru in-service. Sedangkan bagi guru Pra-jabatan, proses rekrutmen dianggap sebagai tantangan utama karena kebijakan pemerintah terus berubah dari waktu ke waktu, kondisi ini menyebabkan banyak kemungkinan untuk menggunakan peraturan yang berbeda dalam proses rekrutmen sepanjang tahun.

Introduction

The profession of teaching is inherently challenging, requiring a diverse set of skills and extensive intellectual training. A teacher's professionalism is crucial in earning the trust of parents, students, colleagues, school administrators, and the broader community. Educators play a vital role in guiding students through their struggles, ultimately helping them to reach their aspirations for a successful future. Consequently, it is essential for teachers to undergo professional training to enhance their effectiveness in this important role.

The initial regulation that governs governmental initiatives aimed at elevating the teaching profession to a position of respect is Law Number 14 of 2005, which pertains to teachers and lecturers engaged in the educational field, thereby providing a framework for legal protection. Following this, the Teachers Professional Development Program (PPG) in Indonesia has been in effect since 2022, as evidenced by the issuance of Ministerial Regulation Number 54 of 2022. However, due to its misalignment with evolving legal standards and organizational requirements, the government has introduced a new regulation, specifically Ministerial Regulation Number 19 of 2024, which addresses the teaching profession in the Republic of Indonesia. This regulation encompasses various aspects of teacher professional development. Firstly, El Islami et al. (2022) said that the enhancement of learning quality is significantly influenced by the outcomes derived from professional development initiatives. Secondly, Hammond et al. (2017) defined effective professional development can be defined as a systematic approach to professional learning that leads to modifications in teaching practices and enhances student learning outcomes. In Indonesia, the professionalism of teachers pertains to their capability to fulfill their roles and responsibilities, as well as their conduct within both the school environment and the broader community. In the execution of their professional responsibilities, the teaching profession, which encompasses the activities performed by individuals and serves as a means of livelihood, is required to adhere to specific quality standards and norms, necessitating professional education. Educators must possess a comprehensive understanding of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that constitute their competencies. It is essential for teachers to hold an academic qualification equivalent to a bachelor's degree or a four-year diploma, aligned with the type, level, and formal educational institutions they serve.

Additionally, certification is mandated as part of the process of awarding credentials to teachers and teacher educators in accordance with the Teachers Law. An educator certificate serves as formal recognition bestowed by the state, affirming the professional status of teachers and educators.

There were four significant barriers to the enhancement of teacher professionalism. These barriers include issues related to textbooks and student worksheets, the science laboratory, ICT-based teaching resources, and challenges posed by the students themselves. The analysis of the data indicated that problems associated with textbooks and worksheets stem from students' tendencies to forget or misplace these materials, as well as the need for their content to be further developed and enriched. Additionally, challenges related to the science laboratory were noted, including outdated equipment, instances of damage or loss, the permanent use of the lab as a classroom, the absence of a lab assistant, and teachers' unfamiliarity with certain laboratory tools. Furthermore, respondents highlighted constraints in teaching and learning that pertain to the use of ICT-based teaching aids, such as a limited quantity of resources, insufficient skills in operating the equipment, inadequate power supply, and bureaucratic hurdles regarding the principal's approval. Lastly, obstacles arising from the large class sizes, students' individual personalities, varying learning capabilities, and diverse social backgrounds were also identified (Tanang et al., 2014)

Regarding to these obstacles, various forms of professional development have been implemented in Indonesia to enhance teacher professionalism, including PKG (*Pusat Kegiatan Guru* or Centre for Teacher Activity), KKG (*Kelompok Kerja Guru* or Teachers Working Group), and MGMP (*Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran* or Teacher-subject forum). These initiatives facilitate the exchange of experiences among teachers as they address challenges encountered in their teaching practices. Additionally, training sessions and workshops are organized for educators, targeting both general and specific objectives. The programs offered aim to address the everyday challenges faced in teaching and learning, while also fostering innovation and creativity among teachers to ensure student success (Tanang & Abu, 2014)

The Teacher Professionalism Education Program, known in Indonesia as PPG, recently represents a significant government initiative aimed at enhancing teacher

competencies within the country. Currently, obtaining a teaching certificate, which is essential for becoming a teacher, necessitates participation in PPG activities. Fibrianto and Yuniar (2020) point out that the objective of enhancing teacher professionalism through this program is closely linked to a range of debates and differing opinions. This phenomenon arises from the diverse perceptions within the community regarding the PPG initiative. Such perceptual discrepancies can be attributed to several factors, one of which is the insufficient provision of clear and comprehensive information about the recently introduced PPG program. Despite its implementation spanning five generations since its inception in 2011, the initial cohort remains largely uninformed. The lack of effective communication regarding the nature of PPG, the specifics of PPG-SM3T (which targets remote, underprivileged, and disadvantaged areas), the intricacies of the program, its necessity, the distinctions from prior initiatives, the eligibility criteria for participation, the procedural steps for recent graduates aspiring to become professional educators, the types of PPG available based on their respective fields, the advantages of engaging in the PPG program, and other pertinent information related to PPG contributes to this issue. This paper provides a comprehensive examination of PPG, detailing both the advantages and challenges encountered by educators participating in this program, as evidenced by a review of various scholarly articles.

THE TEACHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Teacher Professional Education Program or *Program Profesi Guru* (PPG), which is officially regulated by Indonesian Government in 2013, serves as an educational initiative designed for individuals who have completed undergraduate or diploma 4 studies, aiming to cultivate future educators equipped to achieve the objectives of national education. The Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG) is designed to equip graduates from both education undergraduates and those from non-education disciplines who possess the requisite talent and interest in teaching. This program aims to ensure that these individuals acquire comprehensive teaching competencies that align with national education standards, thereby enabling them to secure professional educator certificates in early childhood, primary, and secondary education. PPG is anticipated to address a range of educational challenges, including the acute shortage of teachers in remote and underserved areas, the

uneven distribution of educators, issues related to under qualification, the low competency levels of some teachers, and the discrepancies between educational qualifications and actual teaching assignments.

PPG programs can be categorized into two distinct types according to their intended audience. The first type is designed for Pre-Service Teachers (known as *PPG Pra Jabatan* in Indonesia), targeting individuals who have fulfilled the academic prerequisites of undergraduate qualifications and are seeking to enter the teaching profession. The second type caters to In-Service Teachers (known as *PPG Dalam Jabatan* in Indonesia), which includes both civil servant and non-civil servant educators currently engaged in teaching within various educational institutions. These institutions may be operated by the central government, local authorities, or community education providers, and the teachers involved typically possess either a work agreement or a collective work agreement.

Two prominent concepts regarding professional development issues emerge: one emphasizes the advancement of educators as a professional vocation, while the other highlights personal growth. Research has indicated that interventions aimed at professional development have a beneficial impact on teachers, particularly in enhancing their knowledge and competencies related to teaching practices (Monica & Kuswando, 2019)

PPG as a Tool for Enhancing Teacher Professional Development

The concept of PPG serves as a significant instrument for the advancement of teacher professional development. Additionally, the PPG is implemented to enhance the skills and competencies of these prospective teachers, ensuring they are well-prepared for their roles in the educational landscape. By integrating structured programs and reflective practices, PPG facilitates educators in enhancing their pedagogical skills and knowledge base. This approach not only fosters individual growth but also contributes to the overall improvement of educational standards within institutions. Through continuous engagement in professional development activities, teachers are better equipped to adapt to the evolving demands of the educational landscape, ultimately benefiting their students and the broader academic community (Mukrim et al., 2023).

PPG is considered as effective professional development for a better quality of Indonesian education (Fibrianto & Yuniar, 2020). In addition, Effective professional

development can be understood as a form of structured professional learning that leads to significant transformations in teachers' knowledge and practices, ultimately enhancing student learning outcomes. This professional learning emerges from a combination of externally facilitated programs and job-embedded experiences that enrich teachers' understanding and enable them to modify their instructional methods in ways that foster student achievement (Hammond et al., 2017).

CHALLENGES OF PPG

PPG for In-Service Teachers

The Indonesian government has recently introduced a hybrid learning initiative aimed at in-service teachers seeking to participate in the PPG for in-service teachers. This initiative has presented various challenges as well as factors that facilitate accelerated learning in the context of online education for those teachers involved in the program. There were four significant challenges associated with the online learning component of PPG for in-service teachers in Indonesia. These challenges include the participants' proficiency in information and communication technology (ICT), the instructors' familiarity with the software, the quality of the materials provided, and the overwhelming volume of assignments. Additionally, the research highlighted four factors that could enhance the learning experience for teachers: the role of mentors, the characteristics of the participants, managerial aspects, and the availability of facilities. This suggests that there is a pressing need for improvements in the execution of the online PPG program for in-service teachers (Utami, 2018).

In addition, Rahmat et al. (2022) explain that participation in the PPG program is hindered by several challenges, including inadequate internet connectivity, age-related issues, adverse weather conditions, inconsistent electricity supply or rolling blackouts, and varying levels of family support. Individuals residing in rural areas face significant difficulties, while those in urban settings may experience a sense of safety and comfort, particularly regarding family support and the availability of time dedicated to PPG activities. However, even urban participants encounter obstacles that can impede their engagement in the program, highlighting the disparities between rural and urban experiences in accessing and benefiting from PPG initiatives.

There are two primary factors that significantly influence the effectiveness of Teacher Professional Development (TPD): (1) workload and time management, which plays a crucial role in the TPD process. When teachers are burdened with excessive workloads, their ability to engage actively and consistently in TPD initiatives diminishes, as they must prioritize and manage their time effectively. This situation presents a considerable challenge for educators who juggle multiple responsibilities within the educational system, as their workload directly affects their capacity to balance their roles as both teachers and learners; (2) the lack of follow-up programs associated with TPD, which are designed to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge through specific content-based activities, necessitating that instructors tailor the content to align with the professional needs of the teachers (Monica & Kuswando, 2019). Furthermore, it is essential to monitor the implementation of these programs to assess their impact on teachers, which can be achieved through the establishment of follow-up programs. Such follow-ups are instrumental in evaluating the effectiveness of the TPD initiatives, allowing for the identification of strengths and weaknesses. For example, workshops focused on classroom research conducted by teachers often lack subsequent follow-up or feedback for both the educators and the facilitators. This scenario illustrates that workshops, as a component of TPD in Indonesia, tend to function as isolated events rather than as part of a continuous development process. Consequently, these singular programs, particularly workshops, typically result in minimal follow-up, leading to limited effects on teachers' professional growth and understanding.

PPG for Pre-Service Teachers

Fibrianto & Yuniar (2020) describe that the advantages of this training program are manifold, as it enhances the professionalism and maturity of teacher education graduates in their teaching practices. Furthermore, the program contributes to the improvement of teachers' quality by refining their skills in lesson planning and classroom management. Additionally, the opportunity to obtain certification upon completion of the training serves to elevate the teachers' career prospects, ultimately fostering a more effective educational environment for the nation's youth. Conversely, the opposing perspective emerges from the government initiative mandating that all prospective teachers possess a four-year bachelor's degree (S1). This four-year duration is significant, particularly as it encompasses an

extensive exploration of various educational theories and essential practical experiences. The framework of the PPG program suggests that the government or associated entities may perceive the educational qualifications provided by teacher education programs as insufficient for producing competent and professional educators. If this interpretation holds true, it implies that the four-year degree serves merely as a foundational requirement, while the PPG represents an additional, yet undisclosed, prerequisite. Furthermore, the PPG is not exclusively available to graduates from Education programs; it also welcomes candidates from Non-Education undergraduate's backgrounds. This inclusion effectively broadens the pool of applicants vying for participation in the PPG program. However, this situation raises concerns regarding equity, as graduates from Education undergraduates, who have dedicated four years to studying the fundamentals of teaching professionalism, must now compete against both Non-Education undergraduates and other Education graduates. Should Non-Education undergraduates successfully navigate the selection process for PPG candidates, it could be argued that the PPG program offers a shortcut for these individuals, enabling them to transition into teaching roles, potentially even as professional educators, despite their lack of formal training in education.

A significant challenge faced by pre-service teachers in the PPG for pre-service teachers pertains to the recruitment process, which offers a distinct perspective on societal needs. In response to recommendations from educational stakeholders aimed at enhancing the quality of candidates entering professional teacher education programs, applicants are subjected to a series of entrance examinations. These assessments encompass pedagogical and content mastery evaluations, culminating in an oral interview. However, it is noteworthy that the examination process does not incorporate a content knowledge assessment tailored to the applicant's specific educational background. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that the policies governing this program have evolved over time, resulting in the likelihood that different regulations may be applicable in various years or even among different cohorts within the same year (Tias & Tongjean, 2023)

CONCLUSION

Teachers' professional programs in Indonesia offers numerous benefits that enhance teachers' quality and students' outcome. One of the major benefits is for teachers'

professional growth which will lead to the quality for better Indonesian Education System. Indonesian education system needs to go from the question “Is teacher training important?” to “Indonesian teachers’ must be trained regularly”. Only by doing these, we can bring our education system really impact positively to the students. Beside the benefits, the implementation of this program also has barriers for In-service and Pre- service teachers. For in service teachers, lack of participant competencies in using ICT, Instructors familiarity with software, availability of internet facilities and quality of the material provided are the barriers that must be faced. The last, the recruitment process and the implementation of government’ regulation which always change over the years become the main problem faced by Pre service teacher. The last but not least, by implementing teachers’ professional education program will fulfill the need of all education standards.

Declarations

I hereby declare that the disclosed information is correct and that no other situation of real, potential or apparent conflict of interest is known to us. I undertake to inform you of any change in these circumstances, including if an issue arises during the course of the meeting or work it (2024

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