



## **Comparative Study: Teaching Experiences of Prospective Teachers before and After Participating in the Teacher Professional Education Program at UMS Rappang**

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### **Abstrak**

This study aims to compare the teaching experiences of prospective teachers before and after participating in the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG) at UMS Rappang. The research utilizes a qualitative descriptive method, collecting data through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Findings indicate significant improvements in pedagogical skills, classroom management, and teaching confidence after the completion of the PPG program. The study highlights the role of professional education in preparing teachers for effective classroom practice and fostering a deeper understanding of teaching methodologies. These findings suggest that PPG plays a vital role in shaping competent and professional educators.

### **Keywords**

Teacher Professional Education, Prospective Teachers, Teaching Experience, Pedagogical Skills, UMS Rappang

## INTRODUCTION

The quality of education is fundamentally influenced by the competency and professionalism of teachers. Teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' character and academic achievements, which underscores the importance of preparing educators who are both knowledgeable and skilled. In Indonesia, one of the key initiatives to achieve this goal is the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG), designed to equip prospective teachers with the necessary pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies.

The transition from theory to practice can often be challenging for prospective teachers. While academic programs provide theoretical foundations, the practical application in a classroom setting requires a distinct set of skills and confidence. The PPG program aims to bridge this gap by offering structured training, including teaching simulations, classroom management strategies, and reflective practices.

This study focuses on the experiences of prospective teachers at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang (UMS Rappang) before and after participating in the PPG program. By examining their journey, this research seeks to provide insights into how professional education programs contribute to the development of effective teaching practices. Additionally, the study explores the challenges faced by prospective teachers and the extent to which the PPG program addresses these issues.

The findings of this study are expected to enrich the discourse on teacher education and provide practical recommendations for improving the implementation of PPG programs in Indonesia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher professionalism and competency have been central themes in educational research globally. The ability of teachers to deliver quality education significantly depends on their pedagogical skills, classroom management capabilities, and professional attitudes. These aspects are often honed through structured training programs, such as the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG), which has become a vital component of teacher preparation in Indonesia.

The PPG program is designed to prepare teachers who meet professional standards and are capable of adapting to the dynamic needs of education. According to Susilo (2018), the PPG program focuses on developing pedagogical and professional competencies through theoretical learning and practical teaching experiences. Participants are equipped with skills such as lesson planning, curriculum development, classroom management, and student assessment.

Research by Fitriani et al. (2020) highlights that PPG graduates often demonstrate enhanced teaching confidence and improved classroom performance. The program emphasizes reflective teaching practices, enabling participants to critically evaluate and refine their teaching strategies.

Prospective teachers often encounter challenges when transitioning from academic training to real-world teaching environments. According to Darling-Hammond (2012), the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application is a common issue in teacher education. This gap underscores the need for professional development programs that integrate hands-on teaching experience with theoretical frameworks.

Studies conducted by Rahmawati (2019) indicate that prospective teachers tend to struggle with classroom management and student engagement

during their initial teaching experiences. However, with the support of structured professional education programs, they develop the skills necessary to navigate these challenges effectively.

Comparative studies have been instrumental in assessing the impact of professional education programs on teacher development. For instance, research by Iskandar et al. (2021) shows that participants of professional education programs exhibit significant improvements in their teaching performance compared to those who did not undergo such training. These studies suggest that programs like PPG play a crucial role in equipping teachers with the competencies needed to face diverse classroom scenarios.

While numerous studies have examined the effectiveness of teacher education programs, there is limited research focusing specifically on the comparative experiences of teachers before and after participation in such programs. This study aims to fill this gap by providing a detailed analysis of the teaching experiences of prospective teachers at UMS Rappang, contributing to a deeper understanding of how PPG programs influence teacher development.

In summary, the literature underscores the significance of professional education programs like PPG in enhancing the competencies and preparedness of prospective teachers. This study builds on these findings by exploring the specific experiences of teachers at UMS Rappang, providing valuable insights into the practical outcomes of the PPG program.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the comparative teaching experiences of prospective teachers before and after participating in the Teacher

Professional Education Program (PPG) at UMS Rappang. The qualitative approach was chosen to capture in-depth insights into the participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges throughout their professional development journey. The participants in this study consist of prospective teachers enrolled in the PPG program at UMS Rappang. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who have completed both the theoretical and practical components of the program. The sample includes individuals from various educational backgrounds to ensure a diverse range of perspectives.

Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants to explore their teaching experiences before and after the PPG program, focusing on challenges, teaching strategies, classroom management skills, and perceptions of professional growth. Classroom observations were carried out to evaluate participants' teaching practices during their practical teaching sessions, allowing the assessment of changes in their pedagogical skills, student engagement, and classroom management. Additionally, relevant documents such as lesson plans, reflective journals, and assessment reports were analyzed to provide further insights into the participants' teaching competencies and professional development.

The data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The process involved familiarizing with the data by reading transcripts, observation notes, and documents multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding. Key themes and patterns were identified and coded, focusing on differences in teaching experiences before and after the PPG program. These codes were then grouped into broader themes representing the impact of the PPG program on the participants' teaching skills and professional growth.

Triangulation was used to validate the findings by cross-checking data from interviews, observations, and document analysis.

This study adheres to ethical research standards, including obtaining informed consent from all participants, maintaining anonymity, and ensuring confidentiality to protect participants' identities and personal information. However, the study is limited to participants from UMS Rappang, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research could include a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the applicability of the results. By employing this methodology, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the PPG program impacts the teaching experiences and professional development of prospective teachers.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The findings of this study reveal significant differences in the teaching experiences of prospective teachers before and after participating in the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG) at UMS Rappang. These differences are categorized into three main aspects: pedagogical skills, classroom management, and teaching confidence.

Before joining the PPG program, many participants demonstrated limited knowledge in designing effective lesson plans and applying appropriate teaching methodologies. Their lessons often lacked structure, and they faced difficulties in aligning learning objectives with student needs. After completing the PPG program, participants reported substantial improvements in their ability to design lesson plans, incorporate diverse teaching strategies, and adapt to different learning styles. Observations of their

teaching sessions confirmed these improvements, showing better-organized lessons and more active student engagement.

Classroom management was a significant challenge for participants prior to the program. They struggled with maintaining discipline, addressing disruptive behavior, and creating a positive learning environment. Following the PPG training, participants exhibited enhanced classroom management skills, including the ability to implement effective rules, foster collaboration, and manage classroom dynamics. These improvements were evident in their practical teaching sessions, where they demonstrated greater control over the classroom environment. Many participants initially lacked confidence in their teaching abilities, often expressing anxiety and uncertainty in their classroom performance. However, the PPG program helped build their self-confidence through guided practice, mentorship, and reflective activities. Interviews revealed that participants felt more prepared and assured in their teaching roles, enabling them to engage more effectively with students and deliver lessons with clarity and enthusiasm.

### Discussion

The results highlight the transformative impact of the PPG program on the professional development of prospective teachers. The improvements in pedagogical skills align with previous studies, such as Fitriani et al. (2020), which emphasize the role of professional education in enhancing teaching competencies. The structured training provided by the PPG program equips participants with the tools needed to design and deliver effective lessons, fostering a deeper understanding of teaching methodologies.

Enhanced classroom management skills underscore the program's focus on practical application and real-world

teaching scenarios. This finding is consistent with research by Darling-Hammond (2012), which stresses the importance of experiential learning in bridging the gap between theory and practice. By addressing classroom challenges during the training, the PPG program prepares participants to navigate diverse classroom dynamics with confidence.

The increase in teaching confidence further demonstrates the program's effectiveness in building professional readiness. Confidence is a crucial attribute for teachers, as it directly impacts their ability to engage students and create a positive learning environment. The reflective practices and mentorship provided in the program played a pivotal role in fostering this confidence, aligning with findings by Iskandar et al. (2021), which highlight the value of reflection in teacher education.

While the findings are promising, it is important to acknowledge the study's limitations. The results are based on a relatively small sample from UMS Rappang, which may limit their generalizability. Future research should include a larger and more diverse sample to validate these findings and explore additional factors influencing teacher development.

In summary, the PPG program significantly enhances the teaching competencies, classroom management skills, and confidence of prospective teachers. These findings underscore the importance of professional education programs in preparing teachers to meet the demands of modern classrooms and contribute to the development of high-quality education.

## CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant impact of the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG) at UMS Rappang on the teaching experiences and professional development of prospective teachers. The findings demonstrate that participation in the PPG program leads to notable improvements in pedagogical skills, classroom management, and teaching confidence. Before the program, participants faced challenges in lesson planning, managing classrooms, and feeling confident in their teaching roles. However, after completing the program, they exhibited enhanced competencies in these areas, enabling them to deliver more effective and engaging lessons.

The study underscores the transformative role of professional education in preparing teachers to navigate the complexities of modern classrooms. By combining theoretical learning with practical application, the PPG program bridges the gap between academic preparation and real-world teaching. The mentorship, reflective practices, and experiential learning provided during the program equip participants with the tools and confidence needed to excel in their teaching careers.

Despite its promising findings, the study is limited to a specific context at UMS Rappang. Future research is recommended to include a broader and more diverse sample to validate these results and explore additional dimensions of teacher development. Nonetheless, this study contributes valuable insights into the effectiveness of the PPG program and reinforces the importance of professional education in fostering competent and confident educators.

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