

Indonesian English Pre-Service PPG Program: Students' Perception

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Abstract

With the development of technology, the system, strategies, and evaluation in teaching have also developed. Teachers are encouraged to enroll in a professional development program that can improve their qualities. In Indonesia, teachers who have been teaching in schools and prospective teachers who have just completed their education are recommended to enroll in a teacher certification program. For fresh graduates, the government provides a Pre-Service Teacher Professional Education program. Yet, studies investigating pre-service teachers' perceptions are scarcely reported. This study aims to explore the English pre-service teachers' perception of joining the PPG program. The participants of this qualitative study were eight students who enrolled in PPG from various universities in Indonesia. Open-ended questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the data. This study used an interpretative inquiry method and Brenhonfbrenner's theory as a framework. The findings showed three factors influencing English pre-service teachers joining PPG: improving their quality and professionalism in teaching (self-improvement), being influenced by parents, lecturers, and colleagues (environmental support), and required by government regulations (government regulation). The implications of this research are expected to contribute to the government in considering policies related to the PPG program, as well as to teachers about continuing professional development.

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INTRODUCTION

There is much research conducted about teacher professionalism and professional development. Numerous studies have been done especially investigating the teachers' motivation to improve themselves through professional

development programs (Appova & Arbaugh, 2018; Basikin, 2020; Gameda & Tynjälä, 2015; Osman & Warner, 2020; Wati, 2011; Zhang et al., 2021). Research on teachers' motivation has revealed valuable insights that can enhance teachers' performance with appropriate guidance. However, fewer studies discuss the pre-service teachers' perception in joining the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program, commonly known as *Pendidikan Profesi Guru* (PPG) in Indonesia. Therefore, it is interesting to analyze a teacher's perception of enrolling in the PPG program, especially the pre-service teachers who just graduated.

Educators are needed with quality and integrity to meet Indonesian education standards (Rosser, 2022 & Tjabolo et al., 2020). National Education Standards aim to ensure the quality of national education in the context of educating the nation's life and shaping the character and civilization of a dignified nation. National Education Standards are refined in a planned, directed, and sustainable manner in accordance with the changing demands of local, national, and global life (Helda & Syahrani, 2022). Teachers are encouraged to enroll in a professional development program that can improve their qualities. Career development refers to the development of a person, in this context specifically a teacher (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). It is the process by which educators reevaluate, reaffirm, and extend their commitment to the ethical goals of teaching such as change agents, as well as acquiring and developing knowledge, skills, planning, and practice with students at all stages of instruction with advanced learning, engagement, and practice concepts.

Teacher professional development should be designed to elevate the knowledge and skills of teachers through effective instruction, training, and support that contribute to the quality of the learning and teaching process (Borko et al., 2009). The concept of professional development in Indonesia is different from reality, and teachers' professionalism is seen as linked to the development of professionalism. Teachers should replace the inability to do something related to their profession with good ability (Wardoyo et al., 2017). Another definition is given by Mushayikwa (2015), who argues that professional development involves teachers as learners.

Professional instructors must be well-versed in their subject, the teaching and learning process (including staying current on pertinent findings from educational research), society, and policy and structure in the educational system. Knowledge,

abilities, and attitudes are the three components that go into a teacher's professionalism (Snoek, 2007). To conduct research in their schools, participate in collaborative learning from their professional communities, and transform the findings of educational research into innovations in their classroom/school context, professional teachers must also demonstrate effective communication skills and the ability to discuss educational issues with a wider audience. Lastly, teachers' commitment towards student learning, commitment to the profession and the collective of professionals, willingness to contribute collective knowledge of the profession, commitment to respect for the code of professional ethics and integrity in work, willingness to share quality work with the outside world, focus on continuous professional development and focus on improvement are all examples of positive attitudes of professional teachers.

According to Kholis and Murwanti (2019), the PPG program is considered effective in developing knowledge and acquainting participants with the latest technologies. The adoption PPG program is one of the government's initiatives aimed at enhancing the caliber and professionalism of teachers in graduate and undergraduate programs who aspire to become competent and certified teachers. Teacher Professional Education is one of the government's programs to boost teacher quality. PPG curriculum is developed according to the principles of an experiential curriculum that works with a learning model in the form of a learning device development workshop (Orón Semper & Blasco, 2018). PPG program is an alternative to Act IV (teaching certification). For S1 Education and S1/DIV Non-schooling graduates to prepare for careers that require specialized skills according to national education standards (Galih & Iriani, 2018). Teacher certification is a certified teacher status granted to teachers with a certain level of education and skills (Rahman et al., 2022). The implementation of the PPG program necessitates a lengthy term of schooling lasting for 1-2 years (Rahma et al., 2022a). The participation of teachers in the PPG program demonstrates teacher empowerment and career improvement (Galih & Iriani, 2018; Putri & Latiana, 2020).

The increase in participation in PPG is one of the indicators of the success of this government program. The quality of education will increase due to students' interest in the PPG program. Students who are interested in becoming teachers will be more prepared to align their behavior according to the needs of their profession, move toward achieving their objectives, and look for various PPG program

information (Rahma et al., 2022b). It is believed that both internal and external reasons, as well as a number of others, contributed to students' growing interest in the PPG program. For teachers, professional development should give educators the tools they need to collaborate with their peers to build learning support networks in their schools (Oktaviani & Yulianto, 2015). The goal of professional development should be to enhance the educational processes. The government must first raise the standards of its teaching personnel until they are at the level of professional instructors if that is to improve the quality of education. Through the provision of a professional teacher training program or PPG, the government has remained committed to raising the standard of teachers so that they can become professionals with the many competences necessary by government programs (Pendidikan Ekonomi et al., 2020).

Prior research examining the pre-service teachers' perceptions and motivation when taking a PPG program. The study found that the participants were positively associated with motivation to participate in the program (Hapsari et al., 2020; Rahma et al., 2022b). Another research has explored the civil servant teachers and non-civil servant teachers who showed the different attitude in joining the PPG program. Civil servant teachers participate in the program more structured compared to their non-civil servants due to these activities being more closely related to promotion. However, most teachers viewed the program as personal professional development activities (Pangestika & Afarisa, 2015; Suarcaya et al., 2022; Ubaedillah et al., 2021; Zulfitri & Setiawati, 2019), and regarded his profession as a dedication to God (Widayati et al., 2021), and government regulation for getting the teachers' professional certification (Putri & Latiana, 2020)

The previous studies above showed a number of research studies have investigated the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG). However, research that focuses on the English pre-service teachers' perceptions is scarcely reported. Therefore, a gap in research on this limitation was identified. To address this issue, this present study focuses on exploring the perception of Indonesian English pre-service teachers in joining the PPG program. The data was collected from numerous English pre-service teachers from four regions in Indonesia, namely Surakarta, Yogyakarta, Banjarmasin, and Gorontalo who just graduated with a bachelor's degree. These four cities are located on different islands. The regions represent different parts of Indonesia, covering Java (Surakarta and Yogyakarta) and non-Java (Banjarmasin in

Kalimantan and Gorontalo in Sulawesi). This ensures geographic diversity and a broader representation of the Indonesian context.

The four cities were selected because it was expected to see variations in the perspectives or experiences of teachers from the four separate cities on the three islands. All participants were graduates of English education degrees from both public and private universities. Therefore, the research question guiding this study is: "What are the factors that influence Indonesian English pre-service teachers to join the PPG program?". It is hoped this research will provide valuable insights for future teachers in preparing themselves to develop the teaching profession.

METHOD

Research design

The current study used an interpretative inquiry method. The research focuses on the human understanding and interpretations of a specific phenomenon, such as teachers' perception of Professional Development (Ernest, 1994). Supported by Perry (2011), interpretive inquiry is the overall research design or the structural framework that facilitates the efficient construction of the study and attempts to address the research questions (Perry, 2011). Qualitative research places importance on understanding the social world from the perspective of the "actors" involved. These actors are the informants or respondents, and what they say or do forms a crucial component of qualitative research. In this research, we aim to comprehend how teachers perceive and interpret Professional Development to gain deeper insights into their perspectives. This research employed a qualitative method, which involves exploring and comprehending the significance attributed to social or humanitarian issues (Creswell, 2013). To explore the views of prospective teachers about the professional development program they are participating in. This study used a questionnaire as the main data and was supplemented by semi-structured interviews with a series of questions. The interviews were conducted online which allowed participants to elaborate on each part of the questions and get more information from the participants.

In this study, the authors used the framework of the Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model by focusing on the interaction of the individual and microsystem aspects, to explore students' perceptions in joining the PPG program. Bronfenbrenner's theory is used to generate (coding) categories and explore the

relationships between categories from an interview with one of the teachers. Bronfenbrenner's theory revolves around human development and focuses on how individuals grow into fully competent members of society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, it is classified as a developmental psychology theory and is often referred to as the theory of socialization (e.g., Saarinen et al., 1994). In addition to his book on socialization, Bronfenbrenner (1981) also explored the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2002). Bronfenbrenner provides his own definition of human development: It is the process through which the growing person acquires a more extended differentiated, and valid conception of the ecological environment, and becomes motivated and able to engage in activities that reveal, maintain, or reorganize the properties of the environment at similar or more complex levels of form and content.

This theoretical framework provides a suitable theoretical framework for conceptualizing the developing individual (the teacher), the environments that influence an individual's development (the teacher's development), and the interactions between them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to the model, in general, development is a sustained and increasingly complex interaction with and within the immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2004) with a gradual shift towards defined goals. This model consists of five nested systems, namely microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Individuals as the core of the model interact directly with the microsystem stage. Microsystem refers to the immediate and direct environments in which an individual interacts, such as family, school, and peer community. Individuals can be influenced and affected by ecosystems, which include environments they have not directly experienced, such as their parent's workplace or community resources.

Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model in the methodology of this study is used because the model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the interactions between developing individuals, and their environment and how this influences the perceptions and experiences of prospective English teachers. By understanding the five systems concepts in this model, research can explore how prospective teachers interact with their immediate environment (microsystem) such as family, school, and peers, and how their indirect environment (ecosystem) such as their parents' neighborhood or community resources affect them. In addition, the model also allows researchers to consider changes over time (chronosystem) that

may affect teacher candidates' development and perceptions over time. By applying this model, research can provide deep insights into the factors that influence the development of prospective English teachers, as well as the practical implications for their professional development.

Participants

In this study, the participants or research samples consisted of eight pre-service students of the PPG program. The participants were recent graduates who had obtained bachelor's degrees in English and were selected from four different provinces, namely in Surakarta, Yogyakarta, Banjarmasin, and Gorontalo. The reasons previously considered by the researchers were because this was strengthened by the fact that the participants had decided to take part in the PPG program as a teacher certification pathway when they graduated with a bachelor's degree. During the PPG program lectures and other reasons, the participants also understood the process of implementing the PPG program.

Data collection and analysis

To carry out the study, the researchers followed a set of steps adapted from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). These steps include (1) data collection, (2) data condensation, (3) data display, and (4) conclusion drawing and verification. During the data collection phase, the researchers utilized open-ended questionnaires and interviews to obtain in-depth explanations. The questions were adapted from (Widayati et al., 2021) to align with Bronfenbrenner's system. In this study, the researchers used a type of semi-structured interview (Alsaawi, 2014). A semi-structured interview is a method in which the interviewer prepares pre-planned questions before the interview, but also allows the interviewee the opportunity to elaborate and provide detailed explanations by using open-ended questions (Blandford, 2013). Follow-up interviews were undertaken to provide participants with the opportunity to provide additional information or clarification on specific aspects discussed in the initial interview. Once the data was gathered, it was described descriptively. Subsequently, the data underwent qualitative analysis. The researchers then presented and validated their research by drawing conclusions based on the data findings.

RESULT

This section presents the findings and discussion that emerged from the data analysis generated from open-ended questionnaires and further interviews. The perception of English pre-service teachers in joining the PPG program, according to Bronfenbrenner's system, can be divided into self-improvement (individual), environment supports (microsystem), and government regulation (ecosystem).

Self-improvement

Within the framework of Bronfenbrenner's theory, the teacher's desire for self-improvement is at the individual level. Based on the questionnaire, the participants generally mentioned that they joined the PPG program to improve their personal skills, knowledge, and career prospects. Through further interviews, the answer is explained below,

I want to develop my skills in making a fun yet meaningful teaching and learning process. I also need to train myself in time management, teamwork, and discipline. (Participant 4)

Well, why I joined this program, I expect that I can improve my public speaking skills and how I am designing learning techniques for students. (Participant 1)

Generally, the two participants above answered that they want to improve their value and their professionalism in teaching. This was also answered in the same way by the other three participants. In addition, they specifically mentioned that improving their teaching skills, especially adapting to the latest curriculum and all its needs, also strongly encouraged them to join the PPG program.

I think my motivation for joining this program (PPG) is I want to be able to understand "Kurikulum Merdeka" and to run a teaching classroom better than before. (Participant 2)

I expect to get new skills in making "Teaching modules and learn different methods of teaching. Many lessons especially in developing lesson plans, students' background, developing assessments, etc. (Participant 5)

Honestly, I think I still lack knowledge in teaching, so I hope that joining PPG can help me learn how to make teaching modules, classroom management, updated teaching methods, and teaching activities. (Participant 8)

Environment Supports

At the microsystem level, the environment around students also plays a role in influencing the pre-service teachers to join the PPG program. Factors such as support from parents, lecturers, colleagues, and a conducive learning environment can significantly influence a student's decision to take the program. A supportive

environment can create a sense of comfort and confidence for students, which in turn can increase their motivation to succeed in their studies.

My family supports me to join the PPG program. They support me as best as possible in whatever I take with the initial intention of improving my abilities as a teacher. (Participant 6)

My friend gave me advice to join the program and told me the benefits of joining it, so I took it after a discussion with my parents. (Participant 4)

My family said the PPG was an interesting opportunity to try rather than me just being unemployed after graduation. (Participant 2)

Similar to the three answers above, all participants also received the same full support from their families. It can be understood that the support from their family strengthened their desire to take the PPG program. Apart from the family, the motivation behind these pre-service teachers participating in the PPG program is from their lecturers or teachers.

The lecturer directs us to continue to dedicate ourselves through self-improvement, one of which is with this PPG. (Participant 3)

My lecturer said you are the candidate teacher as an agent of change in education. You need to improve your skill as a teacher for the better education in Indonesia. (Participant 7)

My teacher in junior high school gave me the information about PPG. She encouraged me to join this program, she said that I will get a lot of benefits if I join this program. (Participant 8)

Participants provided various answers regarding the relationship between lecturers or teachers in influencing them to enroll in the PPG program. Interviewees 3 and 7 received support from their lecturers to continue this program due to their necessity to develop themselves in order to have better skills in teaching and to be able to dedicate themselves as teachers for Indonesia. On the other hand, Interviewee 8 got insight from his teacher, through this program, he was influenced that personally he would get a lot of benefits through the PPG program. Furthermore, besides lecturers and teachers, this pre-service teacher also gets influenced by his environment in general, it could be neighbors, college friends, work colleagues, relatives, etc. The two Interviewees below explained the influence of the environment on their desire to take part in the PPG program.

Many people gave support with words such as "Now being a teacher at school, if you don't do PPG first, it's difficult. If there's an opportunity, just take it. If you don't become a civil servant, you will have to become honorary teachers whose salaries are very small. If you take PPG, your salary will be much higher." (Participant 2)

From the expressions of Interviewee 2 above, it can be seen that the influence of the people around them also greatly influenced their decision to take part in this Professional Education Program (PPG), especially when they were given information about the salary they would receive. This consciously or not can also influence them to join this program in order to get a more decent career level and life.

The environment also supports us, especially since I studied in one of the famous universities in south Kalimantan so the environment helps us to learn and relax during our classes. (Participant 1)

Government Regulation

The ecosystem level involves external influences that indirectly affect individuals. In this context, government regulations and policies related to the PPG program play an important role in motivating students to register. Factors such as obtaining an educator certificate, and the need to upgrade the latest curriculum knowledge from the government are some of the reasons behind the participants joining the PPG program.

It was a precious opportunity because not everyone can't have this chance to join this program. My brother, who is also a teacher, motivated me to join this program. He said that teacher certification is really important for a teacher, and being able to gain knowledge about recent curriculum and all about teaching matters are really big advantages for me. (Participant 4)

My motivation in participating in this program is to be a professional teacher and get the certificate (Participant 5)

DISCUSSION

Self-improvement

It can be seen that the basic motivation behind these pre-service teachers joining the PPG program is that apart from improving their personal soft skills, it is also to improve their quality and professionalism in teaching. They specifically mentioned that by participating in the PPG program, they hoped to learn more about the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the newest curriculum policy of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Nugrohadi et al., 2022).

Based on the results of this study it is clear that self-improvement determines a person's motivation to wish to take part in a PPG program. From the eight participants, all agreed that their biggest motivation for participating in this program was to improve their self-quality and professionalism to become competent teachers in their fields. These results are in line with research which states that

through the PPG program, teachers can improve their ability to select and master teaching materials, plan, develop, and actualize a productive teaching and learning process (Pangestika&Afarisa, 2015; Rahma et al., 2022b; Zulfitri& Putri Setiawati, 2019). They increase their ability to achieve personal and professional goals. Also, by improving their academic qualifications, they may feel more confident and ready to take on the challenges of the working world. Motivation for self-improvement also includes the desire to become more competent in a particular area and make a more meaningful contribution to society. They see this program as an opportunity for greater personal growth and development, self-confidence, collaboration, and networking (Suarcaya et al., 2022). In this context, as teachers, a higher level of education will open up more opportunities in their lives (Huda, et, al., 2022).

This finding is consistent with previous research which states that through the PPG program, teachers can improve their ability to select and master teaching materials, plan, develop, and realize productive learning processes. They can also achieve their personal and professional goals and feel more confident and ready to face the challenges of the world of work.

Environment Supports

From the result of the interview, it can be seen that the environment is also one of the biggest factors that influence pre-service teachers to join the PPG program. The support provided by this environment varies. Support comes from family, guidance from teachers, social expectations, or even peers who have participated in the program first. Based on interviews, family support dominates the support given to pre-service teachers to join this program in order to improve their quality as teachers. Research shows that emotional or practical family support can increase students' motivation to learn (Aulia et al., 2022). In the context of PPG, family support that provides an environment conducive to learning and professional development can influence students' success in completing the program (Puspitasari et al., 2017).

Not only that, pre-service teachers who joined the PPG program were also influenced by their environment such as their neighbors, colleagues, or relatives. One of them said that joining the PPG program was a golden opportunity. This is because after joining the program, pre-service teachers have a better chance of becoming civil servants. If they do not become civil servants, most teachers in Indonesia

become honorarium employees whose salaries are very low. Thus, the surrounding environment plays a big role in influencing pre-service teachers to develop their potential and professionalism to have a more secure life in the future.

The finding that the surrounding environment, such as support from family, peers, and the community, played an important role in influencing the prospective teachers' decision to join the PPG program is consistent with the concept of eco-systems in Bronfenbrenner's theory. The eco-system includes environments that are not directly experienced by individuals, but still influence their development. In this case, indirect environments such as support from parents, peers, and social norms in the community can influence teacher candidates' motivation and decisions.

Government Regulation

The new regulation that requires teachers to have a professional certification generally influences the participant to join the PPG program. The government encourages teachers to join relevant academic activities designed for their professional development. This result showed that government regulation influences pre-service teachers to join the PPG program. It is in line with the research that stated that civil servant teachers perceived continuing professional development related to government regulations (Widayati et al., 2021) The regulation from the government requires teachers to have academic qualifications, competencies, and educator certificates that have been regulated in Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturer must be taken for consideration of pre-service teachers to join PPG program (Putri & Latiana, 2020). The new regulation requiring teachers to have professional certification has a significant impact on prospective teachers' decision to join the PPG program. In this context, the government encourages teachers to participate in relevant academic activities designed for their professional development. This regulation influences prospective teachers to join the PPG program as a step toward meeting the necessary certification requirements.

The finding that the new regulation requiring teachers to have professional certification influenced prospective teachers' decision to join the PPG program can also be linked to the concept of chronosystems in Bronfenbrenner's theory. Chronosystems highlight environmental changes over time and how this affects individual development. In this context, changes in government regulations

affecting the professional requirements for teachers are examples of chronosystem changes that influence the decisions and actions of prospective teachers.

Overall, government regulations play an important role in influencing prospective teachers' decision to join the PPG program. With these regulations in place, prospective teachers feel encouraged to improve their qualifications and competencies to remain relevant in their profession and meet the standards set by the government. Therefore, the government and educational institutions need to continue developing and updating regulations that support teachers' professional development and ensure that PPG programs can meet their needs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of this study, it has fulfilled the purpose of this study. It is the perception of the participants that self-improvement, environment support, and government regulation influence English pre-service teachers to join the PPG program. This study is expected to contribute to the government in considering the policy related to the PPG program, and the teachers as well as continuing professional development. Based on the results of this study, it has fulfilled the objectives of this study. Participants' perceptions that self-development, environmental support and government regulations influence pre-service English teachers in joining the PPG program. This study is expected to contribute to the government in considering policies related to the PPG program, and also to teachers about continuing professional development. The researchers realize that the data sources of this study are limited so future researchers are advised to enlarge the participants to get richer perceptions on this issue. By increasing the number of respondents from the same city or adding other cities, future researchers can see richer perspectives from respondents by conducting quantitative research. Furthermore, future researchers can research to explore more deeply the perspectives of pre-service English teachers in joining the PPG program by using other theories or methods to see from different perspectives.

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