

# Chapter 32

## The Quest for Teacher Education Quality in Indonesia: The Long and Winding Road



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**Abstract** Teacher education in Indonesia graduates a large number of teacher candidates every year. However, due to discrepancies in the quality of the institutions, the preparedness and the quality of graduates remain a concern. The quality of teacher education in Indonesia is affected by several contextual factors such as policies, socio-economic, educational system and geographical challenges. This chapter provides an account to understand teacher education in Indonesia including historical background, concerns from the literature and some findings from a recent study exploring quality of teacher education which involve multiple stakeholders. The views of stakeholders including the Dean of Faculty Education, Head of Department, educators and student teachers were taken into account to get a balanced perspective regarding their concerns about education or teacher education in Indonesia. The findings show a variety of complex and complicated issues in teacher education as the result of challenges in the context, policies and educational system. The findings recommend evaluation on the effectiveness of teacher education and teacher professionalism training program and getting feedback from the stakeholders. The findings also indicate the importance of the pursuit of quality over the negotiation or compromise for political or economic purposes.

**Keywords** Teacher education quality · Indonesia · Teacher quality · PPG · Stakeholders

### Introduction

The quality of teacher education is crucial to improve educational quality in many countries, particularly in Indonesia. The number of teachers who graduate from teacher education (also called Faculty of Education) in Indonesia is growing every year. For example, between 2005 and 2010, the World Bank reported a fivefold increase in the number of students enrolled in teacher training programs, from two

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hundred thousand students in 2005 to over one million in 2010 (Negara & Benveniste, 2014). However, alongside that growth, pre-service teacher education graduates' quality is questionable due to the discrepancy in teacher education quality. Additionally, the geographical background is also one of the challenges and factors in the disperse of quality education. Indonesia is the fourth most populated country in the world, with a population of over 273 million by 2022, based on the latest data from the *United Nations Population Division* (Worldometer, 2022). Indonesia is an archipelago, a nation that is geographically comprised of 13,466 islands, 922 inhabited with more than 300 ethnic groups and 700 languages and dialects (Central Intelligence Agency, 2021). Hence, Indonesia faces amount of challenges to provide the equity and good quality of education for large number of people in thousands of islands that are randomly distributed in urban, rural, and remote areas. Indonesia's geographical background leads to other societal factors and challenges that need to be considered before adopting other countries' policy or system to Indonesia. For that reason, before comparing Indonesia with high-performing countries such as Singapore or Finland with around five million population, the differences in demography, socio, economy, and educational system need also to be taken into account.

What similar among Indonesia and those high-performing countries and other countries globally is the effort to provide good quality of education for their citizens. However, every country has a varied historical background. For instance, Indonesia gained Independence Day in 1945. The same year when Japan lost the war and destroyed by Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombing. Malaysia, the neighbour country, gained its Independence 18 years later, in 1963. What happens seven decades later for these three countries are different stories. In Indonesia, education quality has been a serious issue as PISA results show students' poor performance for two decades (OECD, 2013, 2016, 2019). For instance, in 2012, a shocking PISA result placed Indonesia 64 out of 65, second from the bottom of the list. Even when PISA result was compared with other neighbouring countries in ASEAN with a similar economic background as developing countries, Indonesia was still at the bottom of the list (OECD, 2014). Despite its controversy, PISA can be viewed as a wake-up call to improve Indonesia's education quality. The reviews of national policies for education show that teachers' poor quality mainly causes Indonesia's low education level. Therefore, there is an urgent need to improve teacher education quality (OECD, 2015). To understand the challenges that teacher education face in the pursuit of quality, this chapter provides historical background and contemporary issues from the literature. Besides that, the empirical findings from a recent study about the quality of teacher education involving multiple perspectives will also be presented to understand how stakeholders perceived the current issues related to teacher education quality in Indonesia.

## Historical Background of Teacher Education

Teacher education in Indonesia has gone through a long and winding road to pursue quality and teacher standard competencies (for details see Bjork, 2013; Buchori, 2009; Djojonegoro, 1996; Fahriany, 2014; Nielsen, 2003; Novita, 2019; Raihani & Sumintono, 2010; Soeratman, 1985; World Bank, 1998). Teacher education has evolved several times to adapt the demand and meet the challenges, starting from undemocratic education in the colonial era, increasing oil revenue in the old era, political issues, until policy changes, such as the policy of “Freedom of Learning” that has been launched recently.

### *From Colonial Era to Independence Day in 1945*

Before Indonesia declared Independence Day on 17 August 1945, education was privileged for the aristocracy and the Dutch colonials. Ki Hajar Dewantara, a pioneer of education for native Indonesians, founded Taman Siswa School as an institution for indigenous commoners in 1922. Ki Hajar Dewantara was famous for his educational ideals. One of his famous sayings had become the principal in his school and his description of ideal teachers, a teacher who can become a role model, give support and encouragement in the learning process. He said (in Javanese) “*Ing ngarso sung tulodo, ing madyo mangun karso, tut wuri handayani*”, which translates: "(for those) in front should set an example, (for those) in the middle should raise the spirit, and (for those) from behind should give encouragement". Today, *Tut Wuri Handayani* is used as the motto of the Indonesian Ministry of Education. Ki Hajar Dewantara was honoured as the National Hero of Indonesia. He was a prominent figure and regarded as the founding father of education in Indonesia. Before 1942, the education system was stratified, European School was for the Dutch, Europeans and Indonesian aristocrats, Dutch Native School for government officials' children, Village School and Continuing School for indigenous commoners. Teacher education was also stratified. Courses for People Education (CVO) was a two-year education for teachers to teach at village schools (three-year education with local characters and language, Javanese writing and language). Normal School was a four-year education for teachers to teach at continuing schools (a two-year extension of village school using Latin character and Indonesian language). The stratified system of education was abolished during the Japanese occupation. Since Independence in 1945, Indonesia adopted a democratic educational system that was available for all citizens, which also changed the teacher education system.

### ***From Independence Day in 1945 to Teacher Law in 2005***

Seven decades after Indonesia declared Independence Day, teacher education has gone through several evolutions on its system, impacting the quality of teacher education as an institution and its graduates. In 1954, Indonesia formed the first formal teacher education system at tertiary education. Teacher College offered a three-year bachelor degree program to supply teachers at junior and secondary schools. In 1963, Teacher College changed its name into Institutes of Teacher Education. Nonetheless, since 1963 high achievers lost interest in studying at the Institute of Teacher Education as they were not supplied with funding and no longer guaranteed to become civil servants after graduation. In the 1970s, oil revenue was increased, and Indonesia rapidly expanded education access by building more than sixty-one thousand schools all over Indonesia. The government rushed to make a shortcut by recruiting thousands of primary teachers who were not carefully selected in the crash program, Teacher Training High School. As a result, teacher competency was reduced, as there was no quality control. Ministry of Education's study showed a shocking result because only less than half of a random sample of trained teachers could pass the science test given to the primary school completers. In the 1980s, rather than focusing on the Institute of Teacher Education's improvement to produce competent teachers, the government made another crash program, three-year university education (Diploma III), to anticipate higher schooling due to the expansion of primary schools in the 1970s. However, in 1999, the government mandated the upgrading of primary teachers graduating from Teacher Training High School to have a two-year university education (Diploma II) which was proven ineffective because only focusing on the upgrading qualification but not focusing on the quality of teachers. In 1999, Presidential decree 93/1999 changed the Institutes of Teacher Education into Universities of Education. The change of the status attracted more students to enrol, since studying at universities were considered prestigious. Nevertheless, no studies found confirming that the increase in enrolment improved the quality of graduates.

### ***From Teacher Law in 2005 to Freedom to Learn Policy in 2020***

In 2005, the government implemented Teacher Law 14/2005, requiring teachers to have a four-year university education (Bachelor Degree) to teach at school (Chang et al., 2014). Consequently, all school teachers with a previous educational background (Teacher Training High School, Diploma II and Diploma III) were suggested to upgrade their standard qualification. As a result, qualification of teachers with the minimum bachelor's degree increased from 37% in 2003 to 90% in 2016 (World Bank, 2018). However, it takes more than qualification to improve teacher quality. A video observation study from Ministry of Education and Culture found that Indonesian teacher still lack of content and pedagogical knowledge as shown by teachers

who did not pose open-ended or complex questions to elicit critical thinking or elaboration of students' answer, nearly 90% of the students observed responded teacher question using only one word (Ragatz, 2015). Following up Teacher Law regulation, teacher certification program was implemented in 2006 to certify teachers who had fulfilled the standard competency: professional, pedagogical, social and personal competencies (Jalal et al., 2009). The certified teachers receive certificates and professional salaries and incentives, and career promotion opportunities (Haryanto et al., 2016). Nonetheless, even though certification improved certified teachers' welfare, numerous studies suggest that certification program is not correlated with the improvement of teacher performance or student achievement (de Ree et al., 2018; Fahmi et al., 2011; Kusumawardhani, 2017; Triyanto, 2012). Certification policy increased the enrolment to teacher education from two hundred thousand students in 2005 to over one million in 2010 (Negara & Benveniste, 2014). Nevertheless, without tight selection on the admission process, the graduates' quality becomes a concern due to the fact that the graduates come from candidates with a diverse level of abilities from a different level of accreditation of the institution.

In 2013, the government improved the certification process by implementing Teacher Professionalism Training Program (Pendidikan Profesi Guru/PPG). There are two kinds of PPG. The first PPG is designed for existing teachers (in-service training) which typically last 6 months. The later program is for future teachers (pre-service training), which typically requires one year of training. The participants are the graduate of teacher education program and the graduates of non-teacher education program (Chang et al., 2014). Model of pre-service PPG is illustrated in Fig. 32.1 (adapted from Gufron, 2010; Pangestika & Alfarisa, 2015).

This regulation has been controversy. This training could be seen as a shortcut for non-teacher education graduates to become professional teachers. This regulation impacts teacher education and graduates as the teaching opportunities are no longer solely for teacher education graduates. In the early 2020, the Minister of Education and Culture issued a policy called "Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka", which is translated into "Freedom to Learn-Independent Campus" (Nizam, 2020). The essence of this policy is to unlock students' potential by giving them opportunity to follow interest in learning and innovation. Accordingly, based on the regulation No. 3/2020, this policy provides opportunities for university students to spend two semesters to follow their interest to learn in the same or different program outside their university. For student teachers who follow the passion to study for one year outside teacher preparation context, it might have impact with their competency development as a teacher. As Kosnik and Beck (2008) argued that there should be priorities to certain critical aspects of teaching because so much material and lack of focus and "cohesion" across the various components of teacher education leads to feelings of being unprepared. The summary of events in the history of teacher education is illustrated in Fig. 32.2.

### Model of Preservice PPG

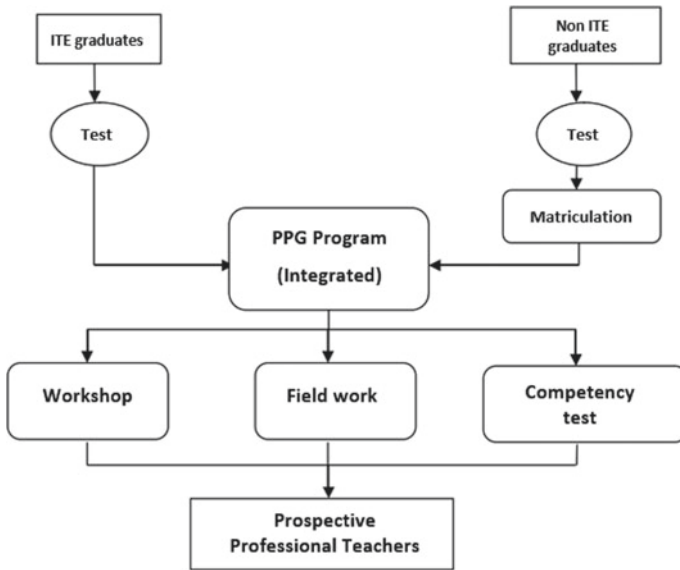


Fig. 32.1 Model of pre-service PPG

### Historical Timeline of Teacher Education



Fig. 32.2 Historical timeline of teacher education

## Structure of Pre-service Teacher Education Program

Pre-service teacher education in Indonesia is a four-year undergraduate degree program for teacher preparation which consist of coursework and fieldwork. As part of the program, student teachers need to produce a mini thesis based on a practitioner research as one of the requirements to graduate. Teacher education curriculum is based on the Indonesian Qualification Framework as the nationwide framework qualification, competence and the standardization of learning outcome based on Presidential Decree No 8/2012 (Insani et al., 2017). The level of educational system and expected learning outcome from a bachelor degree program is displayed in Fig. 32.3

*Indonesian Qualification Framework Learning Outcome*

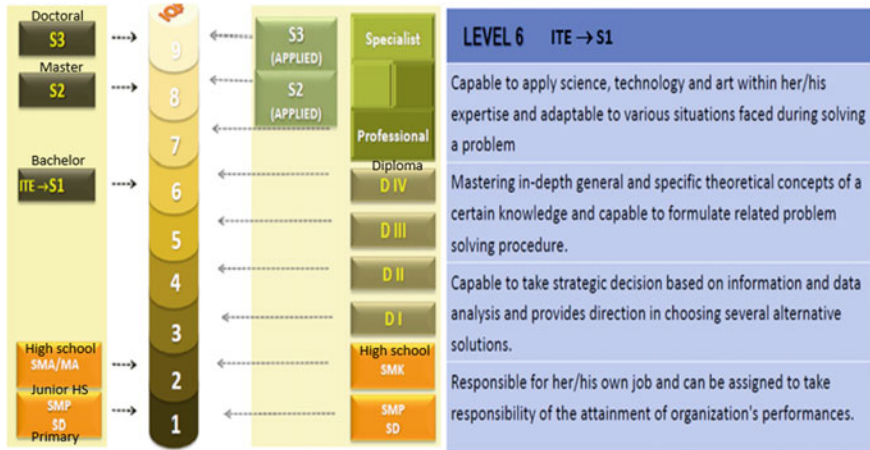


Fig. 32.3 Indonesian qualification framework learning outcome

(Moeliodihardjo et al., 2016; Susilo, 2015).

Nevertheless, the microelements of the documented curriculum, including the content of the curriculum for courses are designed by each individual university (Latif, 2017; Rohmah, 2017; Susilo, 2015; Wahyuningrum, 2017). It means that every teacher education has a variety different courses, length and structure of the program and the assessment procedure. The length and structure of field work such as observation and practicum teaching also depends on the policies of each institution (Azkiyah & Mukminin, 2017). Research training is very limited in scope. It is mainly research method courses for preparing students writing their mini final thesis rather than giving them fundamental foundations to make a research for their professional development in the teaching profession. Teacher education is supposed to become an institution to prepare skills and knowledge of future teachers, but teacher educations in Indonesia face several challenges and need to tackle some problems to achieve the mission.

**Concern for Pre-service Teacher Education in Indonesia**

*Student Teachers' Motivation and Career Intention*

Admission process in pre-service teacher education is relatively easy. As a result, besides candidates' diverse abilities, low-stake screening test may allow the candidates who may not be motivated to become teachers to enter teacher education since it is uncompetitive. Students might choose teacher education as a last

resort to continue education to universities as a result of not being accepted in their desired faculty. The finding of a recent study revealed that “no other choice” as a popular choice for students motivation to join teacher education (Masbirorotni et al., 2020). Student teachers who are motivated to become teachers may choose the teaching profession due to altruistic, intrinsic, or extrinsic motives (Abotsi et al., 2020; Giersch, 2021; Mukminin et al., 2017). However, some students who might not be motivated to become teachers cannot be generalized into that group. A recent study investigated student teachers motivation (integrative vs instrumental) found a considerably high proportion of students, 145 out of 328 (44%), who did not have a genuine motive to enrol in a teacher education programme and commit to becoming a teacher (Suralaga et al., 2020). The fact that some student teachers are not motivated to become teachers should not be overlooked. Taking for granted that all student teachers joining teacher education want to become teachers seem like turning a blind eye to the phenomenon. A vast literature has emphasized the importance of taking motivation and passion for teaching as consideration for teacher candidates (Flores & Niklasson, 2014), nevertheless, motivation is still regarded as “the missing ingredient in teacher education” (Lamb & Wyatt, 2019).

Students lack of motivation and interest might affect their career intention. Consequently, a lesser portion of student teachers prioritizes teacher as their choice. This phenomenon showed in a study conducted to measure student teachers’ motivation with Factors Influencing Teaching (FIT) (Suryani, 2017, 2020; Suryani et al., 2016). FIT has been used widely as a valid instrument in diverse settings, including Australia ((Watt & Richardson, 2007; Watt et al., 2012), Netherland (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012), Germany (König & Rothland, 2012), Ghana (Abonyi et al., 2021) and Nigeria (Akpochafo, 2020). Interestingly, the study finding also showed that out of 657 student teachers who planned to become teachers, 636 of them (79.30%) planned to have a second job, with 530 students (66.08%) planned to have a job at the same time, indicating being a teacher is not a priority but only as the option. Additionally, the result showed that only a small group of 109 students (13.59%) intended to focus on teaching without having a second job. Similarly, the study by Suralaga et al., (2020) adds to this point as it also showed less than half of respondents, 145 (44.2%) out of 328 students who fully committed to becoming teachers.

Socio-economic, political, and financial concerns play an essential role in this tendency, a dilemmatic situation. When a teacher is perceived as an “easy going” job that could be juggled with other duties and interests, the effectiveness of teachers’ performance is questionable. But, asking teachers to focus on a single teaching job when they have financial constraints seem unfair. Moreover, student teachers are aware that teachers are oversupplied and being a certified teacher is not solely for them as they need to compete with non-teacher education graduates. In this context, a plan to have a second job for student teachers could be seen as a strategic plan to survive besides the motivation factor. Having said that, measuring all student teacher’s motivation using a scale without mapping the career intention might not portray the accurate portrait of student teachers’ motivation to join the teaching profession. Considering challenges in the Indonesia context, the sweeping generalization ignores the facts that in Indonesia, student teachers join teacher education



might not necessarily mean they want to become teachers. Perception of the teaching profession might not reflect the career intention. However, it is important to note that motivation and intention are not static and likely to change as the learning experience in teacher education could also influence their decision to become teachers.

### ***Role of Teacher Education***

PPG's implementation raises a concern on pre-service teacher education as a teacher preparation institution and teacher education graduates' job market. Teachers are oversupplied. The problem relies on teachers' distribution, especially for the frontier, outermost, and least developed regions program in Indonesia (Marmoah et al., 2021). In anticipation of a possible oversupply of newly graduated teachers, the government has set an annual quota of 40,000 teacher candidates to enrol in teacher education (Chang et al., 2014). PPG allows every university graduate who is talented and interested in becoming a teacher to join the training and become professional teachers. The purpose of this program to meet the supply demand is questioned considering the oversupply of teacher education graduates, approximately only half of teacher education graduates have opportunities to enter the teaching workforce (World Bank, 2010). This policy raises an issue on how the quality of teacher education graduates perceived. Even though PPG program is believed to contain high-quality material, problems may arise due to the short period of time for participants to engage and interact with the material, particularly for students who are not from pre-service teacher education, as they might have limited pedagogical knowledge and teaching practice. Teachers are the pillars of the education system and front liners for educating the young generation. The notion of professionalism may vary in concept or contexts (Brante, 2011; Dodillet et al., 2019). Still, there is a great sense of unity concerning the importance of teachers' professionalism. A certain amount of time, process, and practices must be appropriately allocated to achieve knowledge and skills as a professional teacher to avoid quality conundrum in teacher education (Brooks, 2021).

### **Contemporary Issues: Multiple Perspectives**

This empirical section is part of the study conducted in 2020 regarding teacher education quality in Indonesia. The study's objective is to explore how stakeholders perceive teacher education quality in Indonesia regarding the influential aspects to offer insights into teacher education improvement. In the study, each stakeholder category was asked specific questions related to teacher education's influential aspects. Besides that, one overarching, open-ended question was asked to all types of stakeholders regarding concern in education or teacher education. The purpose of this one open-ended question at the end of the interview was to capture any issues that might not be covered in the questions concerning the influential aspects. Furthermore, this

open-ended question gives all stakeholders space and voices to raise concerns that they think are essential without any leading questions or prompts. These findings' input may give new insight and a better understanding of issues and contextual factors that affect the quality of education or teacher education in Indonesia. The findings from the open-ended question from all stakeholders are reported in this section.

### ***Context of the Study***

The study was conducted in the English Department of two different university types in Indonesia, private and state. Both universities are located in urban areas and categorized with an excellent level of accreditation. The same level of accreditation is chosen to avoid the discrepancy in quality. In addition, these universities were chosen as resources to learn more about the best practices that have proven effective to improve teacher education quality. The example of the best practices will be a valuable input for other teacher education in Indonesia concerning the extent of similarities in terms of context.

### ***Research Methodology***

The research design used the interview to collect qualitative data from stakeholders. Such an approach is necessary here to provide a deep insight into contemporary issues from different perspectives. In the interview, the stakeholders were asked one open-ended question regarding issues in education or teacher education. The study set out to answer the following question: What is your concern about the quality of education or teacher education in Indonesia?

### ***Sample***

Purposive sampling was used in selecting participants for the sample. The sample consists of 26 stakeholders, including four types of stakeholders: student teachers, Deans of Faculty of education, Heads of English Department and educators. The numbers of students were the representation of third- and fourth-year students in each university. The selection of these participants was vital because they represented different stakeholders who could provide insightful and valuable information from different angles. The participants are identified using numbers to protect their identities. The demographic of all participants is provided in Table 32.1.

**Table 32.1** Demographic of interview participants

Category	Participant		Total	Gender		Age range
	Private	State		Male	Female	
Student teacher	8	6	14	2	12	20–24
Educator	4	4	8	2	6	35–50
Head of English Department	1	1	2	1	1	40–45
Dean of Faculty of Education	1	1	2	1	1	50–58
Total	14	12	26	6	20	

### *Data Collection*

The research data was collected in January and February 2020 through interviews. The participant was given a consent form and details about the research information, including their rights, anonymity, and data confidentiality. Each participant was interviewed once. The interview lasted for about one to one and a half hours, including the interview section, which focused on teacher education's influential aspects and the overarching question.

### *Data Analysis*

After member checking, the data were analysed using an inductive approach and reflexive thematic data analysis. Considering there are four types of stakeholders with different roles, the data is categorized, compared and contrasted in the same type of stakeholders. Because the open-ended question data is less structured, there is notable overlapping themes expressed by each stakeholder type.

### **Findings**

In this section, the findings from faculty members (Deans Faculty of Education, Heads of English Department and educators) are presented first, followed by student teachers' findings. While the main focus is on comparing concerns among stakeholders, it is interesting to consider the difference in the university context may have affected their concern in accordance with their responses. This issue is an inductive area of interest that have arisen through the data. Some findings presented here are the selected key findings from various topics in each type of stakeholders and the overlapping theme finding across different stakeholders.

**Table 32.2** Deans' responses

Dean	What are your concerns on the quality of education or teacher education in Indonesia?
1	Teachers who inspire and become an example, our hope, having characteristics to be able to exist, survive anywhere, giving meaning, wherever they are, giving blessings
2	Soft skills and hard skills must be emphasized as the outcome or output provided by students. There is a process that refers to be qualified teachers who have skills and integrity

### *Deans' Comments on the Quality of the Output*

The responses show similar concern on the output quality from the Deans of the Faculty of Education. Dean 1 explained that the expected output is qualified teachers who are competent intellectually and technology savvy. She further added that teachers are supposed to be equipped with social, personal and spiritual competencies. These teachers are expected to teach, educate, inspire students. Similarly, Dean 2 categorized important competencies into hard skill and soft skills. He described that the quality of education in one country is supported by teachers whose majority have been trained in teacher education. So, when the quality of education is low, what is typically blamed is teachers' quality. In fact, teachers' quality is highly affected by the training they received in teacher education as the institution where they learn the skills and knowledge to teach. In a nutshell, he pointed out that the logical consequence of improving education is teacher education's improvement, as the essence of teacher quality improvement. A summary of the Deans' responses is presented in Table 32.2.

### *Heads of Department's Comments on Teacher Education and Online Learning*

In the interview, HoDs responded differently to the question. HoD 1 concerned about the role of teacher education which has been overlooked. He argued that everybody could be successful because of the contribution of a teacher who is mainly prepared for their teaching career in teacher education. Thus, he inferred that teacher education has contributed to everybody's success. Meanwhile, HoD 2 raised concerns on overreliance on technology (The interview took place before the pandemic when all learning platforms moved into online mode). She further criticized the overuse of online learning for replacing face-to-face meeting. She argued that technology is just a tool to teach as part of the learning process, but it is not supposed to replace teachers. Teachers are still expected to explain, educate, facilitate discussion, interact with students rather than just giving away the material, or provide time-consuming games which have nothing to do with the learning outcome achievement. A summary of the Heads of the English Department's responses is shown in Table 32.3.

**Table 32.3** Heads of English Department's responses

HOD	What are your concerns on the quality of education or teacher education in Indonesia?
1	Sometimes the role of teacher education is overlooked. It is one of "the spearheads" of education. All successful people are educated by teachers and teachers are trained mostly from teacher education
2	Online learning is good, but tools cannot replace human education. Technology cannot replace you as a teacher. It is different from other majors. In education, human education is important

### *Educators' Comments on PPG and Student Teachers*

Responses reveal that educators perceived PPG as a controversial topic. Edu 1 suggested that this policy has made the gap in teacher education graduates' quality even further by "creating" a new teacher training platform rather than "fixing" the pre-service teacher education problem. She further commented that this policy doubles the quality concern into twofold: quality of pre-service teacher education and its graduates and quality of PPG and its graduates. Edu 2 expressed her worries regarding pre-service teacher education graduates' prospect as they are considered "prospective but not professional yet". In PPG, student teachers will have to compete with non-teacher education graduates who might have strong content knowledge as they are majoring in a specific subject such as Science, Mathematics, or English. Moreover, Edu 3, an educator in the PPG program, identified areas of concern regarding PPG graduates' quality. He further revealed that the graduates' competence of pre-service PPG, which allows non-teacher education graduates to join, might be questioned as they lack the foundation of pedagogical knowledge, teaching practices or teaching experience. The graduates' competence of in-service PPG, which provided for teachers who have been teaching, could also be questioned, particularly for those from rural and remote areas. Typically, because they are not permanent teachers yet, they have other jobs to meet their needs as part-timers' income might not be adequate. As a result, they have little time to improve their professional development. Besides that, the geographical challenge might affect the limitation of school facilities, internet access and technology. Many might not have laptops yet. As a result, their quality is low, and it is very challenging for educators to train them. For those teachers, the certification has been a hope to have a better income. Edu 4 felt this phenomenon causes a dilemmatic position for him as an educator. If he has to fail them, it feels inhumane as they have contributed to educating the young generation. They deserve good welfare, but passing them and certifying them as "professional teachers" seems unsuitable as the quality is low.

The interview findings show that educators raised several issues with student teachers, especially concerning motivation. Edu 5 commented that one of the underlying problems is from the internal student teacher's motivation. Many of them join teacher education because they are not accepted at their desired faculty, not because they want to become teachers. Edu 7 added to this point by giving an example of her class. She found out that the portion of students who intend to become teachers after

graduating is low. Similar to her colleagues, Edu 8 explained that motivation and career intention might also affect student teachers' teaching skills and knowledge. She noticed that students who only consider teacher education as higher education institutions to continue studying might not take the lessons in teacher preparation seriously. As a result, their beginner teacher's skills and knowledge are also not satisfactory. Furthermore, Edu 6 explained that simply adopting other countries' policy and educational system without fully aware of Indonesia's challenges seems far from feasible. She argued that recruiting the best and motivated students in the country to become teachers without them knowing if they will be certified or having prospective jobs after graduation seems difficult and unattractive for them. The summary of educators' responses is presented in Table 32.4.

**Table 32.4** Educators' responses

Edu	What are your concerns about the quality of education or teacher education in Indonesia?
1	I don't understand what PPG is doing. Why don't we just improve the quality of teacher education? I've been sceptical about this policy issue because not all student teachers go to PPG
2	Many teacher education graduates are not good at content knowledge and even teaching skills. Their positions are threatened because of PPG. When graduates from the Mathematics department join PPG, we are lost in terms of content knowledge. Then where are our teacher graduates going?
3	I happen to teach at in-service PPG for certification. The quality of teachers who join the training is very worrying, in my opinion. They never get training. They have been busy struggling with their minimum welfare. Even to use a laptop, only a few can do, they are even struggling to make PPT, how can they study in this poor condition?
4	With the PPG program, we can't prepare them to become teachers but only prospective teachers. Well, that leaves the students feeling confused. I think the government is not ready with the PPG program. I have also taught PPG. Even if they pass, because of what grades? I just let them pass
5	I think it's a complex issue. First, in terms of those who want to be teachers, maybe they do not want to be teachers. So, teacher or teacher education becomes the last option. If we ask students why they join teacher education, the answer probably majority because they are not accepted anywhere
6	We have a lot of rules to be a teacher. We must go through PPG. That's what might make the interest is decreased. We are still proud of adopting education from other countries, but we have not thought about how our students' character is like, education that works for us. And that's compounded by the ever-changing policies
7	In my class, less than 30% out of 75 students wanted to be teachers. That's why I said I'm not sure there are many potentials, just how we make sure they are interested. Because a lot of them still haven't decided yet. We just need to convince them that being a teacher is a great idea
8	We still need to match what is needed in school with our curriculum. For example, one thing we still lack, in my opinion, is from the side of our students' skills in making a lesson plan, it is not very good, and it is a very practical, much-needed ability as a teacher

### ***Student Teachers' Comments on Teachers and Teacher Preparation***

In response to the question, several students commented on various aspects of teachers. Stu 1 expressed her concern about how people underestimate teacher as a profession. She asserted that the teaching job is not only full of responsibilities but also complex and complicated. Stu 8 supported this idea by explaining Indonesian teachers' challenges who sometimes have to deal with a large number of classes (30–40 students) consisting of students with diverse backgrounds. Stu 6 and 13 also explained that Indonesian teachers face other challenges in terms of the curriculum, which is often changed combined with administrative burden, school demands and low payment. Likewise, Stu 3 showed sympathy concerning teachers' welfare, specifically for those in rural and remote areas, as she saw herself in their condition. She said that the financial constraint limits their capacity to become qualified teacher. Being a civil servant is one possible solution for teachers to have a better and permanent income. However, Stu 14 felt that the teacher recruitment process to become a civil servant is problematic as it is only based on the period of teaching rather than performance, so the quality of recruited teachers is questionable. Stu 7 also raised a concern on the difficulties to control the quality of civil servants who are distributed in thousands of islands in Indonesia.

The interview findings also show that student teachers raised concern about some aspects of teacher preparation. A long-standing issue in teacher education about the gap between theory and practice is one of them. Stu 1 said that she would feel ambiguous if she only learned theory without practice. In line with her statement, Stu 5 also pointed out the importance of practice in the real context. She expressed her worries, confusion and burden if she had never been practised in a real context as she might not understand what to do. Her response is similar to the concern expressed by Stu 12, who argued that the longer exposure is, the better as students might be able to anticipate the problems that may arise, such as the diversities of student's characters in Indonesia. However, exposure to the teaching field can "make or break" student teachers' intention to become teacher, as managing children in the actual classroom might not always be easy. Additionally, Stu 10 suggested that student teachers become strong and not feel down easily and accept it as the nature of the teaching job. In this case, the teacher educator plays a vital role to guide them through the learning process. Stu 2 also showed her expectation for educators to have global knowledge and experience to make them aware of the global context's current issues.

Apart from the theory into practice, two students raised a concern about their status as student teachers. Stu 9 questioned how people perceived education as a less prestigious major. He mentioned that he experienced different reactions from his families when he and his cousin majored in engineering, telling them about their subjects. He expressed his upset feeling by emphasizing that even every engineer used to be taught by a teacher. So, majoring in education should not be underestimated. On a different note, Stu 4 showed her confusion on joining teacher education if,

after graduation, she has to compete with non-teacher education graduates to be a professional teacher in PPG. However, she said that she was not worried about her chance to become teachers, but she raised her concerns with her friends who did not take the teacher preparation subjects seriously as they might not be sure about their career intention. The summary of student teachers' responses is shown in Table 32.5.

The findings show that the faculty members' responses went into more detail and focused than student teachers when answering the same question. The faculty member discussed more issues in teacher education, while student teachers' responses had more various concerns related to teacher and their preparation in teacher education.

## Discussion

There is a notable divergence in the stakeholders' opinions concerning education or teacher education in Indonesia. Data finding from the Deans suggests that teacher education's output is expected to have the content knowledge and soft skills. This finding also points to the role of teachers as an inspirator more than just delivering a lesson. The Head of Department's finding of the perceived role of teacher education indicates the visibility of this social phenomenon. This finding is supported by Stu 9 when explaining how he was compared and treated differently as a student teacher from teacher education.

The educators' concern for student teachers' input quality and motivation indicates that this problem is significant. They are considered the underlying problems which affect the quality of teacher education graduates. One possible explanation is because of the admission process. High reputable universities may have better student intake as the places are limited, and the students can be selected. Nevertheless, the institutions with more available spaces than the students who apply may recruit students without a tight selection process. As an illustration, by 2020, out of 425 teacher education institutions, there are only less than 10% of teacher education with high accreditation, and around 90% of them have varied accreditation levels (National Accreditation Board, 2021). The vast number of teacher education with varied quality causes a considerable discrepancy of quality in teacher education. Low-stake screening test to enter teacher education lower the quality of input in talents as candidates come from diverse abilities. Consequently, teacher educators face more challenges in training their candidates to become qualified teachers as students might struggle with basic content knowledge. For example, the English teacher education department might recruit low proficiency students in English to become English teachers. In the long run, student teachers' lack of content knowledge mastery might affect their pedagogical practice or classroom management as they are not confident with their competence. The incompetent feeling could influence students' career intention to join the teaching profession besides the lack of motivation or teaching passion.



**Table 32.5** Student teachers' responses

Stu	What are your concerns on the quality of education or teacher education in Indonesia?
1	People sometimes underestimate the profession of a teacher because people think it is easy. A teacher should not be underestimated because a teacher has a big responsibility
2	Educators should have more insightful knowledge. They do not only study in Indonesia, so they have a richer experience. The feedback to the students will make them more curious to learn and motivated
3	I have not seen the welfare of the teachers yet. Education has not been evenly distributed in Indonesia. Teachers in the village are not the same as teachers in Jakarta. The government should prioritize teacher preparation
4	PPG allows everybody to teach, then why does teacher education exist? I don't worry. It's just a little bit strange. Many student teachers don't realize that they will be educators who teach humans. They are not serious to study
5	We need to be prepared for the real context so that we won't be surprised. When there is no preparation, we only know theories. When we go to the field, we question many things. I feel burdened because I don't understand
6	In general, teachers lack in the curriculum, as it is often changed. We have not understood it yet. It is replaced again. I saw confusion in teaching, the demands of the curriculum, the other deadlines and so forth
7	I think Indonesian education is good. The problem lies in control. Perhaps due to some aspects such as large areas, thousands of islands, so the central government is a bit difficult to control some remote parts of our country
8	It is a challenge for teachers to manage students with different characters. Teachers need to be more creative and adjust and update the teaching. It is not fair for students if they are taught in the old ways
9	Why is an education major always considered less prestigious? Behind people majoring in engineering, there is a teacher's contribution there. Why don't they appreciate that?
10	Student teachers should not feel down so quickly. Many students initially want to be teachers but, in the process, feeling down when facing the children. Teaching is not difficult but also not that simple
11	Student teachers would be better having more practice than theory. Suppose we learn a theory, but we will just practice it in the sixth semester. We feel ambiguous if the theory is valid
12	Teacher education should emphasize more in practice. The longer and the more we get a lot of exposure from the field, the different characters of students, the better I think
13	Low payment factor limits our intention to become a teacher. Sometimes teachers are busy with administration. They just want to finish the syllabus without caring whether the students understand or not, remember or not
14	I don't know why civil servant registration for teacher has the same examination as others, no microteaching, no PPG, just two-year teaching experience. We don't know about the quality, whether for two years they perform well or not

The quality of student intake and lack of motivation are long-standing, fundamental issues that have been compromised for a long time. If they were considered minor symptoms of a disease in a body, they were ignored, and as time goes by, these symptoms become chronic and acute and lead to a more severe illness and have a lot of complications. In this case, low-quality of student intake and lack of motivation in student teachers may lead to low quality of graduates and a low portion of student teachers in the teaching profession. If it keeps going on like this, the teaching profession will be filled in with people who might not have a passion for teaching and this phenomenon results in low quality of teachers. The other implication is a curriculum issue in teacher education. Student teachers might be provided with more subjects that do not focus on teacher preparation to accommodate students' needs and adjust the low interest in the teaching profession. In the long run, this phenomenon could shift teacher education as teacher preparation into merely a higher education institution besides the decrease in teacher education graduates' quality.

PPG is identified as a common concern between educators and student teachers in the data. The findings show that PPG implementation raises a concern regarding the input, process, output, and impact. The literature about the history of teacher education in Indonesia has given evidence regarding crash program conducted in the 1970s and 1980s due to the increased oil revenue (Bjork, 2013; Djojonegoro, 1996; Raihani & Sumintono, 2010). The history revealed that rushing effort to provide teacher training in a short time resulted in poor quality of teachers as the consequence of inadequate training in the crash program. If PPG is argued to supply the demand of teachers who will be retired, Indonesia has the oversupply of teachers in urban areas and teacher graduates from teacher education. A system might need to be developed to manage the distribution. Moreover, not all PPG pre-service graduates are allocated to teaching professions yet. Suppose the quality of pre-service teacher education graduates who have been prepared to become teachers for four years are questioned after 4 years of training. In that case, the quality of non-teacher education graduates who have a year of preparation without fundamental knowledge about teacher preparation, limited pedagogical knowledge, practice and teaching experience could also be more questionable.

## **Implication**

The findings of the study indicate an urgent need to improve the quality of teacher education graduates. One possible solution is by making a mechanism in the admission process to filter the students who are talented and motivated. Besides that, the findings also bring implication for PPG. It is suggested to embed the PPG program in pre-service teacher education as a postgraduate level of teacher education. One possible reason is that matriculation in PPG might not be adequate to replace four-year teacher preparation. Additionally, student teachers who join PPG do not need to encounter the similar material they have in pre-service teacher education. PPG will focus more on practising teaching skills and innovative teaching methods. Students

are also equipped with the awareness of local and global issues in education and subject-specific knowledge. More importantly, PPG will emphasize the importance of the mind set and values to become dedicated teachers who are professionals, explorative and adaptive to the dynamic of the teaching profession and changing world. Furthermore, research skills are also vital and need to be developed for candidates to become critical, innovative and responsive to the problem they face in their classroom teaching based on scientific evidence. Motivated and talented non-teacher education graduates interested in becoming teachers are welcome to join. Besides that, other issues regarding teachers' motivation, dedication and distribution also need to be addressed.

A system might need to be developed to distribute teachers and sustain a good quality of education in rural and remote areas. The government effort to give scholarship for the bright students from those areas needs to be increased and supported, especially for those who want to become teachers by giving a civil servant status for them to come back to their hometown and contribute there. The distribution of good quality teachers could also be possible from PPG graduates as civil servants in those areas. So, the exposure to good quality teachers does not rely on a short period of visiting teachers or NGO project or practicum teaching of student teachers. Finally, the findings suggest quality control and evaluation for the effectiveness of teacher education and teacher professionalism training program, which involve the multiple stakeholders' feedback towards the program as quality could be seen as a stakeholders-related concept (Harvey & Green, 1993).

## Conclusion

Teacher education in Indonesia has experienced a long and winding road to prepare qualified teachers for the country. The challenges are rooted in the historical background of teacher education's evolving system, perceived teacher status, combined with socio-economic and geographical challenges, tangled with changing policies, changing curriculum, and implementing one crash program to another with an intention to prepare professional teachers. Extensive literature in the broader and Indonesia context have suggested the importance of choosing the bright students with a passion for teaching to be recruited to become teachers from the beginning. High performing countries have also given similar recommendation to improve the quality of teacher education. The voice of this argument is echoed, loud and clear. In the light of this, supportive educational system might need to be developed to apply this approach, as changes could not be made with a wish. Different results might be unlikely to happen when using the same approach or doing the same thing repeatedly. The Indonesian government has made a lot of efforts to provide a good quality of education. Never-

theless, feedback from stakeholders and regular evaluation of the program's effectiveness must be taken into account for constant improvement because the quality needs to be pursued, not compromised.

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