

Teacher's Readiness in the New Principal Preparation Programme (PPP)

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive study reports on the learning readiness of teachers in the Indonesia Principal Preparation Programme (PPP). The Republic of Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture has decreed that school principal candidates are to have school principal certificates before they can be appointed as school principals. The school principal certificate can only be attained by completing the PPP, one of the important stages of which is education and training. As a form of learning, education and training in the PPP demands school principal candidates to exhibit learning readiness. It has long and widely been acknowledged that learning readiness is one of the most important determining factors of success in learning. The PPP itself, in short, is a programme designed to equip teachers with previously determined competencies to enable them to take on the role of school leader and school manager. The PPP consists of several stages, which are: proposal of principal candidates, selection, and education and training. Each stage of the PPP comes with certain requirements. This study focuses on the stage of education and training. The preconditions of this stage determine the success of the process of learning and the achievement of the learning goals. Based on this notion, this paper aims to describe the training readiness of teachers nominated as school principals, with particular regard to their physical, psychological, and material readiness. Further attention is given to proposing possible alternatives to improve PPP training readiness. The method used in this study is the descriptive qualitative method. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test, questionnaires, and document study. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse the data. The analysis results show that, while teachers' material readiness for training is relatively high, they lack psychological and physical readiness. Better time management, competent trainers, a contextual curriculum, and a matriculation programme are proposed as alternatives to improve psychological and physical readiness.

Keywords: Principal Preparation Programme (PPP); readiness; principal education and training; principal candidates

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INTRODUCTION

The success or failure of a learning process is determined by many key elements. Among those crucial elements is learning readiness. Readiness, in general, implies a degree of concentration and eagerness. Individuals learn best when they are physically, mentally, and emotionally ready (Schunk, 2013). Ausubel (as cited in Baharudin, 2007), defined readiness as the adequacy of the student's existing capacity in relation to some instructional objective. Nasution (2005) states that learning readiness is the conditions that precede the learning itself (p.169). Without readiness or willingness, the learning goals could never be achieved. This pre-learning condition consists of attention, motivation, and readiness development. According to Djamarah (2002), there are three factors affecting readiness: physical, psychological and material readiness. Physical readiness is closely related to health and it can affect learning outcomes and social adjustment (p.13-14). Teachers with poorer quality of health will not have enough energy to learn. Psychological readiness is closely related to intelligence, a good memory, satisfaction, desire or motivation to learn, concentration, and attention. Material readiness is related to learning materials and other supporting materials used in learning, such as having a notebook, as so on.

Learning readiness is a condition in which someone is being prepared to perform an activity (Djamarah, 2002). For example, preparing for learning activities may involve arranging learning materials, ensuring one's body is in good condition, and organising other training equipment. Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that learning readiness refers to the condition in which someone gets ready to learn and prepares responses or stimulus for the learning process.

Every teacher nominated as school principal is obligated to join the Principal Preparation Programme (PPP). The PPP in Indonesia is implemented in three stages: proposal of principal candidates, selection, and education and training. The Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Culture (Permendikbud) Number 6 Year 2018 is a new regulation relating to administrative requirement and curriculum training. This regulation states that teachers nominated as school principal should have managerial experience either as vice principal, head of library, head of laboratory, daily board of Kelompok Kerja Guru (Primary School Teacher Association) or Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (Secondary School Teacher Association), or coordinator of Penilaian Kinerja Guru (Teacher Performance Assessment) or Pengembangan Keprofesional Berkelanjutan (Continuous Professional Development). In the education and training phase, it is important that all participants master the subject of managerial competence. For this reason, becoming a school principal candidate in 2018 poses greater challenges than ever before.

Related studies conducted in the United States have also revealed that standards of acceptance in principal preparation are too low. Moreover, the criteria used in the selection are not applied carefully and consistently. These evaluation studies indicate that a large number of PPPs select participants on the basis of academic qualifications only, without further research on candidate qualities such as resilience, orientation on the outcome, the belief that all children have the ability to learn, commitment, and the integrity necessary to perform the task well

(Analytical and Capacity Development Partnership [ACDP], 2016). The PPP should be designed to meet specialised requirements in an education system. Other evaluation studies of the PPP show us the importance of paying particular attention to the role of school principal in terms of educational leadership, administration, and management. Research evaluations in Australia, Europe, and the United States show that there are many programmes that do not support through mentoring or coaching. However, such support is often needed to ensure that those preparing to become principals can be successful leaders in their schools (Slater & Nelson, 2013).

Of further interest is the International Study of Principal Preparation (ISPP), which was conducted in 14 countries by the University of Calgary in Canada at the beginning of the year 2000. This study examined various examples of set-up experiences for principals in certain professional learning approaches. The findings indicated that school principals require certain skills and core competencies in educational leadership and management (Slater & Nelson, 2013). Regarding the skills and competencies needed, Sharp (2003) stated that a school principal has two important roles: as the instructional leader of the school and as the manager of the school. Morris (as cited in Sharp, 2003, p.9) stated that “although instructional leadership remains the central expectation of the principalship, the scope of the school-site management role has grown substantially over the years.” The principal’s managerial competency is highly important in determining teacher professionalism (Botha, 2011, p.413). These statements are in line with the new PPP in Indonesia which emphasises managerial skills as the core competency in principalship.

Referring back to the learning readiness of teachers in Indonesia PPP, concerning managerial competence, it has been found that there is a gap between the high requirement and the real condition of the initial ability of teachers nominated as school principal. Juwita (2017) found that the mean initial ability of teachers nominated as school principal in terms of managerial competence was 2.8 (between fair and good). This result supports the previous assumption that the lack of managerial competence of school principals is in part due to the low competence of school principal candidates. The study was conducted on 919 principal candidates from 10 Provinces, 33 Regencies, who participated in PPP in 2016. The lowest indicators of managerial competency were the mastery of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) and the implementation of monitoring and evaluation. Both of these indicators were low level in all provinces. Rosalina (2013) found that the managerial competence of principals in Padang Timur scored only 78.6%. Therefore, school principals require training and guidance from school supervisors. The ACDP study, in 2013, also found that the managerial competence of principals is low. The lowest scoring indicator of the principals’ competence was the ability to use ICT for school organisation and management. Issues related to ICT also appeared in other dimensions as a field that needs to be improved and developed for principals (ACDP, 2013).

The Provincial/District/City Education Authorities encounter difficulties in recruitment phase, especially in primary school. For this reason, teachers are usually obligated to complete the PPP. The difficulties are caused by three factors. First, there are a greater number of primary schools than kindergartens or

secondary schools, so primary school principal candidates are in high demand. Second, a large number of principals will reach retirement age in the next five years. Third, most teachers feel comfortable in their role and are content with their salary, and therefore lack the motivation to become principals. These difficulties have also been observed by Hidayat, Nurkholis, & Rasiman (2016), who found that primary school teachers had low motivation to become principals, because the principal workload did not match the benefits received. Based on the above discussion, this study aims to answer two questions, as follows:

1. How is the readiness of teachers in the new Principal Preparation Programme (PPP)?

What are teachers' perceptions of how to improve their training readiness in the new Principal Preparation Programme (PPP)?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs the descriptive qualitative method. According to Widodo, Erna, and Mukhtar (2000), the descriptive method is not intended to test a particular hypothesis, but rather to describe the existence of a symptom, a variable, or a state. However, this does not mean that all descriptive studies do not use hypotheses. In descriptive research, hypotheses are not tested, but may be helpful in identifying alternative methods to overcome research problems using scientific procedures. Another opinion suggests that the descriptive method is a way of researching the status of a human group, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought, or a class of events in the present (Nazir, 2011, p.4). Based on the above descriptions, it can be stated that this descriptive study aims to describe the training readiness of teachers nominated as school principal in the new PPP, and their perceptions of how to improve teachers' readiness in the new PPP through scientific procedures.

Data collection tools used in this study are the LPPKS standard test, questionnaires and document studies. The sample of this research is 13 education and training classes (469 school principal candidates) from 13 districts/cities who joined the PPP in 2017. The LPPKS standard test consists of a *pre-test*, which was distributed to 13 classes at the beginning of training, and a *post-test*, which was distributed at the end of training. The questionnaires were distributed in a *WhatsApp* group of the training participants in 13 districts/cities. The questionnaire aimed to measure teachers' readiness: physically, psychologically, and materially in education and training. Document studies were used to collect information about the gender, school level, and age of participants. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse the data in this study.

Table 1. Data and Data Collection Tools

Research Questions	Data Collections	Data Collection Tools
1. How is the readiness of teachers in the new PPP? a. Physically b. Psychologically	a. Physically (age, health) b. Psychologically (initial ability, motivation)	a. Physically (document study, questionnaires) b. Psychologically (document study)

c. Materially	c. Materially (equipment needed for learning)	from pre-post test result, questionnaires) c. Materially (questionnaires)
2. What are teachers' perceptions of how to improve training readiness in the new PPP?	Perception to improve training readiness in the new PPP	Questionnaires

METHODS

1. *Training Readiness of Teachers Nominated as School Principals in the New PPP*

Djamarah (2002) states that there are three factors that influence learning readiness. These three factors are physical, psychological, and material readiness. Physical readiness is closely related to health, which affects learning outcomes and social adjustment. Teachers with poorer quality of health will not have enough energy to learn. Psychological readiness is closely related to intelligence, a good memory, satisfaction, desire or motivation to learn, concentration, and attention. Material readiness is related to learning materials and other supporting materials used in learning, such as having a notebook, and so on.

Physical Readiness

Based on the documentation study, it was found that about 82% of kindergarten teacher participants were in the 31-50 years old age range, while the remainder were in the range of 51-60 years old. On average, kindergarten teacher participants were younger than primary and secondary teacher participants. Physically, the kindergarten teacher participants were stronger, and thus exhibited learning readiness during education and training.

About 3% of the primary teacher participants were in 31-40 years old age range, while the remaining participants (about 97%) were 41-60 years old. The physical state of the primary teacher participants is the opposite to the kindergarten teacher participants. The primary teacher candidates were older than kindergarten teacher candidates. Physically, the primary teacher candidates were probably weaker than the kindergarten teacher participants.

About 64% of secondary teacher participants were in the range of 41-50 years old, while about 3% were in the range of 31-40 years old and 33% were in the range of 51-60 years old. The majority of teachers in secondary school were in the age range considered productive for principals, that is 41-50 years old. For this reason, secondary teacher candidates have a high level of learning readiness and many learning opportunities.

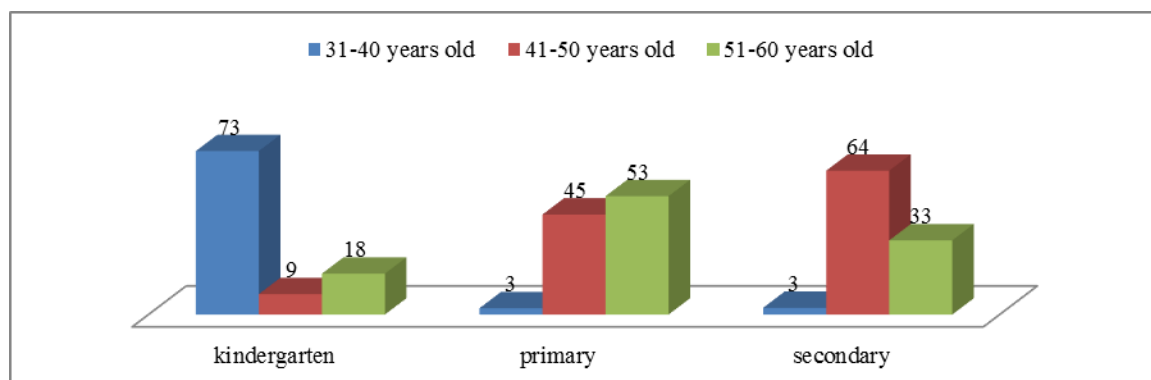


Figure 1. Age of Participants Based on School Levels (%)

Based on the questionnaires, it is found out that about 82% of participants brought personal medicines with them to anticipate sickness during the training, and about 75% of participants went to the doctors for a medical check up before attending the training. This indicated that most of the participants took precautions with regard to their physical needs in order to stay healthy during the training.

Psychological Readiness

Psychological readiness is related to intelligence, a good memory, satisfaction, desire or motivation to learn, concentration, and attention. Coopasami, Knight, and Pete (2017, p.302) state that “...*psychological readiness reflects an individual's state of mind in terms of being ready for learning. A student's mental preparedness is one of the most important factors that could affect the success of learning...*”. Psychological readiness reflects a state of mind who is ready to learn. Psychological readiness is one of the most important factors that influence individual learning success.

The questionnaires proved that about 85% of participants felt happy when they came to the training ground, lived in dormitories, and got along with new friends. The rest, about 15% of participants, felt uncomfortable at the training ground and were maladjusted to the environment. An interesting finding of the study is that about 23% of participants were being forced to attend the training and about 44% of participants stated that they did not receive or read any resources before the training. This psychological unpreparedness disrupted the learning process. These findings confirm the research result of Coopasami et al. (2017) which proves that a student's mental preparedness is one of the most important factors that could affect the success of learning.

Table 2. Pre-test and Post-test Average

No	Districts	Pre-test	Post-test
1	District of Baubau	35,07	41,17
2	District of Bone	44,70	49,90
3	District of Bungo	34,02	56,57
4	District of Lingga	37,20	46,41
5	City of Sungai Penuh	36,87	48,23
6	District of Ciamis	39,76	48,68
7	District of Indramayu	40,63	48,28
8	District of Sukabumi	37,64	52,33
9	District of Tegal	37,80	60,84

10	District of Wonogiri	49,96	53,85
11	District of Ngawi	43,09	75,53
12	District of Ponorogo	38,00	57,25
13	District of Situbondo	44,70	55,58
Average		39,96	53,43

Teachers who attend principal education and training should have good initial ability. Peterson and Kelley (as cited in Darling & Hammond, 2010) said that principal candidates should be equipped with an appropriate preparation programme that has a clear, comprehensive vision and supports sustainable career development. Peterson and Kelley stressed, “...features that are similar to exemplary features of leadership preparation programs: having a clear vision; coherence; and a thoughtful sequencing of career development knowledge, skills and abilities;” they also conclude that “stronger programs offer a long-term set of experiences; combine workshops or institutes with on-site training, practice, and coaching; are closely linked to participants’ work; and foster a sense of membership” (as cited in Darling & Hammond, p.19-20).

Table 2 illustrates the participants' initial capabilities, as measured by the pre-test instrument performed on the first day of the training. The initial ability of participants from District of Wonogiri was 49.96, the highest score among the 13 districts/cities. Meanwhile, the initial ability of participants from District of Bungo and District of Baubau were 34.02 and 35.07, respectively. These were the lowest scores of the districts/cities. The overall pre-test average was only 39.96 out of a maximum score of 100.

The initial ability of participants based on school level are as follows:

1. The pre-test average of kindergarten teachers is 35.75
2. The pre-test average of primary school teachers is 41.10,
3. The pre-test average of secondary school teacher is 42.00.

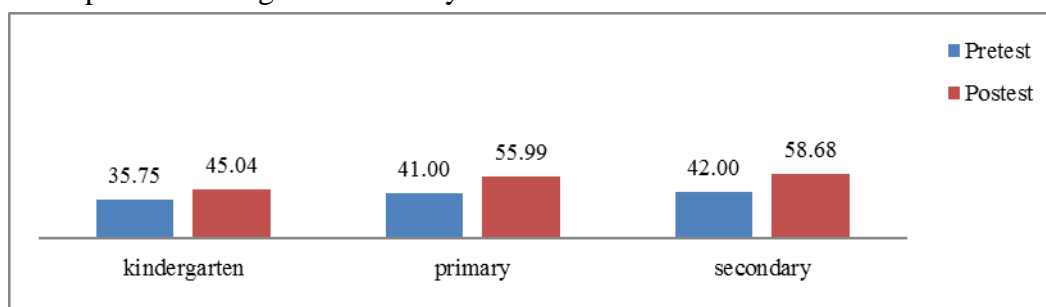


Figure 2. *Pre-Test and Post-Test Average Based on School Level*

On average, the initial ability of the kindergarten teachers was the lowest, while that of the secondary school teachers was the highest. The lack of psychological readiness has a negative implication. Lortie (2009) stated that, for most of the principals, the transition from teaching to principal was abrupt. Although around half had some prior administrative experience, only 13% felt that this constituted significant preparation for their new position; of those, only two did not talk about things they had to learn. On their first day on the job, the rest of these men and women began work without a clear idea of what they were expected to do; they knew practically nothing, for example, about the many routines they were

expected to carry out; they were forced to rely heavily on the building secretary, if they were lucky enough to have an experienced one, during those initial months (Lortie, 2009, p.31-32).

Material Readiness

Material readiness is related to materials, such as learning materials and other supporting materials used as a learning reference. Based on the questionnaire results, about 83% of participants prepare the equipment needed for learning. Approximately 98% of participants bring a laptop when training and have a smartphone connected to the internet. Nevertheless, not all participants are able to operate their laptops and use them as a resource for learning. It can therefore be concluded that the participants have prepared their material needs, although they still need assistance in the utilisation of technology.

The lack of technological readiness is in accordance with the result of the research conducted by Juwita (2017), which states that the lowest indicators of managerial competency are the mastery of ICT and the implementation of monitoring and evaluation. Link and Marz (2006) also found a problem of low ICT skills in students. A lack of readiness in the utilisation of ICT causes frustration during the learning process (Link & Marz, 2006). In order to overcome these problems, a matriculation programme focussed on basic computing is needed.

2. Teachers' Perceptions on How to Improve Training Readiness in the New PPP

Identifying the problems with training readiness also elicits about some opinions on how improve teachers' readiness in principal education and training. Approximately 15% of participants suggested time management. Better time management enables participants to have enough time to read, understand, collaborate, report and perform their tasks. Another 9% of participants recommended that trainer competence should be developed, especially with regard to designing, implementing and evaluating instruction. Training materials should also be contextually packed (according to 19% of participants), so that participants can implement the material in their daily tasks as principals. Places of training and equipment should be representatively ascertained to support the achievement of learning objectives. The most popular solution (suggested by 46% of participants) is to design a matriculation programme before the training, so that all participants have the same initial ability and the trainers could easily determine the most effective learning strategy.

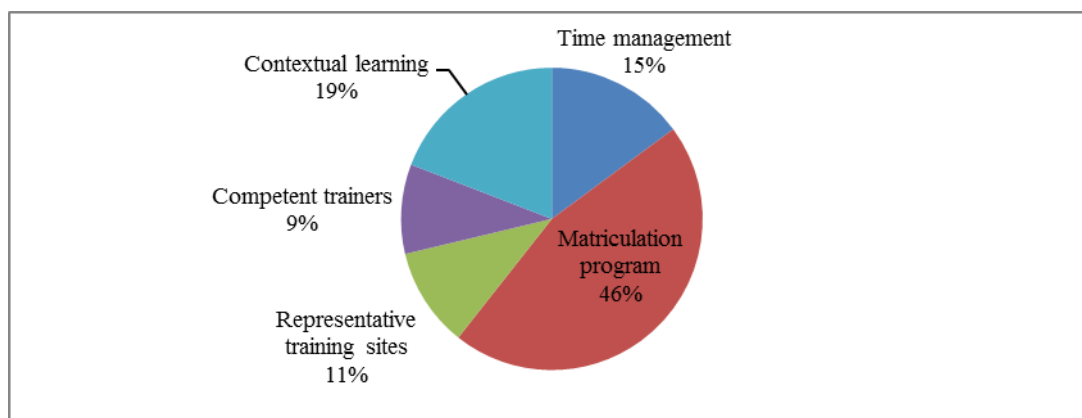


Figure 3. Teachers' Opinions on How to Improve Training Readiness

CONCLUSION

Readiness in learning is a condition in which someone has been prepared to perform an activity. In this case, the activity refers to the series of PPP. One of the most important stages of the PPP is principal education and training, which is conducted over 3-4 months. Every teacher who joins this programme should have a good physical, psychological and material readiness. As readiness is an important factor which determines success in the PPP, it must be taken into account. Physical readiness should be a concern, for about 4% of participants were 31-40 years old, 48% of participants were 41-50 years old, and about 48% were 51-60 years old. At these ages people may be more vulnerable to health problems that can disrupt the educational and training process. LPPKS must remind the teachers to have a medical check up before attending the training and to bring personal medicines with them.

Psychological readiness is related to intelligence, a good memory, satisfaction, motivation to learn, concentration, and attention. Approximately 85% of participants stated that they are happy to attend the training, but around 23% of participants admit that they were force to attend. Concerning learning materials, 44% of participants do not carry and do not read any reading material before the training. The result of pre-test shows that the average of participant's initial ability is 39,96 and final ability is 53,43. Lack of teacher's psychological readiness can be minimised by debriefing before the training, strengthening pedagogical competence of teacher training, re-arranging time allocation and task load, and giving contextual material with principal's job.

Material readiness relates to teaching materials, training facilities, and other learning tools. The availability of teaching materials and training facilities is the responsibility of the training institutes. Meanwhile, the personal learning materials are the responsibility of participants themselves. Approximately 83% of teachers have prepared the necessary learning tools during the training. However, the ability of some teachers in utilising the equipment, especially laptops, still needs to be developed. The trainer should employ special strategies in the classroom, so that less experienced participants can learn as happily as others.

Although training readiness may consist of many factors, this research highlights the three factors physical, psychological, and material. The data collected for this study were analysed using the descriptive qualitative method. Due to time constraints, only the principal education and training stage of the PPP was assessed. In terms of future research, it is recommended that the other factors relating to learning readiness, and the other stages of the PPP, be explored in order to determine how ready teachers nominated as school principals are when they join the programme. LPPKS, as the institution in charge of the PPP, should facilitate any programme that support teachers' readiness in the PPP.

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