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The Role of PGRI in Strengthening Educators' Competencies Through the Continuing Professional Development Program

Abdul Azis ⊠
Fatmawati Rahimah
Gilang Rakha Faiza
Rosyidah Mei Noni

UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta
⊠ 23104090023@student.uin-suka.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to examine the role of the Indonesian Teachers Association (Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia/PGRI) in strengthening teachers' professional competence at the regional level. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach through interviews with administrators of the PGRI Special Region of Yogyakarta, as well as organizational document analysis. The findings indicate that PGRI plays its role through continuous training programs, the strengthening of teacher learning communities, mentoring in the development of instructional materials, and advocacy for teachers' welfare and professional protection. However, the optimization of this role still faces obstacles, including variations in members' levels of participation,

limited funding, and uneven dissemination of program information across educational institutions. These findings underscore the need for strategies to strengthen internal coordination structures and to design more targeted competency development programs that are based on teachers' needs in the field.

Keywords

Teacher competence, professional organization, continuous professional development

Introduction

Teachers play a crucial role in education as key agents in shaping the character of the nation's future generations. Along with the development of the times, the role of teachers is no longer limited to that of instructors, but has expanded into that of professional educators who are capable of implementing ethical values, digital competencies, and adaptive abilities in response to policy changes and social dynamics (Rosilawati et al., 2024). Teachers are required to master four core competencies: professional, pedagogical, personal, and social competencies. These four competencies serve as the main foundation for building teacher professionalism and ensuring the achievement of national education goals.

The primary indicator of successful learning is teachers' professional competence, as it is directly related to the quality of learning processes and student learning outcomes. Rosilawati (2024) demonstrates that improving teachers' professional competence has a tangible impact on educational quality, particularly in the development of creative and innovative learning

strategies (Rosilawati et al., 2024). Professional teachers not only master subject matter, but are also able to apply contextual approaches, utilize information technology, and continuously reflect on their teaching practices. This is in line with the view of Lohmann et al. (2021), who emphasize the importance of teachers' professional competence in taking reflective pedagogical actions oriented toward sustainable learning (Lohmann et al., 2021).

In Indonesia, teacher professional organizations such as the Indonesian Teachers Association (Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia/PGRI) play an important role as platforms for professional development, guidance, and guardianship of educators' work ethics (Munawwir et al., 2025). As the oldest and largest professional teacher organization, PGRI has implemented various programs to enhance teachers' capacity through training, seminars, and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities. At the provincial level, PGRI of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) serves as a concrete example of how a professional organization can collaborate with local governments and higher education institutions to systematically improve teacher professionalism.

However, efforts to strengthen teacher professionalism through PGRI still face various obstacles. Some teachers have not been actively involved in professional activities due to limited time, financial constraints, or lack of institutional support. In addition, gaps persist between central policies and regional implementation, resulting in unequal opportunities for teachers to participate in competency development programs. Munawwir

(2024) reveals that the effectiveness of teacher professional organizations in Indonesia still needs to be improved through member-needs-based management systems and continuous program evaluation (Munawwir et al., 2025). Therefore, strategies are required to optimize the role of professional organizations so they can reach all educators.

The research problem in this study is: How can the role of PGRI be optimized in strengthening educator competencies through teachers' continuing professional development programs in the Province of the Special Region of Yogyakarta? The objective of this study is to describe the forms of strategies, programs, and impacts resulting from PGRI's efforts to improve teacher competence and professionalism in the Province of DIY.

Theoretically, this research is based on the concept of teacher professional organizations proposed by Dickey (2018), which views professional teacher associations as social and institutional spaces for knowledge exchange, advocacy, and sustainable professional development (Dickey, n.d.). This perspective is reinforced by the research of Rahimah and Syaifullah (2025), which highlights the role of teacher codes of ethics in maintaining the moral integrity of the teaching profession (Rahimah & Syaifullah, n.d.). The code of ethics not only regulates teachers' behavior in the learning process, but also ensures professional conduct in interactions with students, colleagues, and the community.

From an educational management perspective, efforts to improve teacher competence through professional organizations are understood as planned and sustainable development processes.

Therefore, the existence of PGRI as a professional teacher organization is not merely a symbol of togetherness, but also a means to manage and develop teacher professionalism. In addition to serving as a platform for competency strengthening, professional organizations also play a role in shaping teachers' collective identity. Dickey et al. (2018) emphasize that professional associations create a "community of practice" where teachers can share experiences, build professional networks, and strengthen their bargaining position in educational policy (Dickey, n.d.). This is relevant to the context of PGRI DIY, where collaboration among members and across institutions is key to program success.

This research is highly relevant to the course Professional Development Management, as it examines how professional organizations manage teacher competency improvement programs through managerial and collaborative approaches. Academically, this study enriches the literature on the management of educator professional organizations. Practically, its findings are expected to serve as strategic recommendations for PGRI administrators in designing competency development programs based on local needs. More broadly, this research is expected to contribute to the national agenda of improving education quality and strengthening sustainable teacher professional ethics.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical research design. This approach was chosen to analyze and describe in depth the strategies for optimizing the role of the Indonesian Teachers Association (PGRI) in strengthening the

competence and professional ethics of educators in the Province of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with the Secretary General of PGRI DIY. The interviews focused on organizational structure, professional development programs (including digital transformation through the Smart Learning and Character Center/SLCC), handling ethical code issues through the Indonesian Teachers Honor Council (DKGI), as well as challenges and solutions related to member awareness. Secondary data were obtained through a literature review by examining theoretical concepts of teacher professional organizations as communities of practice and as instruments for sustainable professional development, as relevant to the Professional Development Management course. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively by interpreting interview findings based on the theoretical framework to formulate strategic recommendations for strengthening teacher competence based on local needs.

Result and Discussion

Research Findings

The results show that the Indonesian Teachers Association (PGRI) plays a highly strategic role in strengthening educator competencies through various professional development programs and activities. Based on interviews with the Secretary General of PGRI DIY, it was found that the organization functions not only as an administrative professional body, but also as a nurturing space that cultivates values of dedication, learning, and solidarity among educators. PGRI is perceived as a large home that not only

fights for teachers' rights and welfare, but also fosters professionalism and educator character grounded in humanitarian values.

As an organization established one hundred days after Indonesia's independence, PGRI has demonstrated remarkable resilience and consistency in fulfilling its functions for more than eight decades. Its multi-tiered organizational structure—from the central, provincial, district or city levels, to branches and school units—enables effective communication between policy and practice in the field. Through this hierarchical system, teachers' needs, aspirations, and challenges can be systematically conveyed to policymakers. Conversely, policies formulated at the central level can be adaptively translated at the regional level through training and mentoring. This pattern reflects PGRI's participatory organizational management, in which each level actively contributes according to its capacity in strengthening the educational ecosystem.

Efforts to optimize the organization's role are implemented through various divisions and internal institutions working synergistically, including the Professional Development Bureau, the Research and Community Service Bureau, and the Smart Learning and Character Center (SLCC), which serves as the main driver of teacher training and competency development. SLCC plays a vital role in initiating digital-based activities such as online training, webinars, and the Guru Menyapa program broadcast via podcasts every 25th of the month. This innovation reflects PGRI's capacity for dynamic transformation in responding to the digital era. By opening broader learning spaces, PGRI encourages

teachers not only to follow changes but also to become agents of change themselves.

The digital transformation implemented by PGRI represents a concrete step toward expanding access to competency development for all educators. Training activities that were previously conducted face-to-face are now developed in online formats, enabling teacher participation from various regions without geographical limitations. This approach is not merely about efficiency, but also inclusivity, as it provides equal learning opportunities for all members. In this process, PGRI acts as a facilitator guiding teachers to adapt to educational technology— not only to master digital tools, but also to understand their benefits for learning effectiveness and work quality. Thus, digital transformation within PGRI signifies not only modernization, but also the organization's commitment to lifelong learning.

Nevertheless, interviews reveal that the main challenge in strengthening teacher competence does not solely stem from limited facilities, but from individual motivation and awareness. The Secretary General of PGRI DIY emphasized that some teachers are still reluctant to participate in training because they feel it is unnecessary or perceive it as an additional workload. This phenomenon indicates that improving teacher professionalism must be built from two sides: provision of facilities and cultivation of intrinsic awareness. PGRI seeks to foster this awareness through a humanistic approach—not through coercion, but by educating teachers that learning is part of their moral responsibility as educators. Through socialization activities, seminars, and group discussions, the organization instills the understanding that competency development is not merely an administrative

obligation, but a necessity for continuous growth and broader impact on students.

In addition to competency development, PGRI also fulfills its role in fostering professional ethics. Interviews indicate that violations of the teacher code of ethics may still occur due to human factors. However, PGRI's approach is not repressive, but preventive and educational. Through the Indonesian Teachers Honor Council (DKGI), cases are handled internally with an emphasis on guidance and restoration of teachers' dignity. This approach reflects the organization's view of teachers not merely as rule enforcers, but as human beings entitled to opportunities for self-improvement. PGRI upholds the principle of safeguarding professional integrity without neglecting humanitarian values, as education is fundamentally rooted in compassion rather than punishment.

Values of dedication and solidarity constitute the driving spirit of the organization. Despite relatively small membership fees, all PGRI activities continue to operate due to the spirit of mutual cooperation and sincerity among administrators. The Secretary General of PGRI DIY described the organization as a "large train" with complete tracks and carriages, which can only move if all members work together to turn the same wheels. This perspective reflects a philosophy of collective work that places service as a form of social devotion organizing not merely for personal benefit, but as a commitment to fulfilling moral obligations as educators.

From these findings, it can be understood that optimizing PGRI's role in strengthening educator competence is a process involving not only structural and programmatic aspects, but also

dimensions of values and awareness. PGRI exists not merely as a professional institution, but as a learning community that fosters continuous growth, adaptation, and service. Through a humanistic and collaborative approach, PGRI seeks to instill the awareness that being a teacher is not a status completed by a degree, but a lifelong journey renewed by the spirit of learning and sincere dedication to educating future generations.

Discussion

Education is a fundamental human need. Knowledge plays an important role in shaping individuals' adaptive abilities in response to the advancement of the times, especially in the digital era that demands mastery of technology and critical thinking skills. Quality education produces superior human resources with global competitiveness. Therefore, efforts to improve educational quality should not only focus on infrastructure, but also on the quality of educators as a key determinant of learning success (de Boer et al., 2018).

In practice, educational effectiveness is often determined by the extent to which educators can manage learning resources—such as laboratories or other instructional media—to improve student learning outcomes. However, many educational institutions have not yet maximized the function of learning facilities, as reflected in various studies emphasizing the need for proper management to make learning more contextual and student-centered (Indriyanti, 2021; Rahayu & Eliyarti, 2019).

In the context of teacher professional development, the role of professional associations is highly strategic. As the oldest teacher organization in Indonesia, PGRI functions not only as an administrative body, but also as a driving force in strengthening educators' competence and professionalism (Aidi & Abidin,

2023). Based on the findings, optimization of PGRI's role occurs due to the synergy between strong organizational structures, values of solidarity, and adaptability to changing times. PGRI DIY, for example, applies a collaborative approach that enables effective communication between central and regional levels, bridging policy and teachers' real needs in the field.

Regarding the process of optimization, internal institutions such as the Smart Learning and Character Center (SLCC) play a significant role in organizing digital-based teacher training and professional development. This digital transformation responds to contemporary needs while expanding access to competency development for teachers in various regions. These findings align with studies showing that technology-based training enhances learning efficiency, expands professional networks, and fosters reflective culture among teachers (Nugraha et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the study reveals that improving teacher competence depends not only on facilities and policies, but also on individual awareness and intrinsic motivation. Some teachers still hesitate to participate in training, perceiving it as an additional burden rather than a professional necessity. Therefore, PGRI emphasizes a humanistic and persuasive approach to build awareness that lifelong learning is a moral responsibility of educators.

In terms of professional ethics, the Indonesian Teachers Honor Council plays a significant role in maintaining professional integrity. The approach adopted is not repressive, but educational and preventive, providing teachers with opportunities for self-improvement without losing their dignity as educators. This reinforces the principle that professionalism cannot be separated from humanitarian values.

Beyond strengthening competence and ethics, values of mutual cooperation and dedication form the foundation driving PGRI's organizational activities. With relatively small membership fees, activities continue through collective commitment. This philosophy illustrates that PGRI is not merely a professional association, but a learning community that embodies togetherness for educational advancement.

The implications of these findings can be extended to strengthen other educational professional associations such as Teacher Working Groups (KKG), Subject Teacher Forums (MGMP), and School Principals Working Groups (K3S). The application of participatory principles, digital innovation, and ethical development as practiced by PGRI can serve as a sustainable development model for other professional associations. Conceptually, this study confirms that optimizing PGRI's role in strengthening educator competence is not solely the result of formal programs, but also an expression of an adaptive organizational culture grounded in humanitarian values. The integration of effective organizational management, ethical development, and digital innovation positions PGRI as a concrete example of a professional association capable of transforming into a sustainable learning ecosystem.

Conclusion

Optimizing the role of PGRI in strengthening teacher competence at the regional level demonstrates that this professional organization makes a significant contribution to improving educator quality, particularly through continuing professional development programs, the formation of learning

communities, and efforts to protect and support teachers' rights. PGRI has the capacity to facilitate collaboration among teachers in sharing best practices, developing learning materials, and expanding scholarly networks. However, the findings indicate that this role has not yet been fully optimized. This is due to limited funding, varying levels of member participation, and insufficient communication and access to programs across educational institutions. In addition, more systematic planning is needed to align programs with teachers' real needs in the field. Therefore, it can be concluded that PGRI possesses strategic capacity to enhance teacher competence; however, achieving this requires strengthened organizational governance and the development of more organized and equitable training systems.

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