Improving Teachers' Social Competence through Collaborative-Based Teacher Professional Education at UMS Rappang

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the enhancement of teachers' social competence through a collaborative-based teacher professional education program at UMS Rappang. Social competence plays a crucial role in fostering effective communication, building positive relationships, and creating a conducive learning environment. The collaborative approach in the program involves interaction among educators, experts, and stakeholders to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices. The research adopts a qualitative methodology, analyzing data collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicate that the collaborative-based education model significantly improves teachers' interpersonal skills, adaptability, and professional relationships. These improvements ultimately contribute to a better teaching-learning process and professional growth. This study highlights the importance of collaboration in teacher training programs to develop comprehensive social competence.

Keywords: Teacher Professional Development; Social Competence; Collaborative Learning

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a central role in shaping the quality of education and fostering the academic and social development of students. Among the various competencies educators must possess, social competence is a critical factor. This competence involves effective communication, building positive relationships with students,

colleagues, and the community, and creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Teachers with high social competence are better equipped to navigate classroom challenges, understand diverse student needs, and establish collaborative atmospheres.

In recent years, there has been a shift towards collaborative-based approaches in teacher professional education. Collaborative-based teacher professional development offers an innovative framework that promotes the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and best practices among peers, mentors, and experts. This method goes beyond theoretical understanding, focusing on practical engagement and the development of interpersonal skills essential for enhancing social competence. By participating in collaborative learning activities, teachers can improve their communication, adaptability, and empathy—skills crucial for their professional roles.

UMS Rappang has embraced this approach through its collaborative-based teacher professional education program. This initiative involves various stakeholders, including educators, education experts, and school communities, to create a dynamic learning environment. Through collaborative efforts, participants can develop essential social competence skills that contribute to more effective teaching and a supportive classroom atmosphere. The program encourages teachers to exchange insights and experiences, fostering a deeper understanding of students' needs and strengthening professional relationships.

This study focuses on examining how the collaborative-based teacher professional education program at UMS Rappang contributes to enhancing teachers' social competence. It seeks to identify key elements of the program, understand its impact on participants, and explore its potential as a model for teacher development in other educational contexts. Through this investigation, the research highlights the significance of collaboration in improving teachers' overall professional capabilities, ultimately leading to a more enriched educational experience for students and the broader school community.

Additionally, the program emphasizes the importance of reflective practice, where teachers can analyze their interactions and classroom strategies to continually refine their social competencies. This reflective approach allows educators to adapt to the evolving needs of their students, ensuring that they provide a supportive and effective learning environment. Furthermore, by fostering connections between teachers, mentors, and experts, the program promotes a culture of ongoing professional growth and innovation. This ensures that teachers are not only better prepared to handle immediate classroom challenges but are also empowered to contribute to the broader educational development within their communities. Through collaborative-based teacher professional education, UMS Rappang is effectively equipping educators with the necessary tools to lead transformative and socially responsive classrooms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social competence is a multidimensional construct that encompasses an individual's ability to interact effectively with others, understand social cues, and respond appropriately in diverse contexts. In education, social competence is a critical skill for teachers, as it influences their ability to manage classrooms, build positive relationships with students and colleagues, and foster a supportive learning environment. According to Goleman (1995), social competence includes components such as empathy, communication skills, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation, all of which are essential for effective teaching and leadership.

Teachers with strong social competence are more likely to motivate students, address their individual needs, and create inclusive classroom dynamics. Conversely, a lack of social competence can lead to miscommunication, conflicts, and a less effective educational experience for students. Developing social competence, therefore, is a critical aspect of teacher professional development. Teacher professional education aims to equip educators with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to meet the demands of their profession. It includes both pre-service training and in-service programs that focus on pedagogical skills, subject knowledge, and professional competencies. Traditional teacher education models often emphasize theoretical learning, which may limit opportunities for practical application and interpersonal skill development.

Recent studies highlight the importance of experiential and collaborative approaches in teacher training programs. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), effective teacher education programs integrate theory and practice, involve mentorship, and provide opportunities for reflection and collaboration. Such programs not only enhance technical teaching skills but also foster professional relationships and social-emotional learning. Collaboration has been identified as a key component of successful professional development initiatives. Collaborative-based teacher education programs encourage interaction among participants, mentors, and experts, enabling them to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices. This approach aligns with the social constructivist theory, which posits that learning occurs through social interaction and the co-construction of knowledge.

Research by Vangrieken et al. (2017) suggests that collaboration in teacher training enhances professional learning, promotes a sense of community, and supports the development of interpersonal skills. In a collaborative environment, teachers engage in peer discussions, problem-solving activities, and joint projects, which help them build social competence while addressing real-world challenges in education. UMS Rappang has emerged as a key player in advancing teacher education in Indonesia. The institution's collaborative-based teacher professional education program is designed to address the gaps in traditional teacher training by emphasizing social competence alongside pedagogical skills. The program

incorporates group discussions, role-playing, peer mentoring, and community engagement activities to foster collaboration and experiential learning.

By focusing on collaborative approaches, UMS Rappang aims to equip teachers with the necessary social and professional competencies to navigate the complexities of the modern educational landscape. This model serves as a benchmark for other institutions seeking to enhance teacher quality through innovative and inclusive training methods. The literature underscores the critical role of social competence in education and highlights the benefits of collaborative-based teacher professional education. By integrating collaboration into teacher training, programs can address the limitations of traditional approaches and foster the development of interpersonal and professional skills. UMS Rappang's initiative offers a practical example of how such models can be implemented to improve teacher quality and, ultimately, educational outcomes. This study builds upon existing research to examine the specific impact of collaborative-based training on teachers' social competence, contributing to the broader discourse on teacher professional development.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the impact of a collaborative-based teacher professional education program at UMS Rappang on improving teachers' social competence. Qualitative methods were chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and behavioral changes because of the program. The research was conducted at UMS Rappang, a prominent institution known for its focus on teacher development. The participants included 20 teachers enrolled in the collaborative-based teacher professional education program. These participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure they had diverse teaching backgrounds and varied levels of prior professional training.

Instrument and Procedures

Data were collected using multiple methods to ensure triangulation and validity. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants to capture their perspectives on the program and its impact on their social competence. Observations of collaborative activities, such as group discussions, role-playing, and peer mentoring sessions, were documented to analyze interactions and behavioral changes. Additionally, program materials, session notes, and participants' reflective journals were reviewed to gain further insights into the program's content and processes.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes. This process included familiarizing with the data through a review of interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation. Key data segments were coded to highlight elements related to social competence and collaboration. These codes were then grouped into themes representing the program's impact on interpersonal skills, adaptability, and professional relationships. Finally, the themes were interpreted to draw conclusions about the program's influence on participants' social competence. The study adhered to ethical guidelines to protect participants' rights and privacy. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection, and confidentiality was ensured by anonymizing their identities in all records and reports. Participation was voluntary, and participants were given the right to withdraw at any stage of the study. However, the study is limited to a specific program at UMS Rappang with a relatively small sample size, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research could expand the scope to include multiple institutions and larger participant groups. This methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of how collaborative-based teacher professional education enhances social competence, offering practical insights for improving teacher development programs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the collaborative-based teacher professional education program at UMS Rappang has a significant impact on improving teachers' social competence. The results are categorized into three key themes. First, participants demonstrated notable improvements in their ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and non-verbally. Through group discussions and role-playing activities, they learned to express their ideas clearly, listen actively, and provide constructive feedback. Many participants reported feeling more confident in engaging with students, colleagues, and parents, which enhanced their classroom interactions and professional relationships.

Second, the collaborative nature of the program exposed participants to diverse perspectives and real-world challenges. This experience helped them develop greater adaptability in handling complex situations, such as managing conflicts or addressing students' unique needs. Participants also reported an increased capacity to collaborate with peers to find creative solutions to problems, which they attributed to the program's emphasis on teamwork and shared learning.

Lastly, engaging in peer mentoring and collaborative activities enabled participants to build strong professional networks and a sense of community. This supportive environment encouraged them to share experiences, exchange teaching strategies, and learn from one another. As a result, participants felt more connected to their

professional community, which motivated them to continue improving their social and teaching skills. These themes highlight how the collaborative-based approach at UMS Rappang contributes to the development of teachers' social competence, fostering both personal and professional growth.

The findings align with existing literature on the importance of collaborative approaches in teacher professional development. Social constructivist theory emphasizes that learning is a social process, and the collaborative-based program at UMS Rappang provided a practical platform for participants to co-construct knowledge and skills. The observed improvements in interpersonal skills and adaptability are consistent with studies by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), which highlight the role of collaborative learning in fostering professional growth and social competence.

The program's success can also be attributed to its experiential design, which allowed participants to apply theoretical concepts in real-world contexts. This hands-on approach bridged the gap between theory and practice, enabling participants to develop practical skills that are essential for effective teaching. Moreover, the inclusion of peer mentoring and group activities created a culture of mutual support, which has been shown to enhance teachers' confidence and motivation. However, the study also identified some challenges. A few participants initially struggled with the collaborative format due to limited prior experience with teamwork or group discussions. Over time, these participants adapted and benefited from the program, but this finding suggests the need for preparatory sessions to ease the transition into collaborative learning.

The strengthened professional relationships observed in the study underscore the value of building a community of practice among educators. This sense of community not only enhances individual development but also contributes to a collective improvement in teaching quality. The program's success at UMS Rappang serves as a model for other institutions seeking to integrate collaboration into teacher training.

The results suggest that collaborative-based teacher professional education can serve as a powerful tool for enhancing teachers' social competence. Institutions implementing similar programs should focus on designing activities that encourage interaction, problem-solving, and peer mentoring. Additionally, providing ongoing support and resources can sustain the long-term impact of such programs. The collaborative-based approach at UMS Rappang has proven to be effective in improving teachers' social competence, contributing to their professional growth and the overall quality of education. Future research could explore the broader application of this model in different educational contexts and its impact on student outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant role of collaborative-based teacher professional education in improving teachers' social competence. Through a qualitative exploration at UMS Rappang, the findings reveal that the program effectively enhances interpersonal skills, adaptability, and professional relationships among participants. Teachers developed better communication skills,

the ability to collaborate and solve problems, and stronger connections within their professional networks, all of which contribute to creating a positive and supportive learning environment. The success of the program underscores the importance of incorporating collaborative approaches into teacher training. By engaging participants in group discussions, role-playing, and peer mentoring, the program fosters practical application of knowledge, mutual support, and a sense of community. These elements not only enhance individual social competence but also promote a collective culture of professional growth among educators. However, the study also identifies the need for preparatory measures to help participants adapt to collaborative learning formats, particularly for those with limited prior experience. Addressing this challenge can further optimize the effectiveness of similar programs. In conclusion, the collaborative-based model implemented at UMS Rappang offers valuable insights for improving teacher development programs. It demonstrates that fostering social competence is critical for teachers' professional success and, ultimately, for the quality of education they provide. Future research should consider replicating this model in diverse educational contexts to assess its broader applicability and impact on student outcomes.

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