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# REDEFINING PROFESSIONALISM: THE IMPACT OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION ON THE IDENTITY AND AGENCY OF MADRASAH AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION TEACHERS

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**Abstract**

The professionalism of madrasah teachers and Islamic education (PAI) teachers is often judged by completion of Teacher Professional Education (PPG), while the ways teachers arrange identity and agency are rarely followed as stories. The manuscript offers a directed narrative synthesis of traceable empirical studies and official documents, read through longitudinal narrative inquiry and ecological agency. The corpus includes accounts of teachers in madrasahs and Islamic schools, reports of PPG implementation, studies of PAI teacher identity, Law No. 14 of 2005, Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 19 of 2024, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs PPG portal. Four findings follow. State recognition and the exemplary role run side by side rather than replacing each other. PPG reports display artifacts of competence more often than negotiation of identity. Madrasah teachers' agency emerges from biography, institutional conditions, and a future direction, including when access to PPG is limited. Relationships inside the madrasah can shift the meaning of supervision, yet no longitudinal account yet follows the same PAI or madrasah teacher before, during, and after PPG. The findings limit any claim that PPG has succeeded once a score or a pass is recorded, and they prepare questions for repeated interviews.
Keywords: madrasah, narrative inquiry, professional identity, teacher agency, Teacher Professional Education

## Introduction

Professional standards in many education systems now tie teaching to professional learning and to the requirement that work be open to inspection (Ball, 2003; Sachs, 2016). Longitudinal studies outside Indonesia show that reforms of this kind do more than add skills. They also reorganize teachers' emotions and multiple identities over time (Jiang et al., 2021). The relevant question is therefore not only whether a program is recorded as completed, but how teachers retell who they are when state standards enter everyday work. The question becomes sharper for teachers whose work also includes religious example.

Indonesia defines the teacher as a professional whose status is evidenced by an educator certificate, while pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies are obtained through professional education (Republic of Indonesia, 2005). Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 19 of 2024 directs Teacher Professional Education (PPG) toward those four competencies. The Ministry of Religious Affairs PPG portal states that in-service PPG is intended for madrasah teachers and religious-education teachers who do not yet hold a certificate (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, n.d.). Teachers in Islamic schools often understand professionalism as closer to the caregiver and moral guardian than to the subject teacher alone (Qoyyimah et al., 2023). The intersection of the certificate and the exemplary role is the locus of this manuscript.

The normative picture differs from teachers' daily work. Eight English teachers in madrasahs reported heterogeneous classes among 87.5 percent of participants and administrative tasks among 78 percent, and they judged PPG selection for teachers under the Ministry of Religious Affairs to be strict, so that not every participant was certified (Laili et al., 2022). A PAI teacher in one public elementary school who had completed PPG still faced clashing schedules, teaching duties that continued alongside the program, and technological difficulty when the examination was recorded (Masfufah et al., 2024). PAI teachers in public senior high schools also describe unequal access to certification as a structural limit on agency (Faishol et al., 2026). The distance remains open between the teacher drawn in regulation and the teacher who must arrange time, artifacts, and the exemplary role inside the institution.

Recent studies have already moved beyond a bare list of competencies. A narrative inquiry with English teachers in madrasahs maps agency onto the iterational, practical-evaluative, and projective dimensions (Laili et al., 2022). A case study in a private Islamic junior secondary madrasah shows that professional identity grows both from teaching skill and from alignment with the school's religious values, including after in-service certification (Ma'mun et al., 2025). Research on PPG in Islamic education institutions reports curriculum design, outcome-oriented assessment, and claims of stronger pedagogical skill (Mardhiah et al., 2023). That sequence maps competence, agency, and program management. It does not yet join them as a retold story of PAI teachers, or of teachers of religious subjects, in madrasahs.

Longitudinal traces that follow the same teacher have already shown identity shifts during educational reform (Jiang et al., 2021; McKibben & Breheny, 2023; Wu, 2023). No comparable trace is yet available for madrasah and PAI teachers who pass through PPG. A recent study of PAI teacher identity in a madrasah follows clinical supervision across one semester, not the PPG trajectory (Tamsiyati et al., 2026). A PPG study that treats professionalism as a performance score also stops at one teacher in a public elementary school (Masfufah et al., 2024). The gap is empirical and theoretical together. Retold voices have not been recorded, and dialogical identity has not been tested where religious example meets the standardization of the profession.

The manuscript takes up that gap through a narrative synthesis of traceable studies and regulations, read with longitudinal narrative inquiry and ecological agency (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Priestley et al., 2015). Its contribution is to move the question from a rise in competence toward the way already published material shows negotiation between two self-positions. The synthesis does not replace repeated interviews with the same teachers. It states what can already be concluded on the present evidence and what must still be asked when primary data become available.

The task is pressing because PPG for madrasah and PAI teachers already operates as a route to professional recognition, while the examinable literature remains split among scores, program management, and identity stories that do not follow the program (Laili et al., 2022; Mardhiah et al., 2023; Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, n.d.). The general aim is to interpret those published findings so as to explain how teachers' identity and agency are negotiated around PPG. The specific aims are to map self-positions, to map dimensions of agency, and to mark claims that the present corpus cannot support.

The theoretical contribution joins dialogical identity, ecological agency, and narrative time as one analytic lens for the professionalism of madrasah and PAI teachers (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; McKibben & Breheny, 2023; Priestley et al., 2015). The practical contribution shows PPG providers and madrasah leaders that completion, portfolios, and examinations do not yet explain how teachers keep or combine the exemplary role. The methodological contribution is a source trail that lets every finding be reopened in the original text.

## Method

The design is a directed narrative synthesis. The reading lens uses the narrative dimensions of temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), the distinction between chronological time and interpretive time in longitudinal interviews (McKibben & Breheny, 2023), and the three dimensions of ecological agency (Priestley et al., 2015). The lens fits a question about meaning, but the available material is not repeated talk from the same teachers. McKibben and Breheny (2023) argue that a longitudinal interview is both a second round of data collection and a reconfiguration of the story. Articles that each record only one moment cannot supply that reconfiguration. The design is therefore a synthesis of published narratives, not a longitudinal field inquiry.

The corpus was assembled purposively through the preparation of this manuscript. A source had to concern madrasah teachers, PAI teachers, teachers in Islamic schools, or PPG provision in Islamic education institutions. It had to report empirical findings or an official norm, rather than opinion without data. The text had to be openable through a DOI, a journal repository, or an official webpage. Law No. 14 of 2005, Ministerial Regulation No. 19 of 2024, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs PPG portal were retained as basic regulations. Older theoretical works serve only as lenses, not as field findings (Beijaard et al., 2004; Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

Table 1 lists the analytic corpus. Participant numbers and locations are copied from the original reports. The manuscript adds no informants.

| Source | Material that can be inspected | Focus of the report | Limit for the PPG question |
|---|---|---|---|
| Laili et al. (2022) | Eight madrasah English teachers; narrative frames and interviews | Agency and professional identity | Not PAI teachers; PPG appears as restricted access, not as a program story |
| Qoyyimah et al. (2023) | Five language teachers in four private Islamic schools | Caregiver and moral-guardian identity | Not a PPG study |
| Ma'mun et al. (2025) | One certified English teacher in a private Islamic junior secondary madrasah | Habitus, capital, and agency | One case; the subject is not PAI |
| Masfufah et al. (2024) | A PAI teacher at SD Negeri 2 Jragan, Temanggung, including a performance score | PPG implementation and its supports and obstacles | One public elementary school, not a madrasah |
| Mardhiah et al. (2023) | PPG participants and program documents at UIN Alauddin Makassar | PPG governance, curriculum, and assessment | Little narrative material on teacher identity |
| Tamsiyati et al. (2026) | Four PAI teachers, the principal, and the vice-principal at MTs Negeri 2 Musi Banyuasin | Clinical supervision and identity | One semester; not PPG |
| Faishol et al. (2026) | Twenty-six PAI teachers in public senior high schools in Banyuwangi | Identity reorientation and agency | Not madrasahs; not a PPG trajectory |
| Republic of Indonesia (2005); Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2024); Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (n.d.) | Published articles and portal provisions | The definition of the professional teacher and the PPG target group | Documents, not teachers' voices |

The researcher is the reading instrument, but the material is other authors' texts. Three questions were put to every source. Which self-position does the teacher or the regulation bring forward? Which dimension of agency appears in biography, present action, or future direction? Does the source record a change of meaning at another time? The analysis is directed thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The steps were a full reading, open

coding of findings and quotations actually printed in the sources, grouping of codes under two self-positions and three dimensions of agency, and selection of themes able to connect different sources. Direct quotations were taken only from printed sentences and were attributed to the original authors.

Trustworthiness here is not the trustworthiness of a primary interview study. Credibility rests on triangulation across teacher stories, program reports, and regulations, and on refusal of any finding that cannot be pointed to a page or a DOI (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability rests on a corpus table that records site, number, and the limit of each study. Dependability rests on a reading order and inclusion rules that another reader can repeat. Confirmability rests on keeping the source sentence separate from the interpretation offered here. The principal limit is explicit. No member checking with teachers was conducted, the author of this manuscript carried out no classroom observation, and no claim of primary-data saturation is made.

## Results

### *State recognition and the exemplary role run side by side*

The identity visible in the corpus is not a single professional self completed when a certificate is issued. Article 2 of Law No. 14 of 2005 evidences professional status with an educator certificate. Article 7 still includes a calling, idealism, faith, piety, and noble character. Article 10, paragraph 1, locates four competencies in professional education (Republic of Indonesia, 2005). Teachers in the Islamic schools studied by Qoyyimah et al. (2023) placed professional responsibility closer to the caregiver and moral guardian than to the subject-teacher identity. An English teacher in a private Islamic junior secondary madrasah, already certified through the in-service route, still tied professional work to afternoon Qur'anic teaching and to leadership of a Qur'anic school. He said, "I love teaching... although I'm not only teaching here, I have afternoon school like teaching Quran recitations" (Ma'mun et al., 2025, Excerpt 1). The statute and the two studies show two self-positions alive together. The standardized educator does not erase the spiritual figure. Both remain material for dialogue, and program completion does not close that dialogue.

### *PPG reports change artifacts of competence more than stories of identity*

Sources that study PPG directly report change in curriculum, assessment, scores, and skills, not identity stories followed across time. Mardhiah et al. (2023) reconstruct PPG at UIN Alauddin Makassar as an arrangement of staff, learning space, school partnerships, and outcome-oriented assessment, and they claim that Islamic values are joined to current pedagogical principles. The article does not present extended teacher talk about a tension between example and examination. Masfufah et al. (2024) report a performance score of 79.98 for the PAI teacher at SD Negeri 2 Jragan before PPG in 2022 and 81.23 after PPG in 2023. They also record support from colleagues, school facilities, and lecturers at UIN Salatiga, set against scarce time, uncertain lecturer schedules, teaching duties that continued, and technological difficulty during recording of the comprehensive examination. A rise of 1.25 points for one teacher in a public elementary school does not warrant the conclusion that professional identity has shifted. The figure shows, instead, that the evidence most readily published is still a performance artifact. The artifact has to be read with the obstacles the authors themselves record. Those obstacles display practical-evaluative agency: the teacher weighs time, tools, and teaching load while the program is under way.

### *Madrasah teachers' agency grows from biography, institutional conditions, and a future direction*

The most detailed agency stories in the corpus come from eight madrasah English teachers, not from PAI participants in PPG. Laili et al. (2022) organize three stages: the novice, the journey toward feeling like a professional teacher, and the lifelong learner. They connect the stages to the iterational, practical-evaluative, and projective dimensions (Priestley

et al., 2015). Six of the eight teachers, early in their careers, worked in madrasahs that did not select applicants strictly. The obstacles named most often were heterogeneous students and administrative tasks. Some teachers simplified lesson plans so that paperwork would not consume class time. The actions reported most often later were the teacher forum (87 percent) and, at 75 percent each, reading, making teaching media, attending conferences, and discussing ideas with peers. Publication and formal reflection were named by only 25 percent of the participants. Every teacher projected a self that would continue learning, including through further study. One sentence in the findings bears directly on PPG. Not all participants were certified, because selection for PPG in institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs was relatively strict, and they therefore took other routes to develop competence (Laili et al., 2022). Agency here is not compliance with one state program. It is an achievement that appears when a teaching biography, the constraints of the madrasah, and a future self are brought together. Uneven access to PPG belongs to the practical condition. It is not the end point of identity.

***Institutional relationships can shift meaning, but a repeated PPG trace is not yet available***

Studies of PAI teachers show that identity can change when relationships inside the institution change. The recorded change, however, is not a change produced by PPG. Four PAI teachers at MTs Negeri 2 Musi Banyuasin first took supervision to be a frightening assessment. One said, "When the supervision schedule was announced, I felt anxious because I saw it as a strict performance assessment" (Tamsiyati et al., 2026, p. 281). After the post-observation conversation, another said, "After the discussion session, I felt guided rather than judged" (Tamsiyati et al., 2026, p. 282). The move from feeling inspected to feeling guided occurred within one semester, through joint planning, observation, and feedback. Faishol et al. (2026) add that PAI teachers' agency to change their teaching depends on school leadership, peer support, and access to professional development, including unequal certification. Both studies strengthen the practical-evaluative dimension. Institutional conditions help decide which self-position can be enacted. Both studies also mark the limit of the corpus. No source follows the same PAI or madrasah teacher before PPG, during the program, on return to teaching, and at the later retelling. The interpretive time required by longitudinal inquiry (McKibben & Breheny, 2023) is not yet present in the accessible material.

## Discussion

The first finding treats the professionalism of madrasah and PAI teachers as a dialogue among self-positions, consistent with accounts of identity as multiple and mutually responsive (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004). The certificate in Article 2 of Law No. 14 of 2005 supplies a public position as a professional educator, while Article 7 keeps the language of calling and character (Republic of Indonesia, 2005). Qoyyimah et al. (2023) and Ma'mun et al. (2025) show that the caregiver, the moral guardian, and the Qur'anic teacher do not recede once a formal qualification is recognized. The implication for PPG is direct. Modules, portfolios, and examinations can strengthen the standardized educator without automatically rearranging the spiritual figure. An analysis of identity is complete only when both positions are asked of teachers, not when completion alone is recorded.

The second finding urges caution about how PPG evidence has been assembled. Mardhiah et al. (2023) and Masfufah et al. (2024) are useful because they show program management and concrete obstacles, yet both narrate professionalism as competence, satisfaction, or a score. Sachs (2016) notes that debate on professionalism easily narrows into compliance with standards. Ball (2003) shows that the demand to appear in line with indicators can itself shape a professional sense. Read through that lens, a rise of 1.25 performance points is an auditable display. The display is legitimate as administrative data. It

does not answer whether the teacher changed the meaning of service after returning to the classroom. The same reading limits generalization from Masfufah et al. (2024), whose site is a public elementary school rather than a madrasah.

The third finding extends ecological agency to the certification conditions of madrasah teachers. Priestley et al. (2015) treat agency as an achievement of personal capacity and of cultural and material conditions, not as a fixed possession. Laili et al. (2022) already show that pattern among English teachers: a heavy early biography, practical action through the teacher forum and independent study, and a projection of the self as a lifelong learner. PPG selection, described by those teachers as strict, did not stop the actions. Teachers looked for other routes. The pattern agrees with Biesta et al. (2015), who treat beliefs about educational purpose as a guide to agency, so that agency is not the same thing as following a procedure. For PAI teachers, that belief is likely to include the purpose of moral example. The corpus does not yet contain enough PPG stories to test that possibility among PAI teachers in madrasahs.

The fourth finding explains why a longitudinal design is still required even though the secondary material is already substantial. Tamsiyati et al. (2026) show that the meaning of supervision can change within one semester when dialogue replaces control. Faishol et al. (2026) show that PAI teachers' agency depends on leadership and on access to certification. Jiang et al. (2021) and Wu (2023) show, in other settings, that identity and emotion continue to move after a reform has been lived. Joined together, the three indications suggest that PPG may become a narrative event, not only a course in competence. That possibility has not been tested on the same teachers. The manuscript stops at the limit on purpose. A fabricated second interview wave would only appear to close the gap, and it would damage the traceability of the findings.

## Conclusion

The synthesis supports four points, and each point can be returned to its source. Teacher identity in madrasah and Islamic-school settings continues to include religious example alongside recognition by certificate. Available PPG reports are stronger on artifacts of competence than on negotiation of identity. Madrasah teachers' agency appears as an ecological achievement, including when access to PPG is limited. Institutional relationships can shift the meaning of professional work, but no longitudinal story yet follows the same PAI or madrasah teacher through PPG.

The limit governs how the manuscript may be used. The results must not be cited as primary informant voices collected by the present author. They may be used to draft a protocol for repeated interviews: the religious life course, concrete episodes during PPG, clash or alignment with the exemplary role, and a request that teachers compare the first telling with a later one. PPG providers and madrasah leaders can use the findings to avoid treating completion as the end of identity formation. The next methodologically warranted step is a primary longitudinal narrative inquiry, once transcripts, observation notes, and ethical approval are available for inspection.

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