12th Grader's Perception Regarding Tertiary Students Teaching Practices
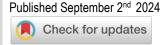
Putu Wahyu Sudewi[1], Adi Isma[1], Reski[1]

[1]Universitas Sulawesi Barat, Indonesia
*Correspondence: putuwahyu.sudewi@unsulbar.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This research investigates students' perceptions of the teaching skills of teaching assistant (TA) tertiary students from the English Education Study Program at the University of Sulawesi Barat, conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Majene. The study aims to assess how well these TA tertiary students perform in key teaching areas, including lesson opening and closing, explaining, questioning, providing reinforcement, introducing variety, guiding small group discussions, and classroom management. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected via questionnaires based on a Likert scale, complemented by guided interviews for qualitative insights. The findings reveal that TA tertiary students received high ratings in explaining (92%), questioning (84%), and classroom management (85%), with an overall average rating of 81.37%, categorized as "very good". While students appreciated the enthusiasm and clarity TA tertiary students brought to lessons, they identified areas for improvement, such as maintaining classroom order, enhancing reinforcement techniques, and diversifying teaching methods. The study underscores the importance of targeted support and continuous development for TA tertiary students to enhance their teaching efficacy and better meet students' diverse needs.

1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental pillar in shaping the younger generation to be prepared for the challenges of the workforce and social life. As Nasrah and Elihami (2021) argue, education is fundamental to human life, playing a crucial role in supporting and enhancing professional endeavors. In this context, the teaching practices of tertiary students become a vital component that not only impacts the quality of learning but also the perceptions of the students they teach. Sipahutar et al. (2023) emphasize that developing a professional teacher involves not only theoretical understanding of teaching competencies but also the practical application of those skills in real-world educational settings. Teaching skills refer to the abilities and expertise that a teacher possesses in delivering subject matter and facilitating student learning effectively (Rahman, 2016; Hasnia et al., 2022). Teaching demands flexibility. We must consistently reflect on our methods and be prepared to make adjustments as needed, aligning with the goals of our study (Hande et al., 2014; Junaidi et al., 2020; Yaumi et al., 2023).

Basic teaching skills that a teacher must have in carrying out their duties as educators include reinforcement skills, questioning skills, variety skills, explanation skills, classroom management skills, skills to open and close lessons, skills to teach small groups and individuals, and skills to guide small group discussions. Students have a role in the teaching assistance program. According to English et al. (2019), being a good teacher requires students to possess a variety of knowledge and skills. This includes understanding effective teaching methods, creating lesson plans, preparing for classroom activities, and effectively delivering material to students. According to Filz and Gurung (2013), undergraduate teaching assistants are indispensable assets in numerous academic courses, especially within smaller and mid-sized universities that lack graduate programs. Their contributions are critical to the instructional process, providing essential support and enhancing the educational experience in these academic environments.

While participating in teaching assistance programs, tertiary students often encounter various challenges that can impact both their own learning experience and the quality of teaching they deliver. One common issue is their limited practical experience in managing classrooms and delivering subject content. This lack of experience can lead to uncertainty or confusion when unexpected situations arise in the classroom. Although the tertiary students have studied educational theory in their coursework, applying these concepts in real-world classroom settings often proves difficult.

Challenges may include planning effective lessons, managing the classroom environment, or providing constructive feedback to students. These difficulties underscore the need for student-teachers to actively identify and address problems during their teaching assistance programs. To overcome these challenges, it is essential that the tertiary students seek appropriate solutions, whether through discussions with mentors or advisors, collaboration with peers, or utilizing support programs offered by their institutions. By addressing these issues proactively, the tertiary students can enhance their teaching experience and develop important skills that will aid them in their future careers as educators. Ultimately, higher education institutions aim to prepare graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to tackle the issues facing their local, national, and global communities, thereby contributing to a better quality of life for all (Sewagegn & Dessie, 2021; Anggawirya et al., 2021; Youngsun et al., 2024).

For 12th-grade students, who are on the brink of transitioning to higher education, their perceptions of the methods and teaching practices of tertiary students can influence their understanding of the learning process at a more advanced level. According to Sudewi (2020), learning experiences encompass the processes and activities each student engages in within a specific classroom, aligned with the teaching methods or strategies employed by their educators. The perception process forms the basis of our understanding of the world and affects how we interact with the environment and individuals around us.

The teaching practices conducted by tertiary students are often seen as part of their professional training before becoming full-fledged teachers. However, how 12th-grade students view the involvement of these students in their learning process remains an under-researched topic. Understanding students' perceptions is crucial to ensure that these teaching practices provide a positive impact, both for the prospective teachers and the students receiving the instruction. This study aims to examine the views and perceptions of 12th-grade students of SMAN 1 Majene regarding the teaching practices of tertiary students English Education Study Program, Sulawesi Barat University. According to Nitami and Ardi (2023), the objective of the English language education program is to prepare students to become proficient and qualified teachers, especially in the field of English. By understanding these perceptions, the research hopes to offer insights for higher education institutions in designing more effective training programs and improving teaching methods in high schools

2. Methodology

The method in this research uses a qualitative method. A qualitative approach is employed to comprehend events and issues by detailing their current state and occurrences within the study (Restiningtyas et al., 2022). Beside that, according to Kamran et al., 2022 qualitative research is appropriate for investigating the subjective experiences and perceptions of participants, which is the primary focus of this study. In this study, a measurement tool from the Likert scale according to Sugiyono (2012) is used. The Likert scale is used to measure the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of individuals or groups about social phenomena. The measurement with the Likert scale has gradations from positive to negative. This measurement uses a scale of: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.

This research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Majene from August to December 2023. The research subjects are the classes taught by tertiary students in the Teaching Assistance Program of the English Education Study Program at the University of Sulawesi Barat, specifically students in classes XI MIPA and XI Bahasa as well as classes XII MIPA 1, XII MIPA 2, XII MIPA 3, and XII MIPA 4. Additionally, it includes classes XII Bahasa and XII IPS 1 and XII IPS 2. The total number of subjects was 113 students.

The data collection techniques used in this study were questionnaire and interview. A questionnaire was used to collect data on students' perceptions of the teaching skills of tertiary student assistants in the English Education Study Program at the University of Sulawesi Barat. The data collection technique used is a closed-ended questionnaire. This technique was chosen because it facilitates respondents in providing answers and allows researchers to collect data more quickly. The variable used for assessment is teaching skills, with the questionnaire encompassing eight teaching skills. The first sub-variable is the skill of opening a lesson, with indicators such as attracting students' attention, providing motivation, giving references, and creating connections.

The second sub-variable is the skill of closing a lesson, with indicators such as reviewing and evaluating. The third sub-variable is the skill of explaining, with indicators such as clarity of material, simplifying material presentation, using examples, emphasizing important points, conducting Q&A, and maintaining attention. The fourth sub-variable is the skill of questioning, with indicators such as articulating questions clearly and concisely, providing references, turn-taking and distribution, giving time, providing guidance, and simplifying difficult questions. The fifth sub-variable is the skill of providing reinforcement, with indicators such as verbal reinforcement, non-verbal reinforcement, accompaniment,

and giving rewards. The sixth sub-variable is the skill of introducing variety, with indicators such as varying voice volume, varying attention strategies, varying position, varying teaching styles, varying teaching media, varying interaction patterns, varying learning resources, and varying learning methods. The seventh sub-variable is the skill of guiding small group discussions, with indicators such as clear topic formulation, elaborating on students' ideas, stimulating comments, focusing attention, wisely preventing monopolization of discussion, clarifying issues or opinions, increasing student participation, distributing opportunities to participate, closing discussions, and assessing the discussion process. The final sub-variable is the skill of classroom management, with indicators such as the skill to create and maintain optimal learning conditions, the skill to restore optimal conditions, time management accuracy, the skill to show attention, the skill to explain learning objectives, the skill to approach personally, the skill to organize, and the skill to guide and facilitate learning.

Interviews were a data collection technique used when the researcher conducted a preliminary study to identify problems that need to be investigated or when the researcher explored deeper information from respondents, especially when the number of respondents is small. An interview guide was utilized to gather students' reasons for their perceptions (Rasyid et al., 2023). The type of interview applied in this research was a guided free interview, meaning that before conducting the interview, the researcher prepares a framework of questions to obtain broader and deeper data. This method was used to gather information on students' opinions regarding the teaching skills of tertiary student assistants in the English Education Study Program as part of efforts to improve the quality of future educators. The interview was directed at the students.

3. Result and Discussions

3.1 The results of questionnaire

The primary purpose of this study was to testing students' perceptions of the teaching skills of teaching assistant tertiary students from the English Education Study Program at the University of Sulawesi Barat. The research analysis exposes that the questionnaire results indicate the following information:

Table 1. Teaching skills results

No	Skills	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor
1	Lesson Opening Skills	28%	60%	12%	0%	0%
2	Lesson Closing Skills	35%	48%	17%	0%	0%
3	Explanation Skills	69%	29%	2%	0%	0%
4	Questioning Skills	50%	34%	16%	0%	0%
5	Providing Reinforcement Skills	12%	66%	16%	6%	0%
6	Introducing Variation Skills	39%	26%	26%	9%	0%
7	Small Group Discussion Guidance Skills	41%	48%	11%	0%	0%
8	Classroom Management Skills	53%	36%	11%	1%	0%

The first statements about opening lessons skills. There were 4 items representing the indicators of opening lesson skills out of the 47 total questionnaire items. The percentage of students rating this skill as very good is 28%, good 60%, fair 12%, poor, and very poor 0%. The average percentage is 86.18%, categorizing student perceptions of teaching assistant tertiary students' skills in opening lessons as "very good".

The second statement exposes about closing lessons skill. There were 2 items representing the indicators of closing lesson skills out of the 47 total questionnaire items. The percentage of students rating this skill as very good is 35%, good 48%, fair 17%, poor, and very poor 0%. The average percentage is 79%, categorizing student perceptions of teaching assistant tertiary students' skills in closing lessons as "good".

The third statement discloses about explaining skills. There were 6 items representing the indicators of explaining skills out of the 47 total questionnaire items. The percentage of students rating this skill as very good is 69%, good 29%, fair 2%, poor, and very poor 0%. The average percentage is 92%, categorizing student perceptions of teaching assistant tertiary students' skills in explaining as "very good".

The fourth statement shows about questioning skills. There were 6 items representing the indicators of questioning skills out of the 47 total questionnaire items. The percentage of students rating this skill as very good is 50%, good 34%, fair 16%, poor, and very poor 0%. The average percentage is 84%, categorizing student perceptions of teaching assistant tertiary students' skills in questioning as "very good".

The fifth statements display about providing reinforcement. There were 4 items representing the indicators of providing reinforcement skills out of the 47 total questionnaire items. The percentage of students rating this skill as very good is 12%, good 66%, fair 16%, poor 6%, and very poor 0%. The average percentage is 73%, categorizing student perceptions of teaching assistant tertiary students' skills in providing reinforcement as "good".

The sixth statements reveals about introducing variety. There were 8 items representing the indicators of introducing variety skills out of the 47 total questionnaire items. The percentage of students rating this skill as very good is 39%, good 26%, fair 26%, poor 9%, and very poor 0%. The average percentage is 72%, categorizing student perceptions of teaching assistant tertiary students' skills in introducing variety as "good".

The seventh statement about guiding small group discussions. There were 9 items representing the indicators of guiding small group discussions out of the 47 total questionnaire items. The percentage of students rating this skill as very good is 41%, good 48%, fair 11%, poor, and very poor 0%. The average percentage is 84%, categorizing student perceptions of teaching assistant tertiary students' skills in guiding small group discussions as "very good".

The last statement about classroom management. There were 8 items representing the indicators of classroom management skills out of the 47 total questionnaire items. The percentage of students rating this skill as very good is 53%, good 36%, fair 11%, poor 1%, and very poor 0%. The average percentage is 85%, categorizing student perceptions of teaching assistant tertiary students' skills in classroom management as "very good".

Based on the analyzed data, it can be concluded that students' perceptions of the teaching skills of teaching assistant tertiary students from the English Education Study Program at the University of Sulawesi Barat at SMA Negeri 1 Majene result in an average of 81.37%, categorized as "very good".

3.2 The result of interview

In addition to administering questionnaires, the researcher also conducted interviews with students. Selected respondents were students with experience with the teaching assistant tertiary students who could provide valuable contributions to the understanding of the research topic. To ensure that the conclusions could be generalized to a broader population, respondents interviewed were diligent students who regularly attended classes taught by the teaching assistants. The quality of the data was considered by selecting respondents who could provide rich and meaningful information in line with the research objectives. Therefore, top-performing students in the class were chosen as respondents.

By mastering the skills of initiating learning, a teacher can create a motivating, constructive, and stimulating learning environment for students' intellectual and emotional growth. The first interview question relates to students' learning experiences with teaching assistant tertiary students. The interview results provided the following data:

> *"Pengalaman belajar saya dengan mahasiswa asistensi mengajar di kelas kami sangat positif. Mereka membawa semangat dan energi baru ke dalam pembelajaran." Other results show:*

> *"Pengalaman belajar saya dengan mahasiswa asisten mengajar agak menantang. Meskipun mereka memiliki antusiasme yang tinggi, terkadang mereka kesulitan menjaga kelas tetap teratur dan fokus. Namun, saya menghargai upaya mereka untuk terus belajar dan meningkatkan keterampilan mengajar mereka."*

From the above data, it can be concluded that teaching assistant tertiary students bring fresh enthusiasm and new energy into the learning process, positively impacting classroom atmosphere and student motivation. Students' learning experiences with teaching assistant tertiary students tend to have a positive effect, increasing student engagement and overall learning quality. Additionally, the learning experience with teaching assistant tertiary students

shows challenges in maintaining order and focus, but it still provides valuable experiences and builds appreciation for their efforts in improving their teaching skills.

Next is about the advantages of teaching assistant tertiary students in teaching, which become a valuable asset in the learning process at school. However, they are also still in the learning phase, so proper support and guidance from mentor teachers are crucial. This is supported by the following interview results:

> ""*Salah satu kelebihan dari mahasiswa asistensi mengajar dalam mengajar adalah mereka sering kali lebih dekat dengan kami sebagai siswa dan mampu menginspirasi kami untuk belajar dengan lebih antusias*"

From the above data, it can be explained that teaching assistant tertiary students have great potential to make a positive contribution to the learning process in the classroom. Their presence can be a source of inspiration and motivation for students and help create an adequate and supportive learning environment.

The next interview topic was the ability of teaching assitance tertiary students to explain the learning material. The data obtained regarding this matter is as follows:

> "*Menurut saya, kemampuan mahasiswa asistensi mengajar dalam menjelaskan materi pembelajaran sangat baik. Mereka selalu dapat menjelaskan dengan cara yang mudah dipahami dan mengaitkan materi dengan contoh-contoh yang relevan dari kehidupan sehari-hari. Ini membuat pembelajaran menjadi lebih menarik dan pemahaman saya terhadap materi menjadi lebih.*"

From the above data, teaching assistant tertiary students have good abilities in explaining the learning material. They can deliver information in an easily understandable way and relate it to students' everyday lives. This helps increase students' interest in learning and strengthens their understanding of the taught material. Thus, the contribution of teaching assistant tertiary students to the learning process can be considered positive and beneficial for students' academic development.

The next question concerns the attitude and interaction of teaching assistant tertiary students towards students in the classroom. The interview results provided the following data:

> "*Sikap dan interaksi mahasiswa asistensi mengajar terhadap siswa di kelas sangat ramah dan mendukung. Mereka selalu tersenyum dan dengan sabar menjawab pertanyaan kami. Saya merasa bahwa mereka benar-benar peduli dengan keberhasilan kami dan selalu siap untuk membantu jika kami mengalami kesulitan.*"

The attitude and interaction of teaching assistant tertiary students towards students in the class are very positive and beneficial. They show a friendly and supportive attitude by always smiling and being willing to answer students' questions patiently. This attitude creates a comfortable and constructive learning environment, where students feel valued and supported in their learning efforts. Additionally, the willingness of teaching assistant tertiary students to help students who encounter difficulties shows that they care about students' success and are willing to provide additional support if needed. Thus, this positive interaction can help increase students' motivation and overall learning achievement.

The fifth question is about how teaching assistance tertiary students provide feedback or evaluation of students' work. The aim is to gain a better understanding of the evaluation process conducted by teaching assistant tertiary students and its impact on student learning. The obtained data is as follows:

> "*Umpan balik dari mahasiswa asistensi mengajar sering kali bersifat langsung, di mana mereka akan memberikan pujian atau kritik secara verbal kepada kami saat kami sedang bekerja. Ini membantu kami untuk memperbaiki kesalahan kami secara langsung dan memberikan dorongan positif untuk terus meningkatkan kualitas pekerjaan kami.*"

The feedback provided by teaching assistant tertiary students tends to be direct and can positively impact the quality of students' work. Direct feedback from teaching assistant tertiary students plays an important role in supporting students' development and learning, encouraging them to achieve their best potential.

The next question is about the ability of teaching assistant tertiary students to handle challenges or problems that arise in learning. From this question, the following data was obtained:

> *"Saya melihat bahwa mahasiswa asistensi mengajar memiliki kemampuan untuk berpikir secara kritis dan analitis dalam menghadapi tantangan pembelajaran. Mereka tidak hanya menawarkan solusi instan, tetapi juga melakukan refleksi mendalam tentang akar permasalahan dan mencari cara untuk mengatasinya secara menyeluruh."*

Teaching assistant tertiary students have the ability to think critically, analytically, and holistically in facing learning challenges, enabling them to find effective and thorough solutions to improve the learning process.

The final question is about students' suggestions or recommendations to teaching assistant tertiary students to improve their teaching skills. The purpose of this question is to give students an opportunity to contribute to the professional development of teaching assistant tertiary students and enhance their overall learning experience. The interview results provided the following data:

> *"Saya ingin memberikan saran kepada mahasiswa asistensi mengajar untuk lebih memperhatikan gaya pembelajaran siswa di kelas. Setiap siswa memiliki kebutuhan yang berbeda, jadi penting bagi mereka untuk memvariasikan pendekatan pengajaran mereka agar sesuai dengan kebutuhan beragam siswa."*

It is important for teaching assistant tertiary students to pay attention to and accommodate the diverse learning styles of students in the class. Paying attention to students' learning styles and varying teaching approaches is a crucial step in enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of classroom learning.

The data analysis findings in this research have revealed the survey results indicate that teaching assistant tertiary students possess commendable skills in opening lessons. The high rating suggests that teaching assistant tertiary students effectively set the stage for learning, engaging students right from the start and creating a conducive learning environment. In terms of closing lessons, teaching assistant tertiary students received slightly lower, yet still positive evaluations. This indicates that while teaching assistants are competent in concluding lessons, there is room for improvement in summarizing and reinforcing the lesson's key points effectively.

This aligns with the findings of Sipahatur, Manurung, Sidabutar, and Wulan (2023), who discovered that English Department students frequently performed lesson openings and closings during classroom teaching. The students agreed that the skills for effectively opening and closing lessons were well-executed in the classroom. Explaining skills and were highly rated. This suggests that teaching assistant tertiary students excel at making complex information understandable, often using relevant examples to enhance comprehension. Questioning skills were also highly rated. This indicates that teaching assistant tertiary students effectively use questions to engage students, stimulate critical thinking, and assess understanding.

The skill of providing reinforcement received a mixed evaluation. This suggests that while teaching assistant tertiary students are generally effective in reinforcing learning, there is a notable minority who feel this area could be improved. The ability to introduce variety in teaching indicates that while teaching assistants are capable of incorporating diverse teaching methods, there is a significant portion of students who believe there is room for improvement in maintaining engagement through varied instructional strategies. Teaching assistant tertiary students were effective in facilitating small group interactions, promoting collaborative learning, and ensuring productive discussions. Beside that they were proficient in maintaining classroom order and creating a positive learning environment. Additionally, Dewi et al. (2020) found that students were more interested in learning English when teachers addressed them by their nicknames, used easily understandable vocabulary, provided clear explanations, and demonstrated mastery of the material.

Effective teaching strategies included giving clear instructions, demonstrating word pronunciation, assigning tasks, encouraging independent resource discovery, using methods beyond lecturing, and facilitating discussions. The interviews provided qualitative insights supporting the survey results. Students expressed positive experiences with teaching assistant tertiary students, highlighting their fresh energy and enthusiasm, which increased engagement and motivation. However, some students noted challenges in maintaining classroom order and focus, suggesting areas for further development in classroom management.

Teaching assistant tertiary students were praised for their ability to explain material clearly and relate it to real-life examples, which enhanced students' understanding and interest. Their friendly and supportive interactions created a positive classroom atmosphere, further motivating students. Feedback from teaching assistant tertiary students was often direct and immediate, helping students correct mistakes and improve their work quality. Their ability to handle

challenges with critical and analytical thinking was also noted, demonstrating their problem-solving skills in the learning environment. Finally, students suggested that teaching assistant tertiary students pay more attention to diverse learning styles, emphasizing the importance of varying teaching approaches to meet different student needs. This recommendation aligns with the survey finding on introducing variety, indicating a need for ongoing improvement in this area.

These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Restiningtyas et al. (2022), which also discovered that the teaching assistant program brings about significant changes in learning and leads to improvements in children's progress as long as teaching assistants are involved in the educational process. Additionally, the study highlighted that the presence of teaching assistants results in different teacher parenting patterns. Farah and Wicaksono (2024) also discovered that the implementation of the program effectively met the needs of partner schools. Teachers and school coordinators provided positive feedback on the program's outcomes, indicating the project team's success in executing the teaching assistant program. Consequently, the program designed for the community can be effectively implemented and is anticipated to continue in future partnerships.

4. Conclusion

The overall perception of the teaching skills of teaching assistance tertiary students from the English Education Study Program at the University of Sulawesi Barat is positive, with an average rating of 81.37%, categorized as "very good." This indicates that teaching assistance are generally effective in their teaching roles, bringing enthusiasm and clear explanations to the classroom. However, there are areas for improvement, particularly in maintaining classroom order, providing reinforcement, and introducing a variety of teaching methods. Addressing these areas will further enhance the learning experience and effectiveness of teaching assistance tertiary students, ensuring that they meet the diverse needs of all students.

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