

*Aisyah et al: Unveiling the Transformation: The Impact of Teaching Internships in Thai Schools on Pre-Service Teachers' Professional Development*

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### Unveiling the Transformation: The Impact of Teaching Internships in Thai Schools on Pre-Service Teachers' Professional Development

Aisyah<sup>1</sup>

[asyah2731@gmail.com](mailto:asyah2731@gmail.com)

Fitriah<sup>2</sup>

[fitriah@uinsby.ac.id](mailto:fitriah@uinsby.ac.id)

Rakhmawati<sup>3</sup>

[rakhmawati@uinsby.ac.id](mailto:rakhmawati@uinsby.ac.id)

Ahlan Hasan Mapa<sup>4</sup>

[ahlan.mapa@gmail.com](mailto:ahlan.mapa@gmail.com)

#### **Abstract**

*Being an effective teacher requires teaching experience and practical knowledge about the classroom. The knowledge can be obtained from classroom lectures and teaching practices can be learnt by having internship programs at schools and the community. This study aims to uncover the transformation of Indonesian pre-service teachers to their Professional Development during their participation in the international internship program in Thailand. Qualitative method was carried out to understand participants' experience and benefits of the program. The study interviewed seven pre-service teachers who were selected enrolling in the program. The finding indicated that international teaching internships the participants involved help improve their professional development. They believed that there were three aspects affecting their professionalism, namely, pedagogical skills, language competencies, and life skills. This present study highlights that participating in teaching internships is useful for students' professional development. As they will be a teacher, having teaching practice will provide students with the opportunity to apply what they have learnt to the real-world teaching situation, and this will be meaningful for their profession.*

**Keywords:** Pre-service Teachers' Professional Development, International Teaching Internship, Internships in Thai Schools, Indonesian Pre-service Teachers

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<sup>1</sup> UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya

<sup>2</sup> Santi Witya Serong School, Thailand

<sup>3</sup> Santi Witya Serong School, Thailand

<sup>4</sup> Santi Witya Serong School, Thailand

## INTRODUCTION

The growing need of pre-service teachers to master pedagogical skill right after graduation suggests hours of theoretical study and field practices<sup>5</sup>. This means that pre-service teachers should collect credits from their teaching institutions/university as a proof of knowledge in teaching practices. The learning process itself combines reviews of literature, previous practices, evaluations, visits, observations, workshops, courses, and theories<sup>6</sup>. This way, pre-service teachers gain sufficient pictures on how to teach students in the classroom. In many universities, the theories learnt are aligned with pre-service teachers' practices, and they are forced to make professional judgements based on the subjective problem interpretations<sup>7</sup>. These judgments are made during their teaching internship program from their university.

Although the framework of the programs varies across universities, the main goal of teaching internships is providing pre-service teachers to gain practical and hand-on experience in a real classroom setting. This experience is valuable for developing skills and competencies necessary to become effective educators. Within the context of Indonesian higher education, some institutions require students majoring in teacher education to take a teaching internship program in their final year for two months under the supervision of teachers and supervisor in a selected school. Auni et al. (2022) argue that the program is a valuable asset for pre-service teachers as it allows them to practice the pedagogical knowledge they gain from the classroom<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Tran Le Huu Nghia & Huynh Ngoc Tai. *Preservice teachers' experiences with internship-related challenges in regional schools and their career intention: Implications for teacher education programs*, *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, Number 2, (2019), 177.

<sup>6</sup> Sam Sims & Harry Fletcher-Wood. *Identifying the characteristics of effective teacher professional development: A critical review*. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, Vol.32, Number 1 (2021), 48.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Mesker, Hartger Wassink & Cok Bakker. *How everyday classroom experiences in an international teaching internship raise student teachers' awareness of their subjective educational theories*. *Teacher Development*, Vol.24, Number 2 (2020), 210.

<sup>8</sup> Luthfi Auni et al. *International Teaching Internship: Development of Pre-Service Teachers' Competences*. *The Qualitative Report*, Vol.27, Number 12 (December 2022) 2769.

In teacher education, pre-service teachers acquire most of their knowledge during their studies, broadening themselves with in-depth understanding on how to teach students at a certain age and level. Darling-Hammond (2017) has clearly stated that the preparation for teachers' development is a crucial key to creating an effective teacher in nowadays society<sup>9</sup>. Under the same study, keywords "research" and "practice" are highlighted as a bridge to include strong understanding of subject matter and pedagogical preparation. In addition to the obligatory context understanding, pre-service teachers are occupied with meaningful learning experience. As quoted by Kostianen et al., (2018) that these meaningful learning experiences include active and intentional practices, continuous construction, reflective human relations, and authentic learning process in social context<sup>10</sup>. Huu Nghia & Tai (2019) called these efforts a means to create a devoted teaching workforce who works within the educational job title<sup>11</sup>. Many teacher education institutions combine the two needs of contextual understanding and in-field practices by having pre-service teachers to engage in teaching internships.

The concept of internship refers to a field test of pre-service teachers' teaching competence. This concept aims to reduce the gap between the theory and practice by highlighting the collaboration between teaching institutions/university and the school partner<sup>12</sup>. This can be done by transferring their contextual textbook knowledge to students at school. Internship has been said to be effective in gaining practical skills to deepen professional development, get to know many

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<sup>9</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond. Teacher education around the world: What can we learn from international practice? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol.40 Number 3 (May 2017), 298.

<sup>10</sup> Emma Kostianen. *Meaningful learning in teacher education*. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol.71 (April 2018), 71.

<sup>11</sup> Tran Le Huu Nghia & Huynh Ngoc Tai. *Preservice teachers' experiences with internship-related challenges in regional schools and their career intention: Implications for teacher education programs*, *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, Number 2, (2019), 176.

<sup>12</sup> Tom Adams et al. *Student teachers' classroom management during the school internship*. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol.45 Number 5 (December 2022), 738.

experts, and explore career opportunities<sup>13</sup>. During this teaching practice, pre-service teachers' professional development is also being trained. Sims & Fletcher-Wood (2021) has argued that teachers' professional development works effectively when previous knowledge is applied. The role of subject matter understanding clearly plays a big part in this process.

The exploration under this study is to contribute to the existing study about the impact of teaching practice on pre-service teachers' pedagogical knowledge, pre-service teachers' identity development during teaching internships, and pre-service teachers' classroom management analysis during teaching internships<sup>14</sup>. Additionally, Mesker et al., (2020) also argued that pre-service teachers who conduct international teaching internships experienced a different situation from the regular teaching internship by being exposed to different cultures, traditions, and values<sup>15</sup>. By focusing on pre-service teachers' professional development (PD), this research highlights the reflections of each pre-service teacher on their international teaching internships. The expected result is ought to deliver valuable comprehension on pre-service teachers' PD, especially on their practice time. Therefore, this study is aimed to answer the following research question: "in what way does teaching internship programs influence the pre-service teachers' professional development?".

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **International Teaching Internships**

The term internships is relatively another keyword for doing practicums and field practices in teacher education<sup>16</sup>. This activity is usually carried out by final year university students majoring in teacher education to gain authentic

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<sup>13</sup> Esther Cohen et al. *The practicum in preservice teacher education: A review of empirical studies. Teaching Education, Vol.24 Number 4 (December 2013)*, 360.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Mesker, Hartger Wassink & Cok Bakker. *How everyday classroom experiences in an international teaching internship raise student teachers' awareness of their subjective educational theories. Teacher Development, Vol.24, Number 2 (2020)*, 211.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, p210

<sup>16</sup> Daniel B. Robinson & William Walters. *Exploring other Practicum Possibilities: An Action Research Initiative. The Canadian Journal of Action Research, Vol.17 Number 3 (December 2016)*, 42.

experience on teaching in classrooms. Doing an internship is one of the responsibilities of pre-service teachers before holding a professional title as a teacher or educator. Additionally, these internships allow space for pre-service teachers to understand the complexity of social interaction, opportunities to gain ongoing support by professionals, and space for regular feedback and reflections<sup>17</sup>. The execution of this internship varies across teaching institutions/universities. Some might take several months to a year to complete, while others need more than a year. This can also be done locally around the area or internationally through partnership among institutions.

In the state Sunan Ampel Islamic State University, this teaching internship program is carried out for 7 majors, including English language education, Arabic language education, Islamic education, Primary education, Mathematic education, and Early School education. After doing practice on microteaching in the third year of the study, pre-service teachers continue their field practices in school partner. This field practice goes under the name teaching practice in this university. There are two pathways available for pre-service teachers to choose from for their teaching practice program, there are regular teaching internships conducted in Indonesia and international teaching internships conducted in their selected country.

International teaching internships do not differ much on the sets of activities. The regular internship program, which is carried out in the home country, expects pre-service teachers to teach in the classroom gradually. The term “gradually” refers to the involvement of pre-service teachers and in-service teacher’s participation. The very first stage of internships, in-service teachers do 75% of the teaching activity and pre-service teachers act as students support. The next stage, both pre-service teachers and in-service teachers collaborate in peer teaching where each individual takes equal 50% part of the teaching activities. The second-to-last stage, pre-service teachers execute 75% of teaching activity,

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<sup>17</sup> Carl J. Duns. *Metasynthesis of in-service professional development research: Features associated with positive educator and student outcomes*. *Educational Research and Reviews*, Vol.10 Number 12 (June 2015), 1737.

starting from the opening to closing the class. Lastly, pre-service teachers implement their own lesson plan by taking 100% control of the class. In this stage, in-service teachers observe the performance of pre-service teachers and evaluate them afterwards. Similarly, an international teaching internship adapts to the same stages of teaching practice.

However, pre-service teachers who take part in international teaching internships may face academic culture barriers<sup>18</sup>. It is reported that language is the biggest barrier between pre-service teachers and the school partner. The already existing problem of English education in Thai schools contributes to this problem. A research by Noom-ura (2013) clearly stated that both Thai teachers and students face difficulties in their English classrooms due to various problems; inadequate schedule, lack of equipment, little to no opportunity to use English, and being poorly motivated<sup>19</sup>. When conducting international teaching practice, pre-service teachers may have to reintroduce themselves to the new cultures and systems in their targeted country, as previously stated.

## Teaching Internship and Professional Development

Professional Development (PD) is a structured professional learning aiming in creating professional teachers<sup>20</sup>. It is a way to achieve maximal outcomes in the classroom by having qualified teachers in charge. PD is a common term to explain the repeated actions of learning and reflecting usually used for in-service teachers. However, as pre-service teachers undergo a similar process, pre-service teachers' PD is started to be discussed among researchers<sup>21</sup>. Peterson-Ahmad & Hovey (2018) posited that PD for pre-service teachers refer to

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<sup>18</sup> Wulan Ramadhani & Dwi Poedjiastutie. *Academic Culture Barriers Faced by English Department Students Joining International Internship Program*. *Celtic: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching, Literature and Linguistics*, Vol.7 Number 1 (2020), 83.

<sup>19</sup> Sripathum Noom-ura. *English-Teaching Problems in Thailand and Thai Teachers' Professional Development Needs*. *English Language Teaching*, Vol.6 Number 11 (October 2013), p139.

<sup>20</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond et al, *Effective Teacher Professional Development* (Palo Alto CA: Learning Policy Institute, 2017), 14.

<sup>21</sup> Karen Koellner & Jennifer Jacobs. *Distinguishing Models of Professional Development: The Case of an Adaptive Model's Impact on Teachers' Knowledge, Instruction, and Student Achievement*. *Journal of Teacher Education*, Vol.66 Number 1 (September 2015), 55.

a cycle of learning and practicing by pre-service teachers which has to be supported by the institutions<sup>22</sup>.

Sims & Fletcher-Wood (2021) have introduced six characteristics of effective Professional Development<sup>23</sup>. First, it is revealed that sustainability in doing and discovering PD will make it more compelling. Some argued that PD can work better when being cycled and developed regularly in rhythm<sup>24</sup>. Second, working collaboratively with other communities of practice is proven to have significant improvement<sup>25</sup>. This allows space for feedback and ways to tackle classroom challenges with pupils. Third, self-realization of the importance of PD is said to be more effective than obligatory PD. However, it is also important to inform teachers about the positive impact PD has brought to the individual teachers. Fourth, the involvement of previous knowledge of subject matter is said to be more effective. This happens due to the fact that pre-service teachers do regular reflection on the use of content knowledge in the practice<sup>26</sup>. Fifth, the role of outside professionals and experts is crucial to challenge the already existing quality<sup>27</sup>. This means that getting fresher inputs from the outside may be upgrading the overall situation. Sixth, being given appropriate time to use and reflect from the challenges and feedback will orchestrate and activate the self-evaluation of pre-service teachers. Additionally, regular follow-up sessions are

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<sup>22</sup> Maria B. Peterson-Ahmad et al. *Pre-Service Teacher Perceptions and Knowledge Regarding Professional Development: Implications for Teacher Preparation Programs. The Journal of Special Education Apprenticeship, Vol.7 Number 2 (June 2018), 12.*

<sup>23</sup> Sam Sims & Harry Fletcher-Wood. *Identifying the characteristics of effective teacher professional development: A critical review. School Effectiveness and School Improvement, Vol.32, Number 1 (2021), 48.*

<sup>24</sup> Cordingley, P. et al. *Developing Great Teaching: Lessons from the international reviews into effective professional development. (Teacher Development Trust : 2015), 5.*

<sup>25</sup> Catherine Walter & Jessica Briggs. *What professional development makes the most difference to teachers? (University of Oxford Department of Education : 2012), 3.*

<sup>26</sup> Carl J. Duns. *Metasynthesis of in-service professional development research: Features associated with positive educator and student outcomes. Educational Research and Reviews, Vol.10 Number 12 (June 2015), 1738.*

<sup>27</sup> Sam Sims & Harry Fletcher-Wood. *Identifying the characteristics of effective teacher professional development: A critical review. School Effectiveness and School Improvement, Vol.32, Number 1 (2021), 48.*

said to be helpful for positive teacher outcomes<sup>28</sup>. Darling-Hammond et al., (2017) also suggests content-focused PD which is situated with the students contextually<sup>29</sup>. These findings suggest that in general, PD works better with the collaboration of self-reflection and outside inputs which carried out instructional change.

The aligning purposes of teaching internship and characteristics of effective PD create numerous possibilities for pre-service teachers' PD to grow. There are four major activities done by pre-service teachers during their internship, including lesson plan making, teaching practice, self-reflection, and mentoring session. Janssen et al., (2019) clearly posited that in the lesson-planning process, pre-service teachers made significant considerations to their decision<sup>30</sup>. The hypothesis made by previous researchers was also true that integrated support will result in a better integrated justification. This goes along with the key characteristics introduced by Sims & Fletcher-Wood (2021) who stated that expert support noticeably plays a distinct role in pre-service teachers' PD<sup>31</sup>.

The existing previous studies have shown the direct impact of teaching internship on pre-service teachers' PD in several aspects. Huu Nghia & Tai (2019) stated that pedagogical skill and knowledge can be effectively applied in teaching internships<sup>32</sup>. Furthermore, Auni et al., (2022) highlighted pre-service teachers'

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<sup>28</sup> Laura Lackner Saylor & Carla C. Johnson. *The Role of Reflection in Elementary Mathematics and Science Teachers' Training and Development: A Meta-Synthesis: Reflection-Meta-Synthesis. School Science and Mathematics, Vol.114 Number 1 (January 2014), 34.*

<sup>29</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond et al, *Effective Teacher Professional Development* (Palo Alto CA: Learning Policy Institute, 2017), 14.

<sup>30</sup> Noortje Janssen et al. *Technological and pedagogical support for pre-service teachers' lesson planning. Technology, Pedagogy and Education, Vol.28 number 1 (February 2019), 121.*

<sup>31</sup> Sam Sims & Harry Fletcher-Wood. *Identifying the characteristics of effective teacher professional development: A critical review. School Effectiveness and School Improvement, Vol.32, Number 1 (2021), 48.*

<sup>32</sup> Tran Le Huu Nghia & Huynh Ngoc Tai. *Preservice teachers' experiences with internship-related challenges in regional schools and their career intention: Implications for teacher education programs, Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, Number 2, (2019), 166.*



PD on the confidence in speaking English<sup>33</sup>. As pre-service teachers use English in their teaching internship classroom, they gain more confidence on their own language skill. Pre-service teachers described the role of existing knowledge as a frame whenever they face difficulties in teaching practice<sup>34</sup>. This comes along the lines of key characteristics of effective PD in addressing the way pre-service teachers learn and the essence of learning itself.

Due to the fact that this PD happens during students' university years, it is important to highlight and position the pre-service teachers and their reflections on the progress<sup>35</sup>. This means by putting pre-service teachers' perspective on their teaching progress a priority which later can be evaluated by the involvement of professionals. In teaching practice sessions, pre-service teachers sometimes voluntarily write reflections based on their own judgements—or sometimes an obligatory reflection. Whether a reflection was given by an expert, or it was made based on self-assessment, it has a high value in broadening perspective<sup>36</sup>. This is also stated by Darling-Hammond et al., (2017) that PD models which aim for students learning always make room for built-in time for pre-service teachers to reflect, receive input on, and execute changes to their practice<sup>37</sup>. It indicated that reflection happens all the time during practice year and if it is done correctly, it matches key characteristics of PD.

## METHODS

### Research Design

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<sup>33</sup> Luthfi Auni et al. *International Teaching Internship: Development of Pre-Service Teachers' Competences. The Qualitative Report, Vol.27, Number 12 (December 2022)* 2769.

<sup>34</sup> Peter Mesker, Hartger Wassink & Cok Bakker. *How everyday classroom experiences in an international teaching internship raise student teachers' awareness of their subjective educational theories. Teacher Development, Vol.24, Number 2 (2020)*, 211.

<sup>35</sup> Emma Kostiaainen. *Meaningful learning in teacher education. Teaching and Teacher Education, Vol.71 (April 2018)*, 71.

<sup>36</sup> John R. Warda & Suzanne S. McCotter. *Reflection as a visible outcome for preservice teachers. Teaching and Teacher Education, Vol.20 Number 3 (April 2004)*, 244.

<sup>37</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond et al, *Effective Teacher Professional Development* (Palo Alto CA: Learning Policy Institute, 2017), 14.

This study aims to thoroughly investigate pre-service teachers' PD after doing an international teaching internship in Thailand. Qualitative design is employed in this study by interviewing seven pre-service teachers who participate in the international teaching internship in Thailand. The study specifically examined the participants' experience and benefits of the program for their professionalism. This approach is appropriate as it can provide detailed information about participants' experience during teaching internship and the effect of it on their PD<sup>38</sup>. The instruments are developed according to the key characteristics of PD introduced by Darling-Hammond et al., (2017) and Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) to understand how international teaching internships affect pre-service teachers' PD.

The faculty of teacher education holds an annual teaching internship program both in Indonesia and abroad. Seven pre-service teachers were selected to take part in the international teaching internships in Thailand, and this study included all of them as participants in this research. Students who conduct teaching internships are required to complete a teaching methodology course and microteaching practicums. The teaching internship is offered in the third year of the study with the intention that the students do not take any other courses so they can focus on their internship. All the courses they learn are specifically for teaching middle and high school students. But, when they did the teaching internship, they taught elementary school students. Thus, they had to improvise their teaching style to meet students' level and learn how to teach young learners. This is because the partners collaborate with elementary schools in Thailand. Seven pre-service teachers did the internship in two different districts: Yala and Yarang. Both cities are located in Southern Thailand with 80% Muslim population. All of the participants are enrolled in teacher education faculty with most of the courses meant to teach middle school and high school students. However, the participants only teach elementary school students as it was provided by the school partner.

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<sup>38</sup> John W. Creswell, J. W. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed). (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications: 2013), 75.

## Data Collection and Analysis

To explore pre-service teachers' experience on how international teaching internships develop their professionalism, this study interviewed the participants individually. As suggested by Yin (2016), the researchers use interview guidelines to help interviewers navigate the questions given to the participants. This will not limit the interview questions as structured interviews might do, but it will prevent the interview from going out-of-topic. To gather in-depth narrative data from the participants, individual interviews are chosen as it is best to gain personal narratives and experiences<sup>39</sup>. Participants were asked to meet the researchers in the university and were being interviewed in an empty classroom to allow room for participants to answer the questions in depth. Each participant spent about 30-35 minutes delivering their perspectives on the international teaching internship. All the answers from participants are recorded and transcribed to prevent any missing details.

After gathering the data from participants, the researcher continues to analyze the available data by using Yin's (2016) model of compiling, disassembling, and reassembling<sup>40</sup>. The researchers start to familiarize themselves with the data by transcribing the interview results. Some participants felt more comfortable using English during the interview, but some others preferred to use Indonesian language to allow detailed elaboration on their answers. After transcribing the interview, the text is coded based on the similarities among other participants' answers. The coding and labeling process will result in a compilation of related answers. This process is repeated seven times to all answers from the participants. After that, the researchers created pages consisting of participants' answers after being coded and categorized.

## FINDINGS

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<sup>39</sup> Michelle Butina. *A Narrative Approach to Qualitative Inquiry*. American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science, Vol.28 Number 3 (July 2015), 191.

<sup>40</sup> Robert K. Yin. *Qualitative research from start to finish* (Second edition). (New York: The Guilford Press: 2016)

After interviewing the participants on how their international teaching practice influences their professional development, researchers found that there are three big components of professional development gained during the practice. Those are the influence on pre-service teachers' pedagogical skill, language competence, and personality and life skill.

## **Pre-Service Teachers' Pedagogical Skill**

The whole interview process in finding and discovering the truth in the teaching internship program discovered that teaching internship is considered as the way of practicing previous theoretical knowledge gained from the university. The examples of pedagogical skill being utilized is reported in Table 1.1.

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proper execution of lesson plan</li><li>• The implementation of teaching methodology and media</li><li>• Tailoring the lesson plan to match students' characteristic</li><li>• Creating suitable classroom activity to students</li></ul> |
|---|

**Table 1.1.** Implementation of Pedagogical Skill

As described in Table 1.1, the international teaching internship has given all pre-service teachers the opportunity to implement their pedagogical skills, such as the execution of lesson plan, implementing teaching methodology and media, tailoring the lesson plan, and creating suitable classroom activity.

Mr. A said that he reflected a lot from courses and microteaching practices during his first, second, and third year university. He added that his teaching practice experience has a lot of similarities and differences with the materials he learnt before. Additionally, Ms. D said that doing teaching practice is the only way she could learn and implement her pedagogical skill. She also mentioned that although she has several microteaching experiences, teaching in real classes had somewhat surprised her because it was more fruitful than she imagined. However, Ms. N felt that teaching internship in Thailand was not surprising at all as she had

a lot of experience in teaching young learners. She mentioned that all children behave similarly in the class both in Thailand and Indonesia. She uttered:

“Students sometimes run around the classroom, disobey the instructions from the teacher, and talk to their friends during the lesson. This is something we would expect as we teach young learners. I am not surprised about this behavior at all, but other pre-service teachers might be surprised because they have not had this experience before.”

In teaching students, Ms. E mentioned the role and impact of those challenges to her pedagogical skill. She stated that by having diverse experience during teaching practice, it could actually develop the problem-solving skill. In addition to that, many skills are actually being used in order to deliver an entire teaching practice. For example, Mr. Z and Ms. N stated that the lesson plan is just a plan without the proper knowledge on how to execute it in the classroom. In his words, Mr. Z explained:

“Many things go into consideration when we teach; the way we communicate, the way we select the right media, the way we apply the media in the classroom. Those are just a few considerations when we have to teach students.”

It was also discovered that implementing teaching methodology and teaching media in the classroom are part of meaningful experience during teaching internship. Ms. H highlighted that as her priority was students' comfort in the classroom, it was important to her to uplevel her pedagogical skill in the classroom by learning from her previous experience, searching for new strategies from the internet, and asking for advice from her mentors. Tailoring the lesson plan to match the characteristics of students in the classroom is quite challenging. According to Mr. Z, he had to learn a lot from the classroom teachers about students' behavior to give a glimpse so he will be able to make a suitable classroom activity. This is due to the fact that students in Thailand have different learning cultures compared to the students in Indonesia.

The academic culture in Thailand also has a slight difference than in Indonesia. Thai students tend to do individual assignments better than the pair or

group work. Mr. A experienced this as he taught the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. He tried to implement the pair and group work to students, but he did not receive good feedback from the students. He said that students feel confused about working in a group and demanded to be given individual work instead. This forced him to tailor the lesson to match the style of the students while introducing the other type of assignments to them.

### **Pre-Service Teachers' Language Competencies**

As Indonesian pre-service teachers, teaching in Thailand is a whole different experience. Pre-service teachers emphasized the biggest challenge during teaching internships is the language barrier between students and pre-service teachers as mentioned in Table 1.2.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Being able to simplify the language</li><li>• Learn basic instructions in Thai</li><li>• Being able to hold conversation in various topics</li></ul> |
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**Table 1.2.** Examples of Language Competencies

The table above tells us that there are three ways that pre-service teachers can implement the use of language during international teaching internship, such as simplifying the language, learning basic Thai language, and holding a conversation on various topics. As an English pre-service teacher, Ms. N felt that she had to face multiple layers of translation to make students understand her instruction. She uttered:

“English is not my first language and neither are the students. They only speak Thai and a bit of Melayu language. When I needed to give them instructions, I had to translate everything so they could understand. There are also times when I do not have time to translate, I just use my body language.”

Ms. H also mentioned that due to the fact that pre-service teachers do not speak the same language as the students, it forced them to broaden their language

skill by learning how to simplify the instruction and to learn basic Thai vocabularies. The instruction had to be simplified because the students were not going to understand if the pre-service teachers used the regular type of instruction. Ms. D expressed her feeling that the more she used English, she could clarify her meaning better. She showed her agreement that her English is improved every time she has to use it in the classroom. Although not every pre-service teacher has to teach English in the classroom, they still have to use English for conversing with teachers and other school administrators. Some of the pre-service teachers also claimed that there are still a lot of students who do not understand English whereas the curriculum expects them to learn the subject that sometimes is too hard for students.

#### **Pre-Service Teachers' Personality and Life Skill**

One of the pre-service teachers, Ms. N, felt that she gained the skill of understanding the students better by teaching them in the classroom. Whenever students showed slight changes, she could tell by their movements and facial expression. She added that the skill of noticing the surroundings is important as teachers should take good care of the students. Mr. A agreed on this one by stating that small changes are not small when it comes to teaching. He understood the role of teachers' sensitivity in the classroom as something very crucial. He pictured the example of great teachers' sense in the classroom as a way to notice the problem, then find the way to prevent and solve it. Ms. E emphasized this matter as having "psychological awareness" of the students. She also mentioned that she developed the feeling of motherhood during teaching the students.

The problem does not lie only in classroom settings, pre-service teachers mentioned that they had to adjust to the whole culture of Thailand. This means by adapting the way of communication, the type of clothing they wear, and the cultural habits of Thailand citizens. Both Ms. N and Ms. E agreed on this matter that even though Thailand is not far from Indonesia geographically, there are many differences in which pre-service teachers have to adjust themselves to the situation.

## DISCUSSION

The importance of doing teaching internships on PD has been shown by pre-service teachers' positive attitudes during the interview process. First is the role of teaching practice activity to their pedagogic skills. It seems that pre-service teachers consider the teaching practice as a substantial part of the pathway in becoming professional teachers. This is aligned with Walter & Briggs (2012) previous research on what is actually significant for teachers' PD<sup>41</sup>. It was found that pre-service teachers tend to value teaching internship experience as something more valuable than other types of training. These pre-service teachers seem to realize the significant impact of doing teaching internships to their PD. In this case, the experience helped them to understand the real practice of teaching in the classroom. Specifically, those pre-service teachers seem to grasp the crucial process of tailoring all the teaching aspects, like combining teaching methodology and teaching media, before and during teaching practice. Kostianen et al., (2018) believed that having authentic and contextual teaching practice are personally meaningful experience<sup>42</sup>. This view accurately represented how pre-service teachers value their teaching practice.

The pedagogical skill acquired during teaching practice also shaped the efficient thought process in creating classroom activity for students. It has found that the academic culture differences faced by the pre-service teachers force them to think about all possible media and methodology to teach students in the classroom. For example, if students are not used to doing individual assignments, then a pre-service teacher might have to offer different types of assignments. This finding is confirmed by Ramadhani & Poedjiastutie (2020) that the academic culture differences allow pre-service teachers to identify the most suitable

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<sup>41</sup> Catherine Walter & Jessica Briggs. *What professional development makes the most difference to teachers?* (University of Oxford Department of Education : 2012), 3.

<sup>42</sup> Emma Kostianen. *Meaningful learning in teacher education. Teaching and Teacher Education, Vol.71 (April 2018), 71.*



teaching methodology instead of doing a repetitive and monotonous style<sup>43</sup>. In this case, pre-service teachers had to adjust the lesson plan to match students' style. Sprott (2019) confirmed that traveling through different contexts of the classroom will allow pre-service teachers to see their teaching practice from new lenses<sup>44</sup>. It is evident that doing teaching practice internationally leads to a newer and fresher way of teaching.

Along with developing pedagogical skill professionally, the medium of communication is also being improved simultaneously. As pre-service teachers talked about a lot of topics in a day during the internship and most of them are in English, they seem to be more aware of their language and communication skill. This was also explained by Kabilan (2013) that pre-service teachers are given the space to explore their language skill during teaching internship as they have freedom to express themselves in the classroom<sup>45</sup>. It was also theorized by Harbon (2007) that this happens because pre-service teachers can practice without the pressure of being assessed<sup>46</sup>. During teaching internship, pre-service teachers may experiment on the type of language being used which leads to better awareness of their skill. However, English is not the only language that is used during the teaching practice. It was found that pre-service teachers also need to learn a bit of Thai and Melayu language to deliver instructions to the students. The phenomenon of learning a new language during an international teaching internship was also found in a previous study by MacKinnon & Shields (2020) in Canadian pre-service teachers conducting teaching internships in China<sup>47</sup>. It seems

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<sup>43</sup> Wulan Ramadhani & Dwi Poedjiastutie. *Academic Culture Barriers Faced by English Department Students Joining International Internship Program*. *Celtic: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching, Literature and Linguistics*, Vol.7 Number 1 (2020), 83.

<sup>44</sup> Ryan A. Sprott, R. A. *Factors that foster and deter advanced teachers' professional development*. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol.77 (January 2019), 324.

<sup>45</sup> Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan. *A phenomenological study of an international teaching practicum: Pre-service teachers' experiences of professional development*. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, Vol.36 (November 2013), 200.

<sup>46</sup> Lesley Harbon. *Short-term international experiences and teacher language awareness*. *International Education Journal*. Vol. 8 Number 1 (April 2007), 230.

<sup>47</sup> Gregory R. MacKinnon & Robert Shields. *Preparing Teacher Interns for International Teaching: A Case Study of a Chinese Practicum Program*. *Networks: An Online Journal for Teacher Research*, Vol.22 Number 1 (February 2020).

that language is an inevitable skill acquired by pre-service teachers during their teaching practice internationally. However, elementary school students in Thailand seem to have limited capability in their English skills. This is evident from the struggle expressed by pre-service teachers when they teach English in lower grade students. Therefore, this is limiting the language used by pre-service teachers in the classroom. In this case, Ramadhani & Poedjiastutie (2020) had introduced a solution to this problem by teaching them the alphabet beforehand<sup>48</sup>. Although this may seem like a great start, students still need more vocabulary to communicate in English with the teachers.

The third is the developing awareness towards students' feelings and academic culture differences. Having practical experience in teaching young learners triggered pre-service teachers to act and behave accordingly. This means by putting effort in communicating with and trying to understand the students. It was found that teaching internships in elementary school enhanced their sensitivity towards students. Braun et al., (2019) clearly highlighted that teachers who are sensitive, warm, and responsive to the students benefit students the most<sup>49</sup>. Having a great teacher-students relationship clearly plays an important role for students' growth. By understanding that students grow well, pre-service teachers may receive job satisfaction which leads to great and efficient PD. This is confirmed by Banerjee et al., (2017) that there is a strong correlation between students' success and teachers' job satisfaction and professional development<sup>50</sup>. It seems like pre-service teachers get the chance to develop the ability to teach and nurture the students at the same time.

The sensitivity also applies in sensing the academic cultural differences between students and pre-service teachers. Great response and adaptability have

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<sup>48</sup> Wulan Ramadhani & Dwi Poedjiastutie. *Academic Culture Barriers Faced by English Department Students Joining International Internship Program. Celtic: A Journal of Culture, English Language Teaching, Literature and Linguistics, Vol.7 Number 1 (2020), 83.*

<sup>49</sup> Summer S. Braun et al. *Middle School Teachers' Mindfulness, Occupational Health and Well-Being, and the Quality of Teacher-Student Interactions. Mindfulness, Vol.10 Number 2 (February 2019), 245–255.*

<sup>50</sup> Neena Banerjee et al. *Teacher Job Satisfaction and Student Achievement: The Roles of Teacher Professional Community and Teacher Collaboration in Schools. American Journal of Education, 123(2) (February 2017), 236.*

been shown by pre-service teachers in Thai schools. It appears that pre-service teachers have acquired self-efficacy in teaching students. This is mentioned by McLennan et al., (2017) as a “virtuous cycle” that teachers’ performance is determined by the development of teachers’ self-efficacy, which is also impactful to the later classroom teaching performance<sup>51</sup>. This is consistent with the findings in (Perera et al., 2019) that teachers who engage in PD will likely to show student-teachers efficacious both in current and later practices<sup>52</sup>. Both studies greatly noticed that pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy and their PD are highly related. This means that the early signs of sensitivity and awareness towards the surrounding and the academic culture differences shown by pre-service teachers will be beneficial to the PD during teaching practice.

Seeing all the influence of international teaching internships to pre-service teachers’ PD, it is also crucial to evaluate this program to create even better teaching practice for pre-service teachers in the future. Several pre-service teachers were not taught how to teach young learners beforehand. Therefore, not only do they have to learn by doing, but they also have to face unfamiliarity with young learners’ behavior. Darling-Hammond et al., (2017) emphasized that although there is no exact duration on the adequate amount of practices, it still clearly cannot be established in a one-shot training<sup>53</sup>. Specifically for pre-service teachers, it is crucial to get sufficient training before jumping to the real world of teaching. Although pre-service teachers can learn how to teach students and perform teaching practice simultaneously, this is not an ideal way to acquire teaching and pedagogical skill. Regarding this, Kabilan (2013) had warned of the

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<sup>51</sup> Brad McLennan et al. *Pre-service teachers’ self-efficacy mediates the relationship between career adaptability and career optimism. Teaching and Teacher Education, Vol.63, (April 2017), 177.*

<sup>52</sup> Harsha N. Perera et al. *Teacher self-efficacy profiles: Determinants, outcomes, and generalizability across teaching level. Contemporary Educational Psychology, Vol.58 (July 2019), 197.*

<sup>53</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond. *Teacher education around the world: What can we learn from international practice? European Journal of Teacher Education, Vol.40 Number 3 (May 2017), 298.*

danger of the lack of preparation<sup>54</sup>. He found that being unprepared hinders and brings bad performance on pre-service teachers' teaching practice. This posited that pre-service teachers need decent preparation on specific teaching skills before involving in young learner education.

## CONCLUSION

This research has shown how international teaching practice influences pre-service teachers' professional development. There are three general aspects of PD that were influenced by doing an international teaching internship. First, it triggers pre-service teachers to perform teaching practice better. The entire activity of teaching, starting from mapping the lesson plan, practicing in the class, and evaluating the practice, is highly relying on pedagogical competencies of pre-service teachers. Hence, pre-service teachers are ought to show their best practices during teaching. This is not only because the performances are evaluated by in-service teachers and university lecturers, but also because they genuinely wanted to provide a good learning experience for the students. The struggles faced by those pre-service teachers are managed well during teaching internships by reflecting on previous practices and trying new teaching methodology for the students.

Second, pre-service teachers get the chance to learn a new language as they teach in Thai. Knowing that students barely speak English, pre-service teachers were willing to learn to speak basic Thai. This will not only benefit the language skill of each pre-service teacher, but also strengthen the student-teachers relationship as they grow the sense of belonging while learning Thai language. Pre-service teachers also had a lot of chances to use English as daily language and classroom language. Although only some pre-service teachers taught English in the classroom, all of them were using it in daily communication. Even though some pre-service teachers taught English in the classroom, they are unable to use

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<sup>54</sup> Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan. *A phenomenological study of an international teaching practicum: Pre-service teachers' experiences of professional development. Teaching and Teacher Education, Vol.36 (November 2013), 200.*

it as the main mode of instruction because of the students' low level of English. Therefore, pre-service teachers had to reword the instructions using much easier language for students to understand. This allows pre-service teachers to discover ways to communicate with young learners which are beneficial for their professional development.

Third, the differences in academic culture allow pre-service teachers to broaden the understanding of other cultures. In this study, pre-service teachers were exposed to several academic culture differences, such as students' learning preferences and methodologies. By having these differences, pre-service teachers' creativity in designing suitable lesson plans is being examined. By teaching elementary school students, pre-service teachers also developed the sense of warmth and responsibility to students' academic growth.

These conclusions featured several influences of international teaching internships on their professional development. Future programs should create a clear pathway and regulation on conducting teaching internships to assist pre-service teachers in gaining a broader perspective of classroom teaching. By understanding these aspects, future pre-service teachers and university lecturers can reflect and elaborate a set of programs that can be more helpful for both pre-service teachers and the students.

## **SUGGESTION**

This research has provided valuable insights about the influence of international teaching internships in Thailand to pre-service teachers' PD. As this study employed a qualitative design, a generalization does not apply for the results. A bigger study with more population samples would be a research breakthrough since many universities in Indonesia started to send students to practice teaching internationally. Therefore, a quantitative study covering the framework and the solutions to the problem would overcome this limitation. Additionally, this study is done only in Sunan Ampel State Islamic University Surabaya which does not represent all universities in Indonesia. Not only to get a general picture on how international teaching practices around Indonesia, but

future researchers can also explore pre-service teachers' attitudes toward the program since this is one of the sustained activities in teacher education. Pre-service teachers' perception is crucial to add an additional value of a program's evaluation alongside the theoretical perspectives.

Hence, by understanding the quality of quantitative and qualitative study, future researchers can decide what is best to fill the gap of knowledge. This will benefit the future international teaching internship to design a complete and structured teaching practice for pre-service teachers. In addition to that, the field of research will also be rich with many studies discussing the PD of pre-service teachers as they are future educators in Indonesia.

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