

Developing Pre-Service Teachers' Professionalism

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Developing Pre-Service Teachers' Professionalism Through Sharing and Receiving Experiences in The *Kampus Mengajar* Program

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Abstract: The low quality of teachers in Indonesia indicates that its current professional development programs are yet to obtain the ideal form. Therefore, this research aims to determine how the kampus mengajar (teaching campus) program can be used to improve the professionalism of pre-service teachers to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from 11 pre-service teachers, 2 supervisors, and 2 principals involved in the kampus mengajar program with 3 months of professional experience placed in elementary schools spread across various parts of Indonesia. The collected data were analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. The results show that although the kampus mengajar program experiences various challenges, it can be used by pre-service teachers to enhance their professionalism through sharing and receiving experiences. Furthermore, this program can be an alternative model in improving the professionalism of pre-service teachers to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Keywords: *Kampus mengajar*, professional experience, pre-service teachers, sharing and receiving experience

Introduction

The low quality of in-service and pre-service teachers in Indonesia shows that its various professional development programs are yet to obtain an ideal form. The World Bank reports that this profession was awarded low test scores on aspects of subject matter, including knowledge, pedagogic skills, and general intelligence (Chang et al., 2013). They are also unable to effectively control the students who have low motivation, dedication, and thinking independence, including immature emotions (Tanang & Abu, 2014). In Indonesia, various professional development

programs and other forms of training have been carried out, although these have been considered ineffective in improving teacher professionalism (Jalal, 2009).

One of the main problems related to teacher professionalism is the gap between instilling theoretical and practical knowledge in the classroom (Cheng et al., 2010; Kwenda et al., 2017; Hudson et al., 2008). There is a disassociation between program components organized by universities and the actual needs of elementary schools (Zeichner, 2010, 2009). The gap between theoretical and practical knowledge also occurs because pre-service teachers are shaped by their personal experiences and opinions about this profession. According to Kertesz and Downing (2016), this tends to cause dissonance between universities and elementary schools. The lack of reciprocity results in discord between pre-service teachers' preparation with school expectations and requirements (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Meanwhile, Darling-Hammond (2009) highlights the disparity between the programs organized by campuses regarding field experiences. Although these are incorporated into the curriculum, the time spent by both pre-service teachers and their supervisors is often not properly planned. Besides, they are often left to work independently without guidance or supervision from the university (Darling-Hammond, 2009; Valencia et al., 2010).

Empirical evidence shows that field experience is an alternative producing professionals (Loo et al., 2019; Sulistiyo et al., 2021; Le Cornu, 2016). It is an important opportunity for pre-service teachers to improve their skills (Adnyani, 2015; Ingvarson et al., 2014). This provides the best opportunity to learn and gain personal teaching efficacy after graduation (Gray et al., 2017). For pre-service teachers, centers were provided for professional learning in the workplace to understand the daily realities of school life. Professional experience creates opportunities to harmonize ideas and theories learned at the university. Field experience is a meaningful and practical teaching skill that is considered a basic need for pre-service teachers (Kennedy-clark et al., 2018). Deed et al. (2011) stated that professionalism requires balancing the time devoted to theoretical learning at the university and the workplace. It was further clarified that there needs to be a meaningful integration of the 2 experiences to enhance professional outcomes. Pre-service teachers are expected to develop a teaching philosophy involving the transfer of theoretical knowledge acquired at the university into an authentic learning context under real conditions. Teachers gain comprehensive and insightful constructive feedback from more experienced tutors who act as mentors (Genç, 2016; Zeichner, 2010). Therefore, pre-service teachers need more practical opportunities on their way to becoming professional (Genç, 2016).

The Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) or Freedom to Learn-Independent Campus policy is one of the breakthroughs initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (*Kemendikbudristek*) in providing field experience for pre-service teachers. This policy offers some form of autonomy to these institutions and freedom for students to select the desired program. It provides them with a broader learning experience and space to deepen their

knowledge for 3 semesters, namely 2 (equivalent to 40 credits) off campus and 1 (equivalent to 20 credits) in other study programs. This includes internships, practical work, teaching assistantships, entrepreneurship, student exchanges, and research (Qorib & Harfiani, 2021). Moreover, this program is expected to improve the graduates soft and hard skills competence to ensure that they are prepared for the dynamic needs and as future leaders of the nation who are superior, moral, and ethical (Suhartoyo et al., 2020). This policy grants students the freedom to think either individually or in groups, thereby producing superior, critical, creative, collaborative, and innovative graduates in the future. *The Merdeka belajar* program is expected to trigger their involvement to learn (Siregar et al., 2020). Besides, it aids college students in exploring their greatest potentials, including teachers, to independently improve the quality of learning (Dewobroto, 2020; Prayogo, 2020; Sheh et al., 2021). For pre-service teachers, this program is expected to reduce the gap between the theoretical aspect learned on campus and the real needs of the school. It is assumed that there is a missing link between the courses offered by these universities and the actual needs of these users, therefore, graduates of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty are considered to be incompetent. Based on the research background, the problem is how the *kampus mengajar* program aids pre-service teachers to develop their professionalism, and its potential to bridge the gap between theory and practice are interesting aspects to be studied.

Research questions

How can pre-service teachers utilize the *kampus mengajar* program to enhance their professional experience?

Research purposes

This research explores pre-service teachers' experiences in using the *kampus mengajar* program to enhance their professional experiences.

Literature review

The meaning of professionalism and teacher professional development policies in Indonesia

The concept of "professionalism" is used to represent individual competencies and expertise as well as the quality of the work discharged (Eggleston, 2018). It is based on 3 essences: using a specific scientific building, rendering services to others in the community, and possessing a self-regulated code of ethics to maintain high

1 morale, quality, and ethical standards (Bair, 2016; Creasy, 2015; Heck & Ambrosetti, 2018). Professionalism has been defined in different ways, from training to personnel development to more efficient and effective professional courses (Eickelmann & Drossel, 2020; Mukuna, 2013; Roberts, 2011).

Leung (2012) categorized it into 2, independent and managerial. The first level or definition 1 this term, which is also called transformative professionalism (Evans & Homer, 2014), refers to how teacher 45 view their practices, knowledge, beliefs, and skills as well as critical reflection on past teaching experiences as learners, their abilities, and future directives. The second definition is managerial professionalism which refers to what teachers expect as determined by official authorities such as the ministry of education. In other words, the first level of professional development is a bottom-up, personal, and self-initiative process, while the latter is top-down, institutional, and other people-oriented (Dehghan, 2020).

Several preliminary studies have identified the teacher professional development principles as being effective and successful. According to Lessing & De Witt (2007), the 3 aspects include workshops, personal values and programs, and teaching approaches. Teacher professional development programs also need to enable them work with other colleagues to create organizations that support learning. They need to be given the opportunity to become practitioners, share knowledge and commitment, work with community members 3 implement coherent curricula and supportive systems for the students, as well as collaborate with them in ways that advance their understanding and skills. Teacher 33's professional development aims to improve their knowledge and skills through orientation, training, and support 3 that enhance the quality of the teaching and learning process. It also focuses on core competencies such as improving their abilities, understanding the students, managing teaching skills and practice, knowledge of other disciplines, and appreciating this profession (Lessing & De Witt, 2007; Tanang & Abu, 2014). Preliminary 3 research stated that professional development activities positively impact the teachers' beliefs and practices as well as students' performances in learning and educational reform in general (Tanang & Abu, 2014). These programs include relevant activities such as improved qualifications, updating tutors' knowledge and understanding of 3 the subjects taught, practicing teaching students from different backgrounds, developing practical competencies and skills, learning new teaching methodologies, adopting learning innovations and technologies, improving ethical professionalism, as well as acquiring knowledge and skills to anticipate societal changes. 9

In Indonesia, professional development programs are carried out for both in-service and pre-service teachers. Several of them have been implemented for in-service teachers, such as PLPG, PPG, and SMT in remote areas. Furthermore, they need to participate in various independent programs to develop their professionalism, such as MGMP. The Education Personnel Education Institution (LPTK) is the main initiative for pre-service Eng 13 teachers in Indonesia, including those employed in state and private universities whose main role is to provide education and pedagogical training for those interested in teaching at both junior and senior high schools (Zein,

2016). However, through professional teacher education, the government is trying to improve the academic system by increasing their qualifications and skills.

Some research stated that the impact of teacher certification only improves their standard of living. Fahmi et al. (2011) concluded that it does not affect the students' achievement. Furthermore, Abbas (2013) stated that the teacher certification program slightly contributed to improving the quality of national education. Teachers in Indonesia did not significantly improve their quality and performed poorly even after completing the certification program and receiving a salary increase. Helping them update their knowledge and skills in dealing with certain changes and managing human resources is needed. Additionally, professional development aids in achieving better performance in the aforementioned matter (Tanang & Pu, 2014). The essence of professional development is centered on teacher learning and transferring their knowledge into practice for the benefit of the students (Avalos, 2011). Walter and Briggs (2012) reported that it is effective due to (a) the inclusion of concrete and classroom-based skills from outside the school, (b) teacher involvement in the selected fields to develop and carry out certain activities, (c) collaboration programs with peers, (d) providing opportunities for mentoring and coaching, (e) continuous efforts regularly, and (f) support for effective school leadership.

Professional Development for Pre-service Teachers

One of the effective programs provides field experience for pre-service teachers. This helps individuals become tutors by learning the useful about teaching with the support of a good mentor (Grossman & McDonald, 2008). University-based pre-service teacher education is in a state of transition from a training model that emphasizes skill acquisition and competency mastery to a practice-based type centered on participation, involvement, and reflection (Grossman & McDonald, 2008). This practice-based shift brings to the fore the important role of cooperation in teacher preparation as primary mediators of field experience in pre-service teacher education (Hoffman et al., 2015).

Professional experience is relevant, and pre-service teachers typically describe as the most important aspect of their program (Standal et al., 2014), partly because they value the opportunity to be mentored by experienced tutors during their teaching practice (Crasborn & Hennissen, 2010). There is little doubt that effective mentoring is essential for the practical development of PST in the workplace (Loughran, 2013).

Kampus Mengajar Program in Developing Pre-Service Teacher Professionalism

The *kampus mengajar* program as a subsidiary of the *Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) or Freedom to Learn-Independent Campus policy is one

of the breakthroughs of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (*Kemendikbudristek*) in terms of providing field experience for pre-service teachers. This autonomous academic institution and complicated bureaucracy allow students to freely select the desired program (Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2020). It is expected to improve the graduates' competence, both soft and hard skills, to be relevant to the changing needs and produce future superior and morally ethical leaders (Suhartoyo et al., 2020). This policy aids students to freely engage in critical thinking, thereby becoming creative, collaborative, and innovative. The *kampus Merdeka* program is expected to increase students' involvement in learning (Siregar et al., 2020; Widiyono et al., 2021). In accordance with this program, college students explore their greatest potentials, including teachers, to innovatively and independently improve the learning quality (Sherly et al., 2021). For pre-service teachers, it is expected to reduce the gap between the theories learnt on campus and the real needs of the field. Moreover, it is assumed that there is a missing link between the courses taught at these universities and the users' needs, thereby producing incompetent graduates of the Teacher Training and Education Faculty.

Weaknesses in the literature and the novelty of this research

Some research has been carried out on the *kampus mengajar* program. Based on the acquired results, there are at least 3 trends related to this matter, such as response to policies, the organizers' readiness, as well as its impact on students' skills. The research on the first trend was carried out by Wahyuni & Anshori (2021), who examined the implementation of the *Merdeka belajar* policy at Medan State University. It was reported that the students are aware of the importance of learning discourse on independent campuses, although some do not agree with the program. This research stated that low student literacy and lack of stakeholders' involvement were due to low student literacy. Students also believed that this program made it more challenging to graduate as planned. Other studies state that most universities, especially those in remote areas, have not been in a hurry to adopt the program, and the unique situation of each presents certain obstacles during its implementation, such as students who lack understanding of the policy (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020).

The second trend was carried out by Yusuf (2021), who analyzed the relationship between the *kampus mengajar* program and university stakeholders' readiness. By adopting quantitative methods, the readiness of lecturers, students, and government support turned out to have a positive impact on the enacted policy. Anwar (2021), described the implementation of *kampus mengajar* program at Muhammadiyah Elementary School 1 Padas. It was reported that in 2021 first, teaching activities first consist of face-to-face and online learning, including home visits. Second, technological adaptation assists teachers in adopting teaching media and materials in accordance with the curriculum. Third, the administration carried out

by the students was to aid in the preparation of learning tools as administrative completeness. The implementation of the *kampus mengajar* program offered the necessary experience and empowerment as well as had a positive impact during the COVID-19 pandemic. Preliminary research stated that the *kampus mengajar* program triggers the students' readiness because it focuses on active learning, concept mapping, and value clarification based on information and communication technology (Ige, 2019). This educational policy transformation is also in line with the academic theory and practice during the transition, stabilization, and growth potential periods (Strunc, 2020; Tarman & Chigisheva, 2017). Meanwhile, research on the third trend was carried out by Widiyono et al. (2021), and it was reported that the implementation of the *Kampus Mengajar* program has a positive impact on students, such as triggering their interest in learning, as well as integrated literacy and numeracy skills. They also enjoy certain benefits, including being able to provide direct teaching experience in order to develop interpersonal and leadership skills. Yohana et al. (2021) examined the factors that influence the entrepreneurship program in the *Kampus Merdeka* policy by using 5 universities as the research objects. It was reported that the campus policy factors, apprenticeship programs, and exploration of local potentials positively affect competency development, implementation, and entrepreneurial learning.

A review of the previous studies shows that there is little or no interest in analyzing the professional experiences gained through *Kampus mengajar* program. This is because it had only been running for 1 year. Therefore, this research has the potential to develop an alternative model to develop the professionalism of pre-service teachers.

Methods

Research Type

A phenomenological approach was adopted to complete this research because it allows directly exploring the participants' experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon being studied. It also focuses on the embodiment of connections and the context in which people experience certain phenomena (Sohn et al., 2017). This approach focuses on occurrences in natural settings (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Rudolph, 2018). The experiences of pre-service teachers in terms of engaging in *kampus mengajar* program to develop their professionalism was analyzed in this research. Informed consent was given by the participants who were reminded that (1) their involvement was voluntary, (2) all data collected are de-identified when used to draft publications, and (3) they are not required to answer unwanted questions.

Moreover, all their names were written using the code R1-R15 to ensure the confidentiality of their identities.

Participants

The participants consisted of 11 pre-service teachers, 2 principals, and 2 supervisors, who were involved in *kampus mengajar* program for 3 months. They were determined by the purposive sampling techniques and fulfilled the following criteria 1) involved in the *kampus mengajar* program, 2) were science students (pre-service teachers), 3) placement in elementary schools, 4) volunteered to participate in the research until it was completed. Meanwhile, 2 lecturers were assigned by the universities to supervise the pre-service teachers, and the principal heads the school where the students teach. Overall, the participants consisted of 13 women and 2 men.

Research Procedure

Before data collection, a letter of permission was requested from the university's vice-chancellor, where the student²² participated in the *kampus mengajar* program. Information was acquired through semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview was held with the participants as recommended by Creswell & ¹⁴h (2016) in accordance with a phenomenological study. This did not only provide an opportunity for participants to share their experiences rather to gain more insight (Schwartz et al., 2021).

Interviews were carried out based on certain guidelines, and it was performed once or twice with different participants. The first one was held by sending a list of questions through email to the participants, and they were given a maximum of 2 weeks to complete the forms. Based on the allocated time, 13 of them responded on time, while the remaining 2 responded in the next 2 days after receiving confirmation. The answers obtained through email were re-transcribed, and the participants' answers were read in their entirety to get an overall idea. From this stage, answers which needed deepening were identified through virtual or zoom meetings. A total of 7 identified participants stated their ability to hold a second interview. Each selected the time according to their desires, with the duration lasting for a minimum and maximum of 22 minutes and 56 minutes, respectively. Interestingly, each was recorded and transcribed verbatim afterward, besides member checking of transcripts was used to increase data reliability.

Data analysis technique

⁶ An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method was adopted to

analyze and interpret the participants' experiences in utilizing the *kampus mengajar* program to develop professional skills (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The stages of data review adapted from the analysis model (Smith & Shinebourne, 2012) is based on 4 steps. Each transcript was carefully read in the first phase, relevant quotes were selected and further extracted into a word document. The extracted quotes were grouped into micro themes and coded with certain colors in the second step. Certain themes were produced at this stage, and each was considered a "description of life experiences" (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Furthermore, in the third step, the micro themes were re-examined to produce new, larger one when both similar and different quotes for each emerging theme were connected. In most cases, these micro themes were converted to sub-themes. In the fourth step, the critical discussion took place among team members to confirm interpretations, identified, and sub-themes.

Findings

This research aims to explore the pre-service teachers' experiences gained from the *kampus mengajar* program to enhance their professionalism. Data analysis produces 4 themes, such as sharing and receiving experiences, professional development ability, and program challenges. The data analysis results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Data analysis results

Theme	Sub-theme	Number of Participants
Sharing experience	Successfully guiding students	15
	Helping school administration	10
	Helping teachers adapt to technology	12
	Developing school programs	10
Receiving experience	Being trusted	12
	Getting the opportunity	11
	Best practices	7
Professional skills develop	Soft skills develop	12
	Trained skills	10
	Formation of attitude	10
Program challenges	Time management	12
	Program socialization	12
	Coordination	15

Sharing experience

This theme implies that while participating in the *kampus mengajar* program, pre-service teachers had the opportunity to share their experiences, skills, and knowledge with the schools where they taught. It was supported by 100% of

participants, and it is divided into several sub-themes, including successfully guiding the students, helping the school administration and teachers adapt to technology, and developing school programs.

Successfully guiding students

Pre-service teachers' experience in successfully guiding students is an interesting one, particularly during the *kampus mengajar* program. This is manifested in the form of fun learning in class, to motivate the students and ensure they do not get bored easily, as well as accompanied by home visits. All participants (n=15) reported this event during the data collection process, as shown in the following comments.

I taught citizenship education, namely how to practice Pancasila daily. They happily participated in learning (p2, 10 to 13).

Similar comments were also conveyed by many other participants "I have succeeded in assisting students through the home visit program" (P4, 3 to 5). "I developed the subject matter from thematic books to be more creative and ensure the students are not easily bored and absorb the lessons more quickly" (p2, 88 to90). The pre-service teachers' abilities to accompany these learners are evidence of their successful experiences enhancing their professionalism.

The valuable experience I gained during the *kampus mengajar* program was being able to provide varied learning where previously students studied with the teacher only with the lecture method, but now I use the learning method by inviting students to play roles directly (P2, 3-8).

For P2, who was assigned to an elementary school in East Oku Regency, South Sumatra, adopted role-play learning, and it made the students happy because teachers at school rarely applied this method.

Helping school administration

The experience gained from helping school administration included setting exam questions, report cards, and supervising these activities. P5, a 7th-semester student, assigned to the State Elementary School 02 Sriwangi, stated that during the *kampus mengajar* program, they often engaged in helping school administration. "P5 personally executed this activity because the existing teachers were not used to the use of technology, such as laptops". Based on the fact that none of them were capable, P5 was forced to share the experiences gained and this made P5 to completely understand the duties. "P5 realized that the teacher's job was not only teaching" (P5).

Similarly, P1 reported, as follows:

My most valuable experience was when my colleagues and I helped the teacher council prepare for school exams, starting with typing the questions, making report cards, and participating in the supervisory activities (P1, 3 to 6).

Other participants also shared their experiences.

Some also helped the administration by stamping books stored in the warehouse because the school does not yet have a library and assisting the teachers' needs (p1, 17 to 20).

Helping teachers adapt to school technology

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During online learning implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic, technological adaptation was a major problem faced by virtually all teachers. The sudden demand caused the majority not to have enough time to upgrade their ability to use technological devices in learning, as stated by one of the participants below:

My friends and I held a workshop to introduce a "Canva" design application to facilitate teachers to create learning media, certificates, banners for school activities, or concept maps. Besides that, my friends and I also held a workshop on Google Workspace consisting of Google Classroom, Google Meetings, Google Forms, and Google Drive. This was based on the fact that initially, only a few of them were able to use Google Workspace to support distance learning (P4, 16 to 24).

The story of P4 shows that majority of the teachers are not yet proficient in using technology to assist online learning. This is, therefore, a blessing for pre-service teachers because they have the opportunity to share their experiences about the use of various platforms in online learning. "The program organized by P4 starts with adapting to zoom meetings, google meet, Microsoft Excel, and how to scan using a cellphone" (p1, 15 to 17). A similar story was also reported by P3, as follows:

I discovered that the teachers used manual (handwritten) report cards, which was quite different from the surrounding schools that had switched to the automatic type with the help of Microsoft Excel and similar applications or programs. This prompted me to design automatic report cards using Microsoft Excel to help the school adapt to technology. They received positive responses from the teachers, students, and parents (P3, 7 to 12).

Developing school programs

Pre-service teachers also shared certain experiences in developing school programs, such as making webinars, holding national day commemoration competitions, engaging in-home visits, and forming study groups. One of the participants stated that they engaged in-home visit programs because it was discovered that some students did not have the motivation to learn while studying from home.

Home visit programs are for students who have no motivation to learn. They are guided and assisted until they become active in learning (P4, 9 to 12).

Additionally, the formation of study groups is also needed during the pandemic because it aids students who have learning difficulties. "I create study groups for lower grade students and guide them in their reading guidance" (P5, 18 to 20). Another participant explained as follows:

Another valuable experience was when my friends and I made a national webinar with the theme "Improving Teacher Competence through Fun Learning and Dancing in the New Normal Era." My friends and I were very happy because there were many enthusiasts from school teachers who wanted to take participate, and in a short time, it was completed without any obstacles (P1, 7 to 11).

Receiving experience

The theme receiving experience simply means that during the *kampus mengajar* program, the participants acquired knowledge, and skills from the school, especially learning directly from their teachers. Likewise, in sharing experience, 100% of participants also reported receiving experience while attending the *kampus mengajar* program. The sub-themes are being trusted, getting the appropriate opportunity, and best practices.

Being trusted

Most of the participants (n=12) enthusiastically shared how they were trusted by the school to carry out various activities, either in the form of hosting an event, contributing ideas for its development, or the provision of teaching materials. P1, a student assigned at the State Elementary School 1 Cahaya Mulya, was entrusted with hosting the graduation ceremony. "P1 felt more confident because she properly executed the task" (P1, 43 to 45). In line with the P1's story, a student assigned to a private elementary school in Central Bangka Regency, Bangka Belitung Province, stated that

The classroom teacher trusted them to provide teaching materials in ICT learning and help assess the students during practice. This experience gave me a clearer picture of tomorrow when I become a teacher in developing learning materials (P7, 24 to 29).

Getting the opportunity

Getting the opportunity during a *kampus mengajar* program enhances pre-service teachers' professionalism. The participants shared many stories about accompanying the students during competitions, giving speeches in a series of events, especially in the Ramadhan month, aiding children with special needs, and contributing ideas for school development. P6 reported his experiences when he had the opportunity to assist students in various competitions and succeeded in leading them to win at the regency and provincial levels.

At the end of the *kampus mengajar* program, I was happy because the students I mentored won the competition. Meanwhile, at the sub-district level, those who participated in the dance and weaving competition each won 3rd place. They were also invited at the regency level, and *alhamdulillah* the student who took part in the weaving competition, won 1st position while those that participated in dancing won 2nd place. All thanks to the teachers who cooperated, the students are able to participate in the weaving competition, besides, I am excited, touched, and proud (P6, 7 to 13).

P5 reported that their trust in him when he attended various meetings to convey ideas made him feel valued.

During the meeting, I was also allowed to express my opinion regarding any experience during my time at the school. I feel appreciated by the teachers irrespective of whether I am still a student (P5, 56 to 58).

Similarly, P7 reported that accompanying students with special needs was a valuable opportunity for him to understand their learning characteristics. "The opportunity was given to me by the class teacher to accompany them directly. Therefore, I was privileged to understand how much students learn" (P7, 35 to 37). On another occasion, P6 also reported that "I was allowed to give a speech for 2 days at a short-term Islamic boarding school activity during the *Ramadhan* month. At first, I was embarrassed however, thank God I was able to deliver it properly" (P6, 40 to 43).

Best practices

The *kampus mengajar* program has provided best practices for pre-service teachers, such as carrying out learning, increasing students' motivation, engaging in-home visits, working selflessly, being a parent figure, teaching sincerely, giving rewards, not discriminating against them, and properly managing the school program. Interestingly, more than half of the participants recounted this experience (n=9). P3, a student, assigned to an Islamic private elementary school in West Bangka Regency, Bangka Belitung Province, told how she got best practices in managing character education and strengthening certain programs.

I discovered an interesting thing about religious character education. The school is good at implementing this subject, and the parents really appreciate this, which also amazes me. This religious character is applied based on *ahlussunah wal jama'ah* (P3, 14 to 18).

In contrast to P3, who gained several experiences in managing a school program, P4 (a student assigned to a state elementary school in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta) tells how she obtained best practices from this learning activity.

I gained experience from the teachers in terms of executing the learning process. Besides, I am aware of how the teachers continuously motivate the students by properly delivering the learning materials and communicating with them (P4, 43 to 47).

A similar experience was also shared by P4 and P7. P4 witnessed how the teachers visited the students' respective homes. "I came to understand how they are guided selflessly, regardless of their background." Furthermore, "I also understood how to act as a second parent figure (P4, 78 to 82). P7's story reinforces this subtheme, "I gained certain experiences from the classroom teacher about how to give attractive rewards and teach sincerely without discriminating" (P7 92 to 95).

Professional skills develop

The sharing and receiving experiences gained by pre-service teachers during the *kampus mengajar* program aided them to develop pedagogic, professional, personal, and social competencies needed to boost their professionalism. This theme is formed by 2 sub-themes as follows, soft and honed skills.

Soft skills develop

Soft skills are one of the important abilities that need to be embraced by prospective teachers in terms of carrying out their duties professionally. It aids in establishing communication, maintaining good relations with colleagues, students, and the surrounding community, and being inclusive and developing emotional

maturity, tolerance, and social sensitivity. The *kampus mengajar* program has enabled the research participants to acquire all these attributes. An interesting story was told by P8, a student assigned to one of the state elementary schools in Ogan Komering Ilir Regency, South Sumatra.

I learned how to communicate with teachers from different religious backgrounds. In this school, the students were of 2 beliefs, Hinduism and Islam. Based on my observations, the majority of Islamic students often discriminated against those with different beliefs. I was forced to teach them how to tolerate one another. Therefore, I developed the habit of reading stories related to tolerance in the mornings (P8, 46 to 55).

P2's participation in *the kampus mengajar* program impacted "My communication, leadership, and self-confidence skills improved" (P2, 69 to 73). Similarly, P10 stated that "My personality was developed, especially in the aspect of discipline, and ensuring there is harmony among my peers, mentors, and students" (P10, 40 to 43). For P1, this program triggered some attributes. "My social sensitivity is getting higher because I often communicate with teachers, parents, and all the students" (P1, 53 to 56, P3, 59 to 60). Meanwhile, P8, a student assigned to the state elementary school in Ogan Komering Ilir Regency, South Sumatra, stated that schools outside Java give her concern about the existence of inequality in this country.

Interacting with principals, teachers, and students made me realize how visible the gap is between these institutes and the elementary ones during my internship in Yogyakarta (P8, 3 to 6).

Skills are more honed

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One advantage of field experience is that pre-service teachers have the opportunity to put their knowledge into practice, although this is not necessarily acquired while studying on campus, therefore, their skills are honed, as stated by P9.

While following the *kampus mengajar* program, I felt happy to be able to teach in Elementary School. What my friends and I gained from it, was not obtained on campus (P9 4 to 11).

The opportunity to instill knowledge in the real-world context tend to ultimately hone the skills of pre-service teachers, as reported by P2.

The *kampus mengajar* program serves as a forum to practice my skills, gain experience, and turn it into an extraordinary lesson (P2, 138 to 141).

Program challenges

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Although the *kampus mengajar* program offers several benefits for pre-service teachers to enhance their professionalism, it is undeniable that it has numerous challenges that need to be overcome. All participants (n=15) shared this experience, besides, this theme is formed by 3 sub-themes, such as time management, program socialization, and coordination between organizers.

Program socialization

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As a new initiative by the Ministry of Education and Culture (launched in early 2020), program socialization is a major problem in implementing *kampus mengajar*. Moreover, all participants complained about this issue (n=15). The lack of socialization caused this program not to run optimally. P11, a student from the Islamic Religious Education study program assigned to State Elementary School 99/I Benteng Bawah, stated that "Hopefully, the *kampus mengajar* needs to be socialized because many students still do not know about this program" (P11, 88 to 90). The other participants had similar experiences, as recounted by P2.

Many students who participated in the *kampus mengajar* program are still not aware of the materials to be taught in elementary schools. Moreover, they do not know how to maximize their objectives (P2, 160 to 163).

P5 stated a similar experience, as follows:

The socialization of *Kampus mengajar* needs to be expanded, assuming it's possible because many students are still not aware of this program (P5, 76 to 80).

Coordination between organizers

Lack of socialization has caused most of the parties involved in *kampus mengajar* not to have the same perception about this program. Therefore, there is a need for coordination between organizers. This challenge was also shared by all participants (n=15). P11 recounts her experience, as follows:

Kampus mengajar should be socialized in schools that have been selected as partners to ensure there are no misunderstandings because many equate this program with internships and real work lectures (KKN). Meanwhile, whenever my friends and I, who are participants, do not come to class, as usual, one of the teachers says, "you need to teach?" even though this program focuses more on Literacy and Numeracy (P11, 92 to 98).

Other participants also discussed the lack of coordination between the organizers, which resulted in the selection of schools that did not fulfill the criteria. Based on the interview held with P7, it was reported, as follows:

The selected schools really need to be observed to ascertain whether it deserves to be improved or assisted through student creativity, aspirations or attention of the organizers in terms of realizing program (P7, 114 to117).

This is especially for students who initially participated could be converted/recognized but not at all hence many students were very depressed in joining this *kampus mengajar* (P11, 91-92).

P11's experience shows that the idea or initiative made ²⁹ by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology regarding the recognition of *kampus mengajar* program and its division into course credits has not been fully understood by the host universities.

Time management

Time management is also one of the themes that were complained about by many participants, including being out of sync with the learning schedule at school, or the university, which is considered less specific, therefore, its utilization becomes ineffective. P1 reported that "I felt that the allotted time was inappropriate because when the school lesson was over, I had just been sent to the field, and this was regretted by many teachers" (P1, 83 to 85). This issue also occurred because the schedule for the assignment and that of the campus also coincided. This is burdensome for the participants because the majorities are undergraduates. "As a result, I missed a few courses on campus, and for college, I had to work hard because I have a huge responsibility" (P11, 83 to 85). The division of the *kampus mengajar* program schedule was also an obstacle for some participants, as explained by P8.

There is a need for more detailed scheduling of the objectives to be achieved during the assignment, such as helping out with the teaching process, including ad²ministration and technological adaptation. Therefore, the intention of the Ministry of Education and Culture as the goal of the *kampus mengajar* program is carried out properly (P8, 83 to 86).

³⁴ **Discussion**

The main findings of this research show that pre-service teachers benefit from the *kampus mengajar* program through sharing and receiving experiences to enhance their professionalism. They share by successfully guiding students helping school administrators and colleagues to adapt to te⁴⁴chnology and other activities. Meanwhile, receiving experience was obtained because pre-service teachers are trusted by the school and can get the best practices on various educational programs that have been theoretically studied on campus. This research resolves various concerns about the

professional development problem, especially with respect to the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge delivered in the classroom, as stated by Cheng et al. (2010) and Hudson et al. (2008). Meanwhile, Darling-Hammond (2009) specifically highlighted the lack of relationship between the programs organized by the campus and the teacher's field experience. This research explicitly reduces the gap between professional development's theoretical and practical aspects.

The experience gained by pre-service teachers during their 3-month assignment is an important opportunity to improve the needed skills (Adnyani, 2015; Ingvarson et al., 2014). This centers on professional learning at the workplace, where they understand the daily realities of school life. Professional experience provides opportunities for pre-service teachers to harmonize ideas and theories that were learned at the university (Kennedy-clark et al., 2018). They are expected to develop a teaching philosophy by transferring the acquired theoretical knowledge into an authentic learning context under real conditions. This process gained comprehensive and insightful constructive feedback from more experienced teachers perceived as mentors (Genç, 2016; Zeichner, 2010). Therefore, pre-service teachers need more practical opportunities to boost their professionalism (Genç, 2016).

However, becoming a professional teacher requires balancing the time devoted to studying various theories learned at the university and learning in real-world contexts. There is a need for the meaningful integration of these 2 experiences to improve prospective teachers' learning and professional outcomes (Deed et al., 2011). Interestingly, these sharing and receiving of experiences are also described by Brante (2011) regarding the need for a link between scientific theory and professional practice. It was referred to as a "dialectic between know-why and know-how, based on a shared platform of science and profession" (Brante, 2011). According to Brante, the meeting between practitioners and scientists is relevant for both parties because the model quality depends on being "developed, modified, and occasionally rejected by input from both parties, namely from a scientific or theoretical and professional or applied aspects." In this research, practitioners mentor these teachers when they are given assignments. The *kampus mengajar* program offered real and authentic experiences in guiding students, performing administrative tasks, helping their colleagues adapt to technology, and developing various academic tasks. Furthermore, they also gain trust, opportunities, and best practices from their mentors in studying the professional world of learning. Scientists are played by field supervisors as well as the theories learnt on campus. All these processes are packaged in sharing and receiving experiences. It is assumed that the "picture of the subject matter is perceived as a shared perspective of basic causal mechanisms" (Brante, 2011).

The sharing and receiving of experiences led to the development of professional competencies. In this research, it was reported that by participating in the *kampus mengajar* program, these teachers developed soft and honed skills components. These results reinforce previous findings (Kenny et al., 2014; Kertesz & Downing, 2016; Sim, 2010) stated that collaboration and partnerships between schools and universities tend to support pre-service teachers in terms of improving

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their professionalism. During the placement process, their mentors play a vital role in guiding and boosting their growth (de Dios Martínez Agudo, 2016). In order for this process to be effective, these mentors are expected to possess good communication skills and clearly articulate each party's roles. Therefore, those selected were based on expertise and not just a matter of seniority (Sulistiyo, 2015).

Although the *kampus mengajar* program aids participants in developing their professional experience, it was admitted that it still left some managerial challenges, such as time management, program socialization, and coordination between organizers. Hasty time management causes pre-service teachers to find it difficult to reconcile their various activities at the school and on campus because it coincides. This is exacerbated by the socialization of the program, which is still not optimal. Pre-service teachers, mentors, principals, supervisors, and universities have different perceptions. Therefore, coordination between the ministry of education, culture, research, and technology (*Kemendikbud-ristek*) as the program's host, universities-supervisors, and schools needs to be improved. This condition also aligns with the various challenges encountered in previous field experiences. Valencia et al. (2010), and Hoffman et al. (2015), stated that the lack of coordination between the mentors at schools and supervisors at universities contributed to the substantive support of pre-service teachers.

Generally, these findings indicate the urgency of a stronger theoretical framework on the linkage between the Ministry of Education, universities, and schools as a whole to be more proactive and responsible in producing prospective professional teachers. This is also in line with the post-practical method paradigm where teachers are no longer considered as consumers of theory (Kumaravadivelu, 2012), rather, they are perceived as constructors. The pattern is also relevant to recent studies that propose that professional development is a bottom-up process (Dehghan, 2020). This implies that appropriate professional learning is realized through various "differentiated, and contextualized stages, related to practical, curious, collegial, and collaborative problems." Furthermore, it represents an active process that shapes and promotes the teachers' learning skills (Mockler, 2020). Dewey's experiential theory creates meaningful experiences while engaging in the teaching profession (Schmidt, 2010). This allows pre-service teachers to translate the basics of theoretical courses into practical learning activities in the classroom (Yeigh & Lynch, 2017). Theories learned in universities from reading and analyzing texts, lectures, tutorials, and discussions are also encountered through teaching practice in authentic settings to minimize the gap between this hypothesis and practice (Mudra, 2018). Contextual involvement of pre-service teachers is important. Burns (2009), and Richards & Farrell (2005), stated that "teacher learning is not perceived as translating knowledge and theory into practice rather as an effort to embrace new ones by participating in certain social contexts, activities, and processes. This is sometimes called "practitioner knowledge," the primary source of practice and understanding for teachers.

Conclusion

This research discovered that the *kampus mengajar* program is utilized by pre-service teachers to share and receive experiences. With this reciprocal process, all parties benefit from the process. Mentors and school teachers tend to upgrade their skills relating to managerial practice and classroom learning by sharing insights and theories. Conversely, pre-service teachers improve themselves because they have the opportunity to experience real school life and best practices, including learning from their mentors. In accordance with this kind of cycle, there tends to be a "contextual inter-relationship between theory and practice" in the professionalism program. Based on these findings, this model is expected to produce teachers who do not only master educational theories, rather, those that skillfully apply what they have learned. In fact, it also upgrades the experiences and skills of teachers who have been in school for a long while. For the organizers, both the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology as well as universities, sharing and receiving experiences is developed into a curriculum modification model for pre-service teachers.

This research has several limitations, first only pre-service teachers, mentors, principals, and supervisors involved in the *kampus mengajar* program were interviewed. The characteristics of the curriculum implemented in the elementary schools are different from those implemented in the next level, which led to the conclusion that this research tends not to be generalized. Furthermore, due to technical limitations, data collection was realized using a single technique, namely interviews. These created an opportunity for future studies to explore this problem from various perspectives. Subsequently, there is a need to ascertain how this *kampus mengajar* program is utilized by pre-service teachers to develop their professionalism by involving various participants and more diverse data collection techniques. It is also important to determine how *Kampus mengajar* alumni adapt to the demands of the real working-class world, such as the significant differences in the readiness of alumni and non-alumni teachers.

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