

A NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF INTERNATIONAL TEACHING PRACTICUM: EFL PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EXPERIENCE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: Despite the existing literature on international teaching practicum in ELT, little attention has been geared toward uncovering the interplay of challenges, coping strategies, and perceived gains of international teaching practicum encountered by EFL pre-service teachers (henceforth, participants). To fill this lacuna, the present narrative study looks at how two Indonesian EFL-preservice teachers experienced an international teaching practicum in Malaysia. The study specifically explores their experiences of challenges, coping strategies, and perceive gains of such an overseas teaching program and how it affects their professional development. The analysis suggests a dynamic interplay that supports the participants' professional development as a teacher candidate. The findings divulge a continuum of self-experiences in international teaching practicum, where participants develop their teaching engagement through facing challenges, enacting strategic behaviours, and perceiving benefits for their professional development. Therefore, the participants were akin to develop valuable insights and a deeper understanding of their professional development.

Key Words: EFL pre-service teacher, international teaching practicum, narrative inquiry, professional development.

INTRODUCTION

In a multicultural learning environment, both teachers and students can learn from one another while gaining insights into the many ideas and philosophies held by various individuals. In 21st-century education, which prioritizes globalization, prospective teachers must actively adopt and incorporate multiculturalism and diversity within their educational programs (Kabilan et al., 2020). This mutual exchange enables teachers and learners to engage in teaching and learning within a supportive atmosphere that fosters stronger connections while promoting a deeper understanding of different perspectives, beliefs, and cultures (Zacharias, 2013).

In the realm of English language education and the globalized world, the domains of teaching English as a Second Language (henceforth ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) should progress and explore internationalization efforts and endeavours that promote multiculturalism and inclusivity (Dumlao & Pinatacan, 2019) which enterprise important aspect to encourage teachers' education programs for initial licensure should primarily concentrate on coursework, field experience, and student internship involvement as well as stated by Lehman and Welch (2020) "An exponential rise in the need for global education instead of International Teaching Practicum"

Many institutions have considered International Teaching Practicum (henceforth ITP) as a means to provide their pre-service teachers (henceforth PSTs) with authentic international learning experiences. A study examining the outcomes of experiential learning revealed that undergraduate students believe that practical experiences outside the classroom contribute positively to their growth and advancement in their chosen fields (Mukeredzi, 2016; Knutson Miller & González, 2015) and enhance their comprehension of multicultural and urban environments (Boyle-Balse, 2005). Participating in international service-learning programs can provide distinct chances to improve academic performance and personal growth as participants engage with community needs that align with their goals (Tambyah, 2019).

It is observed that the implementation of ITP significantly broadens PSTs' experiences, and they may also communicate and promote effective strategies and innovative initiatives they have developed ITP provides PSTs with the chance to observe and collaborate with actual students, teachers, and curriculum in authentic educational environments (Weinberg et al., 2020; Dos Santos, 2019; Kabilan et al., 2017). Learning to teach in an international context, however,

has several challenges. The ITP highly demands PSTs to participate in teaching, engage in discussions with teachers and mentors, and observe experienced teachers' practices (Ahmad et al., 2019). PSTs often encounter some of challenges related to school's curriculum, Language Proficiency and Cultural differences (Kabilan et al., 2020). These challenges encourage and lead to the PSTs' professional development while maintaining their identity as a prospective EFL teacher. Additionally, ITP also gives the EFL PSTs with the opportunity to challenge themselves in International environment that affords meaningful and enriching learning situations, albeit difficult and complicated ones that they have never experienced before.

Considering various aspects such as academic performance, active participation in the community, clarification of career objectives, and the enhancement of cultural skills (Knutson Miller & González, 2015). Heyl and McCarthy (2005) argue that higher education institutions need to equip teachers with international experience and the ability to integrate a global perspective into their teaching. This highlights the specific interest in understanding the potential influence of international experiences on educators' preparation for incorporating a global outlook in their teaching practices. By enhancing the consciousness and admiration of various cultures among aspiring teachers, PSTs can also promote a greater understanding of their own cultural identity, in turn fostering both professional and personal development that will ultimately benefit their future students and classroom (Dos Santos, 2019)

Furthermore, the benefits of ITP experience for PSTs were reported including increasing confidence in speaking and communication, improving teaching skills, developing PSTs' interpersonal skills, and awareness of diversity, new world views of education and culture, understanding of science teaching and learning before the four-step problem-solving, and adapting to new working cultures. The above gains of ITP in terms of enhanced learning experiences and professional growth for PSTs have numerous international practicum projects worldwide, such as in Maldives and Bangladesh – India (Kabilan, 2013; Kabilan et al., 2017); Hongkong – China (Dos Santos, 2019); Malaysia (Ahmad et al., 2019; Kaur et al., 2021); Thailand (Dumlao & Pinatacan, 2019).

However, PSTs also face emotional challenges when implementing their ITP, as well as moral and sociocultural factors that affect interpersonal communication within the political geography context (Sulistiyo et al., 2022). At the other time, curriculum challenges instead of planning the lesson, language proficiency and cultural differences could be a crucial defiance for PSTs (Kabilan et al., 2020). This presumption may affect EFL pre-service teachers to provide novice teachers a chance to discover their drawbacks in teaching and broaden their view about teacher profession and teaching professionalism (Yan & Mingyao, 2022)

Considering the findings obtained from the previous studies, only few of perceiving gains toward PSTs were obtained where some of the study only focusing on the challenges and the strategy in short-term implementation that employs a case study and phenomenological study. Globally speaking, a case study aimed to explore unique phenomena that have received limited prior research and not constrained by specific theories or hypotheses in line with phenomenon of the prior study. Given the current gap in this frame, through this present study, the researcher aims to identify PSTs personal stories also deepen PSTs' experiences during ITP and find ways to improve further the recent practices of teaching practicum as purpose to inquire about the perceived gains, challenges faced, and the prime strategy to cope the limitation regarded to teachers' professional development during ITP in the secondary school which definitely has different context over education order and culture view. Three Main questions are addressed in this study:

1. What are the challenges and limitations faced by EFL PSTs during ITP?
2. How do EFL PSTs cope with ITP challenges and limitations?
3. What are the PSTs' perceived gains in professional development during ITP?

METHOD

Research Design

As mentioned in the introduction, the recent study aimed to explore and investigate the personal life stories and experiences of pre-service teachers (PSTs) during the International Teaching Program (ITP). Hereby, this study opted for narrative inquiry as a qualitative research approach. As suggested by Clandinin (2006) that the primary objective of narrative inquiry is to comprehensively comprehend the cognitive and emotional processes through which individuals construct meaning and derive significance from their lived experiences. It involves the collaboration of the researcher and the participants across time, at a place or series of places, and in social interaction. The researcher becomes an active participant within this intricate matrix, situated amidst the ongoing processes of living, storytelling, reliving, and retelling the narratives that constitute the fabric of individual and social experiences that make up individual and social lives. These ideas imply that narrative inquiry approach attempts to understand how people think and experience through events and what they value (Abrar, 2019). Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) identified three categories of interviews according to their purpose: short story, life story, and oral history.

Clandinin & Connelly (1994) propose four directions for narrative inquiry: inward and outward, backward and forward. In the inward direction, the focus is on internal factors including feelings, hopes, reactions to aesthetics, and moral values, this direction explores the inner experiences and subjective perspectives of individuals. By outward, it refers to the existential circumstances, i.e., the environment. Backward and forward allude to temporality, which includes the past, present, and future. Therefore, the researcher generated this current study that delved into social and personal issues, encompassing both an inward and outward perspective. The focus was not only on the present moment but also on the past and future, acknowledging the temporal dimension. By situating the research within this three-dimensional space of narrative inquiry, the researcher explored the interplay between internal and external factors, as well as the historical and future implications, thereby addressing a comprehensive range of issues.

Interviews were used as a guide to elicit information about the participants' backgrounds, experiences, and narratives. The participants were chosen by purposive sampling and chose two participants from a local private university in Probolinggo regency who had participated in their International Teaching Practicum program for around 4-5 months in Malaysia with different placements. To safeguard the identities and personal information of the participants, the researchers implemented strict measures for confidentiality. Participants were given pseudonyms or unique identifiers to ensure complete anonymity and protect their privacy throughout the entire duration of the study. Then, our participants were given named as Indriani (as the first participant) and Sandi (as the second participant) all these are based on their program allocation.

Selection of Participant

Initially, the participants were purposively selected based on the researcher's requirements concerning, EFL pre-serving teacher who had their prior experience in handling a classroom management before the international teaching practicum through KM (kampus mengajar) as part of Merdeka belajar Program and another assisted institution in Indonesia. Merdeka Belajar is an innovative program for Indonesian education from the Ministry of Education and Culture. The two Participants taught at different boarding school in Selangor regency. This school is located in remote area which prioritizes religious education (collage). The first participant named Indriani, 22 years old. She has been teaching previously in the primary school from Islamic boarding school in Probolinggo for one year focused on language and religious teaching. During ITP, Indriani was allocated to An-nahdloh Islamic Boarding School, who particularly taught students in the secondary school, she participated ITP around 4 months long. While the second participant named Sandi, 21 years old. He also had 4 months experience of language teaching in state secondary school located in Probolinggo regency through KM batch 4 for academic English and language teaching. Along with ITP, Sandi was placed in Jalan Kebun, at the primary school

which takes longer time than Indriani around 5 months. PSTs' years of teaching experience are the essential factor identified by the researchers to recruit them as a research participant in this current study. Where, both participants in this study stated their readiness to participate in a series of interviews and writing diary to discuss their lived experiences concerning their teaching practicum as international students in a remote place. The researcher described the objectives, methods, and possible risks to the participants prior to the start of the study (Rahayu et al., 2022).

Research Procedure

The interview method was used to answer the research questions. An in-depth interview and reflective journals (diaries) were used to conceive the participants' voices and personal experiences for teaching activities as part of the Narrative inquiry research approach. At the onset, the interview activity was conducted beyond face-to-face, through zoom meetings, and continued on WhatsApp (i.e., messages and voice notes). A face-to face interview was conducted on June 2023 using casual discussion when the researcher completed the major program at the same place as the participants, followed by detailed interviews via Zoom Meet and WhatsApp over long distances, where it was conducted into 2 sessions for each participant, first session was recorded on 3rd - 5th of August 2023 and the second upcoming session was recorded on 8th - 10th of October 2023 after PSTs program completion. Additionally, the reflective journal (diary) was completed using a Google form that included PSTs' background information, teaching documentation, and their experience during the classroom activity (*pre-teaching, while-teaching, post-teaching*). The purpose of the study was thoroughly described to all participants, and they were also asked about their willingness to participate in this current study. The researcher began addressing questions about their teaching experiences during their teaching practicum after the participants agreed on what they wanted to do. The interviews were, by agreement, verbally recorded via digital voice recorder. The observation was also recorded during the interview in the form of self-notes or memos to assist the researcher in understanding the participants' narratives. After the interview, the data from the interview were gathered and recorded in a file to make it easier to identify and categorize.

Data Collection

The researcher used two types of data collection method involving In-depth interviews and Reflective journals (diary) to accumulate reliable and valid data from participants. The purpose of the writing is specifically aimed at enhancing the professional growth of teachers who write and can be in the form of reflective journals, stories and diaries (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Additionally, the researchers utilized the reflective journal as a means of gathering data for this study since it facilitated the process of reflection among pre-service teachers and served as a record of their experiences throughout the international teaching practicum. The interview was conducted through face-to-face, vis Zoom meeting and resumed via WhatsApp, and then the Reflective journals covering participants' teaching stories were collected via Google form that was distributed through WhatsApp message a week after they have completed the teaching practice. Each of session for the interview took time around 40-60 minutes using a mixed-language approach, which involved both participant's L1 (Bahasa Indonesia) and English. This approach was employed to prevent misunderstandings and to enhance the comprehension of the stories being investigated in this study. By incorporating both languages, the researchers aimed to ensure effective communication and a deeper understanding of the narratives being explored. In addition, the interview questions was adapted from Kaur et al. (2021) added with validated self-made question by the expert researcher according to the appropriate field, the questions included what specific challenges and limitations participants faced when handling classroom activities, strategies and solutions for overcoming these challenges, what benefits participants gain from international teaching practice, and how international teaching practice contributes to participants' professional development as pre-service teachers (detailed Interview Questions see in appendix)

Data Analysis

The data collected from both methods were examined through thematic analysis, which involved identifying and analyzing patterns and themes within the data. The findings were reported with a minimal organizational structure but included detailed descriptions of the data. These findings were then utilized to interpret different aspects of the professional development of pre-service teachers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun & Clarke (2006) there were five practical stages to classify appropriate theme involves; (1) getting acquainted with the data; (2) creating initial codes; (3) searching for potential themes; (4) reviewing identified themes; and (5) defining and giving appropriate name for the themes.

As a result, The data analysis in this study followed Braun & Clarke's (2014) six-step thematic analysis procedure. The first procedure, the researchers familiarized with the recorded interviews by listening repeatedly to the participant's stories. During this process, they identified and highlighted the essential narratives shared by the participant. Next to second procedure, the researchers transcribed and carefully read the interview recordings multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of the whole data. This step aimed to interpret the participant's significant experiences. Third procedure, Prior to coding the data, the researchers re-read the interview transcripts and identified patterns that aligned with their overarching theory. This allowed them to establish a foundation for the coding process. The fourth procedure, the coding phase involved categorizing similar utterances, expressions, and phrases into a table or framework. This helped in organizing and structuring the data for further analysis. The fifth procedure, after analyzing the relevant codes, the researchers created themes. During this step, they sorted out irrelevant codes from the table to ensure the themes accurately represented the data. The final procedure was categorizing the final themes (see in findings). This categorization provided a comprehensive framework for understanding and interpreting the data in relation to these dimensions. The ultimate themes encompassed all aspects of the pre-service teachers' professional growth and reflected recognizable patterns or significance in their experiences during the international teaching practicum.

Trustworthiness

The concept of trustworthiness pertained to the relationship established between the researcher and the participants who contributed to the narrative study findings. Which aims to establish the validity and credibility of the research findings to both the audience and readers, as well as to themselves, ensuring that the results are perceived as unquestionable and reliable contributions to the field of scientific inquiry. In order to address this concern, the researcher conducted member checking by sharing the transcripts and analyzed themes with the participants to obtain their feedback and ensure the accuracy of the findings. This process allowed us to refine the results accordingly.

To ensure the data's authenticity, the researcher utilized a reflective diary as supplementary evidence. The researcher thoroughly reviewed the available diaries, engaging in introspection to reflect upon participants' experiences and correlate them with the supporting data found in reflective journal (diary) from the participants activity throughout the program.

FINDING & DISCUSSION

Finding

Question 1: What are the challenges and limitations faced by EFL PSTs during ITP?

Unorganized Institutional system

The lack of clarity in education system can lead to confusion among students and teachers regarding their future prospects, as well as restrict their access to valuable educational resources, it becomes emerging distraction for the PST as revealed by Indriani;

This guidance centre is still relatively new as it was just inaugurated and had its students in 2020. So, when I started teaching, there was still no official collaboration with the

Indonesian Embassy (KBRI), it was quite abstract and not academically organized, maybe only focusing on religious aspects."(June 2023, Indriani I)

The above statement also supported by Sandi, he experienced initial surprise due to the disorganized nature of the educational setting, which encompassed issues concerning the order of teaching, instructional content, and the diverse levels of students' abilities which obviously impacted classroom objectives. Sandi clarified;

Initially, I was surprised by the lack of organization, including the teaching sequence, instructional content, and the varying levels of students' abilities. Consequently, the delivery of materials that should have been balanced became imbalanced. This was attributed to several students who were still lagging behind in their understanding of the subject matter" (Aug 2023, Sandi I)

The school was established and inaugurated in 2020. During this initial phase, there was no official collaboration with the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI). As a result, there was an imbalance in the distribution of materials, which ideally should have been equitable. This imbalance can be attributed to the fact that some students were struggling to comprehend the subject matter, thus falling behind their peers. Since that the Curriculum was not academically organized, possibly focusing primarily on religious aspects.

Students' Characters

The statement highlights Indriani's primary challenge when working with students in the classroom which is contrast with prior teaching experience at an institution as only participated by female students. However, she admits to lacking sufficient experience in understanding the characteristics of male students, as follows;

The biggest challenge for me initially is when dealing with students in the classroom, even though I have previously taught at an institution, it was only with female students so it can be considered as just one adjustment. I haven't had much experience in understanding the characteristics of male students. it's like I find it more difficult to understand the characters of male students here" (June 2023, Indriani I)

Despite having teaching experience with female students, Sandi finds it was challenging to modify their behaviour in the classroom when it comes to male students since they tend to be less motivated to behave in a way that is appropriate for learning. However, student character affects on teaching continuity in the classroom. Below Sandi's statement;

For me, one main challenge is that many students here have a limited understanding of good moral education, which becomes a significant obstacle for us. It could be considered as an education culture shock."(Aug 2023, Sandi I)

Both participants' prior experiences were slightly different from the current teaching situation, the main problem was students' low level of moral education knowledge. This has led to difficulties for the participants in managing and conditioning the students.

Language adjustment

Language adjustment presents distinct problems during international teaching practicums. However, language becomes the key feature to engage students in the learning process, despite the similarities between Malay and Indonesian languages sometimes confuse the students when the speaker gives instruction, as conveyed by Indriani;

"I think language also becomes a slight obstacle, even though Malay is not much different from the Indonesian language. However, there are some word usages that sometimes confuse my students when I give instructions and they don't understand the meaning, like the use of words 'Anak-Anak'(children) or 'Pokoknya'(basically). Whenever I use words with different meanings, they usually point it out or ask for clarification about the meaning" (June 2023, Indriani I)

In another placement, Sandi also added the similar issue for primary school students which might encounter difficulties in fully understanding the Indonesian language. Despite the participant's

efforts to teach them at a slow pace, the students still struggle to comprehend the meaning of various language components, below the additional statement provided by sandi;

Primary school level might find it difficult to fully understand Indonesian language, even though I teach them slowly but they have trouble grasping the meaning of its units of language."(Aug 2023, Sandi I)

Language can pose a minor obstacle that eminently distracted teaching process in the classroom. This barrier may hinder effective communication and instruction between the teacher and students. As a result, the teaching process may be disrupted or less efficient due to difficulties in conveying and understanding information accurately.

Inadequate learning facility

Pre-service teacher may encounter inadequate facility during ITP that can impact their teaching experience. This refers to a lack of resources, equipment, or infrastructure necessary for effective instruction and student engagement. This viewpoint was stated by both participants, from Indriani;

This could possibly be one thing that disrupts students' learning process, there is only one classroom available for learning, which means they have to be combined whether they like it or not. They also haven't been provided with formal uniforms yet. Sometimes, when I want to teach, the projector that's provided is broken, so learning time is reduced while fixing the teaching media because we only have one LCD projector" (Aug 2023, Indriani II)

Regarding to teaching needs to support above statement that Sandi also often relies on printed modules borrowed from students because he only had access to e-modules provided by the school. Sandi expressed dissatisfaction with preparing teaching materials solely based on e-modules and prefers using printed materials.

"When I want to teach, I always borrow printed modules from the students because the teachers are only provided with e-modules. I feel unsatisfied if I prepare materials solely based on e-modules."(Aug 2023, Sandi I)

Due to inadequate infrastructure or space limitations for teaching and learning process was quite troublesome which probably impact the effectiveness and smoothness of educational activities. It implies that the lack of proper facilities or sufficient space hinders the optimal delivery of education and may disrupt the overall learning experience.

Question 2: How do EFL PSTs cope with ITP challenges and limitations?

Creating term of teaching reference (TOR)

Curriculum implementation plays important aspect in the school to cope with the prior shortcoming, creating term of teaching reference is needed to enable students and teachers to have access for guidance and content teaching. Indriani emphasized as need to be solution-oriented and engage in constant coordination to develop a robust curriculum structure. This involves organizing the teaching content, assigning tasks to teachers for each lesson, and creating Terms of Reference (TOR) for each learning objective. It indicates the importance of collaborative efforts and strategic planning to overcome limitations and ensure effective teaching and learning processes, as Indriani's statement;

"With the limitations we have, as pre-service teachers, we must be solution-oriented and always coordinate to develop a good curriculum structure. This includes structuring content teaching, dividing tasks for each lesson to teachers, and creating TOR (Terms of Reference) for each learning objective." (Aug 2023, Indriani II)

Sandi clarified about 2013 Curriculum (K13) which is slightly different from the previous statement. He faced the challenge of creating assessments for final exams as certain types of questions are not provided and the lesson plans may not be consistently structured, it was clearly stated by sandi;

"I teach students using the 2013 Curriculum (K13), which is still not updated in line with the educational standards in Indonesia. As a result, I have to create assessments for final

exams since some types of questions are not provided by the curriculum, and my lesson plans may not be structured consistently but rather follow the content guidelines available in the textbook. Well, it's still a developing curriculum, so its organization is not yet consistent." (Aug 2023, Sandi I)

This situation requires them to take additional steps, such as structuring content teaching, creating assessments for final exams and the lack consistency from lesson plans, instead follow content guidelines from textbooks as well as its importance to create term of teaching reference (TOR) in order to generate teaching and learning objectives.

Interactive teaching and learning

Teaching disparity is a sure thing to take over the adaptation. To adapt to the teaching environment, Sandi prioritizes creative learning to keep the students engaged and avoid boredom as a way of intensive teaching approach. The speaker focuses on in-class learning and interaction, rather than assigning homework. Quizzes are used as incentives for students to stay focused and motivated during lessons, the following Indriani's statement;

"I am assigned to a school where the students are still at the elementary level, so it's definitely a challenging task to educate them. Because this place is not like typical schools that have many teachers, I am responsible for teaching four subjects. How can't I be surprised? But it has become my responsibility and I must be prepared since I teach the elementary school students especially require intensive approach. If they are left unattended for a little while, they may appear disorganized. Since these students have become more independent from their parents, I need to truly become their second support system. That's where I feel the weight of the teacher's role, which is likely different from how I used to teach before." (Aug 2023, Sandi I)

Indriani Felt identical emotions that providing creative learning is essential to prevent students from becoming bored. She did not heavily rely on giving assignments outside the classroom but instead prioritizes interactive learning within the classroom setting, allowing for direct interaction with the students and engaging directly with students during the learning process as aims to create an interactive and stimulating classroom environment, below Indriani's viewpoint;

"I and my other ITP friends also try to adjust by teaching in a way that the permanent administrators here have instructed, because from the beginning we were given guidance to provide creative learning so that students don't get bored. I am not too focused on giving assignments outside of class but prioritize learning in the classroom so that I can interact with them directly"

"Usually, I give quizzes as tickets for them to leave the class, so they feel motivated to listen and more serious when I teach." (Aug 2023, Indriani II)

Adaptation to Language Usage

Indeed, language barrier are crucial when it comes to effective communication. Understanding and adapting to the language used by the students as essential for clear and meaningful interaction. By making the necessary language adjustments, such as learning the students' language or using simpler vocabulary, teachers can ensure that their messages are understood and facilitate better communication in the classroom, as proven by Indriani;

"I started getting used to their language, maybe around 5-7 days, roughly a week, I could fully use the Malay language. Even though they are originally from Indonesia, their culture and language still remain Malay." (Aug 2023, Indriani II)

Sandi also added the same viewpoint about providing clear explanations to ensure that students can accept it with grace. They also make an effort to learn Malay from various sources, including directly from their students, in order to establish good chemistry. This suggests that the speaker values effective communication and understanding with their students, and they are open to learning from their students in order to create a positive learning environment, in the interview he said;

"If there is any misunderstanding again, we definitely explain it well so that the students can accept it gracefully, we also learn Malay from various sources. We even learn directly from our students as wished to have good chemistry" (Aug 2023, Sandi I)

The two participants initially struggled with understanding and using the Malay language which eventually became more comfortable using the language within a week. Despite the fact that students they interacted with are originally Indonesian, who have their own unique cultural backgrounds and language variations. Hence, Indriani and Sandi reveal an adaptation towards learning Malay through various sources beyond formal education settings.

Self- initiating learning facility

In substance, addressing these issues would require efforts from educational institutions to improve infrastructure facilities such as classrooms to be equipped with functioning projectors, and encouraged self-sufficient to provide students' learning needs, it was shared by Indriani;

"For a temporary solution, we only provide a separation between male and female students using wide boards so that I can manage them better during teaching. If they need additional materials, I usually prepare print copies of the paper beforehand." (Aug 2023, Indriani II)

Additionally, Sandi clarified that the boarding school has initiated the construction of classroom facilities as part of its ongoing development. Gradually, they are working towards providing better facilities to ensure efficient learning

"Although the classrooms are still limited, the boarding school has already started constructing classroom facilities, so it is still in the process of development. Little by little, they are providing facilities for efficient learning." (Aug 2023, Sandi I)

Question 3: What are the PSTs' perceived gains in professional development during ITP?

Classroom management skill

Pre-service teachers have the opportunity to gain valuable experience and develop their skills in various aspects of education. This includes character of how teacher interacts with the students, conditioning students' behaviour, teaching confidence, planning lesson and other feasibilities that encourages classroom management proficiency, in the interview sandi stated;

"Yeah... I spend a lot of time preparing strategies before teaching to deliver interactive content that aligns with the lesson plan, I have developed. It's not just about content teaching, but what matters most is my delivery in teaching." (Oct 2023, Sandi II)

In line with Sandi's argument, Indriani has additional gains in terms of improving teaching confidence, as she said below;

"You know...Continuous practice in teaching made me realize that my confidence is actually improved. since that, secondary students can be challenging to handle due to their diverse characteristics, but by building good communication to realize the students' behaviour, so that we can create a conducive classroom environment." (Aug 2023, Indriani II)

Overall, it infers taking great care in planning out their lessons by developing strategies aligned with specific goals outlined in the lesson plans. Sandi realized that effective teaching entails more than just transmitting knowledge that reflects the growth and development of a teacher's confidence through continuous practice in teaching.

Enhanced teaching skill

Perceiving compatibility with teaching techniques grants pre-service teachers a sense of autonomy in their instructional practices. It allows participants to exercise professional judgment and adapt strategies through gentle and guided approach according to their students' needs or the specific context they are working in, here is stated by Indirani related to the compatibility with her teaching technique;

Now, I know that when teaching students who have a bit of a troublemaker character, we shouldn't scold or ignore them. Instead, we should provide them with a gentle and guided approach. And it turns out that this approach proves that my students can perform as well as other students."(Aug 2023, Indriani II)

The same sense was conveyed by Sandi, Understanding and catering to different learning styles can enhance student engagement and comprehension in the classroom, sandi could provide with joyful learning by Game. It demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and differentiation within instruction. As he said;

I understand how my teaching techniques in the classroom can cater to the different learning styles of my students."

Yeah... I'm motivated to create creative learning methods refers on how I bring the class as well. They prefer having games incorporated into their lessons so that it feels fun and enjoyable while they learn."(Oct 2023, Sandi II)

Assessment knowledge

One crucial aspect of this experience is learning assessment construction, which allows pre-service teachers to understand the process of developing effective assessments that align with school standards, it was conveyed by P2;

I am accustomed to creating exam questions for students, but I have come to realize that making a good assessment does not necessarily mean making it difficult for students. When they are working on the assessment, it should still be adjusted according to the level of learning they have already acquired."(Aug 2023, Indriani II)

Various sources that I usually use to create learning assessments, it forced me to dive deep into understanding the content and skills being taught, ensuring that my assessment accurately reflected what students needed to demonstrate" (Aug 2023, Indriani II)

Furthermore, Sandi acknowledges that creating good assessments does not always mean making them difficult for students that should be adjusted to match the students' current level of learning.

"I am sure that constructing our own assessments allowed us a unique opportunity for creativity and personalization. We could tailor assessments based on our students' interests or cultural contexts which enhanced engagement within the classroom environment" (Oct 2023, Sandi II)

The use of various sources for creating assessments helps the participants gain a deep understanding of the content and skills being taught, ensuring that the assessments accurately reflect what students need to demonstrate. Constructing their own assessments provides the opportunity for creativity and personalization.

Teaching professionalism

Embarking on ITP absolutely offers pre-service teachers' opportunity to enhance their professionalism and professional development. It has exposed Sandi to the diverse cultures, languages, and educational systems which approximately fosters him to the cultural competence, enabling to better understand and appreciate different perspectives, adapt teaching strategies accordingly, and build inclusive classroom environments. This evidence was conveyed by Sandi;

From my experience as a teacher in the classroom, my interaction with students has been getting better day by day, which boosts my confidence in teaching."(Oct 2023, Sandi II)

I believe that teaching is not an easy task because it requires a lot of adjustments. However, when we master effective teaching tactics and able to deliver the material comprehensively, learning becomes easier."(Oct 2023, Sandi II)

As a result of the positive interactions with students, the teacher's confidence in their teaching abilities has grown. Indriani felt assured about her instructional methods and approaches, which leads to enhanced self-assurance when delivering lessons or facilitating discussions within the classroom setting. Here is Indriani's statement;

Our professionalism as teachers will be evident when we can effectively manage the class and engage students to follow instructions happily. In those moments, I feel like 'Wow...I can actually achieve teaching professionalism!' Although it may not be perfect, I have seen a 30% improvement compared to before.'(Aug 2023, Indriani II)

Pre-service teachers' awareness of the significance of successful classroom management and student engagement is an expression of teaching professionalism. Both participants also demonstrate self-awareness regarding personal growth and development along the professional journey.

Pre-service teachers' networking

Collaborating with experienced professionals broadens Indriani's knowledge base and encourages reflection on their own teaching approaches, as well as stated in the interview;

I often gather with other boarding school teachers or supervisors with sharing teaching knowledge, as each teacher has their own unique teaching style and techniques. I believe that building relationships like this is very important.'(Aug 2023, Indriani II)

Gathering with other boarding school teachers or supervisors provides valuable opportunities for professional development, knowledge sharing, and relationship-building within an educational community. As also highlighted by Sandi that knowledge is not limited to textbooks, it emphasizes creating a collaborative learning culture within teaching communities to discuss the importance of embracing diverse teaching styles and techniques to enhance overall instructional effectiveness. The following statement from Sandi;

When I expand my connections with other teachers, I can definitely gain new knowledge."
Knowledge doesn't always come from books right! We can also acquire it through exchanging experiences and directly sharing knowledge with others.'(Oct 2023, Sandi II)

Teachers' Networking concerns Interacting with other boarding school teachers, supervisors offer valuable opportunities for professional development, sharing knowledge, and building relationships within the educational community.

Discussion

In accordance with the obtained research question from PSTs experience during International Teaching Practice in Malaysia concerning about their challenges and limitation, strategy to cope with it, perceived gains for professional development and PSTs future idea as prospective teacher. The current study represents four arising research objectives with each indicated themes, some of the finding themes that comprised the study's framework might have been accomplished through teaching practice in the pre-service teachers' own country. However, this international teaching experience presented them with unique chances, challenges, and perceived gains. They learnt to adjust to a new society and to value various people. The fact that the PST was pushed to teach English subject to secondary students who did not have basic English yet, it became essential factor for PSTs professional teaching development.

PSTs experience allowed to them be eager by the challenges they encountered along with their coping strategy, concerning about five finding themes such; Unorganized Institutional system, students' character, language adjustment and inadequate learning facility. However,

academic orientation has been a crucial concern for PSTs (Tomasik et al., 2021), when there is a disparity in teaching and learning approaches and viewpoints, This is in line with the existing research that shows the immersive experiences on language learning and the challenges of international language teaching, where the pre-service teachers (PSTs) encounter a significant hurdle in crafting and refining suitable materials, as well as employing them with purpose and efficacy (Kabilan et al., 2020). Hence, Shortcoming from academic order can cause confusion both students and teachers which limit their ability to obtain valuable educational resources. Along with Ahmad et al., (2019) assertions, they strive to improve students' learning experiences despite current restrictions by creating term of teaching reference (TOR) through taking the initiative and working together on organising teaching methods and efficiently distributing workloads. It encourages the school staff (Islamic boarding school of An-nahdloh) to get coordination among PSTs in overcoming the challenges posed by an outdated K13 curriculum.

PST also dealt with students' character in teaching that also includes language adjustment in the classroom. Although, Malaysian culture has not much dissimilar to Indonesian culture view, however they still faced some of difficulties. Language barrier also becomes a common distractions experienced by individuals when they encounter unfamiliar cultural norms, values, and practices (Klein & Wikan, 2019). Since some students may lack motivation or struggle with developing appropriate character traits during learning activities in the classroom (Ahrari et al., 2019). Those situations are in accordance with Wahyuni (2019) who noted that culture shock toward students' behaviour, language and communication problem in Thailand, the PSTs stated that the first culture shock they experienced was language and communication as one of the most difficult challenges for the classroom activity. PSTs' teaching approach likely addresses these specific needs and aims to support the growth and development of each students academically and personally (Azizah, 2016). The focus is on providing creative learning experiences so that students remain engaged and avoid boredom (Khikmah, 2019). Listening attentively with earning privileges, this approach aims to increase student motivation and seriousness during teaching sessions (Pradnyadewi & Kristiani, 2021). The emphasis is placed on interactive learning and learning within the classroom which also conferred about language adjustment that reflects an intention to address any potential misunderstandings effectively by providing clear explanations for better understanding among students (Ellis et al., 2020). Because when pupils are given instructions or are trying to understand certain concepts, the tiny variations in word usage can occasionally cause confusion (Lehman & Welch, 2020). The pre-service teacher revealed an open-minded approach towards learning Malay through various sources beyond formal education settings as a way for adaptation to language usage. In relation to this finding Kabilan's (2013) research revealed that learning directly from their own students shows an appreciation for reciprocal knowledge exchange as one of manner to create effective communication. However, communication requires language adaptation to ensure its meaning and purpose. These statements also supported by Auliya et al. (2020) highlighted about the reflective practice helped pre-service teachers to try and evaluate various methods that can embody effective classroom management

The pre-service teachers explained how she dealt with the situation for existing facility. The unprepared situation involved inadequate facility that possibly distract their teaching process which leads to boredom and inconvenience in learning for the students, because the availability and functionality of technology play a crucial role in modern education practices. Inadequate facility often includes limited access to computers, internet connectivity issues, outdated software/hardware systems (Corbett, 2022). Indeed, adequate learning facilities are essential to create a conducive learning atmosphere that can promote student engagement, teacher satisfaction, and overall academic success (Abdul Kadir & Abdul Aziz, 2021). Hence, The PSTs need to set on self-initiating learning facility by providing them with a temporary teaching setting under supervision of school staff in Malaysia with separated class using wide boards to differentiate male and female students since the school is for college students, also PSTs typically prepared printed copies of the required materials ahead of time. Currently, the school is

undergoing a development process to provide more suitable learning environments as taking steps to provide facilities that promote efficient learning.

Regarding to perceived gains for professional development during international teaching practicum. During ITP the pre-service teachers gained classroom management skill, enhanced teaching skill, assessment knowledge, teaching professionalism, and pre-service teachers' networking. In line with the prior research in this domain (Ateşkan, 2016; Kabilan, 2013; Kabilan et al., 2017; Kabilan et al., 2020; Kaur et al., 2021), the results of this study indicate that pre-service teachers gain advantages in terms of professional development through international teaching experiences. Pre-service teachers have the opportunity to gain valuable experience and develop their skills in various aspects of education. One critical area they often focus on is classroom management proficiency (Eltanskaya et al., 2022). Because effective teaching entails more than just transmitting knowledge, it requires active student participation through interactive approaches (Eltanskaya et al., 2022). It belongs to the previous gains stated by Kabilan, (2013) This practice of vicarious reinforcement has brought about confidence in their teaching abilities, leading to an enhanced self-assurance in their own skills.

Furthermore, understanding and catering to different learning styles can enhance student engagement and comprehension in the classroom. This approach allows the teacher to provide varied instructional strategies and resources that resonate with individual students' preferred modes of learning (Ubaidillah, 2018). Since that every student is unique with distinct personalities and behaviours (Abacioglu et al., 2020) which needs to recognize each student's strengths while addressing areas requiring improvement allows for more inclusive classrooms where all individuals have equal opportunities to thrive (Mukeredzi, 2016). Hence, teachers and educational institutions should take into consideration the individual differences of students, including their personalities and the Language Learning Strategies (LLSs) they choose to employ (Muslimin & Suhartoyo, 2023). It demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity and differentiation within instruction for PSTs' compatibility in teaching technique. Hence, teacher's motivation and enthusiasm towards developing innovative teaching techniques aimed at creating engaging classrooms for their students. Aligning to study conducted by Ahmad et al., (2019).

Since pre-service teachers found uncertainty in institutional system, it suggested them to delve about learning assessment to measure students' learning goals which enables PSTs to comprehend the process of creating assessments that are effective and align with international standards. They have come to realize the importance of adjusting assessments according to the students' current level of learning (Tierney & Simon, 2004). Through extensive exploration of some sources, there is an increased opportunity for comprehensive comprehension of subject matter (Lehman & Welch, 2020). Consequently, this allows for more accurate alignment between what is being taught and what needs to be demonstrated in assessments. By incorporating student input into assessment design based on Tai (2022) that educators can create a more dynamic and inclusive learning environment that caters to diverse learner needs. Furthermore, regarding the learning assessment construction during their international teaching practicum are substantial. Exposure to diverse assessment methods, alignment with international standards, cultivation of cultural sensitivity, enhancement of instructional practices, and expansion of reflective practice skills contribute significantly to their professional development (García-González et al., 2020).

Undertaking an International Teaching Practicum (ITP) undoubtedly provides pre-service teachers with the chance to enhance their professionalism and professional development, since that effective classroom management and student engagement as manifestations of professionalism in teaching (Aykan & Dursun, 2021), which obviously strengthens their ability to think creatively and incorporate innovative ideas into their future teaching practice including successfully completing an international teaching practicum boosts PSTs confidence in their abilities as professionals. The great matter things from perceived gains also include pre-service teacher networking, because connections are established between pre-service teachers and various stakeholders, including students, fellow educators, and the local community (Mukeredzi, 2016). PSTs can exchange ideas, share best practices in pedagogy or classroom management

techniques while gaining exposure to different educational systems (Oddone et al., 2019). By fostering an environment where teachers feel comfortable sharing their expertise, perspectives, and insights, it paves way for collective growth (Kaur et al., 2021). The power lies in harnessing diverse experiences, bolstering professional networks, and promoting ongoing dialogue among fellow educators (Oddone et al., 2019). Hereby, engaging in discussions outside traditional academic settings allows individuals to broaden their perspectives on diverse topics related to education. Through these interactions, the exchange of thoughts, and direct sharing, knowledge becomes enriched as it incorporates multiple viewpoints over the interrelationship of local and global processes (Klein & Wikan, 2019)

However, some of the results have not been previously documented or discussed. According to the study conducted by Kabilan et al. (2020), pre-service teachers (PSTs) encounter difficulties in adapting to the differences when participating in an overseas teaching practicum and adjusting to positive and negative emotions that highlights about the potential of teachers' emotions, communication barriers and cultural differences Sulistiyo et al. (2022); Wahyuni (2019). PSTs are consistent with those of how PSTs deal with language adjustment. The PSTs will have their own way to overcome the communication issue due to different situation and circumstance, since it is the key to carry out the English teaching and learning activities. Since past teaching experiences play a crucial role in motivating teachers to facilitate better learning for their students. These experiences can shape a teacher's pedagogical approach, mindset, and instructional strategies (Ubaidillah et al., 2020)

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

During the international teaching practicum in Malaysia, the pre-service teacher acquired valuable experience. This experience had significant implications for the professional development of pre-service teachers, especially when the study focused on those who were taught in non-English speaking environments, although Malaysia holds English as second language (ESL) since the PSTs were placed in remote are so they did not have basic English as non-English speaker. The ITP also offered new learning opportunities and allowed the pre-service teacher to reinforce positive teaching practices developed throughout the practicum. The pre-service teacher gained teaching experience, particularly in the areas of teaching, classroom management, and academic needs. In accordance with ITP experienced by both pre-service teachers, there are four emerging themes regarding to their challenges involves; unorganized institutional system, students' character, language adjustment, inadequate learning facility. And four themes over coping strategies such as; creating term of teaching references (TOR), interactive teaching and learning, adaptation to language usage and self-initiating learning facility. Besides that, pre-service teacher definitely gains positive experience as its advantages on ITP which arises five themes involves; classroom management skill, enhanced teaching skill, assessment knowledge, teaching professionalism, and pre-service teachers' networking. Ultimately, the International Teaching Program (ITP) served as a platform for pre-service teachers (PSTs) to learn and gain a comprehensive understanding of their shortcomings and strategy undertaken as English language teachers, as well as the knowledge and abilities they required to grow.

Lastly, however conducting additional studies in diverse settings involving EFL pre-service teachers from various backgrounds can provide insights into a wide range of challenges encountered during International Teaching Practicum (ITP). These studies can offer a more comprehensive understanding of the obstacles faced by pre-service teachers and offer valuable information to teacher education providers on how to enhance the experiences of pre-service teachers during ITP. Exploring a multicultural setting different from this study can deepen the understanding of how various aspects of multiculturalism impact the teaching and learning of English, particularly for pre-service teachers trained in an EFL environment. The future researcher also expected to show contrast experience for national and international teaching practices that encourage authentic evidence from PSTs both experiences.

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