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## International Teaching Internship: Development of Pre-Service Teachers' Competences

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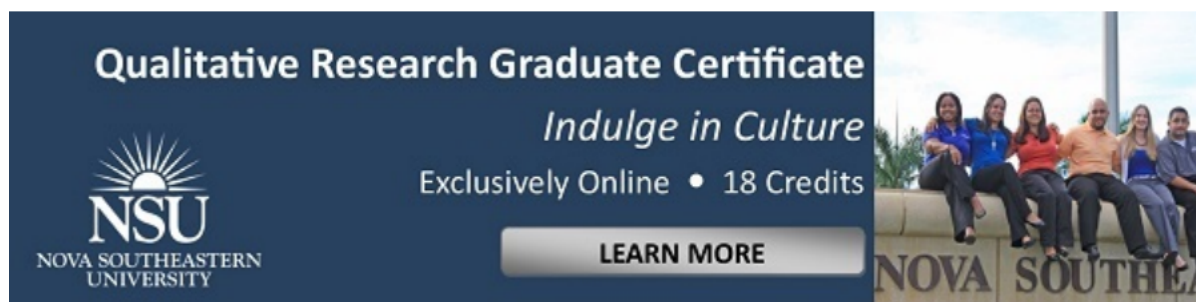
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## International Teaching Internship: Development of Pre-Service Teachers' Competences

### Abstract

Teachers' competences should be shaped from a very early stage of their training (Măță, Cmeciu, & Ghiațău, 2013). For that reason, pre-service teachers are required to get involved in teaching internships and gain professional experience from training programs and workshops. These experiences are assets for these pre-service teachers when they resume teaching positions upon graduation. The present narrative study, therefore, aims to investigate the benefits of international teaching internship, known as South-East Asian Teacher (henceforth SEA-Teacher Program) on Indonesian pre-service English teachers' identity and competence development. There were four male and four female participants of SEA-Teacher program participated in the study. The data for this study was generated through in-depth semi-structured phone and email interviews. The study reveals that this program has developed personal competences of the pre-service teachers, in which they improve self-confidence, coping mechanisms, and time management skill. The "SEA-Teacher" also improved pre-service teachers' professional competences, such as development of communicative competence, pedagogical skills, new worldviews on education, career goals and new opportunities. The program also benefited these pre-service teachers' understanding of different cultures, strengthening global-networking and promoting respect. The findings also indicated that SEA Teachers' competences need to be further developed. Given the significant relationship between teaching competences and teaching internship at international level, it is necessary to promote the SEA-Teacher personal and professional competence. These competences are advised to be reinforced, with more emphasis on weaker domains.

### Keywords

international teaching internship, personal competence, professional competence, cultural awareness, narrative inquiry

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## **International Teaching Internship: Development of Pre-Service Teachers' Competences**

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Teachers' competences should be shaped from a very early stage of their training (Măță, Cmeciu, & Ghițău, 2013). For that reason, pre-service teachers are required to get involved in teaching internships and gain professional experience from training programs and workshops. These experiences are assets for these pre-service teachers when they resume teaching positions upon graduation. The present narrative study, therefore, aims to investigate the benefits of international teaching internship, known as South-East Asian Teacher (henceforth SEA-Teacher Program) on Indonesian pre-service English teachers' identity and competence development. There were four male and four female participants of SEA-Teacher program participated in the study. The data for this study was generated through in-depth semi-structured phone and email interviews. The study reveals that this program has developed personal competences of the pre-service teachers, in which they improve self-confidence, coping mechanisms, and time management skill. The "SEA-Teacher" also improved pre-service teachers' professional competences, such as development of communicative competence, pedagogical skills, new worldviews on education, career goals and new opportunities. The program also benefited these pre-service teachers' understanding of different cultures, strengthening global-networking and promoting respect. The findings also indicated that SEA Teachers' competences need to be further developed. Given the significant relationship between teaching competences and teaching internship at international level, it is necessary to promote the SEA-Teacher personal and professional competence. These competences are advised to be reinforced, with more emphasis on weaker domains.

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### **Introduction**

Internship is an indispensable part of training for students in teacher education programs (Posner, 2005). Student-teachers or pre-service teachers should all join the teaching practicum, whereby they have to do practice teaching at schools. However, apart from this required internship, pre-service teachers or student-teachers may also engage in different internship programs offered by other institutions at local, national, and international levels. For example, international internship is important for students who in the future want to be English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language teachers (Mwebi & Brigham, 2009; Xiaochi, 2012).

In addition, Brindley et al. (2009) suggested that a teaching internship program can "act as a catalyst" for pre-service teachers' professional development. It provides earlier preparation for the student-teachers to be more professional prior to their engagement with real challenges

at schools. Studies have shown the benefits of international internship for pre-service teachers in many respects. Willard-Holt (2001), for example, stated that student-teachers demonstrated “personal growth.” Moreover, Cushner and Mahon (2002) highlighted personal benefits from teaching experience on beliefs about self and self-efficacy as the result of international internship. In addition, Miller and Gonzalez (2016) found that the US students joining the internship program in China improve their personal and professional competences. The finding was also relevant to those found in the study of Robinson et al. (2017).

However, considering the importance of pre-service teacher’s development in the context of South-East Asian countries, research about the benefits of international teaching internship program on Indonesian pre-service teachers’ development is understudied and rare. Although previous studies did address general issues on SEA-Teacher Programs for Indonesian pre-service teachers, most of them examined pre-service teachers’ difficulties (Adekayanti, 2018) or general speaking experiences (Rahmawati et al. (2020). Therefore, in response to this lack of relevant studies, the present study aims to investigate the benefits of international teaching internship named “Sea-Teacher” on Indonesian pre service English teachers’ competences. The SEA-Teacher Program or the “Pre-Service Student Teacher Exchange in Southeast Asia” is a program aiming to provide opportunities for pre-service student-teachers from universities in Southeast Asia to obtain teaching experiences (practicum) in other countries around Southeast Asia (Salcedo, 2018; Sujadi et al., 2019). To guide this study, we raised the following research question: what benefits do pre-service English teachers gain during their international teaching internship in terms of teaching competences? The question was answered using qualitative methods of data collection.

### **International Teaching Internship (The Practicum)**

The international teaching internship is a one-month program designed to give spaces for students to get exposed to the international experience (Xiaochi, 2012). One of the main purposes of the international internship is to expose university students to different cultural values beyond their own contexts. For students in college of teacher education, the international internship usually came in the form of teaching practicum (Mwebi & Brigham, 2009; Robinson et al., 2017). According to Araya (2013), teaching practicum is an organized program for pre-service teachers in which student-teachers practice the learned skills they got from teacher training institutions in schools under the supervision of schools’ teachers (Agustina, 2014). Masadeh (2017) defined practicum as a course in university which equips pre-service teachers with practical knowledge about the real context of teaching. It also helps them to be familiar with the teaching process and challenges. The practicum program provides opportunities for student teachers to test their abilities as well as learn from the experiences of expert teachers. However, it must be noted that the term “practicum” in this context is understood as a teaching internship, even though “practicum” is often denoted as unpaid on work experience, whereas “internship” is normally paid work experience (Simons et al., 2012).

There are many reasons that drive institutions or governments to do partnerships and create international teaching practicum programs, the first and the most popular one being globalization and the need for competitiveness (Armutcu & Yaman, 2010; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009). Globalization is the concept of competitiveness in “world class” (Kabilan, 2013; Moloi et al., 2009; Xiaochi, 2012). Nowadays, teaching profession faces several challenges like the global economy, competitive market, advanced technologies, and changes in student demographics (Mesker et al., 2018; Tuli, 2009; Tuli & File, 2010). In the age of globalization, there is a great demand for teachers to have global and cross-cultural knowledge (Cusher, 2007; Cushner & Mahon, 2002). Therefore, Simons et al. (2012) and Miller and Gonzalez (2016) stated that colleges of teacher education need to involve their students in international and global

experiences so that prospective teachers will be more sensitive and understand diverse student backgrounds that in the future will be found in many classrooms (Rodriguez, 2011). Furthermore, Xiaochi (2012) said that it is essential to train future teachers who think globally, have international experience, speak foreign languages, and can integrate a global dimension into teaching-learning process (Chen et al., 2011; Macgillivray & Pence, 2018).

International practicum programs allow student-teachers to engage in training beyond their environment. This is what we call “borderless education.” Borderless education is the development that crosses the traditional borders of education, whether geographical or conceptual (Middlehurst, 2001). Borderless education operates under the belief that overseas partnership is significant in producing a better education. Because of the reasons mentioned above, many institutions and governments were encouraged to create international practicum projects and gained significant values. Lee (2011), who studied Hong Kong student-teachers who joined international teaching internship program in New Zealand for six weeks, found out that the experience helped the participants enrich their cultural understanding, pedagogical knowledge and skill, language awareness, and classroom language. Yang (2011) interviewed seven Canadians who were enrolling on eight weeks teaching practicum in Hong Kong about their perception on international teaching practicum program and found that teaching practicum helped the participants improve their teaching ability as they got opportunities to observe the mentors and receive feedback from them. In addition, participants felt that they benefited from extra-curricular activities in school. Doing these activities made them feel like part of the school community and they had extra time to interact with students and understand their interests.

In addition, Cushner and Mahon (2002), who explored the benefits of international internship on 50 US student-teachers who took their teaching practicum in different countries such as Australia, Ireland, and New Zealand, found that development of personal competence was one of the benefits of the internship. Egeland’s (2016) research exploring the impact of overseas student teaching revealed that pre-service teachers improve their confidence and awareness of different cultures as a result of the internship. This is because living abroad means living away from family, friends, and other support systems. Through this opportunity, student-teachers learn how to rely on themselves, develop practical skills, and make independent decisions (Shiveley & Misco, 2015). One of the participants, Kaitlynn, mentioned that she had to learn how to live on her own, how to cook, and how to manage her own financial issues. In addition, Kabilan’s (2013) study reveals various benefits gained by participants. Kabilan investigated whether six student-teachers from School of Educational Studies Universiti Sains Malaysia enrolling in teaching practicum in Maldives develop their competences. The international internship benefits students in Kabilan’s (2013) study in terms of development of communicative competence, teaching confidence and skills, interpersonal skills, new views on education, and new working cultures.

### **The Sea-Teacher Program**

The international practicum was named “Sea Teacher Project” or the “Pre-Service Student Teacher exchange in Southeast Asia.” The program is managed by Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). SEAMEO is a regional intergovernmental organization that was established in 1965 in Southeast Asian countries to promote regional cooperation in education, science, and culture in the region (SEAMEO Secretariat, 2020). SEAMEO has seven priority areas in the year of 2015-2035: early childhood care and education, addressing barriers to inclusion, ensuring resiliency in the face of emergencies, promoting technical and vocational education and training, revitalizing teacher education,

promoting harmonization in higher education and research and adopting the 21st century curriculum.

The teaching practicum “SEA-Teacher” requires last year students (on the third or fourth year) to participate in the program to obtain good English skill for communication purposes. The student teachers that might join were students from majors of math, science, English, and pre-school education. The duration of the practicum was one month and based on cost sharing. Students cover costs for their own daily needs, while travel expenses and accommodations were covered by the program. The student teachers’ roles during this one month were observing, assisting in teaching, teaching, and reflecting. In addition, they also developed their teaching skills and pedagogy, practiced their English skills, gained a broader regional and world view on teaching, and were exposed to diverse teaching and learning situations and opportunities, while the host universities’ roles were to provide mentors, supervise, and monitor the pre-service teachers during the practicum.

As the SEA-Teacher program divided internship schedule into stages – classroom observation in the first week, being teaching assistant in the second week, teaching practice in the third week, and evaluation in the fourth week – it helped student teachers to gain teaching skills and ideas and then practice them under the supervision of mentor teachers. Since starting the first cohort in 2016, in 2019, the SEA-Teacher Program already had seven batches participating in the program. Six cohorts had completed their programs and the seventh cohort was still undergoing the program, the explanation as follows:

**Table 1**

*The Participants of the Sea-Teachers*

Batch	Time	Students			Participating Universities
		Indonesia	Philippine	Thailand	
1 <sup>st</sup> batch	20 Jan- 18 Feb 2016	12	-	10	2
2 <sup>nd</sup> batch	17 Jul-15 Aug 2016	56	5	40	7
3 <sup>rd</sup> batch	15 Jan-13 Feb 2017	89	26	81	27
4 <sup>th</sup> batch	7 Aug-5 Sep 2017	132	52	81	41
5 <sup>th</sup> batch	22 Jan-18 Feb 2018	170	110	92	57
6 <sup>th</sup> batch	1 Aug-10 Sep 2018	207	133	84	79

This program aims to provide opportunities for student-teachers from universities in Southeast Asia to have international teaching practicums in schools in Southeast Asia. There are four objectives of the project: (1) to enable pre-service student teachers to develop their teaching skills and pedagogy, (2) to encourage the pre-service student teachers to practice their English skills, (3) to allow the pre-service student teachers to gain a broader regional and world view, and (4) to expose future teachers to diverse teaching and learning situations and opportunities, and the value of flexibility.

## **Brief Description of the Context**

The authors of the present research are all educators and research scholars in the field of English education based in Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, Indonesia. The first and third authors are associate professors at the department of English language education, whereas the second author is a newly appointed professor, the fourth author is the senior lecturer, and the fifth author is on the teaching staff at the department helping us with data collection. The first author has been teaching at the department for more than thirty years and is a senior research scholar who wrote the research paper and was involved in designing the research method, searching for the literature, analyzing the data and interpreting the results. In addition, the second author, who has more than twenty years teaching experience, together with the third author, who has more than ten years teaching and research experiences, helped with the paper essentials, such as drafting the paper and revising for important intellectual content. Finally, the fourth author, a senior lecturer with more than five years of teaching experiences, along with the fifth author, the new teaching staff member, collected the data, analyzed the data, and wrote the article.

Our interest in the topic stems from the fact that so far, only one of our students managed to be selected in the SEA-Teacher Program. Once this student completed this program and returned to us, she looked more confident, gained more exposed to her future profession, and truly developed in almost all areas of her pedagogical and language skills. That brings us to the idea to ask her to tell her story and experiences during the program to other students and lecturers at the department. Finally, we decided to conduct this study by interviewing her fellow participants from other Indonesian universities to examine how they developed their internship program to further develop the pre-service teacher pedagogical and language skills in general.

Having said that, we feel that our investment in this project can really help our students who take part in such programs to truly enhance their language exposure, methodological awareness, and professional competences. We strongly encourage our students to replicate the program alumnae experiences into their pre-service teaching local internships and their day-to-day understandings as future teachers. Our intention is simple: we want some improvements to the way our department and faculty operate and manage the pre-service teacher local internship program and operate the relevant subjects that directly contributed to the pre-service teacher programs, such as micro-teaching, curriculum development, and teaching methodology.

## **Research Design**

In this research, the benefits of international teaching practicum on pre-service English teachers' development on competences were intended to be explored. Therefore, the qualitative method was employed. Specifically, narrative research design was used in this research because this research attempted to analyse the phenomenon based on the view of chosen participants by asking them several questions in order to gather the data and then present the analysed data (result) in the form of words (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2012). A narrative approach was used in qualitative research because it can describe behaviours, feelings, and motivations (Tracy, 2019). These descriptions are powerful in qualitative research as it expresses something which is normally unexpressed explicitly (Ford, 2020). It can also provide rich data that can help uncover and emphasize certain aspects of social phenomena. Narrative inquiry is unique because it unlocks the untold perspectives and complexity and gives profound understanding of particular events or situations (Vähäsantanen & Arvaja, 2022).

The participants were recruited through a purposive sampling technique to meet a set of certain criteria of this research: that they were from the English education department in Indonesian universities, took teaching practicum in Sea-Teacher program, and were enrolled

on the 5<sup>th</sup> or the 6<sup>th</sup> batch of Sea-Teacher program. The potential participants were contacted to obtain their consent and the researchers found eight people willing to participate from the English departments of universities all around Indonesia, specifically from Universitas Syiah Kuala Banda Aceh, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatra Utara, Universitas Halu Oleo, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Higher Institution for Teacher Training of Muhammadiyah Kotabumi, and Universitas Bengkulu. The participants consisted of four males and four females with five people from the 6<sup>th</sup> cohort and three participants from the 5<sup>th</sup> cohort.

In this study, a phone interview was chosen as a tool for collecting data. Hershberger and Kavanaugh (2017) argued that despite the lack of use in qualitative data collection (Warren & Karner, 2015), insightful phone and in-depth email communication can yield rich data when conducted appropriately. Before collecting the data, the instrument was modified to design a new model of instrument, as it is often exercised to discover new ideas before kicking off to the research. Asking some critical questions serves as a sort of preliminary study for qualitative inquiry. As Marathe and Toyama (2018) outlined, prototyping in qualitative research is a very important mechanism to provide a user-centered inquiry. The prototyping was done by testing the instrument on the alumni of the SEA-Teacher Program. The participants were then called one by one for interviews which had a duration of 20 minutes (on average). In addition to the phone interviews, similar questions were asked through email, also confirming what was previously stated to guarantee the credibility of the data. Data was then analysed using manual thematic inductive coding techniques, which is one of the main methods of data analysis in qualitative research (Silverman, 2017, 2020). For the sake of ethics, the participants were addressed by number, such as P1 referring to Participant 1, and so forth. As the local context does not require a kind of third-party approval, we were not obliged to secure approval from parties involved in this work as long as their privacy was well-protected. This work does not therefore address participants by their names; rather, they were addressed through a specific term, such as Participant 1, and so on.

The prototyping was conducted by validating the interview instrument on the alumni of the SEA-Teacher Program from the subject of math with the aim to determine whether the questions met the contextual situation of the entire program. Next, the participants were called on the phone with the 20-minute time duration, respectively. The phone call interview was designed because most of the participants resided in different provinces of Indonesia. Creswell (2012) assured that phone interviews provide the opportunity for the researcher to easily make contact and have access to participants with significant geographical distance. During the interviews, the phone calls were being recorded for further interview transcription.

To analyze the data, Hycner (1985, as cited in Cohen et al., 2007)'s procedure was selected for this research. We went through special procedures in analyzing the data: first, the interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants. The recording was then transcribed and the transcription was analyzed through open coding where information related to the research questions were coded. Having coded relevant information, we then arrived at the second coding step, known as axial coding. In this second step, we categorized coding into themes, known as "thematic analysis." Our third and final coding step was the selective coding. In this final stage, we reorganized and re-classified the themes into narrowed coding, which then emerged as the final codes for the data that correspond to our research questions. To guarantee the credibility and the transferability of the data, we did the member check or respondent validation procedure and then we provided the thick description of the data and the context to allow a stronger transferability of the findings.



## Findings

The findings show three important benefits of international internship for pre-service teachers. It improved their personal and professional competence, and it also allowed them to be more insightful of multiple cultures.

### *Benefit 1: Personal Development*

The interview suggested that the benefits of international teaching internships on personal development of student teachers are divided into three categories: the benefits on self-dependent, coping mechanism, and time-management.

#### *Being Independent Pre-Service Teachers*

The majority pre-service teachers on this research mentioned that the international teaching internship improved their independency. This was because they have been away from their parents in foreign countries. The situation forced them to be more capable of doing things by themselves and not relying on others too much. As Participant 3 said:

It makes me really independence because before that my mom cooked everything for me or I bought something in the shop. But since being there, many foods are not halal so I had to cook by myself or by my friends, and like wash the dishes, wash everything and do everything by myself.

In similar way, Participant 7 believed that the experience of living in another country caused her to be more independent and gain practical life skills. Because of the situation, she had to manage her own needs, as she mentioned:

I have never gone that far from my parents. It influenced my life skill, it helped me to maintain how I wash my clothes, washed the dishes, what time I should go on foot, because I went by foot everywhere, I had no motorcycle there, so I had to go by foot, or I took public transportation.

The data showed that the international teaching internship benefited the pre-service English teachers for their independence in term of personal issues. They did not rely on others and fulfilled their own needs to survive. The result was similar to Egeland (2016), who found that through international teaching internship, student-teachers learned to rely on themselves, developed practical skills, and made independent decisions.

#### *Coping Mechanism*

Coping mechanism was the ability to deal with problems or to cope with difficult situations, which was improved during the international teaching internship. They were able to handle barriers and developed problem solving skills as they encountered problems and challenges during the program, especially the language barriers. For example, one of them did not know how to find *halal* food; he found a way out by making friends with people from different nationalities, such as Thai pre-service teachers and others, so they could help him to communicate with the locals. As time passed, he escalated his coping mechanism by learning Thai language to enable him to communicate with the locals. As Participant 1 mentioned:

On the first week, I met some difficulties especially on finding food because you know, Thailand had a lot of pork. So I got buddies from the university that helped me to find some halal foods and find some *Masjid* (mosque) and something else. Then on the second week and the next third week, I learned the culture from the circumstances. For example, when I bought something, I learn to say it with Thai language and then my buddies helped me to speak basic conversation in Thailand, for example how to deal with the people, how to greet people, how to say number and then I can use the experience to buy something and greet people.

Participant 6 also developed coping mechanisms as he faced a cultural misunderstanding problem in Thailand. He unintentionally wore bright colored cloth when the king in Thailand had just passed away, which could be interpreted as an impolite manner. As the result, an old man yelled at him. However, he did not understand what the old man had said. He solved this problem by asking his Thai friend to say sorry to the old man and decided not to wear bright color anymore in public, as the participant said:

I was surprised, I told my friend to say sorry for him in Thailand, because I could not speak Thai, but then the man still got angry with me. It was ok for me because maybe he respected his king. I did not wear red and yellow anymore.

Moreover, Participant 8 said that she used body language as her coping mechanism in language barrier, as she stated:

When I tried to speak with Thai people and they did not understand what I tried to say, I tried best to get closer to them. I used my body language to tell what I want to say to them.

The result showed that the international teaching internship helped the participant to build coping mechanisms as they handled barriers and solved the problems by themselves. It is similar to Pilonieta (2017) who studied international teaching internship in Germany and highlighted coping mechanisms as personal benefit. The difference between coping mechanisms and the previous point, independence, is that coping mechanisms highlighted problem solving skills while independence highlighted the ability to survive without relying on others.

### *Time Management*

Several participants mentioned that their time management skills improved during the teaching internship. In the program, they had to live in another country, which had a different schedule for the transportation system, school entry time, etc. Therefore, they had to be able to manage their time in order not to be late for school and other activities. Participant 8 stated:

It helped me to maintain how I wash my clothes, washed the dishes, what time I should go on foot, because I went by foot everywhere, I had no motorcycle there, so I had to go by foot, or I took public transportation.

Furthermore, there were a lot of tasks from mentor teachers and other tasks from the program that must be fulfilled. This situation shaped the student-teachers' attitude to be wiser in managing their time and avoid procrastination. Participant 5 mentioned:

Actually, it affected me on my habit. Before, I used to procrastinate something, like when I had a task, I would do it the day after or anytime I wanted. But during that program, I had to do the task directly at that time.

In addition, Participant 6 mentioned that he used to come late; however, during the international teaching internship in Thailand, he found that the people of Thailand's value of being on time inspired him to do the same, as he stated:

I lived near from my university and I used to come late every day, but then in Thailand, I should come earlier, Because of Thailand people's behaviour, because they are very on time. If we say 7, we should come before 7.

From the above explanation, it could be concluded that some pre-service teachers were better in managing their time and avoiding procrastination. There are several reasons for them being on time, the different transportation time, having many tasks to do, and being inspired by the values of local people.

### ***Benefit 2: Professional Development***

In addition to benefits on personal development, the international teaching internship also gave spaces for pre-service teachers to develop their professional competences. Five themes emerged in our study.

#### *Confidence in Speaking English*

The participants in the study stated that having joined the internship, they were more confident in speaking English. As they lived in other foreign countries, in which the Indonesian language is not a public language, they had to use English to communicate during classroom discussion and seek advice about teaching from their mentors. Participant 1, for example, stated that he was exposed to spoken English as it was required by his mentor. He said:

At that time the cooperating teacher of my subject is from England, so I had to communicate with him in English. I think joining this program can improve my English skill, especially in speaking.

This was also relevant with the other participant, as she should communicate in English during the program. Participant 7, for example argued:

I met a lot of new people who did not know me, so I had to introduce myself again and again. And I had to speak English 24/7. Even with my friend from Indonesia, I speak English. That must be improving my English.

The two excerpts suggest that environment shape ways of students' learning English. In this particular case, for example, pre-service teachers were situated in a condition where English was only the most feasible tool of communication. This is in line with Kabilan (2013), who highlighted confidence in speaking and communication as one of the impacts gained from international internship, in the case of Malaysian students taking teaching internship in Maldives. It is also similar to Ateskan's (2016) findings of the research conducted to Turkish students doing international internship.

*Teaching Skills and Ideas*

All of the participants believed that international teaching internships benefited them in term of teaching ideas and skills. As the Sea-Teacher program required the pre-service teacher to observe the mentor teacher on the first week, they became familiar with class situation and approach of their mentor teacher. The observation activities facilitated them to understand teaching skill and get teaching ideas. As the result, they became more confident and looked skillful on their teaching practices. As Participant 1 mentioned:

I joined the class and I observed how the teacher doing teaching and learning process and then on the second week, this is my time to be teaching assistant. In this step, I learned how to deal with students, I learned to memorize, and I learned how to manage students based on their characteristics. On third week, I did my teaching practice, I can adapt with their characteristics based on what I learned on the second week.

Having observed classroom practices in the first week, this knowledge was actualized in the second week through practice teaching as teaching assistant. This activity allows these pre-service teachers to gain insights on teaching practices. Moreover, advice and supports from the mentor teachers also helped these students develop their teaching skills. Participant 8 stated:

I learned a lot from my cooperating teacher like how she managed the students, how she made the student enjoy the class. My mentor told me that before teaching I should enjoy myself, so I could enjoy with my students. She gave a lot of motivations to be better in teaching. I observed my cooperating teacher in how she managed the classroom, managing time. Actually, in Thailand, we have one hour for every subject, so in one hour, I learned from my cooperating teacher how to manage the students, the class, how to use good method in classroom.

Furthermore, mentor teachers also taught and shared their knowledge and experience to these pre-service teachers. Participant 6 mentioned that he was taught integrating online games into teaching by his mentor, as he stated:

My first teacher taught me about an online game, the students really liked the game. It's available on Playstore, Kahoot.

Findings of previous studies, such as by Kabilan (2013) and Ateskan (2016) also confirm that the internship improves pre-service teachers' pedagogical competences.

*New Worldviews on Education and Culture*

Participating in the program allows pre-service teachers to gain insights on the educational system, the program of education, the use of technology in education, and other extra-curricular activities. They would then compare those programs to those implemented in the Indonesian schools. Through teaching partnership with SEA-teacher's participants from different countries, they were able to engage in reflective thinking on the Indonesian educational system. Peer teaching implemented during the internship allowed them to help each other in terms of instructional process. Participant 3 said:

When I was teaching there, I got a teaching partner. When the students do not understand what I was teaching or saying, the teaching partner would explain to them. They would be available during my teaching process.

In addition, Participant 3 noted that he noticed different learning cultures between those taking place in Thai schools and in Indonesian schools, and he happened to reflect on the reasons for the difference. He stated:

[W]e should make our student braver to present or ask, because there I got many students wanting to participate in the class, even when I told them to ask question, almost all of them raised their hands. I think this is because the number of the students there were limited. They were not like us until 40 students in the class. They only got 20 or 25. And in term of bullying, they avoided it and they were so strict about it.

He explained that the students were active in the class because there were fewer students in one class compared to what he found in Indonesian classrooms. This allowed teachers to better organize them and prevent bullying. The school had strict regulations about it, so that the students avoided bullying others. As the result, a supportive learning environment was well-developed in the school.

Participant 7 highlighted the facilities and extra-curricular program in the school, as she said:

The point is the school that I was taught was school that has good facilities. It is like high standard school. It was like best five schools in Thailand. They had a lot of technologies. The things that I had never seen in Indonesia, they had hall. The hall was so big. Every month, they have science fair. When it came to science fair, everybody came, like from public school, private school, everybody came. And they had to do English test to make the government understand, how fine they educated the children. But again, Thailand is a small country, not like in Indonesia. The system was easier to be implemented there, not here.

She explained that the school in which she did the internship had good facilities, as well as a lot of extracurricular programs that help the students to develop themselves. She also mentioned that the government put a large amount of attention on students' progress in education. She thought that this program was great, but not really applicable to be implemented in a big country like Indonesia.

The internship suggests that internships allow pre-service teachers to reflect on the condition of education across settings. This result corresponds with Ateskan (2016)'s research, which mentioned that the Turkish student-teachers enrolled on teaching internship program in the US had new worldviews on education and culture. They mentioned that the classroom facilities were very different between Turkish and US schools.

### *International Career Opportunity*

Some participants believed that international teaching internship facilitated them to experience working in other countries. After going through the program, they felt it was a fun experience and got accustomed to it. They did not think that working in another country was an impossible mission. As they stated:

I got many friends for example from US, Russia who taught English as well they were exchange teachers, so I got used to International environment and I got motivated as well to work in International school (Participant 3).

Other participants also stated that:

I thought that it was really good and great if I can do this again or work in international school. Being intern teacher, I feel I can try this for my future career (Participant 8).

In addition, Participant 2, who already graduated from college, mentioned that she had been working in a company that cooperated with international institutions and she was in charge to communicate with foreign people, as she said, “My working area now is also in touch with international environment, because we have costumers from Europe and we had to communicate with them” (Participant 2).

Moreover, Participant 4 told us that actually he had a goal to continue his career working abroad. However, at this time he wanted to pursue his master’s degree first. As he stated:

One of my goals is to teach and open halal restaurant abroad. But for now, I just want to focus for my master scholarship. This internship indeed takes me to another intention (Participant 4).

This is justifiable because environment is very much influential to one’s academic journeys.

### *New Opportunities*

Some students stated that the one-month teaching internship in other counties has opened new opportunities for them. Participant 7 explained that she was called for an interview to teach in an international school. She added that the interviewer had a good impression of her, as she had experienced teaching international students in Thailand. As Participant 8 said:

Even though I haven’t finished my bachelor degree, I already have some jobs interview with international schools in Surabaya and I think and they saw me as someone who have ever teach overseas, so they see me as someone who can handle students better than anyone else.

Furthermore, Participant 6 said that he would go to teach in Thailand for one month after the data collection. He said that he joined the Sea-Teacher program on purpose because he had already targeted this opportunity. Because he knew that his university has a collaborative program from alumni to work as a teacher in some countries, as he stated:

Actually, that is why I joined this program because I wanted to teach in international level, because my university provided the program that alumni could teach in other countries like in Thailand, Malaysia even in Europe. Actually, next month, I am going to Thailand for teaching.

In addition, Participant 4 mentioned that he got a scholarship offer to continue his study in Chulangkorn University from his university because his university believed he had good capability after completing the international teaching internship program. He said:

[A]fter the international teaching internship, my faculty offered me opportunity to have master's degree in Teaching English as Second Language in Chulagkorn University Thailand (Participant 5).

This data suggests that this international teaching internship has opened other opportunities for participants. This is evident from opportunities gained by some participants for job interviews in international schools, opportunities gained by the other pre-service teachers to teach in other countries, the last one being offered a scholarship to continue study in another country.

### ***Insightful on Cultural Differences***

In addition to benefits on personal and professional competences, the internship was believed to help these pre-service teachers improve their awareness on cultural differences.

### ***Understanding Different Cultures/Values***

International experiences have allowed these pre-service teachers to be aware of cultural differences. Savage (2017), for example, mentioned that if someone understood a different culture, that would be an indication of a global-minded person. As they lived in another country for one month, the pre-service teachers had opportunities to observe and interact with local people. As the result, most of the participants agreed that they knew and understood more about different cultures and values. The participants said:

The important value that I learned from Thai people was about politeness. They were polite when they met people, even when they did not know the people, they were always bowing and gave greeting like "Sawadee khap" (Participant 1).

In Thailand, the nationalism was really emphasized. For example, when I went there, their king had just passed away. And everyone was not supposed to be wearing the colorful clothes, like yellow or red. They should be wearing dark colors like black or brown (Participant 3).

What I could learn there was discipline. They never crossed the street without zebra cross or help from policeman, they always use the bridge to cross street. And the public transportation was very complete. To go everywhere, we can use transportation like Bemo named Songtail. They are usually on time when it was crowded in the street. Songtail was fast, and we paid only 8 Bath (Rp 4000) (Participant 7).

The quotations suggest that the pre-service teachers had observed the locals and found out the values that they could learn from them. They could learn that the local people were polite, as they always bowed and greeted people, and even gave more values to teachers; their nationalism was really emphasized as they respected the king, and they were also disciplined,

as they obeyed the traffic rules. As a conclusion, the pre-service English teacher became more aware of other cultures. By doing this, they became globally minded persons.

### *Strengthening Global Networking*

The other indication of global mindedness, according to Savage (2017), is strengthening global-networking. Most of the participants stated that the internship program facilitated them to make friends from other countries. Some of the participants mentioned:

Being in an international program with international people like I said from England, USA, Thailand, I have more global awareness, I learned how to deal with people, how to communicate with people from another country. I learned a lot from them (Participant 1).

When I was in that school, I got many friends for example from US, Russia who taught English as well, they were exchange teachers, so I got used to International environment and I got motivated as well to work in International school (Participant 3).

Having known friends from many different societies, these students have developed networking across many different countries, as can be learned from these two previous quotations. Furthermore, Participant 6 escalated the networking to share about education, as he said:

I still had their contact and sometimes I still ask them about education, Thailand about their life, like activities in Indonesia or in Thailand or in the school.

The other participant escalated the networking to the point of cross-culture activities as her friends from other countries learn about Indonesia. Participant 5 stated:

In my school, there were a lot of teachers from England, India and the Philippines. There were a lot of cultures there, so I guessed they accepted me and our cultures really well because they were really interested in Batik and traditional dance from Bengkulu, because I showed the traditional dance during the teaching practice.

It seemed that all of the student-teachers successfully strengthened their networking skills as they made friends from many countries and exchanged ideas and knowledge. This global networking would help the pre-service teachers to become more culturally aware and it also allowed them to engage in exchanging information about professional opportunities.

### *Promoting Respect*

Respect is a trait of treating others well, which is really needed in order to have a more peaceful world. Student-teachers involved in this research admitted that they became more respectful and appreciative towards others' cultures. As they faced the cultural differences, they learned how to face the situation and respect other cultures. Participant 3, for example, expressed:



I became more appreciative and be more open minded than before. They were so different from me. I could also learn from them, for example I was motivated in how they managed their time (Participant 3).

Furthermore, Participant 2 shared tips on how to feel comfortable with others during the internship. She explained that at that time she had tried to fit into the place she lived. She shared other things that she could and could not do, and asked others to share the same. As the result, they understood and respected each other, as she said:

When I was there, I was supposed to feel like, just imagine they were in my place, what they will do, the things I would do then, so I was trying to fit myself at that place, I need to be more respectful to them, what kind of way of life they have, I need to take on them. They were telling me and I was telling them what I can do and what I cannot do. So far, I was feeling so comfortable with them, they respected me, the way I respected them.

Being in contact with people of different cultures and values, these pre-service English teachers learned to promote respect with other people. According to Savage (2017), promoting respect is one of the indicators of global-minded people. Moreover, Lee (2011), who studied seventeen Hong Kong student-teachers' internships in New Zealand, found that the program facilitated learning about culture. Student-teachers from Hong Kong became more appreciative toward the culture and life of New Zealand people.

## **Discussion**

The international internship developed three pre-service teachers' competences: personal, professional, and social competences. Mesker et al. (2018) also found that the international internship allowed participants to gain cultural awareness and improve professional competence. The participants of international internship in our study were more independent in catering to their daily needs, such as dietary matters. This is so because being away from their own social contexts, participants of the SEA-Teacher Program needed to assimilate with the cultural context in which they found themselves. For example, they had to adapt to the condition which required them to provide their own needs. This was indeed the purpose of the international internship in the first place – to expose students, pre-service teachers, and in fact in-service teachers to international experience (Xiaochi, 2012). This is because globalization has allowed someone to interact with people from different cultures and linguistically different communities (Mwebi & Brigham, 2009; Xiaochi, 2012) and that caused need for a program that allows participants to interact with different people beyond their own communities. For that reason, pre-service teachers should be introduced to international communities, from which they could interact with people of different cultures.

In addition, constructivism advocates experiential learning in real contexts (Mwebi & Brigham, 2009). The study by Simons et al. (2012) suggests that one of the types of experiential learning is engaging in teaching internship. Their study found that the internship as one of the types of experiential learning allowed participants to develop personally and professionally, and also increased their social and cultural awareness. Our study also comes along the lines of these previous studies on this issue. It is important to note that international teaching practicums enable pre-service teachers to engage in active learning, and the nature of active learning leads toward personal and professional development.

Being in the international practicum has also improved the pre-service teachers' ability to cope with daily issues and also enhanced their time management, which is in line with

Egeland's (2016) and Pilonieta's (2017) work. In addition, the internship also gave spaces for these pre-service teachers' professional competences. The program improved their communicative and pedagogical competences and gave participants opportunities to have more ideas on teaching, broaden worldviews on education, gain more career goals, and obtain new opportunities. In a similar tone, Kabilan (2013) highlighted that pre-service teachers participating in his study improve their confidence in speaking in front of the public. This is also similar to the findings of Ateskan (2016), who investigated Turkish student teachers enrolled on international internship in Iowa and mentioned confidence in communication as one of the benefits of international teaching internships on professional development. In addition to the benefits gained on the improvement of personal and professional competences, the participants of our study show that the internship allow students to be insightful on cultural awareness, so that they may have knowledge on how to respect others and also improve their international network.

### Conclusion

The study on investigating the perceived influence of international teaching practicum on pre-service teachers' competence yielded important data: being in international teaching practicum allows these pre-service teachers to improve their personal competences. They were more independent both on daily and academic issues. These pre-service teachers have gained some skills to fulfill their daily needs, time management skills, and coping mechanisms. In addition to personal competence, international teaching practicum also enabled students to develop their professional competence. For example, they gained more knowledge on teaching and new ideas on education. The international experience also opened new opportunities for these students to shape their goals and future careers. This was possible through their interaction with others from different cultural contexts. Finally, the program also shaped students' awareness on cultural differences. They become more considerate upon explaining cultural differences to their colleagues from different backgrounds. In addition, the internship develops networks with international communities, and most importantly, they tend to be respectful for other different cultures.

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