Pre-Service English Teachers' Experiences in Joining *Kampus Mengajar* Program

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Abstract: *Kampus Mengajar* is part of *Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) initiatives introduced by the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia in early 2020. The objective is to enhance the quality of university graduates, enabling them to thrive in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0. Additionally, the program aims to elevate the professionalism of students aspiring to become teachers. The aim of this research was to explore the experiences of pre-service English teachers in joining this program. This study employed a qualitative method with a narrative approach. Eight students of the English Education Study Program at a university in Riau, Indonesia, participated in *Kampus Mengajar* were interviewed. They were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The data were collected through interviews and documentation. The analysis of the data resulted in the identification of four themes. These themes encompassed the motivation for participating in *Kampus Mengajar* program, the various types of activities undertaken, the lessons gained from teaching and non-teaching activities, and the skills that were improved throughout the program. Based on the results of this study, the participants shared remarkably similar experiences aiming to enhance their skills as university graduates and prospective teachers.

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture introduced a new policy named *Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM). This program aims to prepare university students to adapt to the demands of social, cultural, and professional changes. In its implementation, universities need to reorient curriculum development that address these challenges. In drafting or developing the curriculum, universities are required to refer to *Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia* (KKNI) and the National Standards for Higher Education. According to Junaidi (2020), the curriculum that aligns with MBKM policy is the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum. OBE is a curriculum that focuses on outcomes

(Siregar, 2020). This curriculum contains not only the materials to be learned in the classroom but also prepares graduates (outcomes) who have been equipped with the ability to compete in the global society. When a campus adopts the OBE curriculum, it means that the campus also supports MBKM policy (Hatmanto, 2020). Therefore, through the implementation of this program, universities will be better in preparing their graduates to face the global competition.

The Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 eras demand university graduates who are able to survive amidst social, cultural, work, and technological changes (Permendikbud Number 3 Year 2020). According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, educated unemployment in Indonesia was 6.27 million people in August 2020, accounting for 64.24% of total unemployment (Fizriyani, 2020). As a result, this policy is expected to produce graduates with excellent soft skills and hard skills, as well as positive attitudes and character, to meet the challenges and needs of society (Setiawan, 2021).

The MBKM policy consists of four major components: the establishment of new study programs, the improvement of higher education accreditation systems, the establishment of legal entity state universities (*Perguruan Tinggi Negeri Badan Hukum*/PTNBH), and the chance to study three semesters outside of the study program (Priatmoko & Dzakiyyah, 2020). The emphasis of this study is on the final aspect, namely the chance to study three semesters outside the designated study program. In this program, students have the opportunity to engage in various activities such as internships, community service projects, participation in student exchanges, independent study, humanitarian projects, research, and entrepreneurial programs, including *Kampus Mengajar* program. Within MBKM programs, universities, particularly study programs, are required to facilitate the conversion of courses within one semester, totaling 20 credits, without being equivalent to other courses (Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Tinggi, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2020).

English Education Study Program of Universitas Riau, Indonesia, has already implemented this curriculum. Among several existing MBKM programs, one of the programs followed by students from the English Education Study Program is *Kampus Mengajar.* It provides an opportunity for university students from diverse academic backgrounds to engage in teaching and non-teaching activities within elementary schools. According to Priatmoko and Dzakiyyah (2020), this program aims to enrich students' educational experiences by offering practical opportunities outside the traditional classroom setting, fostering professional growth, and enhancing their teaching skills. In *Kampus Mengajar* program, university students

participate in various activities within elementary schools, including assisting teachers in classrooms, organizing extracurricular activities, and developing educational materials. These activities not only provide valuable assistance for primary school educators but also offer students hands-on experience in educational settings. Through these engagements, students gain practical insights into teaching methodologies, classroom management techniques, and educational challenges. Thus, it complements their theoretical learning with real-world experiences (Rosita & Damayanti, 2021).

This immersive experience not only deepens their understanding of teaching methodologies but also enhances their professional skills, such as communication and leadership, and preparing them for future careers in education (Priatmoko & Dzakiyyah, 2020; Rosita & Damayanti, 2021). Additionally, the program fosters community engagement and social responsibility, enabling students to contribute meaningfully to local schools and build positive relationships within the community (Kemdikbud, 2021). According to the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture, *Kampus Mengajar* program is a forum for Indonesian teacher candidates to develop their teaching skills. To develop the quality of pre-service teachers, teaching practice is needed. According to Hazzan and Lapidot (2014), teaching practice establishes a connection between universities and schools, enabling prospective teachers to put theoretical knowledge into practical use in classrooms. Consequently, pre-service teachers, especially those focusing on English as a Foreign Language (EFL), need hands-on experience to equip them for a successful transition into the professional realm upon graduation.

However, critics raise concerns about potential drawbacks, such as inconsistencies in educational quality and disruptions to the school environment, highlighting the importance of careful planning and ongoing commitment from stakeholders to address sustainability challenges and ensure the program's long-term success (Priatmoko & Dzakiyyah, 2020). Moreover, Indonesia's education sector continues to face various challenges in terms of quality, such as restricted access to education, unequal teacher distribution, and perceived inadequacies in the quality of educators (Sjahrifa, 2019).

There are several previous studies regarding students' experiences in *Kampus Mengajar* program. Tampubolon et al. (2022) studied students' experiences in joining *Kampus Mengajar*, focusing on the overall student involvement and impacts. Additionally, Kusuma and Kurniawan (2022) provided insights into the teaching experiences specifically within *Kampus Mengajar*, offering a detailed examination of the challenges and successes encountered by

English teachers. Furthermore, Sumani et al (2022) investigated the impacts of *Kampus Mengajar* on students' personal development and community engagement, highlighting the program's broader societal impact. However, despite the existing studies, there is a notable gap in the literature concerning students' experiences within *Kampus Mengajar* program at the English Education Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Universitas Riau. This gap prompts the need for further investigation to understand the experiences, challenges, and benefits encountered by students in this specific context. Therefore, the researchers investigated the experiences of pre-service English teachers participating in *Kampus Mengajar* program within the English Education Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of Universitas Riau to share and spread significant information about this research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)

MBKM policy is one of the programs launched by Nadiem Anwar Makarim, the Minister of Education and Culture. This program represents independence for educational institutions, both educational institutions and colleges. The selection of the independent learning concept was influenced by the philosophy of K.H. Dewantara that the essence of education means independence (Widyanuratikah, 2020). The impact of this independence can be extended to educators in the classroom, providing them with the flexibility to select suitable teaching approaches and optimal curriculum components for their students. In the current era of educational democracy, learning freedom is considered relevant and appropriate. As stated by Susilawati (2021), education that emphasizes educational democracy is the definition of independence and freedom. The learning experience at *Kampus Merdeka* represents a crucial embodiment of student-centered learning. It presents challenges and opportunities for students to cultivate innovation, creativity, and independence as they actively seek and discover knowledge through real-world experiences and field dynamics.

As a result, it is hoped that through this policy, universities will be able to improve graduate students' soft and hard skills, allowing them to adapt to the needs of society, culture, workplace, and technological advancements. Several activities in this MBKM program are already being implemented at Universitas Riau, including student exchange, internship, teaching assistant in an education unit, research, humanitarian project, entrepreneurial

activities, independent study project, and building thematic real work village. The researcher focused on *Kampus Mengajar* program, which has been implemented by the English Education Study Program at Universitas Riau.

Kampus Mengajar **Program**

Kampus Mengajar is one of the programs in MBKM. According to Iriawan and Saefudin (2021), *Kampus Mengajar* brings together students from all over Indonesia and from diverse backgrounds to contribute to the field of education, particularly in the learning process at school, especially at the elementary school level. A total of 15,000 university students from across Indonesia participate in this program, teaching elementary school students in their local regions (Yuliati, 2022). This program also emphasizes students to carry out the application of learning in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, which has a major need in achieving mastery of literacy and numeracy materials. The government opens the opportunity for students to contribute to developing education in Indonesia. There are criteria for placement in this program, namely, the schools are close to the domicile of university students, the schools are C accredited, and the schools belong to the 3T (frontier, remote, underdeveloped) regions (Kemdikbud, 2021). In the current situation, some schools still need assistants, especially elementary schools in rural areas (Zulkarnaen & Handoyo, 2019).

According to Surya (2012), the distribution of teachers across Indonesia is still unequal. Numerous schools in urban areas have an excess of teachers, whereas many schools in remote areas face a shortage of teaching staff. Therefore, this program is also expected to be able to make education in Indonesia even better, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, in which learning was conducted online. Many schools could not adapt to this new way of learning due to various things constraining it. In this case, the university students joining this program could directly assist and develop creativity towards teachers at schools in managing the learning process. According to the main guidebook of student activities of *Kampus Mengajar* (Kemdikbud, 2021), this program has several objectives. Firstly, it aims to provide students with opportunities to contribute directly to improving the quality of teaching at schools. Secondly, it is to assist schools in proactively delivering education services, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, the program aims to offer optimal learning opportunities for all students, especially at the elementary school level, amidst the challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Experiential Learning Theory

David A. Kolb developed Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), which emphasizes the importance of experience in the learning process. According to Kolb (1984), the idea of learning involves the creation of knowledge through the transformation of experience. The MBKM programs are in line with David Kolb's experiential learning theory. In the context of MBKM, the experience gained during the three semesters of the MBKM program must be able to be transformed into new knowledge that belongs to each student. This new knowledge is the result of reflection and conceptualization by the students themselves on their experiences while joining this program. As stated by Majid and Rochman (2014), this experiential learning model activates learning to build knowledge and skills through direct experience. Therefore, with this new knowledge, while participating in MBKM programs, students will learn and get real experience in society, especially in the field of work.

Experiential learning focuses on each individual's learning process. According to Fathurrohman (2015), the experiential learning model is a technique that uses experience as a medium for learning rather than books or teacher material. Experiential learning includes the body, thoughts, feelings, and actions, and it is a lot more than listening. This assists students in making connections between learning material and real-world conditions so that with this real-world experience, students can remember and understand the information obtained in education and can improve educational quality.

METHODS

Research Design

The researchers used a qualitative method with a narrative approach because this study focused on discovering English students' experiences in joining *Kampus Mengajar* program. According to Creswell (2009), a qualitative study seeks to investigate and comprehend the meaning that individuals or groups explain to a social or human problem. As a result, it is focused on explaining, describing, and analyzing more processes and meanings from the subject's point of view. A narrative approach focuses on individual experiences and chronology in greater detail. As stated by James and Kimberly (2011), the narrative approach is an examination of individuals' lives as told through their experiential stories, including discussions on the significance of these experiences for the individuals. Meanwhile, according to Metrova & Webster (2019), narrative is a research method in the social sciences where

stories are constructed through the process of listening either from others or directly engaging with research subjects through interviews. Thus, narrative research can be concluded as a study of stories that narrate and elucidate an event, with the focus of the researcher centered on a particular chronological sequence in detail.

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and documentation. Through purposive sampling, eight students from the English Education Study Program at Universitas Riau who participated in the 2nd batch of *Kampus Mengajar* were chosen as participants. The program took place from August 2nd, 2021 until December 18th, 2021. According to Arikunto (2010), purposive sampling is the method of choosing a sample without being constrained by a specific level or area; instead, it is selected with a particular purpose in mind. The semi-structured interview served as a crucial method for collecting data, involving verbal communication between the researcher and the participants (Mathers et al., 2000). According to Kallio et al. (2016), semi-structured interviews use a list of questions in the structured type and permit the interviewer to ask additional questions to explore the topic in more detail. The data were also collected from documentation, such as photos, log books, and the results of their activity during the program.

The data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method, which involves the identification of patterns or themes in qualitative data. The theme encapsulates crucial aspects of the data that are relevant to the research question (Heriyanto, 2018). Thematic analysis is the process by which these patterns or themes are recognized. The procedure begins with the identification of meaningful patterns and potentially intriguing issues in the data, culminating in the reporting of the content and significance of these patterns. An approach for examining the credibility of results is through member checking. Member checking is a method to validate, confirm, or evaluate the dependability of qualitative research findings (Doyle, 2007).

FINDINGS

Participants' Profile

In this study, eight students from the English Education Study Program at FKIP Universitas Riau were selected as participants. They took part in the 2nd batch of *Kampus Mengajar* program. Interviews were conducted face-to-face. All participants were given pseudonyms in the form of codes (see Table 1).

Table 1. Participants profile

No.	Participants	Class	School Placement
1.	P1	8C	SD Negeri 192 Pekanbaru
2.	P2	8B	SMP Negeri 40 Pekanbaru
3.	P3	8B	SD Negeri 57 Pekanbaru
4.	P4	8B	SD IT Darussalam Tambang
5.	P5	8A	SMP Negeri 8 Dumai
6.	P6	8B	SMP Negeri 5 Kampar Hilir
7.	P7	8C	SMP Negeri 12 Pekanbaru
8.	P8	8B	SMP Negeri 1 Tapung Hilir

The research findings were described based on the interpretation of the results of the recorded interviews with the participants. During the interview, the researcher and the participants spoke in Bahasa Indonesia to avoid misunderstandings, but the findings were translated into English. The researcher then transcribed the recorded interviews. To gain a general understanding, all of the data are explored and coded. Following that, all data are organized into several major themes and sub-themes that will be discussed. The researcher then interprets all of the data described as study responses.

The Participants' Motivation in Joining *Kampus Mengajar* Program

Motivation is what drives someone to achieve a specific goal. Based on the findings of the interviews, the researchers discovered several similarities in each participant's motivation for participating in *Kampus Mengajar* program.

Table 2. Themes and sub-themes of students' motivation

Theme	Sub-themes
The participants' motivation for joining *Kampus Mengajar* Program	a. To participate in MBKM program
	b. To get a new learning atmosphere
	c. To gain new experience
	d. To speed up the learning period
	e. To get the benefits offered
	f. To help improve the quality of learning in 3T (frontier, remote, underdeveloped) schools.

The first motivation discovered was the desire to contribute to the government's new program and society. This was stated by one of the participants, P1, who expressed her desire to participate in this program:

> "My motivation for participating in *Kampus Mengajar* program is that I wanted to take part in the program from the Ministry of Education and Culture. At that time, this program was often discussed after *Kampus Mengajar* batch 1 was completed. Therefore, I sought information from seniors, and I was interested in participating in *Kampus Mengajar* batch 2." (P1)

The second motivation was found because they felt bored with online lectures during the pandemic. They also found out about several new programs from the Ministry of Education and Culture, and they were interested in joining *Kampus Mengajar* program after reading about the benefits and mechanisms related to this program. Thus, they want to get a new learning atmosphere. As stated below:

> "My motivation for joining *Kampus Mengajar* was based on the fact that, at that time, lectures were still being conducted online, and honestly, I felt bored with the same activities. Then, I read a post from Instagram of BEM FKIP UNRI about *Kampus Mengajar* batch 2. After I read the mechanisms and benefits of this program, I was interested in contributing as a participant in this program." (P8)

The desire to gain new experiences, particularly the first experience in teaching, motivates every student to participate in this program. A participant expressed this as he mentioned that:

> "When this program was launched, I knew that this would be a new experience for me, especially I would get direct experience in teaching practice." (P3)

Another motivation was that they wanted to speed up their study period at the major. By joining *Kampus Mengajar*, the participants got conversions in field teaching practice (PLP) courses. As said by P2:

> "Because at that time, it was reported that if I had joined this program, I would not need to take PLP next semester. So, if I can do it quickly, why not." (P2)

Besides, it was found that the participants had the motivation to join this program because they were interested in the benefits offered. It was reflected in P4's statement below:

> "I'm also interested because this program has many benefits. It improves my experience and skills. This program also offers tuition assistance, monthly payments while participating in the program, and credit conversion." (P4)

The motivation that made the participants join this program was that they wanted to help improve the quality of learning in 3T schools. 3T stands for frontier (*terdepan*), remote (*terpencil*) and underdeveloped (*tertinggal*). As stated below:

> "This program aims to help 3T schools. I want to know the conditions in these schools." (P1)

Types of Activity in *Kampus Mengajar* Program

The following themes represent the types of activity at school during *Kampus Mengajar* program.

Table 3. Theme and sub-themes of types of activity during *Kampus Mengajar*

Theme	Sub-themes
Types of activity during *Kampus Mengajar* program	a. Teaching activities
	b. Literacy and numeracy
	c. Adaptation of technology
	d. Administration activities

Following data collection from all participants, seven of them admitted that one of the activities during *Kampus Mengajar* program was a teaching activity. They directly replaced the role of the teacher in delivering lessons to students in the class. The participants were allowed to bring their teaching skills into practice as expressed by P1:

> "So, during *Kampus Mengajar*, my team and I were assigned to replace the teaching in several classes. Incidentally, at that time, I was given to teach grades 1, 2, and 3 in elementary school." (P1)

In line with P1, P5 also said that one of the forms of activities during *Kampus Mengajar* was teaching in the classroom as he explained:

> "We were also assigned to teach in several classes, and I was given to replace the teacher in several subjects. I really felt my experience while joining KM2." (P5)

Figure 1. Teaching activities

The next is literacy and numeracy activities. The participants provided activities (see Figure 1) for students to improve literacy and numeracy skills from an early age. It aligns with one of the main focuses and objectives of this program, which is to increase the literacy and numeracy skills of students in elementary schools, as stated by P5:

> "When I joined KM2, the activities I did most often focused on increasing literacy and numeracy skills and adapting technology in schools. For literacy and numeracy activities, we focused on providing activities and programs for schools to improve literacy and numeracy skills. For example, in our numeracy activities, we made a program where, before starting the lesson, we gave students a simple test regarding multiplication, division, etc. We did this every day before beginning any task so that the students themselves get used to solving problems with these numbers. We organized literacy ambassadors for literacy activities, like learning more about novels or storybooks." (P5)

This is also mentioned by P8, who said that she also carried out literacy and numeracy activities in addition to teaching activities during *Kampus Mengajar* program. She mentioned that:

> "At that time, I also held literacy and numeracy activities. Literacy activities were carried out to improve reading skills, while numeracy activities focused on numbers, such as multiplication, division, etc. Therefore, we focused on helping improve both of these skills at school." (P8)

Based on the interview results, the participants revealed that they assisted the schools in adopting technology. They carried out activities such as conducting training in terms of technology utilization for all teachers and students at school, helping teachers and students learn how to use applications for learning purposes as well as school needs. It was reflected in P8's statement below:

"During *Kampus Mengajar* program, we also hold training for teachers and students in using Zoom, Google Meet, and Google Classroom." (P8)

This was also expressed by P7, who said that she and her team also conducted several trainings for teachers during *Kampus Mengajar* program. She said:

"We held training in using online learning facilities provided by Google and the Ministry of Education and Culture, such as training on how to use Google Forms, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Zoom Meeting, and *Rumah Belajar*. At that time, we also held training on using Microsoft Word." (P7)

Figure 2. Technology adaptation training activities

The next activity was doing administrative tasks, such as assisting the teachers in archiving school data and inputting student report scores. This activity was mentioned by all of the participants, as P6 expressed:

"We also helped with administrative activities at school. At that time, the activities were in the administration room. What helped archiving student data and input data into the school database. Also, at that time, I was asked by the teacher to input students report scores." (P6)

Lessons Learned from *Kampus Mengajar* Program

The following themes are about the lessons learned from the activities during *Kampus Mengajar* program. There are six lessons as stated by the participants.

Table 4. Lessons learned during *Kampus Mengajar*

Theme	Sub-themes	
Lessons learned during *Kampus Mengajar*	a.	Learning how to teach and manage classes well
	b.	Learning how to make learning tools (lesson plan, learning media, learning material)
	c.	Learning how to improve public speaking skill
	d.	Learning how to manage school administration
	e.	Learning how to be good at teamwork
	f.	Learning how to manage and handle a program

The first lesson learned is about how to teach and manage classes well. This was expressed by one of the participants, namely P1. She said:

> "I also learned how to teach well in class. Moreover, several times, I participated in mentoring with tutors so I could observe the learning process in that class. During the learning process, I could also understand how to manage a lesson well, managing elementary school students who still like to play and I also practiced my patience when handling the class." (P1)

The next lesson learned is how to make learning tools. Of eight participants, four of them said they had learned how to make learning tools, such as lesson plans, learning media, learning material, etc. As stated by P5, she said that:

> "Of course, you use learning tools during the teaching process. Well, I also learned how to make learning tools, such as lesson plans and others." (P5)

Another lesson learned is how to improve public speaking performance. It was found that four out of eight participants have learned how to improve public speaking performance. It was reflected in P6's statement below:

> "While teaching, at first, I was often clumsy in front of the class, but over time, I learned how to make my public speaking better because no matter what, good public speaking also determines how far students can understand the material we teach." (P6)

During *Kampus Mengajar* program, the participants assisted teachers in completing administrative tasks at school, so the participants also learned about handling school administration and data, as expressed by P5:

"During the non-teaching activities, I helped the teacher a lot doing administrative tasks in the TU room, so I learned a lot from there, about how to input data until archiving school data." (P5)

The next lesson learned is how to be good at teamwork. As stated by P3, he said that:

"I also learned how to work with my *Kampus Mengajar batch 2* team because we often had different opinions and thoughts and how to manage debates. That's what I learned in our team." (P3)

Based on the interview results, the participants also learned how to manage the programs they had planned. It was reflected in P1's statement below:

"Before the program (*Kampus Mengajar batch 2*), at first, we were asked to plan our work program, so we needed to complete the programs that we had made. I learned how to get new ideas, design a program, and implement the programs." (P1)

Skills Improved during *Kampus Mengajar* Program

The participants reported that their teaching abilities improved both during and after their participation in *Kampus Mengajar* program.

Table 5. Themes and sub-themes students' skills that improved

Theme	Sub-themes
Skills improved during *Kampus Mengajar* program	a. Teaching skills and managing classroom
	b. Communication
	c. Discussion
	d. Socialization

P4 has confirmed that his teaching skills have improved during this program as he stated below:

"My teaching ability has improved because I went directly into the field. Of course, I can analyze what the students' real needs, like about how they respond to my teaching method and how to adjust it according to the students' abilities. All of those experiences, I feel, increased within me." (P4)

According to P4, aside from improving teaching skills, other abilities such as class management have also improved:

> "It is like working as a teaching staff, isn't it? Then, I learned how to convey and deliver knowledge to the students. They said that they didn't know about the previous lesson. So, at the very least, I could prepare and study the material directly. All of this has an impact on teaching quality. Yes, my abilities have improved." (P4)

During the interviews, the participants revealed that while participating in this program, they felt that their soft skills in communicating, discussing, and socializing had improved over time. As felt by P7, he said that:

> "Other skills are soft skills. My communication skills have improved. Because when I become a teacher in the classroom, I have to explain or deliver knowledge to students properly and correctly. Of course, it requires good communication skills." (P7)

In addition, the other two participants reported that they have improved their discussion skills. This is expressed by P3 and P4. P3 expressed that:

> "Joining an organization will develop social interaction ability, such as by expressing opinions, refuting or discussing and so on." (P3)

Finally, another improvement is the ability to socialize more easily. According to the data gathered four participants stated that it was easier to interact and socialize with others. Another soft skill that has improved for P5 since joining *Kampus Mengajar* program is her ability to socialize, as she stated:

> "I believe my ability to socialize with the students, the teachers, the community, and the school environment has improved.... that is all I think." (P4)

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to address inquiries regarding the experiences of English education students in joining *Kampus Mengajar* program. The results indicate that the eight participants from the 2nd batch of *Kampus Mengajar* program shared nearly identical experiences, dealing with their motivation in joining *Kampus Mengajar* program, lessons learned from the program, and the skills gained during the program.

Several reasons motivated the eight participants from the 2nd batch of *Kampus Mengajar* program to participate in this program. They wanted to take part in the government and

community-created program as well as to gain new experiences and contribute enhancing the quality of education in 3T schools. Since almost all participants stated that they had no previous teaching experience, joining *Kampus Mengajar* program provides a significant opportunity for acquiring fresh experiences, particularly in teaching.

The participants have learned several lessons while participating in this program and the experiences gained by all students were transformed into new knowledge. This new knowledge is the result of reflection and conceptualization by the students themselves on their experiences. This is in line with the concept of experiential theory, as stated by Kolb (1984), who defines learning as the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. In the teaching activity, almost all of the participants learned about how to teach and manage classes well, how to make learning tools suitable for the students, and how to improve public speaking skills. Moreover, seven out of eight participants said they got direct teaching experience in class, and from there, they learned how to teach and manage class well during the learning process, including preparing the learning tools, such as lesson plans, learning media, learning materials, etc. These findings are in line with the previous study reporting the perception from EFL pre-service teachers which stated that, during *Kampus Mengajar*, they experienced directly how the teaching system was in class as well as the learning tools such as lesson plans, teaching media, etc. (La Ede & Maulina, 2022).

Apart from teaching activities, the participants also learned a lot during the non-teaching activities, such as how to manage school administration, how to do teamwork efficiently, and how to manage a program. All of the participants said that they all learned a lesson while helping with administrative tasks at school, such as how to input student scores, archive school data, record student data, and complete student reports. Those activities gave them lessons on how to carry out the school administration process. Furthermore, they also learned how to work well with teams, including how to negotiate and how to get an agreement from many different points of view, as well as how to increase solidarity and responsibility as individuals. Lastly, the participants also acquired skills in managing the programs.

Based on the interview, the participants were allowed to practice teaching. They also did literacy and numeracy activities. This is in line with one of the main focuses and objectives of this program, namely to increase the literacy and numeracy skills of students in elementary schools. Furthermore, the participants also participate in helping the adaptation of technology at schools, such as conducting training on technology utilization for all teachers and students

at school, helping teachers learn how to use applications for teaching, and helping to create a website for school needs. All those activities are in line with the primary guidebook of student activities of *Kampus Mengajar* (Kemdikbud, 2021).

Additionally, the results reveal that nearly all participants perceived an enhancement in their hard skills dealing with teaching and managing school administration, as well as their soft skills, including communication, discussion, and social interaction. The participants expressed that prior to enrolling in the program, they had deficiencies in communication, discussion, and socialization. These skills developed progressively due to their involvement in this program. According to Iriawan & Saefudin (2021), *Kampus Mengajar* aims to prepare students to adapt to the demands of social, cultural, and professional changes in today's world. It is implemented by developing students' hard skills and soft skills.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study highlights the positive experiences from *Kampus Mengajar* program which encompass the enhancement of their skills, knowledge, and character, ultimately equipping them to effectively meet the demands of contemporary society. Throughout the program, students engaged in a diverse range of activities, including both teaching and non-teaching components. Additionally, the program effectively cultivated empathy and social awareness among students, as they became more attuned to the social conditions within their community. This program not only improves students' hard skills and soft skills but also deepens their understanding and character. This allows EFL pre-service teachers to apply the theoretical knowledge into practice. The participants use a variety of interactive methods to teach basic school subjects, resulting in many positive experiences and outcomes for students.

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