

Teaching Practicums at the Postgraduate Level: Problems, Solutions, and Recommendations

Listyani¹

¹ Master's Program in English Language Education, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Salatiga, Indonesia

Correspondence: Listyani, MPBI, FBS, Jl. Kartini 15-17, Salatiga, Indonesia. E-mail: listyani.listyani@uksw.edu

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Abstract

In any educational study program, teaching practicums are necessary to be implemented. It often serves as an apprenticeship to give pre-service teachers practical experience regarding the real world of teaching. It is commonly implemented at the undergraduate level. At the postgraduate level, however, this implementation remains controversial. This study was conducted to reveal postgraduate students' problems and solutions during their teaching practicums. Besides that, this study also aimed to examine and give critical insights into the implementation of teaching practicums at the postgraduate level for educational study program students. Data was retrieved from open-ended questionnaires to 8 postgraduate students about their problems and solutions in doing their teaching practicums. Data was also taken from 7 other respondents. They were practitioners like lecturers, teachers, and alumni from educational departments. The findings revealed that in doing their teaching practicums, the master's degree students dealt with various problems similar to those faced by their undergraduate counterparts. Another finding disclosed the practitioners' opinions that for the postgraduate level, the focus of teaching practicums can be altered and implemented in a form other than teaching. It can be research, curriculum development, language teaching technology development, and material development. At the postgraduate level, students are expected to focus on research, not just the practice of teaching.

Keywords: teaching practicum, postgraduate, level, research

1. Introduction

Being a pre-service teacher is one of the requirements to be fulfilled by any student of an educational department. It is a phase where these students are prepared to be professional teachers in the future. These students, also called pre-service teachers or teaching-practicum students, have usually been equipped with adequate knowledge about students' characteristics, be it at the primary or secondary level. They are also given knowledge about the curriculum of the school they are going to teach, such as children's or teenagers' psychology, teaching methods and media, and some other things related to the implementation of a teaching practicum. During this phase, various problems may emerge and thus cause these pre-service students to try to overcome their difficulties. In some postgraduate education programs, teaching practicums are still conducted. Despite the many benefits that these postgrad students may obtain, there are some questions and doubts about the effectiveness and urgency of conducting teaching practicums at the postgraduate level.

Based on the elaboration above, there is an urgency to conduct research on this matter. Quite a lot of research has been done on teaching practicums at the undergraduate level. However, little has been implemented in teaching practicums at the postgraduate level. This study then is conducted to delve into the problems that postgraduate English Education Study Program students may face in their teaching practicums, as well as to reveal their solutions to overcoming their problems. These students' experiences are the basis for the next analysis, that is, the urgency and need to conduct teaching practicums at the postgraduate level. Seven other respondents, whose professions are teachers, a principal, and a teacher trainer, were interviewed for their opinions about the urgency of conducting teaching practicums at the postgraduate level. Besides that, this study will offer recommendations on doing teaching practicums at the postgraduate level.

There are three research questions to be answered in this study:

- (1) What problems do 8 postgraduate students experience in their teaching practicums?
- (2) What solutions do they apply to overcome those problems?
- (3) In educational practitioners' opinions, what is the ideal way to implement teaching practicums at the postgraduate level?

Hopefully, this research can help make university students at the postgraduate level aware of the importance of doing research on teaching. It is also expected that graduate school lecturers as well as management can make better decisions on the direction of teaching practicums, if conducted, at the postgraduate level. During their studies, postgraduate students in an education-teaching department are also expected to be able to develop their teaching competencies and finally be able to promote and sharpen their professional skills. It is also anticipated that postgraduate students in an education-teaching department will find this research beneficial in developing their teaching competencies and promoting their professional working skills in the future.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teaching Practicum & Pre-service Teachers

Trần and Nguyễn (2024) stated that a teaching practicum should be a platform for students to try out what they have learned about teaching from their universities in real school contexts. A teaching practicum also teaches students professional skills and the values of the teaching job. Furthermore, it aids students in making their final decision on whether or not to pursue a teaching career. In line with that, Martín-Romera (2022) asserted that a teaching practicum is an important component in the initial training of secondary education teachers. It can be considered as the first approach to the educational practice that future teachers have. This is a basic element in improving the quality of education. Teaching practicums are one of the objectives of the different educational reforms.

Students doing teaching practicums are often referred to as pre-service teachers. It means teachers-to-be who are now doing their teaching practice. Pre-service teachers are individuals who are in the process of receiving formal education and training before becoming certified teachers (Baier et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2023). They are often university students who are learning about pedagogy, child development, and instructional methods. According to particular scientific journal articles (Baier et al., 2021), pre-service teachers are expected to apply the knowledge derived from scientific theories to their everyday teaching. In this field, there are several terms that are somewhat confusing, namely pre-service, Praktik Pengalaman Lapangan (Field Experience Practice – PPL), and teaching practicum students.

The main difference between these three terms lies in the stage of their education and the focus of their training. Pre-service teachers are still in the process of receiving formal education and training. PPL students are pre-service teachers who are in their final year of study at their universities and are undergoing a specific training program (PPL) (Fitria & Fidesrinur, 2018; Hasanah et al., 2020). Teaching practicum students are those who are in the stage of applying their academic knowledge in real classroom settings (Galana et al., 2023; Malikebu et al., 2023). It is important to note that these terms can overlap, as a pre-service teacher can be a PPL student and also a teaching practicum student at different stages of their education.

2.2 Problems Faced

Teaching practicum students face significant internal challenges that obstruct their professional development and teaching effectiveness. Saehu et al. (2019) identified three primary challenges encountered by PPL students, with the most prominent being the theory-practice gap. This notion denotes the struggle of students to bridge the gap between the theoretical knowledge acquired in university courses and its practical applications in real-world teaching scenarios. Consequently, students often face difficulties when attempting to implement teaching concepts and procedures within a classroom setting. Furthermore, PPL students are expected to grasp and apply various aspects of teaching knowledge, attitudes, and skills in a professional manner. However, the lack of a well-structured curriculum may pose a second problem, which hinders their ability to develop practical knowledge, skills, and a professional self-concept necessary for delivering comprehensive care and promoting professionalism (Saehu et al., 2019).

The transition from secondary to university education can also intensify these challenges. While PPL is often considered a pedagogical approach to address issues such as student disengagement and a lack of meaning in learning environments, it is essential to first ensure that entry-level students can effectively manage the rapid expansion of the learning competencies demanded by the program (Saehu et al., 2019). This necessitates careful

planning and support to facilitate a seamless transition and empower students with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of PPL effectively.

The effectiveness of PPL conducted online has not been fully realized due to various hindrances, including quotas, network limitations, inadequate student devices, and a lack of familiarity with online learning platforms by teachers and students (Hasanah et al., 2020). Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the implementation of teaching practicum, with the sudden transition to online learning presenting challenges such as limited access to media, hardware, and software skills, which can affect the efficiency of learning (Setianti et al., 2022). Moreover, the responses from both internal and external communities towards the international implementation of teaching practicum can also pose challenges if they are not positive or supportive, further complicating the learning environment for students (Saehu et al., 2019).

There was another piece of research on teaching practicum students. In a study carried out by Prastomo and Listyani (2020) on six student teachers who were doing teaching practicums in a small town in Central Java, Indonesia, it was found that these students experienced various problems. They had four types of issues. They were in a new environment, had to handle school students, had limited time for consultation with the mentor teachers, and had a lack of knowledge and experience.

Another piece of research by Pakpahan (2023) on the complications faced by teaching practicum students found that the students experienced both internal and external problems. External problems are factors outside of the participants' control or matters that the participants cannot control. The issues can be from the students or the environment. Internal problems refer to factors the participants can control or problems from the participants themselves. The external problems were related to students' motivation and the lack of school facilities. While the internal problems dealt with classroom management and the teacher's proficiency.

Another study on newly qualified science teachers explored the challenges that these new teachers faced and how they addressed these challenges (Boakye, 2017). There were five new teachers. These five NQSTs (Newly Qualified Science Teachers) faced challenges like insufficient resources for teaching and learning, poor time management, a deficiency in content knowledge, students' inability to understand the lessons taught, undisciplined students, students' disinterest in science, and an inability to complete the integrated science. The teachers addressed these challenges by improvising the equipment, modifying their teaching techniques, and talking with parents (Boakye, 2017).

From all the information presented above, it can be concluded that during teaching practicums, potential problems do exist. Obstacles during teaching practicums also exist at the postgraduate level. The issue is whether teaching practicums at the postgraduate level should be conducted or not.

This study tried to give a critical view on the implementation of teaching practicum at the postgraduate level by framing it within a broader context that includes educational policy, graduate profiles, and the evolving responsibilities of postgraduate students. The framework emphasizes that both researchers and lecturers should adopt a holistic perspective that encompasses not only the challenges and solutions faced by postgraduate students but also the larger educational landscape in which these practices occur. Effective teaching practicum must align with existing educational policies that determine the standards and expectations for teacher preparation.

The competencies expected from postgraduate graduates serve as a benchmark for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching practicums. By clearly defining the graduate profile, both the study program head and lecturers can identify the gaps between current practicum experiences and the skills necessary for graduates to thrive in educational settings. This framework encourages a dialogue between educators and policymakers to ensure that practicum experiences are designed to meet these standards.

Beyond the immediate challenges of teaching practicum, postgraduate students are positioned to contribute significantly to their educational environments. This includes engaging in research related to teaching methodologies, assisting in school management, and actively participating in initiatives aimed at improving teaching quality. By recognizing these roles, lecturers can better understand the multifaceted nature of the practicum experience and its potential impact on both student development and educational outcomes.

Addressing the issues faced by postgraduate students requires a systemic approach that considers the interplay between individual experiences and institutional frameworks. This perspective underscores the importance of collaborative efforts among researchers, lecturers, and educational leaders to create an environment conducive to effective teaching practice.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This research employed a qualitative design. Qualitative researchers usually gather data through interviews, observations, and focus group discussions (FGDs). Tenny et al. (2022) stated that qualitative research helps generate hypotheses. These hypotheses are helpful to investigate and understand quantitative data. Qualitative research gathers respondents' experiences, perceptions, and behavior. This kind of research answers how and why questions instead of the quantity of something, how many or how much. In other words, qualitative research answers open-ended questions. The participants are allowed to express their thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

3.2 Research Setting

This study was conducted at a private university in Central Java, Indonesia, in the 2023-2024 academic year.

3.3 Participants

There were 15 participants altogether. Eight were postgraduate students who had finished their teaching practicums, and the other seven were practitioners like university lecturers, schoolteachers, and a teacher trainer. The eight students were randomly selected since they were students from the first-year batch of a postgraduate program in an English Language Education Program, and these eight students were willing to participate in the research. The seven practitioners were selected since they all graduated from an English language education study program as well. Besides that, they came from diverse educational fields, and their insights were needed to enrich the researcher in her attempts to find the answers to the pertaining research question, especially the third research question.

Table 1. Respondents' Data

Initials	Position	Length of Teaching Experience
St. 1 – St. 8	Postgraduate students	Elaborated in Table 2
R1	SHS teacher, a graduate of a master's program in an educational administration study program	17 years of teaching the Indonesian language at a SHS
R2	Lecturer, researcher, young learners' education	9 years of teaching, 7 years as the Head of the Teaching for Young Learners Study Program
R3	A graduate from an educational study program, a doctorate candidate, an NGO activist, a teacher trainer	A doctorate student in an educational leadership program, 2021 batch
R4	A kindergarten teacher, a graduate of a master's program in English Language Education	5 years of teaching English to kindergarten students
R5	A lecturer with a doctorate degree at a private university in Central Java, Indonesia	24 years of teaching English at a university
R6	A lecturer at a private university in Yogyakarta, a doctorate candidate	10 years of teaching English at a university
R7	A lecturer at a private university in Central Java, an Associate Professor	25 years of teaching English at the tertiary level

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data was derived from 8 postgraduate students through open-ended questionnaires distributed via Google Form, while data from the 7 practitioners, that is, university lecturers, secondary teachers, and a teacher trainer were taken from online interviews using the WhatsApp application and Google Meet. Two questionnaire items were addressed to the students:

- (1) What problems did you face during your teaching practicum at the postgraduate level?
- (2) What strategies did you take to overcome your problems?

The questionnaires were distributed using Google Forms to the students in January 2024. The practitioners only had one question, "What do you think of the implementation of teaching practicums at the postgraduate level?" The practitioners answered the question between 6 August and 8 September 2024.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

The data was analyzed based on the emerging themes from the respondents' answers.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity in qualitative research may be defined differently than in quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985), as cited in the School of Education and Human Development (2020), introduced the concept of trustworthiness as a naturalistic counterpart to internal validation, external validation, reliability, and objectivity. Trustworthiness is established through credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in qualitative studies. To implement these concepts, researchers should engage deeply in the field and use triangulation of data sources, methods, and investigators to enhance credibility. Thick description is therefore essential to ensure that findings can be transferred between the researcher and participants. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative researchers prioritize dependability, acknowledging that results may change rather than seeking consistent reliability. Still according to the School of Education and Human Development (2020), citing Creswell and Poth (2013), validation in qualitative research focuses on evaluating the "accuracy" of the findings as portrayed by the researcher, participants, and readers (School of Education and Human Development, University of Miami, 2020).

4. Results

In this section, the findings of the research are reported. Table 2 presents the problems that postgraduate students faced during their teaching practicums and the solutions that they enacted.

Table 2. Postgraduate Students' Problems and Their Solutions during Teaching Practicums (TP)

Information on Participants	Problems	Solutions	TP Site
St 1, M (postgraduate student & part-time lecturer)	Time allocation	Consulting with the supervisor and mentor teacher	University
St 2, M (full-time postgraduate student)	Maintaining students' enthusiasm & eliminating students' boredom	Choosing activities that could get students' attention & reducing long explanations	University
St 3, F (full-time postgraduate student)	Finding the right materials and activities	Reading more from various sources (websites, books, and other sources), & searching for some ideas on activities from the Internet	University
St 4, F. (postgraduate student & admin staff at an international office)	Increasing students' engagement	Using technology while delivering the materials (utilizing technology in teaching)	A language training center
St 5, F. (postgraduate student & English teacher at a homeschool)	Finding the right activities, assessments, & classroom management	Consulting with the mentor, brainstorming ideas with classmates, & forcing herself to be consistent and aware of the time	University
St 6, F (postgraduate student & English teacher at a kindergarten)	Difficulty finding a suitable TP site	Trying to find a teaching practicum site by herself and by asking relatives	University
St 7, M (postgraduate student & admin staff at a teacher training faculty)	Dealing with silent & passive students who did not dare to speak and contribute	Designing group work activities in an interactive setting and using digital applications to help students learn	A language training center
St 8, M (full-time postgraduate student)	Finding suitable teaching methods	Looking for suitable materials and methods from journal articles and websites	University

Note: TP = Teaching Practicum

5. Discussion

5.1 Problems Faced

In general, there were eight different problems faced by the postgraduate students. The first problem was time allocation, which was not adequate for the materials delivered. This was stated by Student 1. Student 1 admitted, *“We were required to do two sessions and address two issues. I taught a writing class and considered writing more as a process and referred to the syllabus and schedule. I did not think two completely separate sessions would be effective.”*

Besides time allocation, there were other problems revealed by the students. The second problem was maintaining students' enthusiasm, which was experienced by Student 2. Similar to Student 2, Student 4 had difficulty in increasing student engagement during her teaching. Student 2's statement is detailed in Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1:

Due to the nature of reading and listening classes, in which the activities are often just reading and/or listening throughout the sessions, students get easily bored. That is why I find it difficult to maintain student excitement throughout my teaching. (Student 2's statement, questionnaire answer, 12 January 2024)

Wahab et al. (2020) considered the significance of maintaining students' enthusiasm. They conducted a study which investigated teachers' performance in implementing 'guidance treatment' to students. The purpose of this treatment was to maintain students' enthusiasm to study in a condition of distance learning. They concluded that the EFL teachers' performance in implementing the guidance treatment at a vocational high school in Sangatta, East Kutai Regency, had been very good. It further conveys that this guidance treatment-maintained students' enthusiasm for learning. Similar to student enthusiasm, student engagement is an important factor in learning activities. This is because the teacher is teaching diverse, heterogeneous learners. Students must be aided to increase their engagement during the learning process, have better self-confidence, and understand the materials (Stanford University, 2024).

The next student, Student 3, faced a different problem, that is, finding the right materials and activities for the students. Sufiyandi (2017) argued that the materials are one of the most important aspects of the teaching-learning process because the materials can control the learning and teaching. As cited from Kitao (1997), Sufiyandi also emphasized that, in many cases, materials are the center of instruction and one of the most important influences in the classroom. Materials also function to control the content, methods, and learning procedures. Sufiyandi (2017) also asserted that materials can motivate students to learn. That is why materials must be well selected.

Student 5 had different problems. Finding the right activities, assessments, and classroom management were the three main issues faced by Student 5. Time management was also one of the matters that five NQTs (newly qualified teachers) faced. The other challenges were content knowledge, teaching and learning resources, student understanding, and some other obstacles (Boakye et al., 2017). The next problem was time management. Eskimen (2023) stated that understanding the significance of time management skills of pre-service teachers and increasing their skills in time management is essential. Therefore, it is paramount to train these pre-service teachers to have this skill. They are the ones who will be active elements in the teaching process.

The classroom management problem is not something unusual that pre-service teachers experience. According to Serliana et al. (2021), classroom management is one of the most important aspects of English teaching. Classroom management is understood as a conscious effort to create an effective and fun learning environment. The purpose is to motivate students to be actively engaged and have an active role in the educational process. Student 5's multiple problems can be examined in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2:

During my teaching practicum, I faced difficulties in finding activities and assessments which could help answer some problems found in in-class observations, as well as in managing the teaching duration in the classroom. (Student 5's questionnaire answer, 16 January 2024)

Another student, Student 6, admitted that she had difficulty finding the right site for her teaching practicum since she was teaching in Semarang, the capital city of Central Java. Student 7 faced a similar problem to Student 1, that is, having to face quiet and passive students. Student 7's statement can be seen in Excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3:

Yes, the majority of the students tended to be more silent and passive during learning activities. This happened because the majority of the students came from non-English departments. As a result, they did not dare to speak

and contribute. (Student 7's questionnaire answer, 17 January 2024)

Tanore and Listyani (2023) mentioned their opinion about passive and reticent students. Reticent students' character can be seen from their being reluctant and hesitant to participate in classroom discussions or activities. They also stressed the importance of comprehensive support from the teaching education programs to prepare pre-service teachers better in addressing the challenges related to reticent students. Finding the right method to teach was experienced by Student 8. All the students' problems are described in Table 2.

5.2 Teaching Practicum Students' Solutions for Overcoming Their Problems

Regarding the solutions to the problems, there were various answers as well from the participants. Consulting with the mentor teacher and supervisors was done by Student 1 and Student 5. Student 5 stated, "*My solution for my first challenge was to consult with my mentor, ask for advice, and also brainstorm ideas with my classmates.*" Iqbal et al. (2017) confirmed this. They stated that pre-service teachers encounter problems during their teaching practicum like maintaining classroom discipline, assessing students' work, dealing with students' individual differences, and many others. These problems have to be solved, and the person who can help these pre-service teachers is the mentor teacher.

Selecting the right activities that could grab students' attention was done by Student 2 and Student 3. Student 2 also reduced long explanations to decrease students' boredom. Meanwhile, Student 3 tried to find other resources, not only focused on one resource. Student 5 forced herself to be consistent and aware of the time. Student 5 stated, "*I forced myself to be consistent and aware of the time planned by not explaining the material too much from what was expected in the lesson plan*". Time management indeed was a problem for these pre-service teachers. Zulkifli (2018) asserted that being flexible is one of the strategies that pre-service teachers can use to handle classroom management problems.

Meanwhile, Student 6 tried to find the TP site by herself and asked her relatives to help her. Another strategy, using online digital applications like Voscreen, Padlet, and Wordwall to help deliver the materials and assist the students in learning was done by Student 7 and Student 4. They tried to incorporate technology in the materials. Student 7 stated, "*I used online websites (Voscreen, Padlet, and Wordwall) to help me deliver the materials and help the students learn*". About integrating technology into classroom activities, LSU Online (2020) claimed that gamified learning applications and the integration of digital content into lessons could enhance communication among parents, teachers, and students. They can also foster enthusiasm and encourage a lively classroom atmosphere.

Student 8 looked for methods and materials that were suitable for the class situation. Iroh and Onyinyichi (2024) supported this idea. They mentioned that instructional materials, teaching aids, and teaching materials are interchangeable. They function as tools and equipment which are used in teaching. They have a role in supplementing classroom instruction to enhance students' interest. Iroh and Onyinyichi further explained that teaching materials are 'catalysts' which are essential to make instructions effective. Instructional materials are very important. They will make the teaching-learning process successful.

5.3 Practitioners' Insights on the Implementation of Teaching Practicums at the Postgraduate Level

In this section, seven practitioners' opinions on the implementation of teaching practicums at the postgraduate level are discussed. From interviews with the seven respondents, there are three points found: the need for research in teaching practicums, the necessity to help develop the curriculum, and the obligation to adjust the teaching practicums.

5.4 The Need for Research for Postgraduate Students

Integrating teaching practicum into master's programs can enrich the educational experience. However, in Respondent 1 (R1)'s opinion, at the postgraduate level, teaching practicums are not really effective. It is because, at the postgraduate level, students are more likely to be able to design, develop, and create educational concepts, models, or products which are then tested for their validity scientifically. Based on the results of these observations or experiences, master's degree students can conduct research to develop or create educational products that are contextual and scientifically tested.

It cannot be denied that master's degree students are required to do some research. They can get some benefits from doing research like applying theories into practice, developing critical thinking, and contributing important things to the body of knowledge. Conducting research is one of the academic loads that postgraduate students have to do. Nonetheless, high academic demands, including research loads, scientific publications, and the expectation to contribute significantly to the scientific field can be a source of great stress (Adm.pasca., 2024). Master's degree students also need to

Albertyn et al. (2007) reinforced the idea about postgraduate students' requirement to do research. In the epistemological changes reflected in Mode I and Mode II knowledge production, there are often varying perceptions regarding the type of learning that should take place in postgraduate programs. In Mode I knowledge production, the focus is on the search for knowledge for its own sake in line with the traditional academic values of truth, objectivity, and universality. In Mode II knowledge production, the researcher spots opportunities to apply research, effectively manages the project, and ultimately markets the final project. This was strengthened by Respondent 2 (R2)'s statement, as stated in Excerpt 4 below.

Excerpt 4:

The teaching practicum program in the master's degree program, as far as I understand, can emphasize the development of science, technology, and research that is beneficial to society. In practical terms, it can be said that the teaching practicum program in the master's degree program can start with the basis of empirical research like evaluative research and/or development research, so that it can give rise to judgment regarding a practice. (R2's interview answers, 6 August 2024)

Meanwhile, Respondent 3 (R3) stated that master's degree students have to write papers and conduct research in the field so that their critical thinking can be honed. Moreover, majoring in education, the research should be about education. The teaching practice time for 1 semester can be used for research to discover new aspects that can strengthen one's capacity as an educator. Today, it is better to do what suits one's needs, like doing research and inventing learning aids. In the meantime, Respondent 4 (R4) also showed her concern in implementing the teaching practicum program at the postgraduate level. She shared her thoughts in Excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5:

I don't think it's necessary (note: it = teaching practicum), because most of us have become teachers and classroom management seems to be our daily activity. If we have to make observations and research the problems we are facing, this will be more beneficial for us. (R4's interview answers, 6 August 2024)

The same concern was also stated by R7. She stated that postgraduate students could be assigned to observe themselves while teaching. Then, they could analyze their own strengths and weaknesses during their teaching.

5.5 The Need to Help the School Management

Another opinion came from R2 about the need for postgraduate program students to help with the school management in dealing with CR management, assessments, evaluations, curriculum development, teacher evaluations, and other things. Both R2 and R7 said something similar. R2 asserted that these pre-service teachers can aid in terms of any school activities, including getting involved in conducting parents' meetings, participating in extra-curricular activities, and some others. From this, they will be able to develop a framework for managing the educational unit as a whole (planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up). Besides that, students can also give suggestions, inspiration, or innovations in effective classroom and learning management strategies. They may also share valuable motivation techniques, differentiation approaches, and varied learning methods to meet the needs of diverse students. Through all these activities, students can gain an understanding of the dynamics and culture of the school. Getting involved in classroom action research and developing the learning materials can also be done by these pre-service teachers.

One of the manifestations of postgraduate students' leadership is reflected in the form of education and training. Postgraduate students often become facilitators or mentors in education and training programs. Their leadership in imparting knowledge and skills to the next generation can help create a constructive and inclusive learning environment. Graduate students also become the main driving force behind new research and innovation. Through their research, they can identify relevant problems and offer innovative solutions. Their leadership in initiating and advancing this research can produce discoveries that are beneficial for nation building (Studi Lanjut, 2024).

Postgraduate students often become the main driving force behind new research and innovations. Postgraduate students are also often involved in analyzing existing policies and designing more effective and inclusive policies. Many postgraduate students are involved in social entrepreneurship, namely business ventures that aim to have a positive social impact. Postgraduate students also often become facilitators or mentors in education and training programs. Many graduate students participate in social entrepreneurship, namely business ventures that aim to have a positive social impact. Postgraduate students also often become facilitators or mentors in education and training programs.

5.6 The Need for Developing Language Teaching Technology

Technology should be developed for language teaching. This opinion was stated by Respondent 5 (R5). This can be seen in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 3:

However, if TP is still to be added to lectures, it should be designed and focused on developing professional skills at a higher level than at the undergraduate level. Students practice developing educational technology in the learning process, such as developing digital platforms, IT-based learning tools, technology to increase the effectiveness of evaluations and the implementation of supervision, as well as other technology to increase the effectiveness of learning management. (R2's interview answers, 6 August 2024)

One example of how university students can help school management with technology can be seen in a study conducted by Oktaviani (2023). Students first carried out observations for one week at the beginning of the assignment. From the results of the observations, a work program was designed in coordination with the school principal as well as tutors, teachers, and field supervisors. Then they implemented the technology adaptation work program which was done at Mulyaharja Public Elementary School 1. The program included assistance in utilizing laptops, training on using Microsoft Office Word, applying TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) in learning, and socializing about how to wisely use social media and gadgets.

5.7 The Need to Adjust the Teaching Practicum with the Graduate Profile

The other two practitioners, Respondent 5 (R5) and Respondent 6 (R6) stated that implementing teaching practicums at the postgraduate level is fine, but the implementation must be based on the graduate profile of each study program. R5 asserted that teaching practicums are not really effective at the postgraduate level, because they are similar to the ones at the undergraduate level. *“If students really want to learn more at the school level, PPL must be done at the school level. Master's degree level research can be oriented there. This means that research should be oriented towards making sense of the teaching experience, but not necessarily CAR (Classroom Action Research),”* stated R6, in an interview on 7 August 2024.

A graduate profile is different from a vision or mission statement. It is a document that a school or university uses to specify the cognitive, personal, as well as interpersonal competencies that students are required to have when they leave school or graduate (Kay, 2017). In a simpler understanding, the graduate profile is the vision that a school or university has for its students at certain stages of their education (TMOA, n.d.). Paul (2024) reinforced this idea. He stated that a graduate profile is a set of competencies that outline the enduring skills that the school wants the students to have when they graduate later. As cited from Battelle for Kids, Paul (2024) further explained that the ultimate purpose of a graduate profile is to equip students with durable skills that enable them to thrive as either employees or entrepreneurs upon entering the workforce. Related to the implementation of teaching practicums at the postgraduate level, it can be further inferred that based on the graduate profile, the study program may determine whether a teaching practicum should be conducted.

6. Conclusion

As discussed in the previous section, teaching practicum students face various problems like handling time management, passive students, classroom management, and student engagement. These problems are normally faced by undergraduate students as well when they are doing their teaching practicums. The solutions devised by the postgraduate students varied. These students enacted some useful measures like consulting with the supervisor and mentor teacher, using technology in teaching, and selecting interesting activities for the students.

Regarding the implementation of teaching practicums at the postgraduate level, some practitioners have suggested that it can be adjusted with the graduate profile. Some of them also recommended that teaching practicums, if any, should focus on research, material and curriculum development, and technology application in language learning. The graduates should also help the school management in doing something deeper than teaching. It is hoped that they can assist in managerial aspects.

Even if teaching practicum is implemented at the postgraduate level, this can be seen as a golden bridge to some fruitful actions and opportunities. First, teaching practicum can be a platform for master's degree students to develop their personal skills, experiences, and confidence. Not only that, they can also get feedback on their teaching performance from the mentor teacher as well as the supervisor. Another good thing is that these students can have wider networking and research opportunities. Next, they can learn to understand diverse learning contexts with heterogeneous language learners. All this will therefore enrich teaching practicum students with a wider horizon, experiences, and knowledge.

This study, nonetheless, still has a few weaknesses. The study only had 8 student respondents and 7 practitioner respondents. Future research can expand the pool of respondents to a greater number. Future studies can also involve school principals and postgraduate lecturers. The findings of this study are constrained by the limited sample size, which restricts the generalizability of the results to a broader population of postgraduate students. The results presented here should be interpreted with caution, as the limited sample size may not adequately represent the diverse experiences of postgraduate students across different contexts.

While this study provides valuable insights into the implementation of teaching practicum at the postgraduate level, the small data set underscores the necessity for further research in the future with a larger participant pool to enhance the validity of the conclusions drawn. To fully understand the complexities of teaching practicum at the postgraduate level, future studies should aim to include a larger and more diverse sample of participants, allowing for more robust and generalizable conclusions. On top of that, there was an inadequate examination of the teaching practicum policy implications and inadequate elucidation of the postgraduate educational landscape. Therefore, future research needs to be done in the same area with broader participants and wider educational contexts. Future researchers are recommended to have more participants and more various data collection methods and instruments. Thus, the results of the research can be more useful for academic society on a larger scale.

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