



The Problem Faced by International Internship Students in Conducting Teaching Practices at Southern Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the problems faced by international internship students in conducting teaching practices in Southern Thailand and to identify the solutions they used to overcome those problems. This research employed a qualitative case study design involving eight students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Enrekang who participated in the second batch of the international internship program in Southern Thailand. Data were analyzed descriptively to present the students' experiences during the internship program. The findings revealed that the internship students encountered eight main problems: administrative issues, health problems, psychological challenges, social problems, teaching-related difficulties, culture shock, language barriers, and inadequate facilities. Administrative problems were mainly related to visa extension procedures, while health problems emerged due to climate differences, illness, and adaptation to local conditions. Psychological challenges included homesickness and pressure from the school environment. Students also experienced social adjustment problems, difficulties in preparing teaching materials, classroom management issues, cultural differences, limited communication with local people, and insufficient living or teaching facilities. To address these problems, the students sought assistance from schools and experienced people, maintained communication with family, adapted to local culture, used body language and basic Thai or Malay expressions, applied simple teaching strategies, and communicated facility-related needs to the school. The study concludes that international internship programs provide valuable teaching and cross-cultural experiences, but students need adequate preparation, institutional support, and adaptive strategies to manage academic, social, cultural, and practical challenges during teaching practice abroad.

KEYWORDS

International internship, Teaching practice, Student problems, Southern Thailand, Qualitative study

INTRODUCTION

Community service program was activities in tertiary institutions in Indonesia that basically must be followed by all students. This activity is further strengthened by the Law of the

Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System in article 20 paragraphs 2 which states that: "higher education is obliged to provide education, research, and community service. "This activity is usually carried out when students are in

the seventh semester. Community service program can train themselves to adapt to real work. This program is usually done by sending Community service program are programs students to certain villages, this aims to see how students apply teaching theories learned on campus in their language without fixating on the media, this program can also help provide ideas about how work is done from the selected study program. From this community service program process students also gain and improve their competence. Ismail, Hasan, & Musdalifah (2018) stated students acquire personality competencies in the form of soft skills including: communication skills, job adaptation skills, teamwork management skills, social skills, and work accuracy.

Aside from being in the country, this program is also conducted abroad which is commonly called an International Internship by selecting students who are able to hold teaching practices there. Implementation of this program abroad is one form of implementation of world-class institutions. Pagano (2003); and Pisano (2007) says that "international service learning is preserved to students to get an equivalent cross-cultural experience within the United States. This activity also aims to strengthen academics in developing education in the environment. International internship program is a cooperative relationship between universities and associations in the country.

One of the universities that held an International Internship was Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang which was conducted in one of the countries in ASEAN, namely Thailand in collaboration with one of the

Associations in the southern Thailand. This kind of thinking leads to the absence of motivation for learning English. As the consequence, Thai students have low level of English proficiency. This program was carried out for approximately 4 months from 18 November 2019 to 22 March 2020. The school locations used as internships are Narathiwat, Krabi, Satun and Nakhon si Thammarat. A total of 9 student representatives from Muhammadiyah University of Enrekang 8 from the English education study program and 1 from elementary school teacher education study program were divided for each area where each school was inhabited by 1 student only. However, there are also 2 students who live in the same school. The form of the implementation of international internships in Thailand is a formal activity that is an activity carried out by the student interns by applying teaching practices in educational institutions or schools for around four months.

Marion (2007) stated teaching is not easy, especially for those who have recently become educators. Through teaching practice in the Community service program is prospective teacher students will get real teaching opportunities and experiences (Astuti et al., 2014; Hashona, 2014). Prospective teacher students will also experience the problems faced by educators every day, especially for inexperienced or inexperienced teachers. Becoming a prospective teacher is not only about being able to teach, but you must be prepared to face all the possibilities that will occur both inside and outside the classroom. Not just giving instructions and assignments, but teachers must be able to show good attitudes and behavior so that they are worthy of being

emulated by their students. Rawjee, et. Al (2012) stated that it makes student face difficulties such as culture shock, language difficulties, homesickness, differences in the educational system, and loss of their established social network. Those challenges make an internship students feel uncomfortable, disoriented, confused and anxious especially when they are in a new country which they had never visited before or it is called as cultural barrier. International internship is not easy and there will definitely be problems that must be faced during the program. This is what makes internship students think hard to find solutions to face or solve problems faced during the internship.

METHODOLOGY

This research was a qualitative research case study that find out the problems faced by international Internship student in conducting teaching practices in southern Thailand. this qualitative research method the researcher can described how the participants' perspectives, in this case, the international internship students in southern Thailand batch 2, totaling 8 students, see the environment, people's behavior, and the activities of the people who live around them to the problems they faced it while in southern Thailand. Therefore the results of this study the researcher will present in the form of descriptive text.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After the data was presented, it makes conclusions and verified the data. In the last stage, conclusions are drawn based on data that has been reduced and displayed. In conclusion, researchers found 8 problems faced by interns when doing international internships in

southern Thailand. The problems were elaborated as follows :

1. Administration (visa)

The first was an Administrative problem, Nurbatra (2015) stated as a crucial document to go abroad, visa play roles as the official permit letter to stay in the target country, visa in this case is essential to be processed within the period of ISL. Since this program was implemented abroad, visas and passports have become the most important documents for apprentices to join this program During the internship some students had difficulty extending visa problems, this was because students who did not know the procedure for extending the visa and also the school where they were staying for the first time, did not know how to do it, so they had to go back and forth between immigration and even go to the Indonesian embassy there. To deal with this situation, students who take part in this community program ask the school to help them arrange for the visa extension Whereas for schools that do not know about their visa extension, they seek information and ask for help from experienced people.

2. Health problem

Health was condition of completed physical, mental and social well-being and not simply the absence of illness or weakness. So that personal health was very important to carried out activities. Well, this is also a problem that students must faced when doing internships in other countries. This was also an obstacle for the health- related internship students during the international internships held in several cities in southern Thailand. What is an obstacle for some of the internship students who often get sick, such as

ulcers, headaches, coughs, etc., they are faced with medicines that are different from the ones they often consume while in Indonesia, and fortunately they bring their own medicines from Indonesia and must be smart to use it. Besides that, most of the student interns also mentioned that they had to face a different climate than in Indonesia. Nurbatra (2015) in his journal that South Thailand has a different climate, some students got sick during the ISL process and was so hot that some students were dehydrated and could not effectively participate in ISL program. When there was a transition season where the weather was uncertain at that time, illnesses could approach them, plus when they were going back to Indonesia they were faced with the Covid 19 Pandemic which made apprentices have to take extra care of their health. To solve this problem they bring medicines from their own country, taking medicine and vitamins, getting enough rest, and adjusting to the weather there.

3. Psychological Problem

Psychology which involves a person's mental condition, thoughts, and behavior in new things, this is also a big problem for internship students when they are in a new place that is foreign to them, especially this is Thailand which requires them to be far away from family, friends, and people they meet frequently. Many things affect their psyche while there, such as homesickness, pressure from the school, the existence of statements that differentiate between past and present community service program students; of course, these things can trigger their psychological problems. In order to deal with this issue, students always do their job well, always thinking positively

to relieve their stress and always call or video call with their family to treat homesickness.

4. Social Problem

It was also experienced by interns during the International Internship especially their relationship with roommates. Some interns mentioned that they had discomfort with roommates, such as so that they could not get along well. Like a messy room, lack of awareness of cleanliness so that they have to clean it, besides that they always seek attention from the teachers there. Then lack of socializing with the community due to language and embarrassment to say hello. To solve this problem the interns always remind them in a polite way to your roommates, always be nice, and greet people with a smile.

5. Teaching Program

The teaching problems they faced occur in two ways, namely teaching schedules and teaching materials. First, the problem of teaching schedules because interns expect them to be given time for classroom observations, students, and the school environment. When they only get a day of rest they are immediately given a teaching schedule, even some of them are given more than 10 classes that they have to teach in that week. So within a week, they were faced with Kindergarten, Pre-Primary (Primary), Mattayom 1-3 (junior high school), and Mattayom 3-6 (senior high school) classes. The second problem faced by interns was the teaching materials that need to be adapted to classroom conditions. They mentioned that they taught English, Malay, and Mathematics which became a problem when teaching students who did not understand the material. This made the

class noisy so that the interns had difficulty managing their class. Besides that Even though they had prepared the material they needed to deliver the lesson, the necessary adjustments turned out to be beyond their expectations. To solved this problems they used sign language and a little insertion of the Thai language that has been learned even though it's only the basics, and also always includes games that are by the material being taught, besides using teaching methods that are easy to understand by students such as using tools demonstration. Thus, the participants of the internship make a role-play to solve that problem.

6. Culture shock

It mostly occurs to the international students who study and live outside of their native country or someone who travels abroad. Those who experienced culture shock experience phases of euphoria, discomfort, adjustment, and different acceptance of the expression that reality is not as beautiful as the expectations felt in Thailand. This was what the interns felt when they were there, there was something that didn't match the food there, they said that the food there mostly tasted sour, the vegetables were eaten raw, and their drinks were cold and sweet. Even at breakfast they are served heavy foods such as sticky rice and fried chicken with cold drinks, which in Indonesia we are used to having breakfast with warm and fried drinks, this is different, some of them also said that they are not used to Thai culture there like greeting with older people, and when they give something we have to accept it so that they are happy and not offended. To solve this problem they apply is to get used to explaining cultural differences or habits they have so that they understand

and do not misunderstand and learn about the local culture, this is because we as immigrants have to adjust to other countries. Darío, et. Al (2013) Culture shock is a common phenomenon when someone entering a new place they never visited before, it has been proved that anyone who enters a new environment will experience culture shock

7. Language barrier

Language becomes a problem because interns have difficulty interacting with local people. Interns use English to communicate but only a few can understand, such as teachers, especially English teachers, and principals. People in some parts of Thailand speak Thai, and some speak Malay. Although Indonesian is similar to Malay, the interns participating in the program do not really understand Malay and they have to struggle to communicate with the local people. To solve this problem, they started using sign language in communicating with people who did not understand English or Malay and they also studied community languages such as Thai and Malay. It is because the participants do not know Thai language and the student do not know the Indonesian language as well. English as an International language should be one of the media of communication. However, the participants think that Thailand students hard to speak in English.

8. Facilities

some students feel that the facilities they get are inadequate, especially housing facilities, one of the students said that he got a room that he had to share with other students, this could disturb the privacy and concentration of the interns, some get a room with no

toilet so they have to leave the room to take a shower, some said they don't get facilities such as a fan, so they have to overheat every day. Then the problem of teaching facilities, the unavailability of adequate facilities such as teaching aids and teaching stationery. To deal with these problem they was ask the school about the problem of inadequate housing facilities, while for teaching tools they bought them at stationery stores around the school.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion that student interns faced several difficulties while teaching in Thailand. Factors contributing to the problems faced such as administrative problems, health, psychological, culture shock, language barriers. , teaching assignments, social, and available facilities.

To overcome this problem, there are several solutions that they have done, firstly for the problem of administrative difficulties they tell the school to be assisted in taking care of this, secondly, if they are sick, they usually tell the school that they are given medicine and vitamins, the third communicates. with family and friends to overcome the psychological problems they face always think positively and reflect themselves to do better, fourth for language barriers they use body language and learn Thai to communicate, fifth for culture shock problems they try to adapt to the surrounding environment and studying the culture of the community there in order to overcome the culture shock, the sixth teaching them to consult with the director and their supervisor, the seven social problems they try to interact well with the community there, the eight problems of facilities they try to communicate with the school to provide

or if there are facilities that they can use either in the dormitory or teaching facilities.

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