

SOCIAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH *KAMPUS MENGAJAR* PROGRAM BY ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM STUDENTS OF PGRI SILAMPARI UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to explore the enhancement of students' social skills through their participation in the *Kampus Mengajar* program. The research focused on four core skill areas: Communication Skills, Emotion Regulation Skills, Cognitive Skills, and Social Problem Solving Skills using Douglas, Smith, and Johnson's (2020) theory. A descriptive qualitative method was employed with 30 students from PGRI Silampari University selected purposively as the subjects of this research. Questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis were used as instruments in collecting data. The data were analyzed thematically across 16 indicators. The findings revealed that the *Kampus Mengajar* program significantly contributed to the development of participants' social competencies. Notably, students demonstrated strong abilities in the four key areas of social skills Communication Skills (88,8%), Emotion Regulation Skills and Cognitive Skills (83,3%), and Social Problem Solving Skills (82,5) which were evident in their classroom interactions. The study concluded that real-world teaching experience provided a valuable context for enhancing students' social skills.

Keywords: *EFL Students, Kampus Mengajar Program, Social Skill*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Minister of Education and Culture, Research and Technology (KemendikbudRistek) of the Republic of Indonesia, Nadiem Anwar Makarim for the 2019-2024 period, introduced a policy known as *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) in 2020. MBKM policy refers to the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 3 of 2020, which gives students the right to study outside their study program for one semester and participate in activities outside the university for two semesters (KemendikbudRistek, 2024). The main objective is to improve graduates' competencies in soft skills and hard skills to be better prepared to face the challenges of the times. Through experiential learning with

flexible pathways, students are encouraged to develop their potential according to their interests and talents.

The *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) program, as outlined by the Directorate General of Higher Education (2024), offers nine types of learning activities that students can undertake inside or outside their study program: student exchange, internships, research, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurial activities, independent studies or projects, village development or thematic community service, state defense, and teaching assistance in educational units. Among these, *Kampus Mengajar* is designed to prepare students to contribute to education through teaching in schools. Initially launched in 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program sought to address severe disruptions in education, particularly in remote and underdeveloped areas. The crisis revealed significant gaps in learning access and quality, prompting the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology to deploy university students to help teachers and schools transition to remote and blended learning. Over time, *Kampus Mengajar* evolved into a structured MBKM initiative aimed at not only tackling pandemic-related challenges but also enhancing students' practical teaching experience and their social contributions in educational settings. In addition, *Kampus Mengajar* helps students develop hard skills related to teaching, soft skills such as communication, time management, and leadership, as well as social skills in interacting with students, teachers, and the community.

According to Douglas, Smith & Johnson (2020), social skills refer to behaviors that enable individuals to communicate and interact effectively in various contexts. These skills help individuals adapt to their social environment, build and maintain relationships, and manage interpersonal interactions. The *Kampus Mengajar* program plays an important role in developing students' social skills by improving communication, teamwork and leadership. Still in line, Nizam (MBKM Guidebook, 2024) explains that the program also strengthens students' empathy and social awareness by exposing them to diverse backgrounds. In addition, the *kampus mengajar* program gives students the opportunity to collaborate in teams, work with teachers and communities, and develop problem-solving skills. Overall, the *Kampus Mengajar* is very important in shaping students' social skills, especially for those in the English Education Study Program.

PGRI Silampari University is a higher education institution committed to producing high-quality, innovative, and competitive graduates, particularly in the field of education. The English Education Program at this university aims to equip students with strong theoretical knowledge and practical teaching skills. As part of

the implementation of the MBKM policy, the university actively encourages students to participate in the *Kampus Mengajar* program.

From the data above, the researcher is interested in better understanding the development of social skills of English education study program students while they are participating in the campus teaching program. Based on the description above, the researcher will conduct a study entitled “Social Skills Development through *Kampus Mengajar* Program by English Education Study Program Students of PGRI Silampari University.”

II. LITERATURE RIVIEW

Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)

Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) is a policy initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia to provide students with greater flexibility in developing their potential through diverse learning activities inside and outside the campus environment. According to Makarim (2020), MBKM aims to offer broad opportunities for students to gain off-campus learning experiences that enhance competencies, skills, and work readiness.

The program was developed in response to the mismatch between higher education curricula and workforce needs, where learning often focused more on theory than practical application. MBKM bridges this gap by strengthening the link between academic institutions and industry, allowing students to gain real-world exposure while still completing their academic requirements. Research by Pongsapan et al. (2024) indicates that MBKM improves both academic quality and career readiness, while Rahma et al. (2023) found that it also enhances self-confidence, leadership, and adaptability—skills essential for professional success.

Kampus Mengajar Program

One of the Independent Learning-Independence Campus (MBKM) programs is *Kampus Mengajar* Program. *Kampus Mengajar* program are activities carried out by students to be able to contribute to the learning process in school that are part o the MBKM (Hendayana, 2021). The *Kampus Mengajar* Program provides an opportunity for students to contribute directly to the learning process in schools in need, especially those located in remote and underserved areas. This program is designed to improve the quality of education by addressing the shortage of teaching staff through active student involvement.

Research shows that *Kampus Mengajar* contributes to improving literacy and numeracy skills in schools (Meliyana & Sugesti, 2023) and encourages innovation in teaching methods (Meilia & Erlangga, 2022). Beyond its academic impact, the program also enhances students’ social awareness by exposing them to diverse

educational and socio-cultural environments (Rahmawati, 2023; Lestari et al., 2022).

The *Kampus Mengajar* program aims to develop 21st-century competencies, including analytical thinking, problem-solving, leadership, teamwork, creativity, innovation, and interpersonal communication (*Pusat Informasi Kampus Merdeka*, 2024). Through direct involvement in schools, students interact with teachers, principals, students, and local communities, gaining skills in communication, coordination, administration, and educational program implementation. Specifically, the program seeks to (1) enhance student skills in leadership, empathy, problem-solving, teamwork, creativity, innovation, and communication; and (2) increase the variety and effectiveness of literacy and numeracy learning methods in primary and secondary education.

Social Skills

Social skills are behaviors that enable individuals to communicate and interact effectively in various contexts (Douglas, Smith, & Johnson, 2020). They are essential for adapting to social environments, building relationships, and preventing negative behaviors (Sriyanto et al., 2019).

Gresham and Elliott (1984) define social skills as interpersonal behaviors that elicit positive responses and avoid negative outcomes, while Mansoorh & Mollazadeh (2017) describe them as interaction abilities aligned with social roles. Social skills encompass verbal and nonverbal communication, empathy, emotional regulation, and problem-solving (Spence, 1995), and can be developed through structured programs such as *Kampus Mengajar*.

Douglas, Smith, & Johnson (2020) categorize social skills into four main areas: (1) communication skills, which involve using language effectively, adjusting speech to context, and engaging in meaningful conversations; (2) emotion regulation skills, which refer to managing emotions through strategies such as situation selection, modification, and cognitive reframing; (3) cognitive skills, which include applying social knowledge, perspective-taking, and adaptive thinking in interactions; and (4) social problem-solving skills, which involve defining problems, generating alternative solutions, making decisions, and evaluating outcomes in social contexts.

Strong social skills enable individuals to adapt to diverse environments and build constructive relationships (Darmiany, 2021). In the context of MBKM, the *Kampus Mengajar* program provides students with opportunities to develop these skills through direct interaction with school communities, teamwork, and collaborative problem-solving. Such experiences enhance public speaking, cooperation, and empathy, preparing students to meet professional demands, increase competitiveness in the job market, and contribute actively to society.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted from May to June 2024 and involved students of the English Education Study Program at PGRI Silampari University who had participated in the Kampus Mengajar program in batches 5, 6, 7, and 8. The study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The research process involves emerging questions and procedures, data collection in the participants' natural setting, inductive data analysis that builds from particulars to general themes, and the researcher's interpretation of the data's meaning.

The descriptive qualitative method was chosen because it aligns with the objective of providing a detailed depiction of a social phenomenon without manipulating existing variables. Sukmadinata (2017) states that descriptive research aims to describe existing phenomena, whether natural or human-made, including activities, characteristics, changes, and relationships between phenomena. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how students of the English Education Study Program develop their social skills through the Kampus Mengajar program, focusing on the experiences and interactions they encounter during the program.

The sources of data in this research consist of both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from the original source, namely students of the English Education Study Program at PGRI Silampari University who had participated in the Kampus Mengajar program. These data were collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. A total of 30 students participated: 6 students from batch 5, 5 students from batch 6, 12 students from batch 7, and 7 students from batch 8. Secondary data were obtained from final reports of Kampus Mengajar participants, journal articles, online books, and relevant internet sources.

Data collection techniques included questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The questionnaire used was a closed-ended type, containing questions with "yes" or "no" answer options, and was developed based on the social skills framework proposed by Douglas, Smith, & Johnson (2020). The content validity of the questionnaire was ensured through expert judgment involving lecturers from the English Education Study Program to assess the clarity, relevance, and consistency of each item with the research objectives. In-

depth interviews were conducted to further explore participants' experiences in developing social skills during the program, allowing open-ended responses for richer and more detailed information. Documentation, consisting of final reports and written testimonials from participants, was used to complement the findings from questionnaires and interviews.

Data analysis was carried out using two approaches. For the questionnaire data, the researcher calculated the percentage of "yes" and "no" answers using the formula from Rahayu & Aini (2021). For the interview data, the researcher applied three stages of analysis adapted from Rizki (2023): identification (reviewing all responses to identify patterns and understand experiences), description (organizing data according to the research questions, particularly on how social skills were developed), and conclusion (summarizing the findings and explaining how students developed their social skills through the Kampus Mengajar program).

To ensure the validity of the findings, the study applied triangulation techniques. According to Bhandari (2023), triangulation in qualitative research involves the use of multiple data sources, methods, theories, and/or researchers to improve the validity and credibility of the findings. In this study, technical triangulation was conducted by examining data from the same source using different techniques—for example, comparing interview results with observations, documentation, and questionnaire responses. If differences were found, the researcher discussed them further with the data source or relevant parties to determine the most accurate interpretation.

IV. FINDINGS

In this research, the researcher presents the result of the research. The aim is to provide answers to the research problem discussed in the first chapter. The researcher conducted questionnaires, interviews, and documentation with English education students who participated in *kampus mengajar* batches 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Questionnaire Findings

Table 4. 1 Results of the Questionnaire

Target Skills	Indicators	Yes	No	
Communication Skills	Language Use	100%	0%	88,8%
	Adjustment of Language	100%	0%	
	Conversation Skills	90%	10%	
Emotion Regulation Skills	Situation Selection	100%	0%	83,3%
	Situation Modification	100%	0%	
	Attentional Deployment	43%	57%	

	Cognitive Change	86%	14%	
	Response Modulation	86%	14%	
Cognitive Skills	Informational Knowledge	93%	7%	83,3%
	Informational Processing	96%	4%	
	Perspective Thinking	100%	0%	
	Neuropsychological Processing	63%	37%	
Social Problem Solving Skills	Problem Definition and Formulation	86%	14%	82,5%
	Generation of Alternatives	90%	10%	
	Decision Making	76%	24%	
	Solution Implementation and Verification	76%	24%	

The findings revealed that most students showed strong competence in communication and emotion regulation, particularly in language use and situation selection. Weaknesses were found in attentional deployment, with only 43% able to stay focused amid distractions, indicating a need for stress management and concentration training. In cognitive skills, students excelled in perspective thinking and informational processing, but neuropsychological processing remained low at 63%. For social problem-solving, they performed well in problem definition and alternative generation, yet only 76% succeeded in decision-making and solution implementation, highlighting the need to strengthen critical decision-making skills.

Interview Findings

Interviews with seven participants revealed varied yet generally positive development across six social skills indicators. In terms of adjustment of language, all participants demonstrated the ability to adapt their communication style according to the audience, with most simplifying language for students, while others adjusted tone and formality when interacting with teachers and parents, thereby fostering rapport and mutual understanding. For situation selection, participants applied preventive and adaptive strategies to maintain a conducive classroom atmosphere, such as ice breaking, personal approaches, emotional control, and early coordination with teachers or parents.

In attentional deployment, most participants struggled to maintain focus amid classroom noise, sudden announcements, time pressure, and technical issues, with only one participant consistently demonstrating effective concentration through firm classroom management. Regarding problem definition and formulation,

participants identified and addressed issues such as bullying, student conflict, absenteeism, and lack of respect, using strategies appropriate to their authority—ranging from school collaboration to persuasive interpersonal approaches.

For generation of alternatives, most participants displayed creativity in proposing solutions, including ice breaking activities, multimedia use, games, and collaborative projects, though some noted limitations due to inexperience. Finally, in solution implementation and verification, participants used various evaluation methods—such as personal reflection, student feedback, behavioral observation, and peer review—to assess and refine their teaching strategies, though consistency in reflective practice varied among individuals.

Documentation Findings

Documentation included classroom photos, activity reports, and reflective journals. One example (Figure 1) shows a student engaging in collaborative lesson planning with teachers, reflecting strong communication and problem-solving skills.



Figure 1. Student participation during Kampus Mengajar program.

V. DISCUSSION

The research found that students in the English Education Study Program at PGRI Silampari University experienced notable development in four core areas of social skills—communication skills, emotional regulation, cognitive skills, and social problem-solving—through their participation in the *Kampus Mengajar* program. In terms of communication, students demonstrated the ability to adjust their language according to the audience, using simple and clear expressions with pupils and more formal language with teachers or principals. They also encouraged active two-way interactions, giving students space to ask and respond to questions. These findings suggest that students were not only familiar with communication theories but also applied them effectively in real teaching contexts, aligning with previous studies that highlight the importance of language adaptability to support comprehension.

Emotional regulation skills were also strengthened, with most participants able to manage their emotions during classroom activities. Many demonstrated effective situation selection, such as using icebreakers to create a positive learning

atmosphere when the class became noisy. However, attentional deployment—maintaining focus despite distractions—remained a challenge, with only a small proportion of students able to sustain concentration under disruptive conditions. This indicates that while awareness of emotional management has been established, further improvement is needed in focus-shifting and stress management strategies.

In the domain of cognitive skills, most students showed strong abilities in processing social information, applying logical reasoning, and considering multiple perspectives before making decisions. Documentation revealed that they approached school-related challenges with structured and rational thinking, although cognitive control under pressure was still an area for growth. Similarly, in social problem solving, students often used communicative and reflective approaches to address conflicts, preferring discussion and collaboration with teachers rather than emotional reactions. Reflection logs also indicated a willingness to evaluate multiple viewpoints before making decisions. Overall, the *Kampus Mengajar* program effectively bridged theory and practice, offering a contextual, collaborative, and reflective learning environment that enhanced students' social skills across all measured domains, even though some indicators still required further reinforcement.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings obtained through questionnaires, interviews, and documentation, it can be concluded that the Kampus Mengajar program has made a significant contribution to the development of social skills among students at PGRI Silampari University. All four domains of social skill, communication skills, emotion regulation skills, cognitive skills, and social problem solving skills showed positive improvement, as reflected through the analysis of 16 indicators. The students demonstrated strong abilities in adjusting their language to different audiences (adjustment of language), managing emotional situations in the classroom (situation selection), thinking flexibly and taking others' perspectives (perspective thinking), and implementing as well as evaluating solutions to social issues in schools (solution implementation and verification). These improvements were evident not only through quantitative data but also reinforced by participants' reflections and field documentation. Therefore, hands-on teaching experiences in real educational settings served as an effective medium for enhancing students' overall social competencies.

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