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## Experiences of Participants in Teacher Professional Education on Obtaining Soft Skills: A Case Study in Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Teachers in the constitution in Indonesia are professionals who must meet pedagogical, social, personal, and professional competencies. This qualitative research with a phenomenological approach aims to explore the experiences of the teacher professional education program (PPG) participants in gaining soft skills. The research data were collected through in-depth interviews conducted on fifteen PPG participants consisting of seven females and eight males. The fifteen participants attended PPG in five universities spread out from universities in Central Java, West Java, Yogyakarta Special Region, and Jakarta Special Capital Region. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Data analysis was carried out through the horizontalization, textually, structurally, and essential descriptions stages. The results of this research found that PPG participants received soft skills learning in hidden curriculum patterns so that each participant had an initial understanding and how to get various soft skill understandings. Soft skills obtained by participants during the PPG implementation are self-confidence, collaboration, hard work, respect for culture, patience, wisdom, maturity, mental resilience, humility, responsibility, creative thinking, positive thinking, cooperation, humility, respect for others, and tolerance. This research recommends that soft skills learning at PPG be implemented with a structured curriculum so that participants have better abilities as teachers.

**Keywords:** *Hidden curriculum, integrated learning, soft skills, structured curriculum, teacher professional education.*

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### Introduction

Currently, the world has entered the industrial revolution 4.0 which is marked by exponential speed, digital progress, interconnectedness, and involving all aspects of human life in rapid, profound, and systematic change (Kasza, 2019). The industrial revolution 4.0 has a direct impact on the economic sector, business globally, nationally, society, and individuals (Voinea & Palasan, 2014). In such a world, besides promising prosperity, it also creates threats of inequality, emptiness, hunger, and injustice (Dell'Angelo et al., 2017). Hopes and threats arise because the age of rapid innovation does not make everyone ready to accept and adopt innovations. Rogers' diffusion theory of innovation states that not everyone is ready to accept and adopt an innovation (Magsamen-Conrad & Dillon, 2020). Only 2.5 percent of people immediately adopted as innovators, followed by 13.5 percent as early adapters. There is a 34 percent early majority waiting for evidence of innovation, and 16 percent as the laggards that are the most difficult to change (Mori & Mlambiti, 2020). By following the diffusion theory of innovation, in the industrial revolution 4.0, the majority of mankind will become victims who will live their lives backward, especially economics and education

In a world situation that is changing very rapidly, everyone needs not only good hard skills but also good soft skills (Gibert et al., 2017). Moreover, for teachers who have the duty and responsibility to educate the generation in each nation, the ability of hard skills and soft skills must be possessed properly (Crawford et al., 2020). Soft skills are the ability to relate to others, such as communicating, listening, sympathetic in dialogue, providing feedback, cooperative, and solving problems (Putranta & Wilujeng, 2019). Soft skills are related to emotional intelligence quotient, character,

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personality, social relationships, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism characterized by relationships with others (Somprach et al., 2014). Although it is not as simple as evaluation of quality assurance, for example, soft skills can be learned, both inside and outside the classroom, although the results are not easy to observe, measure, and quantify (Farida et al., 2019). In every learning in the aspect of knowledge and skills, it is also able to improve the points of soft skills, such as cooperation, commitment, care, responsibility, discipline, the ability to make decisions, respect the work of oneself and others, and aesthetic abilities (Quendler & Lamb, 2016). By doing good learning, knowledge, and skills (hard skills), as well as self-management skills and managing others (soft skills), will increase (Ngang et al., 2015).

The teacher is one of the professions that face many challenges, starting from before teaching while teaching, and after teaching (Pearce & Wood, 2019). These three stages require preparation and follow-up. This challenge can only be dealt with properly by teachers who have strong soft skills in addition to other teacher science conceptual and technicalities. All teacher competencies have been taught to all participants when they become students at the Teacher Training and Education Faculty (FKIP) in all tertiary institutions in Indonesia. However, based on the law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning teachers and lecturers, it is stated that to be recognized as professional teachers, all teachers in Indonesia must attend Teacher Professional Education (PPG). The PPG study program in Indonesia adheres to a consecutive or layered model, namely education that is implemented after an undergraduate academic program.

The PPG curriculum was developed concerning the principle of activity-experience based curriculum with a learning model in the form of a learning device development workshop (Riset, 2018). This pattern is a form of implementation of the TPACK concept, technological pedagogical content knowledge (Koh & Chai, 2016). The PPG study program curriculum contains several activities that are spread out in the first semester and the second semester, both in the form of academic and non-academic activities. The first-semester academic activities are in the form of learning device development workshops, presentations on the results of learning device development, and peer teaching, as well as deepening or strengthening material for the field of study/expertise. The second-semester academic activities are in the form of field experience practices (PPL), classroom action research (PTK), and for vocational PPG there are practical activities in the industry. If the PPG curriculum model is classified, then the proportion of academic strengthening (theoretical) is 60 percent, and field experience practice is 40 percent (Riset, 2018).

Quality teachers have and influence interest and commitment, as well as the achievement of student learning outcomes (Gore et al., 2017). No matter how good the curriculum is, the teacher is the key to success in the teaching and learning process (Almeida et al., 2018). Professional teachers have a mindset of really right action, amateur teachers have a wrong-action mindset (Amir et al., 2017). One of the most fundamental is its relevance to the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 which requires all students to have 21st-century intelligence, such as creativity, critical thinking, effective communication, productive collaboration, cognitive flexibility, complex problem solving, strong and noble character (Maryanti et al., 2020). Thus, teachers play a very important role in teaching and have a direct impact on students (Zhou et al., 2020).

However, how to teach soft skills is a question that is not easy to answer. This is like in Turkey, where the perception of prospective teachers about the teaching profession is positive, but the teacher professional training participants describe it as something difficult to implement in the classroom (Bircan, 2018). Classrooms are still in doubt as to the best environment for teaching or learning soft skills (Tseng et al., 2019). Countries such as Malaysia and Thailand teach soft skills in a conceptual, structured manner, and have curricula or technical guidelines for prospective teachers and teachers (Attakorn et al., 2014). The PPG program in Indonesia is different, teaching soft skills is not specifically given in a structured manner, but is taught and practiced in every learning opportunity or integrated (Mailool et al., 2020). PPG is an educational program that is held to prepare graduates of bachelor of education and non-educational applied bachelor/undergraduate graduates, who have the talent and interest to become professional teachers, to master the competence of teachers as a whole according to national education standards to obtain a professional educator certificate. The main objective of this program is to create professional teachers who can produce quality graduates who can answer the demands of the times (Indra et al., 2020; Riset, 2018). It could be said that soft skills are taught in the form of a hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum here refers to the basic concepts of lessons, values, and perspectives that are not written, and are not official but have strong academic, social, and cultural messages (Ali et al., 2020). Although it includes an unwritten curriculum, the hidden curriculum is recognized by educational experts as very important (Sarikhani et al., 2020). However, the curriculum can be problematic if it is used without awareness and proper planning.

Apart from the concept of the curriculum that seems ambiguous, the materials and ways of teaching it are different, the main thing is that education experts have agreed that soft skills are very important for everyone to have because they help success in life up to 80 percent (Heckman & Kautz, 2012). In such a context, soft skills are important to get greater attention. Soft skills development is an important factor in improving teacher skills. Teachers who have good soft skills will be able to develop the skills needed, become effective and sustainable professional teachers (Rosa, 2020). So far, there have been several important studies that explore how the experiences of experts (lecturers) teach soft skills to prospective teachers (Martin et al., 2019). This research is different because it takes the opposite path, exploring

participants' experiences when taught soft skills by experts, instructors, or lecturers. This research focuses on PPG participants in Indonesia who take the PPG program, with an integrated learning pattern or in a hidden curriculum. The teaching of soft skills that are integrated into the hidden curriculum makes it more difficult to observe and assess without standardized instruments such as character assessment (Semper & Blasco, 2018). Soft skills are so important, when they are not taught in a structured manner, it requires that lecturers be fully aware and maintain creativity. So, this research will explore how the inner space of the participants who take PPG in integrated soft skills learning. This research will answer questions about how the participants experience in following lessons to develop themselves in the soft skills field in PPG. The key questions are developed into three main questions as follows. First, how is the learning system in the teacher professional program (PPG)? Second, how did the participants acquire soft skills during the PPG? Third, what soft skills did the participants get while participating in PPG?

## Methodology

### *General Background and Participant*

This research is qualitative research using an interpretive phenomenology approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). As the basic principles of reflective phenomenology, from a first-person perspective, and the essence of awareness experienced (Moustakas, 1994). This research was conducted to explore information about the experiences of the participants in obtaining soft skills during the PPG program. This research was conducted for 6 months, starting from January to June 2020. This research used a purposive sampling technique, namely taking the subjects not based on random, sample, or region, but based on certain specific objectives and criteria. In this research, the specific criteria referred to were, PPG participants in Java, at the secondary education level were evenly distributed, and sex was relatively balanced. In more detail, the participants of this research were PPG participants in the provinces of Central Java, West Java, Yogyakarta Special Region, and the Special Capital Region of Jakarta, which involved 5 universities implementing PPG. PPG participants are selected for middle-level educators and include Senior High School, Vocational High School, and Islamic Senior High School. The number of informants was fifteen, with seven females and eight males. The number of research participants was fifteen people based on the phenomenological exploration design that can be carried out on participants between three to fifteen people (Mailool et al., 2020; Moustakas, 1994). Meanwhile, the detailed characteristics of the participants involved in this research can be shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Participant profile

Name	Teaching Place	Gender		Total	PPG Implementing Universities
		Male	Female		
YA	Senior High School	1	-	1	Univ-1
CB	Senior High School	-	1	1	Univ-1
BC	Senior High School	1	-	1	Univ-1
JD	Senior High School	1	-	1	Univ-2
BE	Senior High School	-	1	1	Univ-2
GF	Vocational High School	1	-	1	Univ-2
KG	Vocational High School	-	1	1	Univ-3
HI	Vocational High School	1	-	1	Univ-3
IJ	Vocational High School	-	1	1	Univ-3
JK	Vocational High School	1	-	1	Univ-4
KL	Islamic Senior High School	-	1	1	Univ-4
LM	Islamic Senior High School	1	-	1	Univ-4
MN	Islamic Senior High School	-	1	1	Univ-5
NO	Islamic Senior High School	1	-	1	Univ-5
OP	Islamic Senior High School	-	1	1	Univ-5
<b>Total</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>

All participants and institutions in this research are disguised (anonymity) as in the research code of ethics, which aims to protect institutions, research participants, and ensure the confidentiality of the information shared (Mailool et al., 2020). The initials of the participants in this research were disguised by their names; YES, CB, BC, JD, BE, GF, KG, HI, IJ, JK, KL, LM, MN, NO, and OP. Institutions, where PPG participants teach, are given the general initials Senior High School, Vocational High School, and Islamic Senior High School. Meanwhile, the universities organizing PPG were given the initials Univ-1, Univ-2, Univ-3, Univ-4, and Univ-5. The selection of the five universities as the sample was because the five universities had a good reputation in each province.

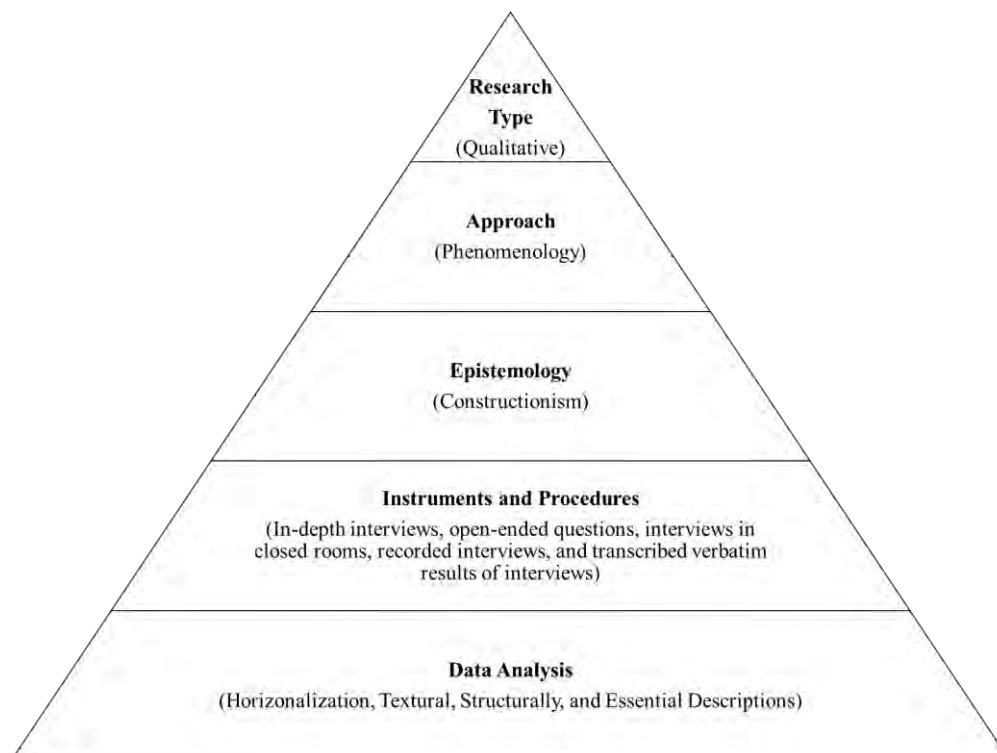
### *Instruments and Procedures*

Data collection in this research was carried out through in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted in forty to sixty minutes duration. Interviews were conducted in East Java, Yogyakarta, Central Java, DKI Jakarta, and West Java. For the interviews to be focused and not distracted, all interviews were conducted in a closed room and only the researcher and participants were in that room. In addition to obtaining good recordings, closed interviews are also a way to ensure that the original identity of participants and the information provided is confidential and closed apart from research purposes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Interview questions are open and general, compiled by researchers to understand the core phenomena of this research.

There are eight main questions that the researcher asks all participants. The first question is a general introduction, such as name, education, place of teaching, teaching experience, a place to take PPG, work, and other personal matters. The next six questions are the core questions of the research. The key to each question is based on how the participants experienced during the PPG. The six questions are how the learning model in PPG? how is the experience of getting soft skills in PPG? What is the easiest learning method to get soft skills messages? How is the easiest way to get soft skills at PPG? What soft skills are obtained during the following PPG? According to experience, what is the most difficult thing for you to get soft skills during PPG? One final question is mandatory because it is to ensure that there are still important things that need to be conveyed by participants but the researchers have not asked. The question is, is there anything you want to say about the experience of being a PPG participant, especially about soft skills, because it hasn't been asked before? During the interview, the researcher tries to create a conducive climate so that participants feel comfortable and free in responding to any questions asked. All interview data were then triangulated on different data to obtain valid data. The results of this interview were made verbatim transcripts and then carried out the horizontal, texturally, structurally, and essential description stages.

### *Analyzing of Data*

Data analysis used in this research follows a phenomenological data analysis model, through horizontalization, texturally, structurally, and essential descriptions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Horizontalization is the process of seeing the transcript verbatim, treating all statements in the transcript as equally important so that researchers can get a general basic core as a whole, through the coding process, main statements, determining themes, and finally synthesis. Texturally and structurally is the process of building a picture of the participant's experience. Textural descriptions refer to what phenomena arise, by writing down participants' experiences as they describe them. The structural description describes how research participants experience it by involving acts of thinking and imagination to achieve core structural meaning. The essence description is a synthesis of textural and structural to describe the essence of the experience. The final step, writing down the essence of all the phenomena experienced by all the participants is called the pinnacle aspect of phenomenological studies. Based on this description, the methodological construction in this research can be described in the form of a pyramid as shown in Figure 1 below.



*Figure 1. Construction methodology*

Furthermore, to ensure the validity and reliability of the data analysis used in this qualitative study, several stages of the validity and reliability of the data analysis were carried out. Data validation was carried out by confirming and clarifying the data obtained with the participants and conducting panel discussions with experts to re-analyze the data that had been obtained. Meanwhile, data reliability is done by asking various identical questions from participants at different times. The questions posed to these participants are contained in the interview script which results in integrated participant answers and by the questions given. Furthermore, analyzing the data that has been obtained in a structured manner and interpreting the results of the research properly, so that other researchers will be able to make the same conclusions in using perspectives, raw data, and research analysis documents, and consider changes that occur. may occur related to the phenomenon under study.

### Results

#### Learning System in the Teacher Professional Program (PPG)

The PPG curriculum concept refers to the principle of an activity-experience based curriculum with an implementation pattern using the technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) concept (Akyuz, 2018). The proportion of material distribution in PPG is divided into two, namely academic strengthening (theoretical) as much as 60 percent, and field experience practice as much as 40 percent (Riset, 2018). By TPACK concept, the PPG learning system is in the form of plenary, workshops, seminars, lectures, peer teaching, and field experience practices as an academic series, the details of which can be seen in Figure 2.

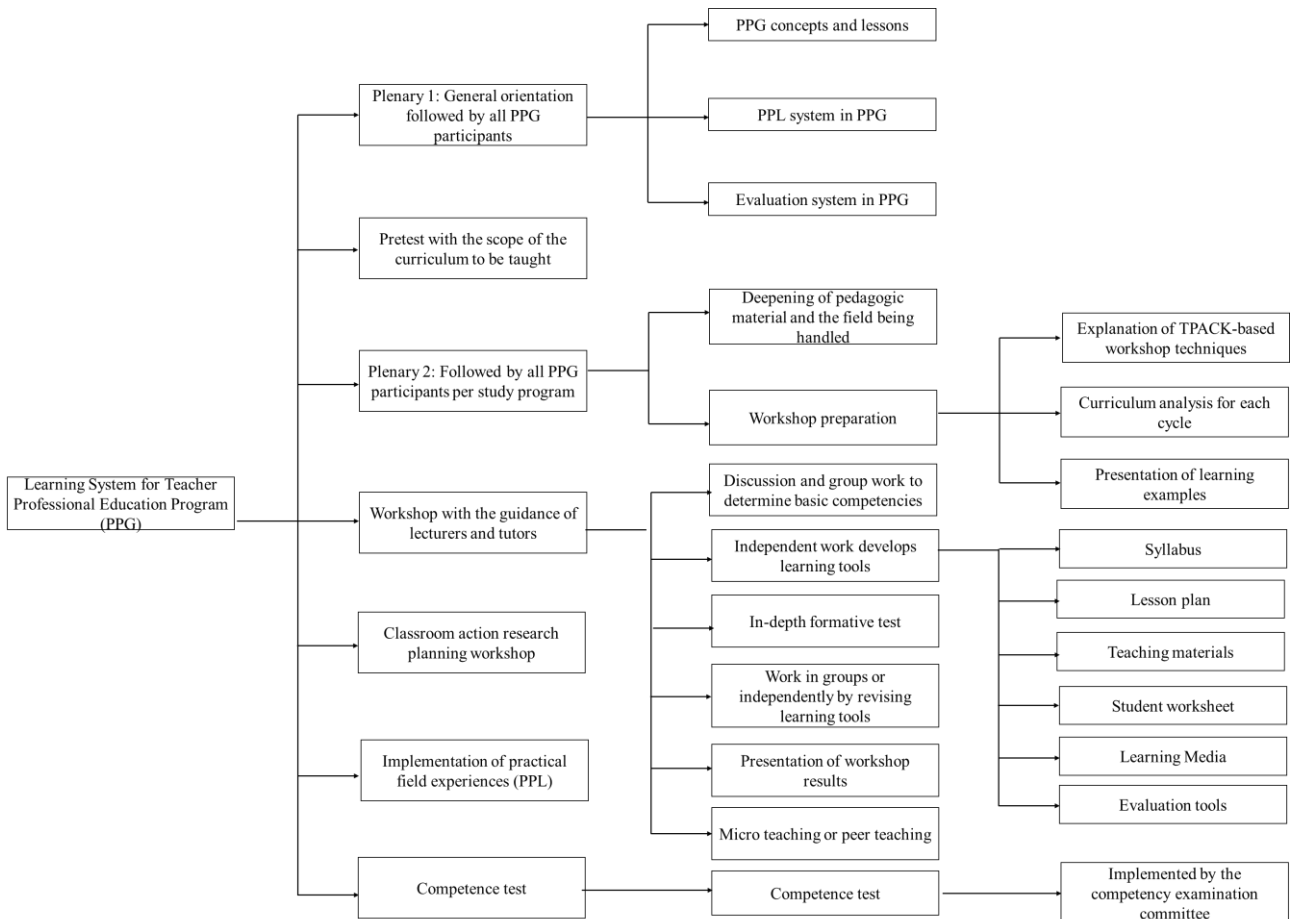


Figure 2. Learning system in the teacher professional program (PPG)

Based on Figure 2, it can be seen that there are seven stages of PPG learning, namely, Plenary 1, Pretest, Plenary 2, workshops with the guidance of lecturers and tutors, a workshop on classroom action research design, implementation of PPL, and finally competency tests. Stage 1, plenary 1 is a general orientation, which is followed by all PPG participants. Plenary material 1 in the form of basic PPG concepts, curriculum, learning systems, PPL system in PPG, grading, and graduation system in PPG. Stage 2, a pretest was carried out online and simultaneously nationally to measure the initial abilities of participants, especially related to mastery of subject matter by the curriculum used. Stage 3, plenary 2 is conducted within the scope of the field of study, followed by participants in the field of study. Plenary 2 activities include deepening the subject matter of the field of study, and workshop preparation in the form of technical explanations for TPACK-based workshops, curriculum analysis for each cycle, and presenting examples of learning tools and/or models.

Stage 4, workshop activities are carried out to produce learning tools. PPG participants, under the guidance of their supervisory lecturers and tutors, discuss in groups, compile learning tools, present work results, revise, and teach. Stage 5, activity facilitates PPG Study Program participants to design classroom action research that will be implemented in PPL activities. Stage 6, practice field experience (PPL) includes practical learning and non-learning activities, classroom action research (CAR) practice, and industrial practice. The learning and non-learning practice activities as well as the PTK practice are carried out by the LPTK, while the industrial practice activities at Polytechnic. The purpose of learning and non-learning practices in schools is for PPG students to have real and contextual experience in applying a set of knowledge, attitudes, and skills that can support the achievement of mastery of pedagogic competences, personal competences, social competences, and competences in mastering the subject matter in the field of study as a whole. Stage 7, the competency test is the final stage test to determine whether PPG participants meet the requirements to become professional teachers or not. PPG participants who pass get a professional educator certificate and get a professional teacher allowance from the state according to their respective fields, as is the law (the Republic of Indonesia, 2005).

#### *PPG Participants' Soft Skill Learning Awareness*

This section will describe how PPG participants initiate awareness of soft skills learning. This research shows that the awareness of soft-skills learning at PPG for each participant has a different experience. YES, PPG participants expressed their opinion that *"There is no written course or material about soft skills during PPG. I ran away from understanding and living up to soft skills, especially in the early days of PPG"*. Another PPG participant, OP said, *"Never mind written materials, lecturers and instructors rarely mention the word soft skills. Therefore, I have previously understood that every learning process at PPG has a soft skill value. I got that understanding when I was in college, and also my experience as a teacher before joining PPG"*. The awareness that the OP has that soft skills are the main value in every material in PPG is good. However, not all participants were like the OP, because some realized it after being in the middle of the trip, as KG stated that *"I just realized that the message of soft skills is always there when given an assignment by the instructor so that PPG participants write down soft skill values. which is involved in a visit to a school. It was very difficult to do this task, and I asked other PPG participants"*.

The difference between PPG participants in realizing the soft skill mission is due to the lack of basic information provided at the beginning of PPG, as stated by the KL *"If all PPG participants are given the emphasis on information from the start or given material about soft skills, there will be no gaps"*. Learning soft skills that are not formalized in the form of a curriculum makes each participant who takes PPG independently identify and sort out the aspects of soft skills in learning. This can be seen from the statement made by CB, one of the PPG participants, that *"Whenever there is learning in class or outside the classroom, I always note the aspects of soft skills that I can catch. For example, lecturers or facilitators who are observing PPG participants who practice teaching have soft skills aspects"*. Another PPG participant, IJ stated, *"Like it or not, I try to understand soft skills myself, even though sometimes I ask my lecturers or fellow PPG participants"*.

The awareness and understanding of different soft skills among PPG participants are because the concept of soft skills is a hidden curriculum in PPG, which is implemented in an integrated manner. Integrated soft skills learning, PPG participants find or develop thematic ways of learning soft skills as said by NO, one of the PPG participants *"I already know certain themes in soft skills such as independence, responsibility, adaptation, cooperation ... because That is every particular activity, both words, and deeds, then I put them in the soft skill themes "*. JD, who is also a PPG participant, gave the same explanation, *"Initially we, my PPG participants and friends, were told by the lecturer how to simply understand hard skills and soft skills, by making themes. For soft skills, there are many themes, for example, confidence, collaboration, tolerance, hard work, respect for the culture, and so on. As far as I know, all of my friends make thematic patterns like this in their portfolios"*. Thus, based on the results of the interviews with the PPG participants when being interviewed about the awareness of learning soft skills, a scheme can be drawn up which can be shown in Figure 3.

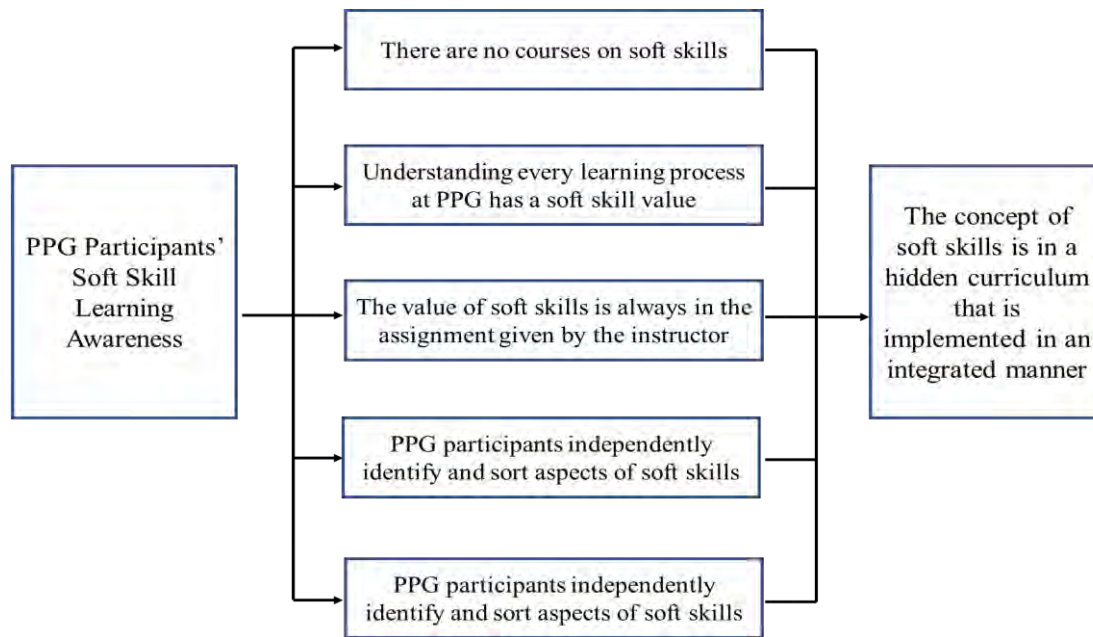


Figure 3. PPG participants' soft skill learning awareness

Based on Figure 3, it can be discussed that in general the participants of the teacher training program (PPG) are not yet very aware of the planting of soft skills in these activities. Some of the arguments from PPG participants, in general, stated that there was no course or training on soft skills during PPG. There are also PPG participants who understand soft skills as the main value of PPG activities whose implementation appears when the instructor or lecturer gives assignments. Based on this, the inculcation of soft skills concepts in PPG is carried out based on a hidden curriculum that is implemented in an integrated manner.

#### Understanding and Acquiring Soft Skills for PPG Participants

The following description will describe how PPG participants experience understanding soft skills based on the themes mentioned above. MN PPG participants explained that lecturers and instructors very often gave PPG participants individual assignments, as well as assignments in small groups. Tasks like this are understood by MN as strengthening soft skills on several themes, for example, independence, responsibility, and cooperation. MN said, *"There are quite a lot of individual and group assignments during PPG. I understand all of these tasks in addition to mastering theory and technical skills as a teacher, as well as strengthening soft skills"*. The PPG participant named GK has a different experience, during the lesson several lecturers used audiovisual media. For example, playing a video of the atmosphere of a kindergarten that will hold a ceremony on the first day of entering the new school year. The atmosphere on the ceremonial ground was busy, irregular. Kindergarten students who just entered for the first time have various expressions, some look confused, cry, look for their parents, look in any direction, and some tones disturb other friends. Meanwhile, the teachers are trying hard so that the atmosphere is immediately over to carry out the ceremony. From this video, GK concludes that to become a Kindergarten teacher requires strong soft skills, such as patience. When describing learning using video visuals, GK said, *"I like learning using audio-visual media, besides being more interesting, I can observe more thoroughly the situation in the video. In one of the videos the lecturer used about the flag ceremony on the first day of kindergarten children, I appreciate how much patience and flexibility is needed to be a kindergarten teacher"*. The experience above shows that live, audio-visual learning PPG participants have more detailed impressions, observations, and learning experiences compared to conventional methods such as lectures or questions and answers. Participating in more enthusiastic learning will strengthen soft skills for teachers.

Another PPG participant named BC admitted that it is easiest for him to understand soft skills in learning with the role-playing method or socio drama. He admitted that learning with this method made it very easy to understand the messages of soft skills, for example, in a conflict, wisdom, maturity, mental resilience, and humility were needed. BC stated, *"The socio-drama or role-playing learning method makes it easier for me to understand soft skills because I have to practice and understand playmates who sometimes have attitudes, traits, and behaviors that are not what I wanted at that time. In such situations, our abilities and soft skill capacities are tested. When playing the role of a good person or someone antagonistic, evil, unsuspecting, my heart is moved and felt. My heart and mind drift, if I become a good figure or vice versa in real life"*. Meanwhile, HI, another PPG participant explained that many soft skills are obtained when working on project assignments, such as when having to make miniature classes. Because a task is a group, so when working on a lot of soft skill messages you get, for example, responsibility, creative and positive thinking, cooperation, respect for the opinions and work of others. HI said this, *"Every time I have a task to make a certain project as a group or individually, what comes to my head for the first time is soft skills. Because this is work that has high physical and psychological*

pressure, individually or in groups. Especially if the project assignments are complicated, such as when we were working on a miniature class project, we needed cooperation, needed a lot of time to gather, had to be patient, think positively, and so on". This experience proves that the method of learning with socio-drama, doing, and making certain practices makes students more excited, impressed, and understands well what they are doing.

During their teaching practice in schools, PPG participants generally get softer skills learning, compared to theoretical learning and simulation practice at PPG. LM, a PPG participant who practices at one of the high schools explained, "During my teaching practice at school I received a lot of soft skill lessons. Because of every word and action that my friends and I do have soft skill values. When visiting the high school for the first time, starting from the school gate, meeting the principal, teachers, students, until returning home, all are full of soft skill values". BE, a PPG participant gave another affirmation, "Here in Yogyakarta everyday life is full of soft skill values, upload, respect, be humble, or respect others. In other cities, it may also be the same, because each place has values of different locality and must be maintained and implemented when we are in that city or place. We have to adapt to the local community". Teaching practice in schools as part of the PPG process is a miniature of real life, compared to theoretically limited learning and small practices in PPG. The experience of the PPG participants shows that the wider real practice will foster better experience and appreciation of soft skills.

Another PPG participant named JK highlighted the plurality of religions, where when participating in PPG they lived together with other people of various religions and beliefs. JK explained, "I found the practice of tolerance and togetherness beautiful. I now have many friends with different religions that I believe in, and they all turn out to be nice. This experience changed the way I view and believe in those who have religions and beliefs that are different from mine. I used to always have a prejudice against those of different religions, now I am more positive about it". YA also experienced similar changes. Ya said, "There are only a few people who follow my religion in Indonesia, I can say that my relationships are also limited to my community. I also got more information about other religions in my community. At PPG I just realized, it turns out that my friends of other faiths are very good, different from my assumptions so far". The experience of PPG participants shows that broader interactions in diverse communities make people more open, understand others, realize that tolerance in diversity is true, and think more positively about others and oneself.

Based on this description, the results of this research can be formulated as follows. First, the soft skill material obtained by PPG participants using an integrated or unstructured curriculum, which is better known as a hidden curriculum. The use of this pattern causes participants to have different initial awareness and understanding of soft skills. Lecturers or instructors also do not provide specific explanations and emphasis on aspects of soft skills and are more focused on a structured core curriculum. Besides, PPG participants finally understand soft skills based on their respective abilities and experiences. Second, the learning methods that were easiest for PPG participants to understand in the soft skills aspect were the socio-drama method, doing certain project practices, micro-teaching, life practices in various communities, and actual learning practices in schools. Third, the soft skill aspects obtained by PPG participants are self-confidence, collaboration, hard work, respect for culture, patience, wisdom, maturity, mental resilience, humility, responsibility, creative thinking, positive thinking, cooperation, tolerance, sense, humility, respect for others, and tolerance. Meanwhile, the soft skills obtained by participants during the PPG can be summarized as shown in Figure 4 below.



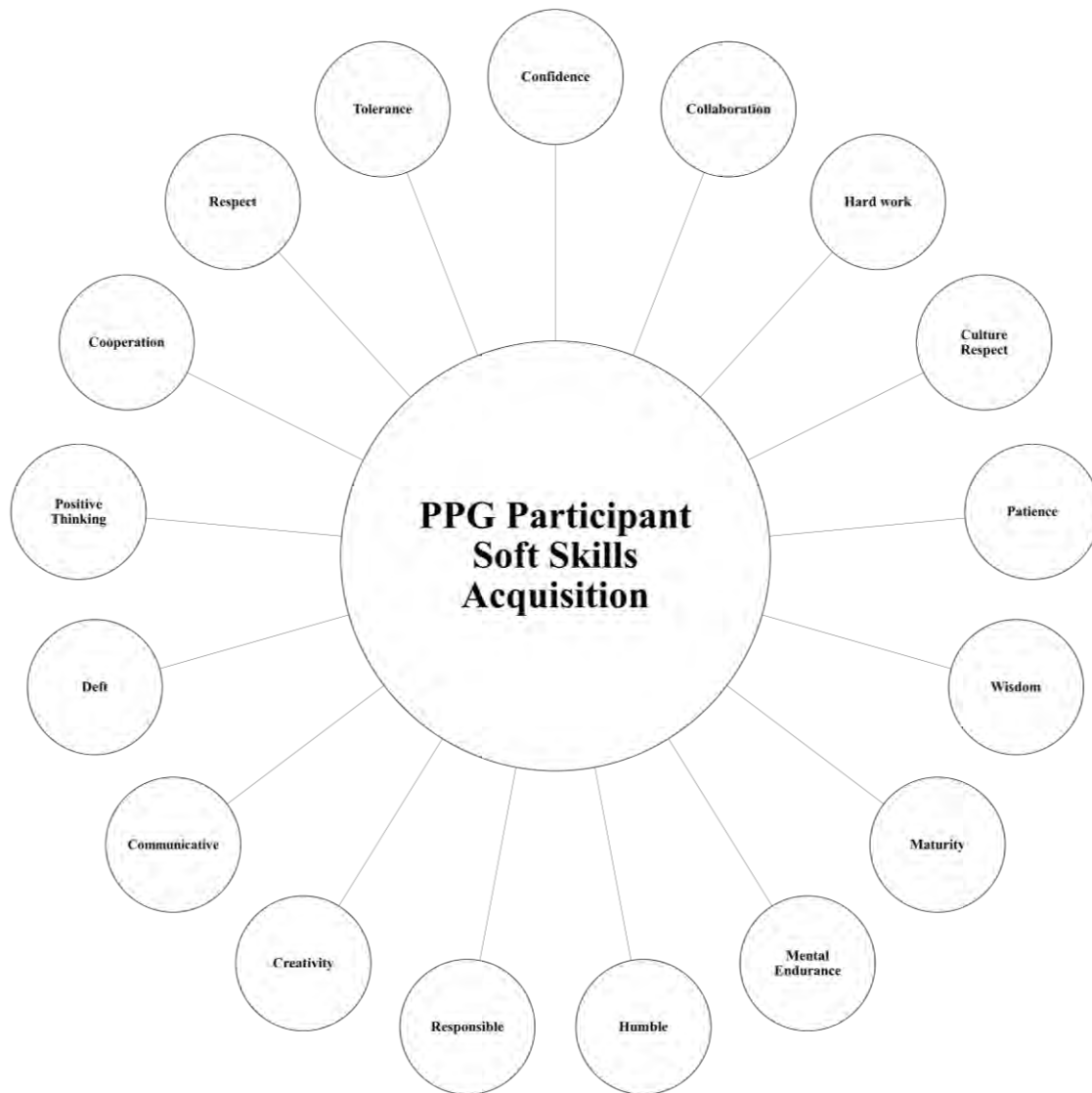


Figure 4. PPG participant soft skill acquisition

Based on Figure 4, it can be seen that seventeen soft skills were obtained by participants during PPG. The seventeen soft skills obtained by the PPG participants synergize with each other and cannot be separated so that if the PPG participant gets the seventeen soft skills, it can be stated that the participants have succeeded in participating in the teacher training program (PPG). In other words, the teacher training program (PPG) is effective in realizing superior soft skills for prospective teachers. In general, seventeen soft skills can be obtained through the integration of social-drama training, projects, micro-teaching, and actual learning in schools using a curriculum that is integrated between theory and real-life.

### Discussion

Everyone in this life needs certain hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills are important techniques and knowledge needed to do something specifically, which can be quantified and measured, as well as being easily trained (Hamari et al., 2018). Soft skills are skills that facilitate relationships between individuals and communities that are developed naturally through personal experience and reflection. Soft skills are recognized as an important attribute in all aspects of life in the 21st century (Levasseur, 2013). This section will continue with the results of the research, by discussing how soft skills are very important to participants, and how they are practiced in the PPG program in Indonesia. Soft skill materials and learning provided to PPG participants are not specifically provided in a structured curriculum, guidebooks, and other written learning materials. This kind of model in education is better known as the hidden curriculum. Because there is no written curriculum concept used, the PPG model of soft-skills learning is called integrated learning (Mailool et al., 2020; Widiati & Hayati, 2015). This integrated learning pattern causes PPG participants to have different initial awareness and understanding of soft skills. Lecturers or instructors are also less in providing specific explanations and emphasis on aspects of soft skills and are more focused on a structured core curriculum. PPG participants finally understand soft skills based on their respective abilities and experiences. So, it is true that the hidden curriculum allows unequal acceptance and understanding of participants (Warren et al., 2019).

Although formally there is no written soft skill material, the PPG curriculum design should still be given a direct and firm message that the soft skills aspect must be given an adequate portion (Bedwell et al., 2014). Moreover, the four competencies that must be mastered by teachers, pedagogic, personal, social, and professional competencies, both directly and indirectly require good soft skills (Ngang & Chan, 2015). Learning soft skills that are not formalized in the form of a curriculum requires each learning participant to independently identify and sort out the aspects of soft skills in the learning material. An integrated soft skill learning, PPG participants also develop thematic ways of learning soft skills as is the case in many places. The experience of PPG participants shows that the values or soft skill themes they get are mostly due to their independent search. The soft skill themes they found are in line with previous research and surveys conducted by experts (Liu et al., 2020). Placing soft skills learning in an integrated manner has challenges that are not easy, both from a conceptual and technical perspective, challenges for lecturers and participants. So, it is important to follow up on the results of this research and the results of previous findings which state that even though soft skills are different from hard skills, they can be trained, structured in the form of a curriculum (Patacsil & Tablatin, 2017). Soft skills that are given in a more structured manner will allow participants to have better, deeper, and stronger soft skills, such as independence, patience, responsibility, critical thinking, collaboration, and tolerance (Tsaoussi, 2020). Moreover, soft skills learning at PPG also does not have a properly validated assessment instrument.

This has sometimes been one of the reasons for the difficulty of implementing professional teacher training programs from the point of view of prospective teachers. Besides, how to teach soft skills is a question that is not easy to answer. This is like in Turkey, where the perception of prospective teachers about the teaching profession is positive, but participants in teacher professional training describe it as something difficult to implement in the classroom (Bircan, 2018). Classrooms are still in doubt as to the best environment for teaching or learning soft skills (Tseng et al., 2019). Countries like Malaysia and Thailand teach soft skills in a conceptual, structured manner, and have curricula or technical guidelines for prospective teachers and teachers (Attakorn et al., 2014; Rozimela, 2020). Meanwhile, in China, the potential factors that influence the professional development of teachers, especially EFL teachers, are teacher understanding, self-reflection, and teaching practice (Zhiyong et al., 2020). PPG programs in Indonesia vary; teaching soft skills are not specifically given in a structured manner, but are taught and practiced at every learning opportunity or integrated (Mailool et al., 2020).

The learning methods most easily understood by PPG participants in the soft skills aspect are the socio-drama method, doing certain project practices, micro-teaching, life practices in diverse communities, and actual learning practices in schools. This shows that the methods of lectures, questions and answers, and theoretical assignments in PPG are not appropriate to use to strengthen the soft skills of PPG participants (Haq & Giatman, 2019). So, to improve the skills and capacity of teachers' soft skills, it can be done through training that involves concrete aspects and direct practice, in the form of socio-drama, making projects, micro-teaching, and PPL. Because these methods include concrete that is easy to understand and master by every learner, conversely lectures, question, and the answer is an abstract method that is most easily lost from memory (Alaagib et al., 2019). Even though PPG uses integrated learning, a hidden curriculum, so it is not structured, it turns out that PPG participants can get quite a lot of soft skills. The soft skills obtained by PPG participants are as follows; self-confidence, hard work, respect for culture, patience, wisdom, maturity, mental resilience, humility, responsibility, creative thinking, positive thinking, cooperation, collaboration, tolerance, humility, respect for others, and tolerance. The acquisition of so many soft skills shows that PPG participants are very diligent and independent in identifying aspects of soft skills in each lesson. Acquiring soft skills that are quantitatively adequate is problematic because soft skill learning is integrated, the hidden curriculum does not have a structured and measurable concept (Cinque, 2016). So, learning soft skills in an integrated curriculum is important for more progressive, focused, and structured changes in the curriculum, because the mastery of soft skills is good for teachers, making teachers able to carry out higher quality, effective teaching practices, and sustainable.

### Conclusion

This research explores how teachers experience learning soft skills in PPG in Indonesia. The results of this research found that PPG participants received unstructured soft skills learning, and integration pattern with a hidden curriculum. Soft skill learning patterns like this are less effective because participants do not have the same readiness and awareness when starting a learning program. Integrated soft skill learning shows that soft skills, although they have been recognized as very important abilities for teachers, have not yet become mainstream in the PPG scheme. However, PPG participants through independent learning methods get adequate soft skills, namely self-confidence, collaboration, hard work, respect for culture, patience, wisdom, maturity, mental resilience, humility, responsibility, creative thinking, positive thinking, cooperation, consideration, humility, respect for others, and tolerance. These soft skills are obtained when learning uses the socio-drama method, doing certain project practices, micro-teaching, life practices in various communities, and actual learning practices in schools (Field Experience Practice). The unstructured soft skill learning pattern (hidden curriculum) in PPG needs to be improved into a structured pattern in the curriculum. With a structured soft skill learning pattern at PPG, instructors (lecturers) and participants will understand from the start and can focus more because they already have certain patterns and guidelines. Meanwhile, the contribution of this research is that professional and humanist PPG can produce teachers who are competent and have several soft skills needed to face such rapid changes due to the industrial revolution 4.0 and society 5.0.

### Recommendations

Based on the results and research conclusions described above, this research provides the following recommendations; First, the compilers of the PPG curriculum concept need to understand that hard skills and soft skills are abilities that every teacher (human) must have. So, in compiling the curriculum, the orientation of the mastery of hard skills and soft skills must appear intellectually firm. Second, the PPG lecturers and tutors in the PPG process in a structured manner explained from the beginning of the PPG implementation that hard skills and soft skills are twin abilities that all PPG participants must realize and have acquired in the entire PPG process. Third, PPG participants must have an awareness that good hard skills and soft skills are mandatory for teachers. Meanwhile, future researchers should be able to use the data obtained in this study to carry out further research by developing innovations that can be used to increase the effectiveness of teacher training programs (PPG). Besides, further researchers can conduct research using subjects or participants who do not only focus on the island of Java but in the future, it is hoped that researchers can conduct research in each province in Indonesia and compare it with similar programs with neighboring countries.

### Limitations

This research has been conducted by scientific standards in the academic world. However, as researchers, we realize that this research has the following limitations; First, although geographically this research was quite extensive in all provinces in Java, the participants in this research were very limited. Second, as with the qualitative-phenomenological research concept, the results are subjective and apply only to the locality of the research location, so the results of this research cannot be understood in general terms.

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