Like Mentor Like Mentee
How the Perception Correlates to Teaching Performance

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Abstract: Mentor teacher holds an important role for the student teaching experience in school practicum program. The mentoring provided by mentors contributes to both the success and failure of student teachers during their early yet critical period of professional development. It is interesting to investigate how the perception of those student teachers to their student teaching affects their own performance. To collect the data of perception, the Mentee Perceptions of Student Teaching survey adapted from Hudson (2007) was given to student teachers of Swadaya University who have concluded their school practicum program in 2016 at one high school in West Java, Indonesia, while the scores of their student teaching performance were used to gather the performance data. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis method were applied to describe the correlation between variables. From the correlation analysis, it is found that there is a significant correlation between perception and performance.

1 INTRODUCTION

Teacher Education system in Indonesia is established and managed by the government and the universities of education became the institutions which hold responsibility to produce teachers (Andyani, 2015). Every year thousands of student teachers from different universities in Indonesia participate in the school practicum program as their student teaching experience. The program is a mandatory requirement and is conducted in several state and non-state schools which previously signed MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the universities.

Studies about the effectiveness of mentoring during school practicum program from the perspective of both student teachers and mentor teachers have been conducted around the globe. From the mentees perspective, they emphasized on how mentoring influenced the outcome of student teaching (Bird, 2006). In the study conducted by Bird, the Mentee Perceptions of Student Teaching (MPST) survey was given to student teachers upon the conclusion of their student teaching experience. Convergence of quantitative and qualitative data showed that mentoring practices implemented by the mentors supported the development of student teachers. Furthermore, research from Hudson et al.

(2009) revealed that during the school practicum program, the mentees were reflective, and brought their own expertise, and could actually contribute to the professional development of the teachers to which they were assigned in school. Kuswandono (2014) and Adnyani (2015) also provide similar result from the perspective of student teacher in Indonesian context. Bradbury and Koballa (2008) conclude from their qualitative study that mentees view their mentors as experts, but the differences in feedback from mentors can be a mismatch in their expectations.

Likewise, McDonough and Brandenburg (2012) argue that the mentor teachers need to offer supports to pre-service teachers to examine the negative experiences as parts of ongoing professional development and to make them aware that negative experiences and emotions are often inevitable in the profession. There is a power differential between mentors and pre-service teachers, where the mentor has considerable power in providing feedback that leads to evaluations towards successful (or unsuccessful) completions of practicum experiences (Anderson, 2007).

Interestingly, many of the previously conducted studies were focusing only on perspectives, and therefore this study will be based on the urgency of identifying whether there is correlation among the perspectives of mentees toward mentor teachers and

their own performances during their student teaching experience.

When the graduates of teacher education are asked about their training experience, they expressed strong positive levels of satisfaction with the preparation in content area, instructional technology, and the creation of learner centered environment (Bratlien&McGuire, 2002) in Nalumansi (2011). Moreover, student teachers who experienced less or no training report being extra unsatisfied with their training, and encounter greater obstacle in completing their teaching duties, especially if their assignments involve handling learners with extraordinary learning needs (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

The theory and practice of school practicum program is a complex and growing field in the context of Indonesia. Finding the correlation between the voices of mentees and their performance is important for it could provide a new focus for hidden potential in school practicum programs and an understanding toward the effect of the method used in running the program. The result of this research is aimed to revisit the policy in teacher education.

These research questions are proposed to guide the study:
 (1) What are student teachers' perceptions of the mentoring factors that contributed to success in their student teaching experience?
 (2) How are student teachers' performances during their school practicum program?
 (3) To what extend are the two elements correlated?

2 METHODOLOGY

This is mixed-methods study which determined the correlation of mentoring perception towards the growth and development of student teachers from Swadaya University. The study measured the perception of the five mentoring factors in student teaching experiences and correlated the overall measurement to the mentees' performance during their student teaching experience.

2.1 Subject

In order to get the valid and reliable data, subjects of the study were 10 mentees from Swadaya University who were assigned to the same school for their school practicum program. They underwent the program early September 2016 to mid December 2016. The 10 mentees were responsible to teach four different subjects, namely English language (3), Mathematics (3), Bahasa Indonesia (2), and Economics (2). The

school practicum program followed the university calendar, meaning student teachers missed out on early entry into the classroom at the beginning of the school year. Student teachers were assigned to a classroom on the basis of what the cooperating teacher teaches. Placement decisions were made by school officials, in this case the principal, often as an open invitation to staff members to volunteer for the assignment.

2.2 Instrumentation

The Mentee Perception of Student Teaching survey (MPST) (Hudson et al., 2005) developed by Dr. Peter Hudson, an educational researcher at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia, was used to obtain perception data. The perceptions of student teachers are divided into five factors; personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling, and feedback. All ten of student teachers responded to 34 statements, using a five-point Likert scale, consisting of "Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree." In addition, student teachers answered six, open-ended questions about their mentoring experience during their student teaching.

Data for student teaching performance were taken from the journal and scoring sheet given by the mentor teachers and were divided by four categories; lesson planning, teaching performance, personality traits, school-related tasks. Each category was scored by using scale 1 to 4.

2.3 Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from the student teachers at the same setting. The student teachers completed the paper survey in the first section included grade level placement, content area taught, number of lessons taught, and school placement information. In the second section of the survey, the student teachers circled their response to 34 Likert scale statements. Lastly, student teachers wrote answers to six open-ended questions in section three of the survey which then modified into unstructured interview. Surveys were collected after the student teachers finished their school practicum program.

In this study, qualitative data were collected in separate sections of the MPST survey, but the analysis and interpretation phase of the study combined both the quantitative and qualitative elements for convergence among the results (Creswell, 2003). SPSS 24 was used to calculate the

correlation between two variables. The results were reported descriptively according to the five mentoring factors and four performance categories. The qualitative component of this study provided additional clarification of issues surrounding the student teachers' mentoring experience. The researcher's goal was to fully understand their experience by collecting and analyzing the personal descriptions the student teachers provided in the open-ended questions.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if mentoring perception had a positive correlation toward the student teachers overall performance. By understanding the mentees' actual experiences with mentoring, this study may offer guidance to educational organizations for shaping mentoring programs.

3.1 Perception

Student teachers perceived the mentoring factor, modeling, as the most used practice by mentors. Personal attributes and pedagogical knowledge were also perceived by student teachers to be employed by the mentors. Although still within close limits to the other factors, student teachers pointed out that their mentors' intention of giving feedback and informing system requirements were not as important.

3.1.1 Modelling

The modelling factor received 90% agreement response on all quantifiable items. Student teachers indicated that a majority of mentors modelled teaching practices. Modelling effective teaching and rapport with students were perceived to be the most representative practices of the mentors. Mentors' modelling of classroom management and well-designed lesson plans were lower on the student teachers' responses, as was the student teachers' perceptions of their mentor's display of enthusiasm (80%.). The lowest score within the modelling factor pertains to the mentors' use of curricular standard. Student teachers perceived that this occurred 70% of the time. One of the interviewed mentee, Annisa, elaborated that a mentor teacher helped her to develop and apply reflective teaching techniques early on in her study teaching. Thus, the skills enabled mentee to communicate meaning and purpose during internship as well as helping mentor clarify meaning and

purpose to himself. In turn, the student teachers used reflective teaching strategies to explain their plans and actions to mentor teachers, and to find ways to perform better in their job.

3.1.2 Feedback

The second factor, feedback, showed the lowest scores of implementation on the MPST instrument, as compared to the other four factors. The student teachers perceived that only 70% of the mentors reviewed the student teachers' lesson plans. Also significant, is that although 90% of the student teachers reported their mentors observed their teaching, only 70% of the student teachers indicated they received written feedback on their teaching. In relation to the type of feedback given by mentor teachers, oral feedback is as helpful, but as the quantity of comments increases it becomes more likely that student teachers will not able internalize the feedback to a certain degree.

3.1.3 Personal Attributes

Personal attributes include the kind of characteristics that possessed by the mentors namely being supportive, encouraging, flexible, and having a positive attitude. In addition, the mentors also identified to be those who are trustworthy and having interpersonal skills. Student teachers indicated that 90% of their mentors were supportive of them in student teaching and almost as many student teachers felt comfortable talking with their mentor. The lowest percentage of student teacher perceptions in this factor related to the mentor teachers assisting the student teachers in reflecting (70%). Lack of encouragement and very controlling mentor are sign rather negative personal attributes where one of the mentees commented, "It is like I work without guidance but then blamed for doing something wrong."

3.1.4 Pedagogical Knowledge

Most of the student teachers claimed their mentors assisted with classroom management (90%). The mentor teachers provided their perspectives that mentors assisted them with planning, and teaching strategies. 80% of the student teachers either agreeing or strongly agreeing that pedagogical knowledge practice were implemented, pertained to the mentors' discussions of four items including discussion about assessment and implementation, guided lesson preparation, discussions about problem solving, and discussions about content knowledge with the student

teacher and assisting student teachers with scheduling.

3.1.5 System Requirements

In system requirements factor, student teachers indicated 80% of the mentors discussed school policies and the goals for teaching, while 70% of the mentees reported their mentors outlined the curriculum. This result had something to do with the result of preliminary studies that mentor teachers were lack of trainings related to curriculum development. The school where the study conducted was the model school for the implementation of 2013 Curriculum. The fact had brought both blessing and curse for the mentees since they have a lot to learn to adapt with the system which clearly is not part of their university subject.

"I found that what is taught in the university is so not up to date compared to what is really happening in school. The system, the curriculum, and assessment is mostly new to us and we need to learn about them fast. I hope that university can have more connection with the school."- said Bramanta, one of the interviewed student teachers.

3.2 Performance

Mentors assessed their mentees performance based on the journal of assessment given by the Swadaya University. The overall score were varied from 3.53 to 3.86 of the scale 1 to 4.

3.2.1 Lesson Planning

"Lesson planning is hard and takes days" was one line mentioned by Bramanta, one of the student teachers on why the average score (3.25) of lesson planning came out to be the lowest among four categories. This fact was also supported by the perception of mentees that the mentors themselves were unable to create a well-designed lesson plan. The result reflects glaring evidence that both mentor and mentees are in the need of good lesson planning modelling. The frequent changes within the form of lesson planning impose by the Curriculum is no help and creates a problematic exposure on which standard need to be followed.

3.2.2 Teaching Performance

In contrast to planning the lesson, teaching performance was the highest score most student teachers achieved during the school practicum

program (3.90). This finding was coherence to the perception that most mentors modelled teaching practice and display enthusiasm in the classroom. It was also suggested from the interview that the practical teaching experience was the most stressful part and that student teachers were in need of practical and emotional support during the practicum, and the mentor was found to be the most highly valued support and resource for the student teachers (Smith and Lev-Ari, 2005).

3.2.3 Personality Traits

The average score of mentees' personality traits was 3.74, indicating that they have good personality and are able to adapt themselves as pre-service to the formal school environment which in fact different from their college-student life. The mentor's help is critical as pre-service teachers often have to cope with their emotional tensions in schools (Patrick, 2013). Such tensions most likely to occur since pre-service teachers are moving into a new situation and a new identity as a novice teacher in schools. The level of support offered to the mentees by their mentors worth the most. According to Reiman et.al (2010) in Bird (2012), support is a noticeable factor in workplace correlated to beginning teachers' perceptions of success.

3.2.4 School-Related Task

In school-related tasks, the mentees were required to be involved in some activities other than teaching including becoming librarian, front officer, school counsellor, and extracurricular supervisor. From the journal it was found that most of the pre-service teachers were ready for the classroom but not for the staffroom. They had difficulties to adjust to the task in the beginning but were finally able to manage their position with the average overall score 3.63.

3.3 Correlation

From previously discussed findings of two variables and their categories, it is clear that there is a positive and significant correlation between student teachers perception on the school practicum program and their performance. The significant correlation was also proven statistically (see Table 1).

Table 1: Correlation between variables.

		Perception	Performance
Perception	Pearson Correlation	1	.748
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	10	10
Performance	Pearson Correlation	.748	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	10	10

The r_s value of 0.748 indicates that five categories of perceptions are correlated positively to four performance categories. Modelling, the highest perceived factor of mentoring correlates to those of student teachers teaching performances indicates that modelling provides student teachers with visual and aural demonstrations of how to teach (Hudson et.al, 2009). These student teachers also value mentors who share experiences, give constructive feedback, both praise and criticism, and listen to the students. Findings also revealed that both mentors and mentees are in the need of lesson planning models. Moreover, mentors personal attributes correlated to the mentees personality traits in which a good mentor resulted in good mentees. Supportive mentor is another significant factor that contributes to the good performance of student teachers in their school-related tasks. The student teachers in this study are convinced that their mentors have knowledge and skills to share with teacher trainees. The results of this study show that mentees enjoy working with well qualified mentors in their schools, and are learning a great deal from each other. According to the mentees' perception, both mentees and mentor teachers have similar opportunities to interact and learn from each other.

4 CONCLUSIONS

How we experience the world and turn thoughts into actions are significantly correlated. It is proven that to some large extent the mentees' perceptions correlates to their study teaching performance. The five factors; personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling, and feedback of mentoring perceptions and four categories of study teaching performance; lesson planning, teaching performance, personality traits, school-related tasks are correlated to each other. The relationship is importance and critical as the mentoring provided by mentors contributes to both the success and failure of student teachers during their early yet critical period of professional development. School practicum programs that obtain the support of experienced classroom teachers as mentors to student teachers are suggested to enlist a set of goals for the student teachers positive perception which then resulted in excellent performance. Increasing the opportunities for interaction and communication before, during, and after the school practicum program between school teachers and university faculty will greatly improve teacher quality both at the school and the university.

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