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SCIENTIFIC
PUBLISHERS

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Printed in the United States of America

Advanced Science Letters
Vol. XXXXXXXXX

International Teaching Practice in Technical and Vocational Education

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Teaching practice is a core component of a bachelor degree in education, and it enables student teachers to acquire initial teaching competencies in the real school setting. This paper presents the perceptions, readiness and challenges of student teachers in the area of technical and vocational education on the international teaching practices program. The study involved 34 undergraduate students who joined a four-week international teaching practice in three provinces of Indonesia namely Central Java, Yogyakarta and South Sulawesi. The questionnaire was used as a research instrument with value of reliability is 0.88. Data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially using the value of frequency, percentage and one-way ANOVA respectively. The findings show that the readiness, challenges and perceptions of student teachers towards the international teaching practice are high. There is no significance difference depicted by respondents from different programs in the three constructs. Based on this study, directions for further research are identified to enhance the implementation of international teaching practice in the future.

Keywords: international teaching practice, student teachers, technical and vocational education

1. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia Education Blueprint for Higher Education has outlined ten shifts that will become catalyst towards excellence in the higher education. Six shifts in the blueprint focus on enablers for the higher education ecosystem which including funding, governance, innovation, internationalisation, online learning, and delivery^[1]. Internationalisation of higher education is one of the essential efforts in producing high market value graduates, attracting more international students and initiating innovation through joint research and development^[2].

Internationalisation is a dynamic process which also move in line with the current education system. Approach and activities implemented under the umbrella of internationalisation in the context of higher education are very much dependent on the funding, setting, capacity and facilities available.

Education is one of the main driving forces in the development of a country. Therefore, Malaysia government has made various attempts in the sector of education to produce first class human capital that is able to bring the country in line with others developed countries. Malaysian education system has undergone multiple phases to strengthen the ecosystem especially in producing competent teachers.

In line with the government's aspiration to ensure that the teaching profession is highly regarded by the community, teachers should be equipped with knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to function effectively in educational settings. Apart from the need to acquire knowledge and skills in their respective areas of expertise, teachers should also possess adequate knowledge and skills to manage classroom and workshop, use information and communication technology in teaching and learning, and communicate effectively^[3].

The future of education in ASEAN countries is heavily influenced by internationalization factors that require students and teachers to become more sensitive to

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the changing of educational landscape abroad. This is due to the fact that internationalization agenda is one of the elements that can strengthen educational excellence among them. Such excellence is required to produce students who not only excel academically but also excel in terms of character and courage to face the outside world and are able to compete at internationally^{[4],[5]}.

Currently, Malaysia is implementing strategies to produce more skilled workers, entrepreneurs and professionals in specific areas to compete with foreign countries^[6]. To meet this goal, Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) has introduced an international program namely international teaching practice in the area of technical and vocational education (TVE). This program is a step to meet the government's endeavour to achieve the goals of Vision 2020, which aims to enhance Malaysia as an industrialized and developed nation by 2020.

International teaching practice of TVE should be brought to achieve national goals. Therefore, these efforts must be explained and understood by all, including policy makers, educators, administrators, and researchers. International teaching practice in TVE can be considered as a medium that if implemented properly will provide benefits to students. However, the most important is to find the best way to implement it in the most systematic way to ensure it is carried out based on the National Education Philosophy and in line with Vision 2020. The main purpose of conducting the study in international teaching practice in TVE are

- 1 to identify the readiness of student teachers for international teaching practice
- 2 to identify challenges of student teachers during international teaching practice
- 3 to identify perceptions of student teachers towards international teaching practice
- 4 to study the differences of student teachers' readiness, challenges and perceptions of international teaching practice according to program

2. INTERNATIONAL TEACHING PRACTICE

Teaching practices is a compulsory component of teacher training with the objectives to expose and provide prospective teachers with teaching experience in the real school settings for professional teaching skills development and reflective practices^[7]. Through teaching practice, student teachers learn and practice the theories, methods and approaches and also the desired behavior when in the classroom. In addition, teaching practice can provide a lot of opportunities to gain experience before venturing into a real profession. However, these are still insufficient to produce future qualified teachers. Various efforts have been made to improve the capacity and quality of student teachers and among them is

international teaching practice.

Internationalization program is one of the elements that can strengthen one's education excellence and increase confidence in communicating. Students teachers will become more confident, self-reliant, creative and innovative, higher social skills and better mastery of English^[8]. The internationally focused program is regarded as a program that seeks to challenge the minds of students to be able to view and analyze the similarities and differences that exist throughout the world. The program is also important because it gives students the opportunity to learn, recognize and appreciate the diversity of values and cultures around the world^[9].

Faculty of Education, UTM has responded to efforts to promote the internationalization program through international teaching practice. This program has been started in 2012 with the participation of two universities in Indonesia namely Yogyakarta State University (UNY) and the University of PGRI Semarang (UPGRIS) which is formerly known as IKIP PGRI Semarang. Until 2015, UTM has collaborated with four universities in Indonesia, and these include the State University of Makassar (UNY) and the University of Muhammadiyah Makassar (UNISMUH). The program aims to provide opportunities for teachers to feel the atmosphere and the challenges of teaching in a foreign country. Thus, trainee teachers should ensure steady availability of physical, spiritual and intellectual training so that they can undergo the teaching practice more efficiently.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN. The quantitative study employed a descriptive survey. A survey has been conducted to identify the readiness of student teachers in the international teaching practice. The challenges and their perceptions of this program are also identified. Next, the differences in the readiness, challenges and perceptions of the student teachers on the international teaching practice according to the program of study are also examined.

SAMPLE. Sample of the study is 34 undergraduates technical and vocational education in the area of building construction, electrical and electronic, mechanical engineering and living skills.

INSTRUMENT. The questionnaire consists of 44 items which have been developed to measure students' readiness, challenges and perceptions towards international teaching practices. The reliability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha is 0.88.

ANALYSIS. The quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics to get the value of frequency, percentage and one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA). Meanwhile, the interview data have been analyzed using thematic analysis approach.

4. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Survey Findings

Readiness for the international teaching practice

There are 20 items that measure the readiness aspects of student teachers for international teaching practice. The result shows that 15 items received positive response at least 80% as presented in Table 1.

The findings show that all respondents are able to deliver the lesson effectively. Their voice is clear and can easily understood by the students. They also possess skills using hand tools in the workshop. However, most of them are not fluent in Indonesian. They do not learn to speak in Indonesia Language prior the placement of teaching practice. This is one of the weaknesses that have been noticed and led to the failure in the delivery of information during the teaching and learning sessions. Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage of all the items.

Table 2. The Readiness for International Teaching Practice

Nos	Items
1	I know how to write a lesson plan properly
2	I can apply the knowledge given by lecturers in teaching
3	I have skills in planning group activities in the classroom
4	I am able to control students in the classroom
5	I have knowledge in classroom management
6	I know the appropriate teaching methods to attract students
7	I know how to use an appropriate teaching aids according to the topics of the lesson
8	I have skills in using computer
9	I can prepare teaching aids by using power point slide
10	I know how to communicate well so that students easily understand my teaching
11	I can deliver lessons clearly
12	I know how to attract students' attention during lessons
13	I am not nervous when students ask questions during lessons
14	I have knowledge in workshop management
15	I am able to handle hand tools in the workshop

Challenges during the international teaching practice

From the result, most respondents can handle challenges during the program very well. According to Table 2, respondents can easily adapt to the environment, culture, and school settings in Indonesia. They also developed a good rapport with teachers and staff in schools and were able to deliver the lessons smoothly. However, the findings indicate that they have encountered difficulties when to communicate with Indonesian students in schools. They are found not fluent in Indonesian and to overcome this problem they use English during lessons.

Table 2. Challenges During International Teaching Practice

Nos	Items
1	I can get used to the environment despite of cultural differences
2	I can adapt to the culture of learning in Indonesia
3	I can easily adapt with a school environment in Indonesia
4	I have a good relationship with the teachers in school
5	I have a good relationship with all staff in school
7	I do not have problems with the school facilities and teaching can be done smoothly

Perceptions towards international teaching practice

The findings show that the respondents have positive perceptions of the international teaching practices as depicted in Table 3. They found that the program enhances their teaching experience and more confidence to deliver the lessons. They are also able to practice knowledge and skills in a broader context. Most importantly, the international teaching practice provides a platform to the respondents to learn and experience Indonesia educational system and culture. They believe such program can produce quality teachers who are aware of current development in education.

Table 3. Perceptions of International Teaching Practice

Nos	Items
1	Enrich my teaching experience
2	Increase my confidence in teaching
3	Practice the knowledge and pedagogical skills in a broader context
4	Opportunity to experience the education system in Indonesia
5	Learn different learning cultures in Indonesia
7	Opportunity to learn new knowledge
8	International teaching practice creates unity with other countries
9	Produce quality teachers
10	Produce teachers who are aware of current developments in education

Differences in the readiness, challenges and perceptions of international teaching practice by programs

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the differences in the readiness, challenges and perceptions by programs. The independent variable, programs included four specialization : (a) building construction, (b) electric and electronics, (c) mechanical engineering, and (d) living skills. The dependent variables for each of the ANOVA conducted were Readiness, Challenges and Perceptions.

As depicted in Table 4, the results of the one-way ANOVA for programs were found to be not significant for three dependent variables, Readiness, $F(3, 30)=.134, p= .939$; Challenges, $F(3, 30)=1.153, p=.344$; and Perceptions, $F(3,30)=1.076, p=.374$ for all programs.

Table 4. Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) for Readiness, Challenges and Perceptions of International Teaching

Practice by Programs

Constructs	ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Readiness	Between groups	.032	3	.011	.134	.939
	Within groups	2.383	30	.079		
	Total	2.416	33			
Challenges	Between groups	.132	3	.044	1.153	.344
	Within groups	1.143	30	.038		
	Total	1.275	33			
Perceptions	Between groups	.361	3	.120	1.076	.374
	Within groups	3.361	30	.112		
	Total	3.722	33			

* $p=.05$ Interview Findings

The interview provides descriptive information regarding the perceptions of the respondents towards the international teaching practice. Important findings from the interview were that :

1. gaining a lot of new knowledge and experiences such as knowledge on school administration, school cultures, the education system in the country as well as the opportunities to learn the native language of the country
2. improve soft skills such as communication, social and leadership
3. enhance teachers professionalism and should be continued
4. produce prospective teachers who are knowledgeable and skillful in their respective area of expertise

5. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study manifest student teachers are ready for international teaching practice. They also provide feedback that no critical challenges have interfered their focus during the teaching practice. Further, the student teachers give a very positive response regarding the implementation of international teaching practice. The readiness, challenges, and perceptions of the student teachers are the same even though they come

from a different background of specializations. The findings, to some extent, can help the Faculty to make improvement in the future to facilitate the implementation of the international teaching practice. Finally, it is hoped that the outcomes of the study can contribute to the success in the area of education and to place the university in the international arena.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was supported by Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

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