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Perspectives on Mentoring Support During Teaching Practicum in Local & International Settings

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Abstract. This study aims to investigate the mentoring support given by the local and foreign mentors to English language teacher trainees during their teaching practicum. The practicum comprised two phases. In phase one, the trainees experienced a local teaching practicum for one month in Penang, Malaysia. In phase two, they went through an international teaching practicum in Indonesia for two months. The sample of this qualitative study comprised four respondents from Universiti Sains Malaysia, who voluntarily undertook the international teaching practicum in Jombang, Indonesia. All of them were females aged 24 years old. The data were collected from reflections and semi-structured interviews and were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings suggest that in both phases, the mentors cumulatively provided cognitive, affective and, social support. All types of support augmented the teacher trainees' competence as future teachers.

Keywords: English language; international teaching practicum; local teaching practicum; teacher trainees

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of technology, global market, and unique demographic nature of students have challenged the teaching profession to employ a range of practice in which it accommodates different purposes, integration of knowledge, sophisticated pedagogical repertoire, learners' diversity, and shifting contextual forces. Learning to teach could be intriguing as well as mischievous (Borko, Whitcomb & Liston, 2009; Fomin, 2020) because it is drawn upon a complex array of contextual and unpredictable knowledge that occurs throughout the life of a teacher. Teacher education today should be able to equip teachers with knowledge and skills to establish effective teaching.

To achieve effective teaching, various approaches were administered. One familiar educational term within the context of teaching education is mentoring. It is initially done through university-based preservice formal training and seen as a course that helps teacher trainees (TTs) become professional teachers. Mentoring is a process of assisting novices develop teaching practice through a nurturing relationship between those with less experience and those with more experience in the field (Hairon et al., 2020), and a mentor guides by serving as a role model and advisor (Bigelow, 2002). The instructional relationship is typical in the form of instructional supervision, assessment monitoring, curriculum implementation, and establishment of a supportive work environment. Teaching practice in schools is a part of teaching practicum (TP) which is pertinent for TTs as they have the opportunity to exercise the acquired teaching concepts (Barton, Hartwig & Cain, 2015). Studies on mentoring have revealed fruitful outcomes in various aspects ranging from cognitive and affective of learning to teach the socialization process that takes place during the first contact with the realities of classroom teaching and school context (Aderibigbe, 2013; Kaasila & Lauriala, 2010).

Mostly, TP occurs in a local setting in which the TTs and mentors share a similar socio-cultural background. However, to provide experiences of learning and engaging teaching in foreign education settings, international networking, agreements, and meaningful collaborations have been initiated by many institutions (Kabilan et al., 2017). In the Malaysian context, the School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia (SES, USM) has been conducting international teaching practicum (ITP) since 2011, allowing the TTs to carry out their teaching practicum in other countries such as the Maldives and Bangladesh (Kabilan, 2013; Kabilan et al., 2017) after going through a period of local teaching practicum (LTP). Mentoring in the ITP platform provides TTs the opportunity to experience effective pedagogical training and the interplay between individuals with different socio-cultural variables (Kabilan et al., 2020; Quick & Sieborger, 2005). It also embraces broader counseling, role modeling, and supports from the mentors. There are many studies on teacher mentoring. However, research on ESL TTs experiencing mentoring in an EFL context, Indonesia, to the best of our knowledge, is scarce. Experiencing knowledge gain in this context would contribute to the field of TP, particularly on mentoring. The findings would be beneficial for novel teachers teaching in a similar setting.

While many studies reported that ITP seems to be encouraging and promising (Ahmad et al., 2019; Burgard et al., 2018; Cinelli & Jones, 2017; Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013; Kabilan, 2013; Kabilan et al., 2016; Kabilan et al., 2017; Kim, & Choi, 2018; Quick & Sieborger, 2005; Tambyah, 2019), some studies underscored the challenges faced by the TTs. For instance, Hendra et al. (2019) found that the five TT's from the Philippines and Thailand who underwent the ITP in Jambi, Indonesia had difficulties in religious sensitivity, content subject, language, and school climate. Kim & Choi (2018) found that Korean TTs faced communication and culture issues during their practicum training in the U.S. In another study, TTs from Indonesia had predicaments in the curriculum, lesson planning, language proficiency and cultural differences in multi-ethnic Malaysian schools (Kabilan et al., 2020). Jin et al. (2019) revealed that the Australian TTs in Anshan, China, were perplexed with the Chinese education system, which is different in the social and cultural contexts.

When faced with such adversities, the teacher training providers need to have the knowledge about the type of support required to ensure that the TTs' learning experience during their ITP is not in jeopardy. Amid of our vivacity in advocating the change in the practicum landscape for the last 20 years (Lang, Cacciattolo, & Kidman, 2016), mentoring support is not addressed aptly at this juncture. The lack of research on ITP on this matter has not substantiated the kind or manner of support for the TTs undertaking ITP. Hahl and Mikulec (2018) found that the mentors' support is pivotal for the international students' training in Finland for being very practical and reassuring, but that was only a small part of the whole finding. More research is necessary to investigate this phenomenon not only to ensure the quality of mentoring support but also to provide solutions to the issues reported in the challenges of ITP.

Following this issue, the research on teaching practicum mainly focuses on either LTP or ITP. Studies in which TTs undergo two modes of practicum (LTP and ITP) are scarce (Kabilan, 2013; Kabilan et al. 2017; Kabilan et al. 2020). It is imperative to investigate the mentor support received during the LTP as well as the ITP to see whether the mentoring support offered at the home ground and outbound are the same or otherwise. It is also crucial to find out whether the mentoring support is vital for TTs during LTP or is it more necessary during ITP. Could the mentor support in LTP and ITP complement each other in shaping the TTs' professionalism? The findings from such a study would inform teacher training providers alike on the necessary framework to support the TTs' practicum training that is usually carried out once in their bachelor's degree. Thus, this study aims is to examine the mentoring experiences of TTs in Penang, Malaysia, and Jombang, Indonesia. The objective of the study is to examine the type of mentoring support given to the English language teacher trainees by the local and foreign teacher mentors.

2. Review of Literature

The underpinning theory

Drawing from Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura (1999), this study involved the interconnectedness between learning and observed conditioning behaviors. The theory propagates that knowledge is constructed by modeled behaviors in the social environment. Through the capability of reflective thinking, the individual then self-regulates sensible decisions on his actions by accepting or rejecting the behavior. Choices lie in the hands of the individual. When a notable observed behavior is emulated, the creative human psyche could expand the new knowledge further, resulting in cognitive, affective or behavioral changes. As described by Bandura (1999), "While performing activities, the individual form ideas about what leads to what, act on them or predict occurrences from them, judge from the results the adequacy of their thoughts and change them accordingly" (p.25).

The attained knowledge could translate into various forms, such as attitude, competencies, beliefs, and skills. Mentoring mimics this behavior modeling concept. Differing classroom instructions, classroom management, feedback, and discussions that relate to content and pedagogical knowledge and moral conducts modeled by the Indonesian and Malaysian preceptors or mentors could enrich the TTs' learning experiences on the teaching practice during the LTP and ITP. The models obtained from the two training milieus could demonstrate a set of examples for the TTs' considerations.

Mentoring support

Mentoring, a traditional practice to provide first-hand on-site training to the TTs during their practicum is still relevant. The mentor is a knowledgeable teacher, functioning as the guide, counselor, facilitator, expert other, supervisor and evaluator to name a few. The young and naïve TTs consider their mentors as the experts. The TTs will turn to their mentor teachers as the primary source for proper strategies to deliver a meaningful lesson, amend the instructional planning, class control, overcome fear and build confidence and other matters related to teaching. Mentoring is thus an agentic social process acquired from skillful mentors (Bandura, 1999; Edwards, 2017).

Mentoring is argued extensively in the literature (Pennanen et al. 2016). The mentoring concept seems to be divergent. Mena, Hennissen & Loughran (2017) contended that an effectual mentoring would be influenced by how the mentors assume their roles to assist the TTs in the field during their practicum tenure. The mentors must be equipped with sufficient mentoring knowledge and execute them vigilantly. However, things are more complex. Mentors who are supposed to be constructive are destructive instead. Domineering mentors eradicate dynamism in the TTs, hence giving distraught to the TT's identity formation (Yuan, 2016). Being directive and dominating discussions also fail to support the TTs (Mena, Hennissen & Loughran, 2017). Langdon (2017) motioned that mentors with presumptions hold beliefs and practices that are hard to break, resulting in poor mentoring.

As opposed to those findings, Izadinia (2016) asserted that having 'an open line of communication and feedback' with the TTs are fundamental while establishing positive rapports and addressing the needs of the TTs are the key concepts of good mentoring (Izadinia, 2015). This study is also corroborated by Duse, Duse & Karkowska (2017), who studied mentoring engaging four counties of Sibiu, Brasov, Cluj-Napoca and Iasi for three years. They emphasize that the mentors and the TTs' pronounced relationships have resulted in the TTs' progress during the training. The authors also urge that mentoring is crucial for TTs and for novice teachers who are just starting their career in the teaching profession. MERID-model (Mentor (teacher) Roles In Dialogues) developed in 2008 (Crasborn et al., 2011) proposed that the mentoring dialog framework would assist the mentors in upskilling their mentoring technique by employing the appropriate role according to the contexts. In this framework, the mentors are classified into four quadrants: active vs. reactive (Y-axis) and directive vs. non-directive (x-axis). In each quadrant, they play different roles: a) active and non-directive quadrant - *initiator*, b) active and directive quadrant - *imperator*, c) non-directive and reactive quadrant - *encourager*, and directive and reactive quadrant - *advisor*. In their study, this framework benefitted the mentors in looking back at their supervision and improving them for future use. Mentoring could also be collaborative in nature, where *co-thinkers* and *co-learners* concept intercept conventional mentoring. This mode of mentoring affords co-learning between the TTs and the mentors. Although this strategy seems to undermine the expertise of a knowledgeable mentor, the effect could be indispensable as proven by Ginkel, Verloop & Denessen (2016).

3. Methodology

Research Background and Setting

The research adopted a qualitative design to investigate the mentoring experiences received by the respondents. Initially, the TTs had their LTP in Penang, Malaysia for four weeks. They were assigned to two mainstream schools correspondingly. Then, ITP ensued for eight weeks. The four TTs were placed in two government schools in Jombang, Indonesia (East Java). The first pair went to a vocational school while the other, in a mainstream school.

During the TP, the participants taught English language to secondary level. For the LTP, the TTs were given between 8-12 periods of English language (40 minutes per lesson). Meanwhile, in the ITP, they were required to teach eight classes (50 minutes per lesson). Besides normal teaching, the TTs were involved in extracurricular activities assigned by the schools. Each TT was assigned a school mentor teacher.

Participants

The sampling technique used in this study was purposive and criterion sampling. Only those who chose to undergo this mode of TP (LTP & ITP) and were willing to participate in the study voluntarily were involved in the research. This study employed Siedman's (2013) criterion to determine the sample size, i.e., sufficiency and saturation of information. The number of respondents must be representative of the total population and data must reach saturation. Hence, four female TTs

out of eight TTs who went for the ITP in Jombang, Indonesia (majoring in English) were chosen for the study. All four were from multi-ethnic females, aged 24 years old and were in the fourth year of their degree program, the year for their practicum training.

Before involving in the ITP mode, there were prerequisites that the TTs had to pass, which included a minimum CGPA of 3.0, positive attitudes towards the teaching profession, learning and research. The ITP should also be self-funded. For this study, the TTs were named (pseudonym) as Mel, Sydney, Nor and Ching.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this study was collected from reflective journals or reflections (JR) and two interview sessions (IS). The reflective journals were written daily on their LTP and ITP mentoring experiences. They wrote about their encounters with their mentors, especially on the attainments that are prominent for their professional development as future English language teachers. The TTs were encouraged to add their emotions when giving their insights. They could also add on their viewpoints in their reflections. The interview sessions took place in SES, USM, after their LTP and ITP, respectively. The interview was designed following the semi-structured protocol. Each TT was interviewed for a minimum of 30 minutes. The questions asked dealt with the mentor-mentees' relationships, frequency, and place of meetings, discussion matters, expectations and the support given by the mentors. Both interviews were recorded for analysis purposes.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. To ascertain the trustworthiness of the study, the six phases of analysis process proposed by Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Nowell et al. 2017, p.1) were employed. The phases were familiarizing with data, formulating for initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming the themes and finally, producing the report.

4. Findings

Three common themes of mentoring support emerged from the study. The TTs reported that they improved their professionalisms as beginning teachers through cognitive, affective, and social supports.

Cognitive support

Cognitive support refers to the assistance obtained by the TT in the acquisition of new knowledge or the expansion of existing knowledge. The data revealed that the mentors supported the trainees cognitively in various aspects. They include lesson planning, pedagogical skills, classroom and time management and assessment.

Lesson planning

In Malaysia, when Ching told her mentor that she could not complete the objectives of her lesson, Ching was advised to shorten them as it is just a one - period lesson; '*...he just asked me to like... minimise the numbers of learning objectives, that's how I learned from him*' (IS). Sydney learned to suit the focus skill with the lesson plan and the materials with the level of the students. Her lesson plan was appropriate for writing, not speaking. Thus, her mentor commented, '*it was*

supposed to be a speaking lessonbut the way I um approached it is wrong. It's more like a writing lesson instead of a speaking lesson and the material is actually too difficult for the students' proficiency level'(SI). Nor's mentor supported her using questioning techniques during their discussions. When Nor wanted to teach her students on paraphrasing using 'SpongeBob Squarepants' video clip, her mentor questioned, '.....if she were to ask the students to write a summary of what they saw the video was about, is it considered paraphrasing? But she said, no'(SI). Nor reflected and agreed with her mentor.

In Indonesia, Sydney had some difficulties in writing the lesson plan as she was asked to teach a topic for two weeks. Thus, she asked her mentor who then lent her some reference books to refer to. *'...I asked her and she even gave me, I mean lent me one of the books that she co-wrote. She told me that I can just use the exercises from that book so that really helps me' (SI). Similarly, Nor, who had two mentors, said that 'They both support me a lot. In giving ideas on how to teach. Giving lesson plan samples. Sharing items and materials.'* In short, the TTs had no problem attaining their resources.

Pedagogical skills

In Malaysia, Mel shadowed her mentor's lessons to learn the various approaches, and later, she was asked to repeat the same lesson in another class using her technique. From her reflection, although she loved her mentor's lessons, *'Her set induction was realistic and direct as she asked students to brainstorm the ways of doing certain action. I love it because it is more applicable and relatable for the students.'* (JR), Mel decided to use video in her set induction and discussed the issue of her lesson with the students using power point slides. This technique she claimed had captured more attention from her students.

Analogously, Ching's Indonesian mentor also modelled some teaching methods before Ching started teaching her own classes. Ching preferred the Indonesian teaching methods as she found them to be more stimulating and effective. She justified, *'For instance, my school in Indonesia only focused on the specific courses the students studied. For example, in my mentor's classes which were about accounting, he always related English to their job scopes and he often stressed on the importance of English'(JR).* This suggests that English is taught as a functional subject in that school.

Uniquely, Sydney experienced the role of a mentor in Indonesia. She was asked to comment on her mentor's teaching, *'After the observation, my mentor approached me for feedback about her lesson. I commented on her ease in managing the classroom, some students' lack of interest in learning the English language and her teaching pace' (JR).* The discussion paved the way for interchange of ideas and built new understandings in Sydney. The mentor had empowered Sydney to exercise what she had acquired from her knowledge and translating it into practice.

Assessment

Sydney was given the chance to mark a test paper with the help of her Malaysian mentor. The experience was very meaningful for her, *'... she showed us how marks are awarded for different types of questions based on the answer scheme. I find this very*

useful as I would be able to make good use of this knowledge (the criteria of a grade A short essay etc) to deliver a better reading or writing lesson that focuses on the certain aspects which I might have overlooked before. This would help Sydney structure her lesson focus.

Another enriching experience in Indonesia was about the authenticity of their evaluation system. The TTs witnessed how speaking evaluation was carried out at Borobudur temple. According to Ching, *'During the English trip to Jogjakarta, the students needed to converse English to Foreigners to pass their exam. It was more to practical usage. We went to Borobudur temple for conducting the English speaking test'*(JR). Nor attested to this, *'I loved this idea of practically using English to speak to foreigners in order to improve their skills, it also helps improving their social skills.'*(JR). Their testing method is realistic. From this experience, the TTs discovered the alternative of oral testing.

Classroom and time management

Nor's Malaysian mentor taught her about classroom management, *'...before we started to actually teaching, we had like, a round table. She gave us situations, what can we do if this happens, and she asked us, what will we do. she did point out if what we do is suitable or not suitable and she suggested ways on how she did it in classes.'*(SI). The scenario given had helped Nor to visualize the situation and think of ways to deal with the situation. And when the mentor gave her some solutions, Nor was able to see things realistically. Mel was supported when she accounted for a discipline problem in her class during her LTP. Her mentor advised her to take this measure, *'..... tomorrow... you go and do a show, let them admit themselves, what did they do wrongly, who are the culprits, and... So, from there, we can actually train them and want them to admit their fault not to repeat again and also to apologise to the others'*(SI). Mel did precisely that, and the problem was resolved.

In Indonesia, the TTs were exposed to a unique approach of disciplining through character building. Every morning, all school students are greeted by the teachers and perform 'salam' (Islamic handshake). The students have daily assembly and singing the national anthem is made compulsory in every meet, signifying the inculcation of patriotism. They even have hand-drawn 'batik' classes. The 'batik' lesson is not merely a drawing exercise, but it has a commercial objective as well. The 'batik' products are sold to the locals and visitors. The TTs were amazed by such practices.

Ching also learned about time management from her Indonesian mentor on how to still produce quality teaching despite a busy schedule. She wrote, *'The things that he taught me was useful to me as it minimized the burden and energy spent on specific days especially when the English periods were continuously for the whole day with 3 classes'* (JR). The mentor taught Ching that in school, students' knowledge augmentations should be the teacher's priority, anything besides that is secondary. In short, students' needs should never be risked.

Affective support

Affective support deals with one's unsteady emotions. In a complicated learning journey as this practicum training, this support is necessary to provide a

conducive learning environment that ultimately would optimize the TTs' learning progress. The data revealed that the TTs did obtain motivation and care, particularly in Indonesia.

Motivation

In Malaysia, Sydney's mentor motivated and commended her for the improvement in her second appraisal. Unlike the first lesson, she managed to overcome her weaknesses in her lesson plan, approach, and classroom management as her mentor stated, *'she said that I improved a lot ... mm students, they actually listen when I talk. And the flow of the lesson is smoother classroom interruptions by the students, I'm, I handled it well instead of panicking like last time, doesn't detract from my lesson objectives.'* (IS). Sydney felt overjoyed that it boosted her spirit. Mel adored her Malaysian mentor as she was very reassuring, *'She always encouraged me throughout the time, especially by motivating me to be patient for the weak students. I love her way very much as she truly gave me inspiration and strength in teaching the weak students'* (JR). Mel was very appreciative for the guidance and encouragement because she was very troubled with the issue.

Nor received good comments from Bu Tenty and she suggested some ways to improve the lessons as well, *'The comments were very uplifting which made me feel like teaching wasn't actually that bad after all'* (JR). The support must have been very significant for Nor to make such a claim.

Care

According to Sydney, *'Mm mentoring in Indonesia seems more intimate because the mentors, they erm took great lengths to take care of us not only in terms of us doing well in the school but also outside of the school. They constantly check on us, making sure that erm we are not experiencing any difficulties and so on. That's why I said that my mentor is a mother figure for me in Indonesia'*(SI). This affective support suggests another benefit that the Malaysian TTs had obtained during their ITP. They were well looked after.

Nor was very thankful and touched that the Indonesian mentors took very good care of her wellbeing, especially when she was sick, and that was the week that her supervisor from Malaysia was coming to observe her. Not only her mentor but the supervisor was also concerned about her health to the extent that they, *'...came to our place every day to check on me, cook for us, and massage me whenever she had time. I was told to rest at home for a couple of days so that I will feel better for my observation'*(SI).

The data did not reveal any evidence of 'care' from the local mentors. However, this does not mean that they were not treated well. It could indicate that perhaps the students did not need it because they were at the home ground and were able to take care of themselves.

Social support

Social support refers to the type of support that would establish the rapport between the mentors and the TTs. Similar to affective support, it is also imperative

to ensure that the trainees are comfortable to learn. In this practicum, the trainees were supported socially, primarily in Indonesia.

Relationship

Mel was treated like a sister by her Malaysian mentor, hence; her relationship with her mentor was very casual. They always shared things, chatted, and had fun. She confessed, *'I always shared my teaching materials, specifically the notes, SPM trial papers and worksheet to her for my Form 4 class and in return she gave me advices and guidance of my teaching materials..... she treated all the USM trainees a lunch at a cosy café. We chatted a lot, shared what we had learnt from both sides and took pictures We text through Whatsapp and are friends in Facebook. I sent her my pictures in Indonesia too'* (JR). Mel was delighted to have such a relationship.

Hospitality

The TTs reported that they received a very warm welcome from the Indonesian mentors. The hosts were very hospitable. According to Nor, the Jombang local newspaper highlighted the news about their coming; *'Press was invited and I was interviewed by the reporter, they welcomed us wholeheartedly, as what Bu Muna said, STKIP PGRI Jombang is now our second home'* (IS). Bu Muna's words made them feel at home right away.

Besides that, the trainees were brought sightseeing to Kampung Coklat and Pantai Pasir Putih Trenggalek. Mel said that *'Pak Adib, planned to bring us there ever since the first week we were there but he just had the time on this day so we went out with him, Bu Rukmini and her daughter, Nalla. We had a great time out and enjoyed the journey'* (JR). After coming back from a short trip to Yogyakarta and Bali, Sydney's mentor also asked about how the trip went. *'She did some catching up with me to check on my well-being,'* Sydney claimed (JR). The social support that established the TTs' relationships with their mentors had alleviated their learning process.

5. Discussion

From the data, it was evident that the LTP and ITP have evolved the TTs' initial professionalisms in teaching. The three months' period accentuated the self-actualization of the TTs, despite the intermittent challenges faced along the tumultuous journey. During this experimental interim period, the TTs are usually 'vulnerable' (Stanulis & Russell, 2000) for being in a country that is altogether dissimilar from theirs, especially in the curriculum and culture. To excel in teaching, the TTs realized the need to have a certain set of competencies. Prominently, a strong foundation in theory and practical aspects were the prerequisites. This teaching practicum was the clinical platform that translated those hypothetical understandings into pragmatic (Burns et al., 2016). For first timers, the TTs captured that mentor support was imperative at this juncture as beginning teachers. The three types of mentor support; cognitive, affective, and social obtained from both their local and transnational mentors proved to be beneficial for the TTs.

Cognitive support appeared to be an integral contributing factor to the TTs' professional development during the practicum. The mentors, especially in Malaysia, emerged as the knowledge providers playing their roles in ensuring the

execution of proper lessons. Using divergent approaches, the mentors, amid their busy schedules, never failed to offer professional supervision. This opportunity had enabled the TTs to link their learned theories into practice, in which oftentimes adaptations seemed to be more applicable. The TTs understood that a failed lesson, whether in the planning, management, or time and classroom management, would be detrimental for the students. Evidently, the support had helped the TTs to reflect on unforeseen matters in their lessons. Having gone through two different settings of practicum doubled the TTs' knowledge. Similar findings on the development on cognition were found in these studies i.e., increased in confidence in speaking and communication, teaching confidence and skills, interpersonal skills, new world views of education and culture and adapting to new working cultures (Kabilan et al., 2017), and developed teaching skills, interpersonal skills, awareness to diversity and independence.

In Indonesia, being in an EFL context was another reinforcing training as the TTs were guided on the adoption of a curriculum alien to them. The exposure on how a speaking test could be conducted outside the classroom and in an authentic environment had also widened the TTs' wisdom as such an evaluation is rare in their home country. The character-building experience was meaningful, as well. The TTs were taught the ways of how patriotism was instilled among the Indonesian students by their daily routines. The 'salam' inculcated respect for the teacher and the 'batik' lessons nurtured their love for their culture. Meanwhile, in two unique cases, besides being the sage, the mentors collaborated with the TTs in the knowledge building. Back in Penang, Malaysia, when Sydney was empowered to take the role of her mentor, she successfully commented on her mentor's lesson. Even though the purpose was to train Sydney in a reverse fashion, the mentor could have also learned from Sydney's comments. This experience portrays that the TTs and the mentor could co-learn with one another. Similar finding is found in Ginkel, Verloop and Denessen's (2016) study. In Mel's instance, the close relationship she had, witnessed the sharing of materials and knowledge between the mentor and her. This experience suggests that the support can also be reciprocal.

Affective support was the second theme that emerged from the data. Sydney's mentor praised her for the remarkable improvement that Sydney made in her lesson. During her second observation, she did not panic, her lesson went smoothly, she articulated well, and her class control was perfect. The appraisal motivated Sydney to improve further. Meanwhile, when Mel encountered a complex situation in dealing with weak students, her mentor consoled, and encouraged her. Her mentor's move was very much appreciated. In Nor's case, the inspiring words from her Indonesian mentor had made Nor changed her pessimistic notion on teaching. In Indonesia, the experience of affective support was impeccable. As a host country, host mentor, they were accountable for the safety, comfort and health of the TTs under their wings. For that reason, Nor was treated with great care while she was sick, and Sydney reported that the TTs' wellbeing was often checked. This support had moved the TTs. The intimacy had made Sydney felt that their relationship was more of a mother and daughter. The concerns had impacted the TTs' professional development positively. The

prevalence of affective support also emerged in Israel et al.'s (2014) study. Coined as emotional support, they concluded that affective support and cognitive support were interrelated. Similarly, in Mitroi and Mazilescu's (2014) study, the respondents perceived that an effective mentor support should consist of emotional support. Mentors should be balanced emotionally, possess empathy, calmness, and kindness. Analogously, Izadinia (2015; 2016) and Duse, Duse and Karkowska (2017) also concur that having a good relationship with the TTs will enhance their professionalism.

Social support is also fundamental during an exacting period, like the teaching practicum. The evidence from Mel's experience connotes the rudimentary of social interactions that should take place between a TT and the mentor. Casual and compassionate portrayals of the mentor had smoothed Mel's learning undertakings. The relationship they had was invariably complementary. The acceptance and recognitions in turn had built Mel's trust, in her mentor. Similarly, Mukeredzi (2017) found that to be accepted as part of the community, establishes trust. The importance of such a bond was also parallel with Sulistiyo et al.'s (2017) findings. The relationship needs to be built *'based on mutual respect and understanding of each other's expertise, needs and perspectives'* (Sulistiyo, et al., 2017). The TTs utterly adored the hospitality received while training in Indonesia. Although making the headlines in the local newspaper was overwhelming, the TTs were delighted by the opportunity. They were not just welcomed by the mentors but by the entire school. The mentors tightened their bonds with the TTs by taking them on sightseeing trips. They had a splendid time. With this good rapport, Kabilan (2013) claimed, the TTs would settle in the new environment at a fast pace.

The findings supported Bandura's (1999) postulation in his Social Cognitive Theory as well. The mentors in the LTP and ITP had indeed played a crucial part in the TTs' professional developments. They assumed the roles that the TTs could emulate from. However, other factors also formulated a pleasant learning environment for the TTs, namely, the student, school, and administrators. Bandura divided this environment into three **imposed environment, selected environment, and constructed environment**. Most of the teaching experiences in this study were supported by constructed environment. The conducive social environment was created between the TTs and their mentors, students, school, and administrators.

This approach of TP has an essential implication for the Ministry of Higher Learning and teacher training providers. With adequate mentoring support, it is wise for teacher education programs to adopt this measure to cater to the needs of globalization, diversity, and mobility, which are becoming notable in today's world. It is a fact that the world is becoming interconnected and becoming more and more borderless. Thus, the ministry and providers need to be mindful of the possibility of job-seeking beyond the TTs' internal perimeter. This scenario has been happening in the outside world, where multinational teachers from South Africa, India, the Philippines, and Eastern Europe have sought for employments in the UK and US schools (Brown & Stevick, 2014 as cited in Cladinin & Husu,

2017 ; Dunn et al., 2014; Manik, Maharaj & Sookrajh, 2006 as cited in Cladinin & Husu, 2017). By getting extra training, the TTs' chances of job security of the TTs would be expanded, enabling their mobility to other countries.

Another consideration that the ministry and teacher education providers should pay attention to is the influx of student immigration or migration from countries like Indonesia, Rohingya, Pakistan, the Philippines, Vietnam and the Arab world into Malaysia, particularly in private schools. This influx has resulted in a substantial diversity in the local schools in terms of language, religion, and culture. The local teachers are often perplexed and overwhelmed by the different needs of the multinational student populace (Kim & Kim, 2012). While immersion courses for in-service teachers are necessary to support existing teaching services, many teacher training providers are integrating ITP in their pre-service courses to fit the TTs for the diverse classrooms. To evade the necessity of such a training would not be appropriate.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the mentors in Malaysia and Indonesia provided cognitive, affective, and social support to the TTs. For novice teachers-to-be, the trainings were invaluable, although it was just for a short stint - three months. Although the mentors originated from different backgrounds and cultures, they had the same objective i.e., optimizing the opportunities for the TTs to experience a meaningful practicum. The mentors, one in Malaysia and one or two in Indonesia, complemented each other. Ultimately, the TTs attained holistic support. This study reveals another success of this fashion of teaching practicum. Hence, teacher training providers with similar background could consider this dual TP program. The practitioners or teacher mentors could also utilize the support found in this research when becoming a mentor teacher. More importantly, the researchers would like to urge the Ministry of Higher Learning of Malaysia to take heed and reassess the curriculum of teacher training providers at the local universities to cater to this dire need.

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