

PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR COMPETENCE AND THEIR READINESS FOR TEACHING PROFESSION

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ABSTRACT

The Indonesian Government takes serious measure on the future prospect of the teacher education graduates who are considered not to have a standardized competence ability to become a professional teacher. It inflicted some responses that opposed with the implementation of the program. This issue highlights the need for a more thorough investigation on the legitimacy of new teachers in Indonesia, as well as their quality. The goal of this study is to learn about pre-service teachers' perceptions of their own competency and readiness to teach. This quantitative study used internet-based questionnaires to collect the data. The participants were 67 undergraduate students of university in Lamongan, East Java Province. The result of this research showed that p value (.258) is higher ($>$) than α value (.05). It means that there were no correlation between pre-service teachers' perception of their competence and their readiness for teaching profession. Nevertheless, the pre-service teachers have a positive perception regarding their competence and readiness to teach in a professional setting. By realizing and considering their competence and readiness for the teaching profession, they will feel more confident and ready to face the real environment of teaching as a profession.

Keywords: *paired-reading method, experimental research, reading skill.*

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian government takes the issue of graduates of teacher education who are not considered to have a standardized competence ability to become professional teachers in schools seriously. So, it has launched an additional teacher education program for prospective teachers or graduates of a year-long teacher education program. This program was carried out after graduating a diploma IV or undergraduate program named Training for Professional School Teachers (TPST). Its major goal for the participants is to have positive, productive, and reflective teaching experiences.

The program affects all graduates of a teacher education program, including English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher. It raised some responses, including teacher education university academics who do not agree with the implementation of the

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program. Their justification is based on the assumption and argument that teacher education graduates are well-qualified to become instructors and are ready to work professionally. This statement, therefore, calls attention to the necessity for a more thorough investigation of new teachers' intrinsic legitimacy in Indonesia, as well as their quality (Julia, Subarjah, Maulana, Sujana, Isrokatun, Nugraha, & Rachmatin, 2020).

The quality of teachers can be represented through their competence. Teacher competence can be drawn during their pre-service education phase and qualities needed for the career must be provided. Improving the standard of teachers is critical in the field of education and it can be done from the start to pre-service teachers where they will prepare themselves before getting teaching profession (Garet, et al., 2001; Mangin & Stoelinga, 2010; PGG, 2011).

The competence and/or readiness of teachers have become the focus on many studies. Mohamed, Valcke, and Wever (2016) focused on identifying the important areas in which these aspiring teachers must be developed before they can be ready for the classroom, particularly the central role of their teacher educators in developing their professional competence. This is essential for pre-service teachers to regard themselves as competent and ready for the teaching profession in this field. Because there are too many changes in the field, teachers are expected to be able to adapt to these changing conditions. The new teachers that have been prepared their competence will feel confident to face the environment (Julia et al., 2020).

For this reason, pre-service teachers' perceptions of competence and readiness for the teaching profession need to be measured to determine whether pre-service teachers are well prepared in developing their competencies during the education phase and are ready for the teaching profession as EFL teachers. Moreover, because English is a foreign language in Indonesia and a topic in the school curriculum, the language is rarely exposed outside the classroom, requiring the English teacher to play a big role in the classroom. Hence, teachers hold an essential role to run their work effectively in order to achieve teaching goals.

Because of these doubts, this study focuses on investigating the perceptions of pre-service teachers who are undergraduate students about their competence and readiness for their teaching profession and on measuring the correlation between pre-service teachers' perception of their competence and their readiness. In addition, this competency

is expected help pre-service teachers to develop their knowledge and skills during their careers, to become professional English teacher, and to achieve educational standards.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher Competence

The term 'competence' in an activity or task is the capability of a person. It refers to the performance of the teacher's duties in teaching to meet the demands of a particular role in classroom activities. Competence requires skills, knowledge, characteristics, abilities, and behaviors that enable certain persons to conduct or perform the duties and functions of a specific job. It is as a balance between a teacher's necessary knowledge, abilities, and psychological qualities. Some other views about teacher competency are defined as teachers' abilities, knowledge, and beliefs to carry out the profession effectively, furthermore, from a humanistic and democratic point of view, teacher competence is viewed as delivering quality education to people as a human rights prerequisite (Panggabean & Himawan, 2016; Balyer, 2017; Sulaiman, Hamzah, & Rahim, 2017).

Teacher competence is the competence of the teacher as a balance of the skills, knowledge, and beliefs of teachers to effectively carry out the profession as a teacher. So, teachers need to have a good competence in carrying out their job. It reflects the quality of teachers because teachers have more control in education. Having competent teachers and a quality of learning process can help to increase the quality of education. Improving the standard of teachers is critical in the field of education. Through their competence, the standard of a teacher can be expressed.

Aspect of Teacher Competence

The different context of interpretation and understanding of teacher competence resulted in a theoretical concept that was also different. Here are several aspects of teacher competence that adapted from the indicators formulated by South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization [SEAMEO] (2010) (Panggabean & Himawan (2016)); it has been used to assess the general competence of teacher in eleven South East Asian countries. They are: a) professional knowledge (content and teaching methodology mastery), b) professional skills (pedagogies, classroom management, and learner assessment), c) personal characteristics (personal traits, such as responsibility, time

keeping, etc.), d) professional or personal ethical standards and values (resulting in teachers being good role models in the school and the community), and e) professional development and learning in existence (such as participation in professional teacher organizations and activities, and other elements that demonstrate a desire to enhance the teaching profession). Those aspects have also fit the standard of teacher competence stated by The Indonesian Government.

Teachers need to have a good competence in carrying out their job. It reflects on the quality of teachers because teachers have more control in education. Aspects of teacher competence have an important role in determining or categorizing the abilities possessed by teachers. It also affects the quality of a teacher. Therefore, they were then used as the basis for compiling the questionnaire's statements in this research.

Teacher Readiness

In the educational context, the word 'readiness' also refers to the willingness and ability of students or learners at the K-12 school level to enter the school system or to acquire a new skill or new knowledge (Williford, et al., 2013; Hatfield, et al., 2016; Mohamed, et al. 2016). Currently, readiness is often used to indicate the willingness of teachers to deliver some aspects of their job or even the entire job.

Teacher readiness is the willingness and preparedness in carrying out their roles as teachers, both emotionally, cognitively, behaviorally, and so on. Teachers' readiness has important role in preparing the pre-service teachers before facing profession as teacher. To achieve a job, people need to have good preparedness needed in work, both physical/behavioral readiness, mental readiness, and cognitive readiness. Those aspects may influence their readiness in carrying out or maintaining their jobs. Therefore, those then became the basis indicators in formulating statements for pre-service teachers' readiness questionnaire in this research.

METHODOLOGY

To determine pre-service teachers' perceptions of their competence and readiness, the researcher conducted a survey research design and used questionnaires as the instrument. The researcher then conducted a correlational research design to determine the correlation between pre-service teachers' perceptions of their competence and their readiness for teaching profession. The respondents in this study were 67 undergraduate

students from the University of Lamongan, East Java Province, Indonesia. They had enrolled in a real teaching program in order to gain real-world teaching experience.

In collecting the data, the researcher used two questionnaires as instrument. The first questionnaire was adapted and modified from Panggabean and Himawan (2016) which functioned to discover the pre-service teachers' perception of their competence. It consisted of 27 items which is divided into seven parts: professional knowledge (4 items), professional skill-pedagogies (4 items), professional skill-classroom management (3 items), professional skill-learner assessment (5 items), personal characteristics (4 items), ethical standards and values (4 items), and lifelong learning (3 items). The second questionnaire was adapted and modified from Maddox et al. (2000) which functioned to uncover the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their readiness. It consisted of 12 items which divided into three parts: emotive attitudinal readiness (2 items), cognitive readiness (8 items), and behavioral readiness (2 items).

The researcher used Pearson product-moment of the SPSS 20 version to measure how accurate the instruments is in this research. After testing the questionnaires' validity through SPSS, the researcher found that all items were valid at point of .05 based on the Pearson correlation ($r > r\text{-table} = .3550$). For asses the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher measured the coefficient of Cronbach alpha in SPSS 20 version. To know the level of reliability, the result was determined based on the classification of correlation coefficient.

The first questionnaire was claimed as a good test since it gained very high (very strong) reliability level with $r = .823$ ($r \geq 0.80$), while the second questionnaire was claimed high (string) reliability level with $r = .744$ ($0.60 < r < 0.80$) as can be seen in table 1 from SPSS 20 below.

Table 1. Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	
.823	27	Pre-service Teachers' Competence Questionnaire
.744	12	Pre-service Teachers' Readiness Questionnaire

After measuring the validity and reliability of the questionnaires, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the respondents via Google Form link due to the regulation of social and physical distancing. The 4-points Likert scale options were provided from the lowest to the highest levels: (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) often, and (4) always. The respondents should choose the option scales to represent their perceptions toward the statements. From the scale, it showed that the higher the score the respondents choose, the more they perceive their agreement to the statement.

After collecting data, the researcher then analyzed the data by looking at the highest to the lowest average score of the questionnaires. High score indicated that the respondents are confident with their competence and their readiness for teaching. On the other hand, low score indicated that the respondents are not satisfied to their competence and their readiness.

Then, the researcher measured the correlation between the two variables by using SPSS. Last, the researcher interpreted those results by looking at the Significant (2-tailed) value. If the Sig. (2-tailed) score is less than .05, there is a correlation between the two variables. Otherwise, if the Sig. (2-tailed) is higher than .05, there is no correlation between the two variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

There were 67 respondents involved in this study. After collecting the data from the respondents, the researchers started to analyze the average scores of the questionnaires, measuring the correlation, and interpret the result. The result and discussion will be described and explained below.

As mentioned previously, the competence questionnaire had seven parts: professional knowledge, professional skill-pedagogies, professional skill-classroom management, professional skill-learner assessment, personal characteristics, ethical standards and values, and lifelong learning. The total average scores of these parts are shown from the highest to the lowest in the table below.

Based on the Figure 1, the highest total average comes from pre-service teachers' perceptions on the ethical standards and values. This section obtained 3.08 of the total average score among the other sections. It means that the respondents positively perceived about their competence, mostly at their ethical standards and values as teachers. The

statements in this section consist of them who encourage students to respect elders and appreciate their peers. Another thing that shows ethical standards and values is that they as teachers who convey the importance of plagiarism policies and those who do not mind if students contact outside of teaching time (still in a learning context).

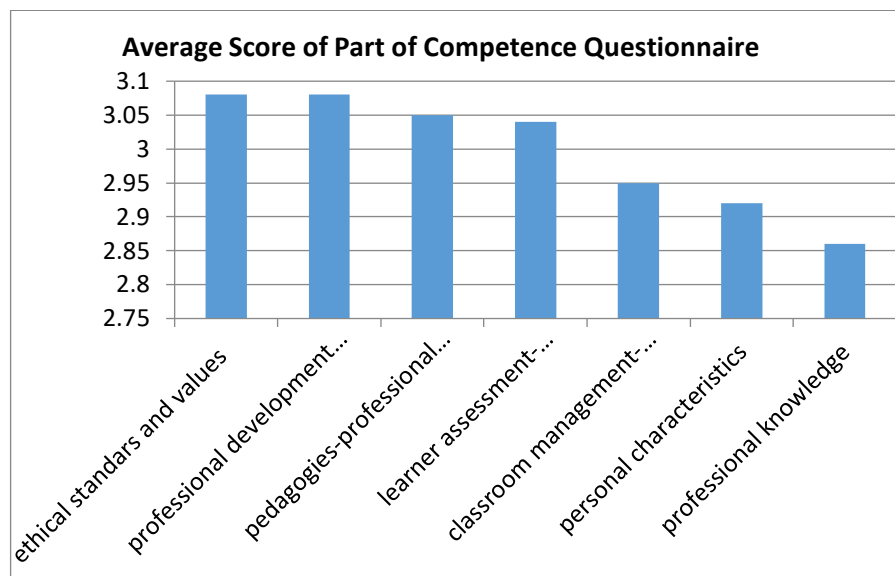


Figure 1. Average score of each part of competence questionnaire

On the other hand, the lowest is personal knowledge with 2.86 score. Some of respondents seem to be not confident as much as at their knowledge as a teacher. However, even though they experienced more doubts about their professional knowledge, their total average score was still higher than 2 out of 4 scores, indicating that many of them still agree that they are competent enough even though they still have a lot to learn and motivate more. In addition, further explanation of the findings of each part of the questionnaire is described in the following sections.

Based on the Figure 2, it showed that the highest average score came from statement number 18 "*I practice fair treatment for the students*" with an average score was 3.33. It means many respondents agree that they treat their students fairly. While the lowest average score came from statement number 19 "*I demonstrate a good behavior to be a role model*" with an average score was 2.01. There were only few respondents who felt confident to perceive themselves as a role model. Even though there were few

respondents agreed to the statement, the score is still higher than 2, out of 4 scores which indicated that the respondents' perceptions on their competence were positive.

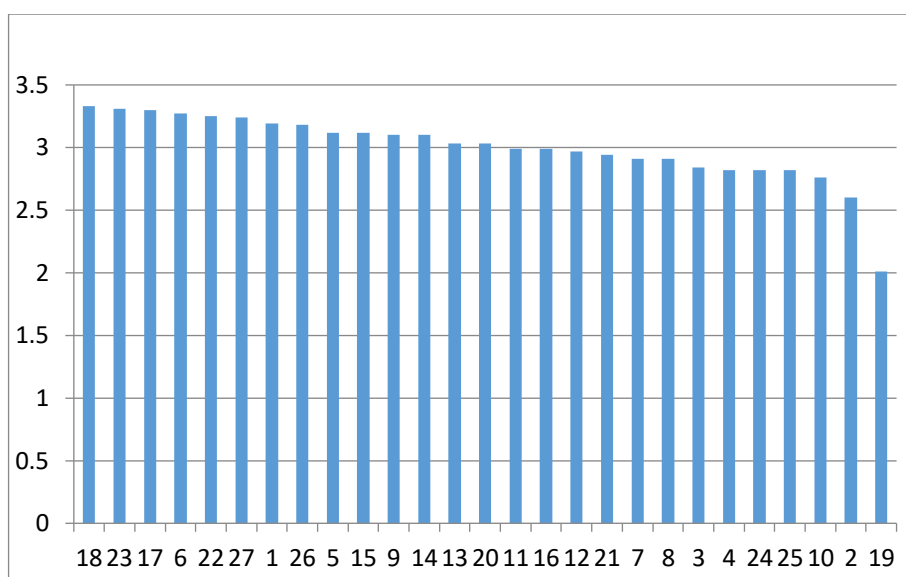


Figure 2. Average score of each item of competence questionnaire

Perception of pre-service teachers' readiness

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the second questionnaire had three parts: emotive attitudinal readiness, cognitive readiness, and behavioral readiness. The total average scores of these parts are shown from the highest to the lowest in the figure below.

Based on the Figure 3, it showed that the highest average score came from statement number 1 "*I feel enthusiasm while teaching*", with the average score 3.5. It means that based on the result, the highest average score came from statement number 1 with an average score was 3.5. It means that pre-service teachers mostly felt enthusiasm while teaching. They were excited to teach their students. Besides, the statement number 5 became the lowest average score with 2.93 as the score. However, although they experienced more doubts to their own strength and did not fully follow the lesson plan, all statements of the questionnaire got above 2 scores with total average score was 3.15 which still higher than 2 out of 4. It means the pre-service teachers were still perceived positively to their readiness for teaching profession.

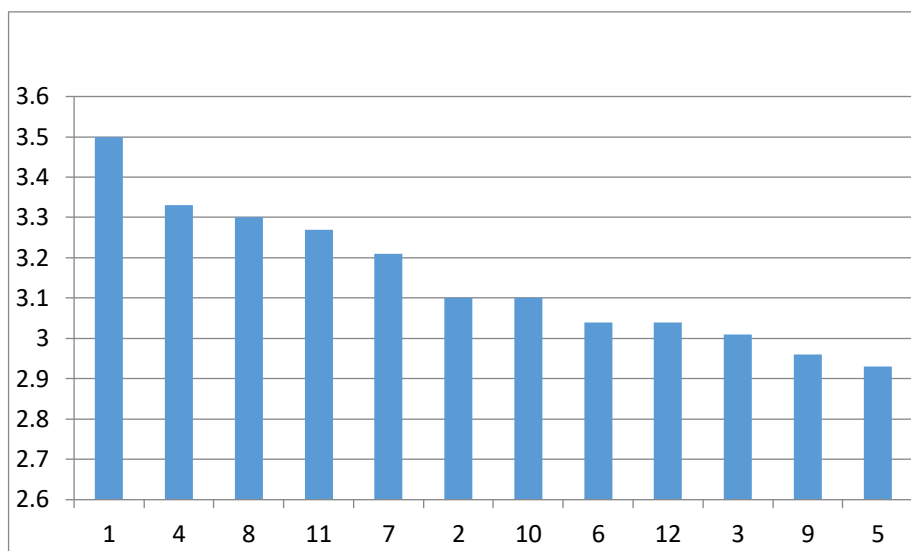


Figure 3. Average score of readiness questionnaire.

Correlation Test

The researcher measured the correlation between pre-service teachers' perception of their competence and their readiness by using SPSS 20. Then, analyze the descriptive statistics result of those variables to discover the objective of this research. Based on the Significance level (2-tailed), the data showed that there is correlation between variables if the Significance level (2-tailed) < .05. While based on the score of Pearson Correlations, the data showed there is correlation between variables if the Pearson Correlations > r-table (.244). Below is the result of the correlation test.

Table.1. Correlations result

		Teacher Competence	Teacher Readiness
Teacher Competence	Pearson Correlation	1	.140
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.258
	N	67	67
Teacher Readiness	Pearson Correlation	.140	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.258	
	N	67	67

Based on the table above, the score of Significance level (2-tailed) between Teacher Competence and Teacher Readiness is .258 which is higher than .05. It means that pre-service teachers' perception toward their competence have no significant correlation with the perception of their readiness. Then, the score of the Pearson Correlation (.140) is lower than r-table (.244) which means that there is no correlation between the two

variables. So, it can be concluded that the result showed there is no significant correlation between pre-service teachers' perception of their competence and their readiness.

However, in this study, the correlation result showed a positive direction but there was no significant relationship between perceptions of pre-service teachers' competence and readiness for teaching profession.

Discussions

Based on the results in this research, it revealed that the majority of the respondents considered they were competent in all competency areas and ready as well for teaching profession. This result is in line with the study by Balyer (2017), Julia et al., (2020), and Tuttyandari (2020), whose investigation results showed that the new teachers' competencies and readiness were in good category. The respondents felt confident in their ability to carry out their profession as professional teachers in the future, mostly at the ethical standards and values.

The results of their perceptions of competence and readiness for the teaching profession showed a highly positive. It is evident from the results of the average score obtained which is higher than 2 out of the total 4-scales. These results are in line with the studies by Balyer (2017), Julia et al., (2020), and Tuttyandari (2020).

The respondents of this research showed their competence were in good category not only on their ethical standards and values, but also on their professional skill-pedagogies and professional knowledge. The respondents also had prepared themselves well which indicated their cognitive readiness. It supported from the statement stating about their cognitive skill and critically thinking that showed positive answered. Thus, they will feel confident and ready to face the environment. Teachers who do not prepare and develop their knowledge of subject matter or pedagogic skill will tend to use old-fashioned teaching methods which will surely make students feel bored in learning process. It is in line with Balyer (2017), who claimed that pre-service teachers believed they were competent and ready in terms of subject matter knowledge. Balyer (2017) also suggests that teachers' beliefs about subject matter knowledge are critical in determining their professional competency. Intensive theoretical teachings were found to have a favorable impact on their perspectives.

Sural (2019) claimed that when requested to do so, pre-service teachers can readily construct a lesson plan in theory. It is in line with the result of this research that showed

many respondents were competent on the classroom management; such preparing well before teaching and informing what students should do during the class. By behaving calmly and smoothly through a planned instructional process, the pre-service teachers will feel self-assured and be able to handle unexpected situations in the classroom and creating conditions in which they may carry out their planned instructional program will go a long way toward increasing the qualified teachers.

In addition, from the data taken from the questionnaire for readiness showed that the result of pre-service teachers' perceptions of their readiness revealed that most of the respondents felt that they are ready for teaching as profession. It showed their emotive attitudinal readiness, cognitive readiness, and behavioral readiness (Maddox, Forte, & Boozer, 2000) was in good category.

The respondents showed their emotive attitudinal readiness by indicating their enthusiasm and comfortable in teaching. When teachers feel comfortable in teaching, students will feel the same way. Students will enjoy during the learning process, so it can make students more focused in learning. It is in line with the study of Julia et al., (2020) which the result said that they were ready to work as teachers although if they became private schools' teachers or honorary teachers with the low income consequence.

Furthermore, based on the correlation test, the result is not in line with the research from Sulaiman et al., (2017) in which his research's finding showed significant positive relationship between the competency and readiness toward creativity in teaching among trainee teachers, and the significant was moderately strong. He also said that the professionalism of a teacher can be measured by their proficiency in using various methods or teaching strategies in class. Those who have a high level of competence and readiness in teaching are more effective in delivering the lesson to students as well as able to overcome the problems encountered.

However, direction of the correlation result showed a positive but there was no significant relationship between two variables. So, judging from the results and compared with the previous research, the researcher assumes that different conditions in conducting the research and lacking participants may affect the results. This research was conducted online, which is different from the previous research because it coincides with the COVID-19 pandemic where there are regulation of social and physical distancing, and less participants responded to the research, thus affecting the results obtained.

CONCLUSSION AND SUGGESTION

This research has identified and discovered the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their competence and their readiness for teaching profession. Based on the results, it can be concluded that the pre-service teachers' perceptions were positive towards their competence in all areas and ready for teaching profession. Teachers' readiness cannot be separated from competence. The result showed that the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their readiness revealed that they considered themselves as ready for teaching as profession. By realizing and considering their competence and readiness for the teaching profession, they will feel more confident and ready to face the real environment of teaching as a profession. This can also create conditions where their readiness will go a long way to improve their quality as a teacher.

However, based on the results of the correlation test, this research does not show a relationship between pre-service teachers' perceptions of their competence and their readiness for teaching profession. So, it can be concluded there is no correlation between pre-service teachers' perceptions of their competence and their readiness.

Suggestions proposed on the basis of the result are addressed to EFL pre-service teachers as well as other researchers who wish to pursue related topics in future research. Concern about the importance of maintaining and/or developing pre-service teacher competence and readiness to face the real teaching as profession and the necessity of further studies on the same or other factors as they are affected to the teaching competence and readiness for teaching profession.

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