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Mentoring Practise during Practicum: The Perspectives of Malaysian Pre-Service English Language Teachers

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Abstract

This study investigates the issues in mentoring practise based on pre-service English language teachers' perspectives about their mentoring experience. This study involved 56 pre-service teachers who had completed their practicum. The study used a quantitative data collection method whereby a questionnaire survey was distributed to the research participants. The data from the questionnaire was then analysed by using SPSS to generate descriptive statistics for item analysis. The findings were discussed based on five mentoring factors which are personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling, and feedback.

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The findings show that modelling and pedagogical knowledge received among the lowest mean scores indicating the moderate satisfactory level of mentoring experience received by the pre-service teachers. The data also shows considerable issues in mentoring quality in terms of pedagogical knowledge. Based on the findings, one of the most crucial issues to be addressed was equipping mentor teachers with the knowledge and skill of mentoring. The mentor teachers need to be given a course and guidance on the key aspects of mentoring. A mentoring manual must be given to the mentors in order to guide them in providing quality and structured mentoring.

Keywords: Mentor teachers, pre-service teachers, practicum, mentoring practise.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the main concerns in upholding the quality of education in a country is to increase the quality of teacher training. Teacher training needs to emphasize and critically review areas that build pre-service teachers' personal and professional development of knowledge and skills about effective teaching and learning (Alaa et al., 2019; Ismail et al., 2019; Sarudin et al., 2019a; Sarudin et al., 2019b; Tahir et al., 2020a; Tahir et al., 2020b). During training, pre-service teachers need to be equipped with values, skills, and knowledge to address the changing trend in teaching and learning (Ismail et al., 2019; Khatoony & Nezhadmehr, 2020; Navidinia et al., 2020; Omar & Kussin, 2017; WagiAlla, 2020; Yamirudeng & Osman, 2019). One of the crucial elements in teacher training that needs to be strengthened is the mentoring process during practicum or teaching practise (Albakri et al., 2017; Vikaraman et al., 2017).

Practicum is an important platform that provides pre-service teachers with exposure to the real context of teaching. The attachment to schools helps pre-service teachers to cultivate and develop their role as teachers, explore the teaching career and understand the connection between theories and practise (Ambrosetti et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Ismail & Albakri, 2012).

A considerable number of past studies on practicum highlighted the challenges faced by pre-service teachers during teaching practise. Pre-service teachers were reported having difficulties in mastering the demands of teaching, such as preparing the lesson plans, adapting instructional materials, managing the class, and adapting to the school culture (Albakri et al., 2017; Ismail & Albakri, 2012; Ismail et al., 2014; Min et al., 2016; Sathappan & Gurusamy, 2019). Another key challenge during practicum that has been explored extensively in the mentoring program. Studies on the mentoring program in a school-based context have highlighted challenges faced by mentor and pre-service teachers that affect the quality of mentoring (Albakri et al., 2017; Hakwendenda & Njobvu, 2019; Sathappan & Gurusamy, 2019; Yunus et al., 2010). These challenges need to be addressed as mentoring is a crucial element in supporting pre-service teachers to fit into the profession. The quality of mentoring shape pre-service teachers' learning and growth and improve their skills, knowledge, and attitude towards teaching (Ambrosetti et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

This study aimed to investigate the issues in mentoring practise from the pre-service teachers' experience during practicum. This study differs from other studies in the Malaysian context as it investigates the mentoring practise for TESL pre-service teachers by benchmarking it using Hudson's (2004) five-factor mentoring model. The model that highlights five main components in mentoring which are personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling, and feedback provides a framework for analysing mentoring practise (Bird & Hudson, 2015).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Pre-service teacher mentoring is a type of organised mentoring model that pairs experienced teachers for a brief period of time with pre-service teachers within a teacher education program (Ambrosetti et al., 2017). During the school attachment period, there are three key players actively participating in the pairing functions. They are pre-service teachers, supervisors of fundamental expertise, and in-service teachers who act as mentors (Ambrosetti et al., 2017; Campbell & Brummett, 2007).

Mentoring allows teachers to gain the ability to recognise, interpret, and measure their own behaviours and strategies to improve students' performance (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Tahir, & Mohtar, 2016). Coffey (2010) describes mentoring experiences for pre-service teachers as "relationships that multiply learning opportunities" because when a mentor shares knowledge and skills in teaching with his or her pre-service teacher, the pre-service teacher can share the skills and expertise with others (p. 189). Experiences of pre-service mentoring are important because they enable pre-service teachers to become accustomed to working in classrooms and schools (Coffey, 2010).

2.1 Key Roles of Mentor Teachers

There are many opinions and meanings about the role of a mentor, but most of the definitions apply to aiding and assisting. Past research indicates that the most significant role of the mentor is to provide support, direction, encouragement, and advice (Ambrosetti et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Mentor teachers who guide and support their pre-service teachers will allow the pre-service teachers to review and recognise their own strengths, and areas for further growth, improve expertise and comprehension of teaching and learning, and see a better direction for their personal and professional development as teachers (Ambrosetti et al., 2017). Past studies have highlighted that mentors should have good interpersonal skills and positive personal qualities to be able to build their relationship with the pre-service teachers they were assigned to a mentor (Ambrosetti et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Saidi (2020) mentioned that it is important to select mentor teachers among the experienced teachers as the experienced teachers are more aware of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and they would have developed good interpersonal skills in handling mentoring other teachers. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of choosing mentors with some specific characteristics such as supportive, encouraging, patient, willing to listen, and friendly.

Mentors' roles also include providing pedagogical input and promoting professional socialization (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Bird & Hudson, 2015).

Studies have reported that providing pre-service teachers with knowledge about the school system, the culture, policies, and curriculum are required of the mentors to familiarize the pre-service teachers with the needs of the context (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Bird & Hudson, 2015). The mentors also act as role models and guide pre-service teachers by modelling good and effective practises (Bird & Hudson, 2015). Mentors must ensure that the mentoring positions they take and the methods they employ to facilitate the learning of pre-service teachers are related to the needs of their pre-service teachers and acceptable for their current levels of professional growth (Ambrosetti et al., 2017; Bird & Hudson, 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Saidi, 2020).

Throughout the field experience, mentors lead and nurture pre-service teachers, tailor each teaching and learning part, while the post-secondary faculty supervisor serves as a link between them (Ambrosetti, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The field experience hence, provides access to classrooms and mentorships for universities, while also providing additional resources to schools (Hamel & Jaasko-Fisher, 2011). There is an opportunity for mutual learning and career advancement for those involved as part of a broader professional development process (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In other words, mentoring encourages those involved to have a skilled learning collaboration. Mentors and pre-service teachers will collaboratively build teaching skills through this joint learning network while cooperating in a school setting (Nilsson & van Driel, 2010).

A mentor will need an understanding of what a learner is attempting to do, which could be partially intuitive. The fact that mentors often ideally need expertise or understanding of the institution in which the mentoring partnership takes place is linked to this (Ambrosetti et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). According to Parsloe (1999), good mentors are:

- (1) good motivators who are able to promote the program goals and fulfil their responsibilities to the candidate,
- (2) successful performers, safe within the community in their own-occupied role and unlikely to feel threatened by the potential of the candidate or resentful of it,
- (3) able to show that mentoring responsibility is part of the organization,
- (4) sufficiently senior to be in contact with the organisational structure, to share the principles of the organization, and to be able to provide access of information and knowledge to the candidate,
- (5) good teachers, who can be trained without intervention, and
- (6) good negotiators.

Parsloe's (1999) characteristics are in line with the characteristics of successful EFL teachers with excellent leadership skills (Hudson & Hudson, 2018; Prasangani, 2019).

2.2 Challenges in Mentoring

Mentoring, in the Malaysian context, is not new. It is an integral part of the teacher education curriculum, especially during teaching practise. Research has shown, however that appropriate emphasis has not been sufficiently emphasised and granted, especially in the guidance on mentoring activities for mentoring pre-service teachers in schools (Ali et al., 2018; Singh & Omar, 2018; Vikaraman et al., 2017). As professional educators, mentor teachers are also experienced teachers in pedagogy,

classroom administration, the interests and attitudes of students as well as school management, but it is very difficult to establish a certain mentoring level because mentor teachers normally undergo little or no instruction before being assigned to pre-service teachers (Sathappan & Gurusamy, 2019; Yunus et al., 2010).

In Malaysia, the traditional practise of school-based mentoring training is to attend a few hours of meetings by inviting school principals or school administrators to discuss teaching practise topics such as practise methods, supervision, discussions on completion of assessment forms, and rating system (Vikaraman et al., 2017). There is, however, no structured or systematic instruction for successful mentoring and coaching skills given to mentors to carry out their duties effectively (Vikaraman et al., 2017). Unlike in some countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom, and South Africa, the institutions provide the chosen mentor teachers with substantive training from time to time through the use of Mentor Training Programs. The training programs are based on justified mentoring models to allow them to lead their pre-service teachers effectively (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hudson & Hudson, 2018).

Many studies have highlighted difficulties faced by mentors and pre-service teachers during the school-based mentoring program, which influences the quality of mentoring (Sathappan & Gurusamy, 2019; Yunus et al., 2010). Many studies reported difficulties highlighted by mentors due to the lack of support for mentoring. Mentors reported excessive workload, coordination breakdown with institution supervisor, difficulty to guide pre-service teachers who lack sound pedagogical skills, and hostile attitude of pre-service teachers towards teaching (Sathappan & Gurusamy, 2019; Yunus et al., 2010). Other studies have highlighted issues such as the tension between mentors and pre-service teachers in their mentoring relationship (Albakri et al., 2017) and the lack of knowledge among mentors on current teaching strategies (Albakri et al., 2017; Leshem, 2012). Studies also recorded that pre-service teachers felt exploited by a mentor to support them with their workload (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). Quality feedback during mentoring activities has also been highlighted as a concern. Studies also indicated that pre-service teachers felt that they received no positive input because of receiving contradictory and unspecific feedback (Albakri et al., 2017; Leshem, 2012).

The literature review has shown that mentoring, while effective in the growth of the professional knowledge of both mentor and pre-service teachers, can also pose difficulties for both parties. In order to structure the steps to be taken in strengthening mentoring for all sides, the problems encountered need to be addressed. Teacher training institutions will benefit from data on the problems encountered by their pre-service teachers in the Malaysian setting. The challenges can be solved, and it is possible to further develop the training for pre-service teachers. Identifying the difficulties encountered by the designated mentor teachers will help teacher training institutions see their issues that they need to resolve in order to prevent disputes in the relationship between schools and teacher training institutions.

2.3 Hudson's Five Factor Mentoring Model

This study used the mentoring model developed by Hudson (2004). Hudson's mentoring model entails five main factors for quality mentoring. This five-factor mentoring model includes: mentor's personal attributes in facilitating the mentoring process, the mentor's guidance on essential education system requirements,

mentor's pedagogical knowledge, mentor's modelling of teaching practises, and mentor's feedback on aspects of teaching and learning. Embedded within the model is the notion of educative mentoring which highlights the crucial aspect of mentoring as a process of helping pre-service teachers to develop their skills, knowledge, and practises in the context of teaching and learning. Hudson's (2004) five-factor mentoring model has been used in measuring the impact of mentoring practise during practicum particularly in the teaching of science (Bird & Hudson, 2015). Based on the studies, the model serves as a useful framework in analysing mentor's personal attributes and mentoring practises. The mentoring programs that apply the five-factor elements also were found able to provide effective support for the development of pre-service teachers (Bird & Hudson, 2015).

3. METHODS

This study utilized the quantitative research design. Data were collected from 56 English language pre-service teachers. A convenient sampling method was used to select the participants. The participants consist of 43 females and 13 males and they were in their final year of the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) degree program. The participants had to undergo 14 weeks of practicum in selected secondary schools in Malaysia as part of the requirements to complete their degree program. The pre-service teachers were assigned mentors who were selected by the respective schools.

Data for the study was collected using a questionnaire survey adapted from Hudson's (2004) instrument called Mentoring Perception of Student Teachers (MPST) which focused on the five factors highlighted in Hudson's (2004) five-factor mentoring model, which are personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling, and feedback. The questionnaire used consists of 44 questions and utilized the five-point Likert scale.

Data collected in this study were analysed by using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, percentage, and frequency. In this study, scores ranging from 3.00 to 4.00 in a 5-point scale questionnaire indicated a moderate satisfactory level, whilst scores from 4.00 to 5.00 indicated a high satisfactory level. The range indicated is based on the general rule provided by Nugent et al. (2001) that scores can be interpreted as a magnitude continuum whereby higher scores are indicative of the greater magnitude and lower scores are indicative of lower magnitude.

4. RESULTS

The findings of what issues are faced by the pre-service teachers during the mentoring practise were discussed based on the five-factor mentoring model by Hudson (2004) that focuses on personal attributes, system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modelling, and feedback. The mean scores and percentage of the pre-service teachers' responses were recorded and particular attention was given to statements that received the mean scores below 4.0 as the scores indicate a low to moderate satisfactory level of mentoring experience received.

Table 1. The mean scores for the five factors.

| No. | Item | Mean | SD |
|-----|-----------------------|------|------|
| 1 | Personal attributes | 4.16 | 0.94 |
| 2 | System requirements | 3.86 | 0.95 |
| 3 | Pedagogical knowledge | 3.82 | 1.04 |
| 4 | Modelling | 3.76 | 1.05 |
| 5 | Feedback | 4.28 | 0.90 |

Table 1 presents the mean scores for the five mentoring factors addressed in the study. Feedback had the highest mean score which is 4.28, and personal attributes placed second with a mean score of 4.16. Following that is system requirements that recorded a 3.86 mean score. The two factors with low mean scores were pedagogical knowledge (3.82) and modelling (3.76). Evidently, three factors showed mean scores below 4.0 which were system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, and modelling. The data shows that attention needs to be given to the three factors in strengthening the mentoring program.

4.1 Personal Attributes

Based on the findings, five out of twelve items recorded mean scores ranging from 3.9 - 4.1 indicating moderate satisfactory agreement on the mentors' personal attributes. Findings related to mentor personal attributes are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The results for Personal Attributes (PA)

| No. | Item | % | Mean | SD |
|-------|---|------|------|------|
| PA 12 | Mentor provided emotional support. | 73 | 3.91 | 1.12 |
| PA 6 | Mentor encouraged me to reflect. | 80.3 | 4.02 | 0.98 |
| PA 2 | Mentor communicated regularly. | 78.6 | 4.09 | 1.03 |
| PA 1 | Mentor was accessible and available. | 80.4 | 4.11 | 0.98 |
| PA 5 | Mentor guided me with lesson preparation. | 82.2 | 4.11 | 1.02 |

The data presented in Table 2 shows a 3.91 mean score for the mentor teacher's emotional support and 4.02 mean score for the item of mentor teacher's encouragement to reflect on practise. In addition, the mean score for the frequency of communication between mentors and mentees was 4.09, and 4.11 mean score for mentors' accessibility and availability. The data indicates lack of regular communication could be due to the lack of availability and accessibility of the mentor teachers. Apart from that, the data recorded a 4.11 mean score in terms of guidance related to lesson preparation.

4.2 System Requirements

The mean scores for all the items under system requirements are below 4.0. The mean scores did not show much variance and remained at a moderate satisfactory level for all items with the percentage of the agreement below 80%. Data for system requirements are presented in Table 3.

The findings for system requirements in Table 3 indicated that the pre-service teachers felt that there was a lack of discussion on school policies with a mean score of 3.70 (63%). The research participants also recorded the mean score of 3.93 in terms of receiving briefings related to their responsibilities and the mean score of 3.95 on

getting advice about school regulations. Evidently, the system requirements component was not equally emphasized among the mentors.

Table 3. The results for System Requirements (SR).

| No | Item | % | Mean | SD |
|------|---|----|------|------|
| SR 1 | Mentor discussed with me school policies. | 63 | 3.70 | 1.01 |
| SR 3 | Mentor briefed me on my responsibilities. | 75 | 3.93 | 0.90 |
| SR 2 | Mentor advised me regarding school regulations. | 77 | 3.95 | 0.94 |

4.3 Pedagogical Knowledge

The mean score (3.82) for pedagogical knowledge was the second lowest among the five mentoring factors. In addition, data from this pedagogical knowledge factor also indicated that the mean scores of each factor ranging from 3.41 to 4.23. Approximately 18 statements were presented under pedagogical knowledge and sixteen statements recorded mean scores below 4.0. There are several mean scores recorded in the data which were the lowest scores for all mentoring factors. The data indicated more statements receiving a moderate satisfactory level in terms of mentoring practise related to pedagogical knowledge. Data on pedagogical knowledge is displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. The results for Pedagogical Knowledge (PK).

| No | Item | % | Mean | SD |
|-------|--|----|------|------|
| PK 16 | Mentor shared with me a good lesson. | 46 | 3.41 | 1.17 |
| PK 8 | Mentor reviewed my lesson plan. | 57 | 3.52 | 1.24 |
| PK 15 | Mentor introduced me to new instructions. | 61 | 3.67 | 1.16 |
| PK 18 | Mentor assisted me with questioning skills. | 68 | 3.71 | 1.07 |
| PK 10 | Mentor showed me how to assess students' learning. | 68 | 3.73 | 0.10 |
| PK 17 | Mentor guided me in choosing and developing materials. | 61 | 3.75 | 1.03 |
| PK 14 | Mentor identified my needs. | 68 | 3.75 | 1.05 |
| PK 11 | Mentor demonstrated content expertise. | 71 | 3.77 | 1.03 |
| PK 13 | Mentor briefed on the curriculum/syllabus. | 63 | 3.85 | 1.01 |
| PK 5 | Mentor discussed the aims for teaching. | 67 | 3.86 | 1.14 |

From Table 4, the pre-service teachers claimed that sharing a good lesson from the mentor teacher was an issue with the mean score of 3.41, in which only 46% of the participants agreed that their mentor shared a good lesson with them. The data also showed a low percentage of agreement (57%) related to mentor teachers' review of their lesson plans with a mean score of 3.52. Among the mentoring practise that received the mean scores ranging from 3.7 - 3.9, which are below 70% agreement were introduce new instructional strategies (M=3.67), assess students' learning (M=3.73), assist with questioning skills (M=3.71), identify mentees' needs (M=3.75), guide mentees in choosing and developing materials (M=3.75), demonstrate content expertise (3.77), brief on the curriculum/syllabus (M=3.85), discuss the aims for teaching (M=3.86), and explain the curriculum/syllabus (M=3.90).

4.4 Modelling

Table 5 presents the data on modelling in teaching and learning. The data generally recorded mean scores ranging from 3.5 – 3.8, which indicate a moderate

satisfactory level of mentoring practise in relation to modelling. Modelling had the lowest mean score among all the mentoring factors studied in the research. The data showed low agreement in terms of modelling a lesson (M=3.50), modelling effective classroom management (M=3.64), and demonstrating how to develop a good rapport with students (M=3.82).

Table 5. The findings for Modelling (M).

| No | Item | % | Mean | SD |
|-----|---|----|------|------|
| M 1 | Mentor modelled teaching a lesson. | 52 | 3.50 | 1.16 |
| M 5 | Mentor modelled effective classroom management. | 63 | 3.64 | 0.10 |
| M 2 | Mentor demonstrated how to develop a good rapport with students while teaching. | 75 | 3.82 | 1.06 |

The data presented in Table 5 showed low agreement in terms of modelling a lesson (M=3.50), modelling effective classroom management (M=3.64), and demonstrating how to develop a good rapport with students (M=3.82).

4.5 Feedback

The fifth factor is feedback. Data for feedback had the highest mean score among the five mentoring factors with a mean score of 4.28.

Table 6. The results for Feedback (F).

| No | Item | % | Mean | SD |
|-----|---------------------------------------|----|------|------|
| F 5 | Mentor discussed about my weaknesses. | 80 | 4.09 | 0.93 |
| F 1 | Mentor discussed the evaluation. | 88 | 4.25 | 0.83 |
| F 3 | Mentor provided oral feedback. | 89 | 4.38 | 0.84 |

The mean scores for feedback items range from 4.10 to 4.38 indicating that above 80% of the pre-service teachers agreed that their mentor provided feedback. The lowest score for feedback was on mentor teacher discussed the mentees' weaknesses with the mean score of 4.09.

5. DISCUSSION

Data from this study provide evidence that modelling received the lowest mean scores. Evidently, the modelling of good lessons was not emphasized during the mentoring program indicating that most mentors do not demonstrate effective lessons to the pre-service teachers. Past studies have highlighted that mentors should be role models to the pre-service teachers (Ambrosetti & Deckers, 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In an effective mentoring practise, it is important that the mentor models effective instructional practises as tangible evidence for the pre-service teachers to see clearly successful teaching practises (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hudson & Hudson, 2018). The lack of emphasis on modelling relates to one of the challenges faced by mentors in Malaysia whereby training for mentors handling pre-service teachers was not properly structured and mentoring practise was not guided by a particular mentoring model (Sathappan & Gurusamy, 2019; Vikaraman et al., 2017; Yunus et al., 2010).

Besides that, pedagogical knowledge had a moderate satisfactory level in this study. Almost 50% of the pre-service teachers highlighted that the mentors did not share a good lesson which echoes the data reported under modelling good lessons. Findings reported on pedagogical knowledge factor also indicated moderate satisfactory level in terms of guidance in new instructional strategies, revising lesson plans, questioning skills, assessment of learning, and selection of teaching materials. Clearly, the items that received moderate satisfactory level under pedagogical knowledge are key items in developing pre-service teachers' skills and understanding about context-based teaching and learning (Ambrosetti et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). As mentioned by Ambrosetti & Dekkers (2010), giving pedagogical input to promote professional development among pre-service teachers is one of the most important leading roles of mentors during practicum.

The data on providing pre-service teachers with information and guidance on school policies, routines, and norms showed a moderate satisfactory level. The data indicates that many pre-service teachers were not provided with clear information on system requirements within the school context. Past studies have shown that mentors need to articulate the school organization, policies, and curriculum documents to the pre-service teachers in order to help them understand the school culture and plan their lessons effectively (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Bird & Hudson, 2015; Hudson & Hudson, 2018).

Findings on the mentor's personal attributes also showed a moderate satisfactory level in terms of providing emotional support, guidance, and encouragement. Past studies on mentors' personal attributes during practicum suggest that mentors need to exhibit several key personal qualities which are supportive, encouraging, and willingness to listen (Ambrosetti et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hudson & Hudson, 2018). These key characteristics help mentors to form a strong and positive relationship with the pre-service teachers. Studies have shown that pre-service teachers who do not receive emotional support from their mentors are less confident in teaching and experienced higher anxiety when teaching (Bird & Hudson, 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The data from the study also showed that some pre-service teachers did not have regular communication with the mentors and some mentors were not easily accessible. This relates to one of the challenges highlighted by mentors during mentoring practise in Malaysia which is the excessive workload of the mentors and the tensions in the relationship between mentor and pre-service teachers (Sathappan & Gurusamy, 2019; Vikaraman et al., 2017; Yunus et al., 2010). The lack of communication between mentors and pre-service teachers may have a huge impact on the quality of the mentoring practise.

Lastly, the data on feedback showed that all the pre-service teachers received appropriate feedback from their mentor teachers. Feedback has been one of the key features in a mentoring program and it is evident from the data that mentors focused on giving feedback in their mentoring practise.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the pre-service teachers perceived their mentoring during practicum as satisfactory. However, there are several aspects of the mentoring practise that received low mean scores indicating that these elements

require attention particularly in terms of modelling and pedagogical knowledge. These two factors are crucial factors in mentoring practise that affect greatly the quality of a mentoring program. The data also revealed that system requirements need to be addressed in the mentoring practise as the pre-service teachers enter schools with little knowledge of the organization, school culture, and policies. Mentors need to assist the pre-service teachers in understanding the complexities of the organizational contexts that have an impact on classroom teaching and learning.

Clearly, the results of this study provide some insights on school-based mentoring practise coordinated by a teacher training institution. However, this study was conducted with a group of pre-service teachers from one teacher training institution, who were placed in several secondary schools in Malaysia. Hence, the data could not be generalized to represent the perception and experiences of all pre-service teachers. The study also involved a small number of mentors. Therefore, the findings are limited to the participants and context of this study. Future studies can be conducted to explore mentors' conceptualization of mentoring practise and their patterns of mentoring practise. Studies investigating both mentors' and pre-service teachers' experiences and comparing the converging and diverging factors should also be conducted to understand their cognition about mentoring practise.

Generally, the findings of this study greatly benefit all educators who are interested in improving the quality of future teachers. Mentor teachers may find this useful as an insight into their current mentoring practises in order to improve their own practises. Data from the findings also indicate that mentor teachers need to be provided with guidance and training in mentoring pre-service teachers. Structured training of mentor teachers needs to be given to teachers who have been selected to become mentors. They have to understand their roles, and they also need to be trained on how to share their knowledge and how to guide the pre-service teachers. Given the fact that the experienced teachers are equipped with expertise in pedagogy, classroom management, and school management, it is also important to equip them with coaching skills and knowledge in order to assist them in carrying out their mentoring duties effectively.

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