Perception of Tesl Trainee Teachers' Practicum

Raja Zaida bt Raja Ahmad kamar
rajazaida@ipgm.edu.my

Noraida bt Mustafa
noraida.mustafa@ipgm.edu.my

Abstract

Teaching practicum is an essential component in the teacher education programme, especially in the Institute of Teacher Education, Malaysia (IPGM). During the practicum, trainee teachers received feedback on their teaching practice from both supervisors and cooperating teachers. However, there were complaints from the trainees regarding the different feedback received on their strengths and weaknesses from both parties. As a result, this created confusion among the trainees. This study aims to investigate the Institute of Teacher Education, Islamic Education Campus supervisors', school cooperating teachers' and *Program Ijazah Sarjana Muda Perguruan* (PISMP) TESL trainee teachers' perceptions of the trainees' strong and weak areas of language teaching practice in the Malaysian context. A questionnaire was used to collect data from all the respondents based on two constructs: planning and implementation. The results of the survey show there are some similarities and differences in their perceptions thus creating awareness of the importance of a discussion between supervisors, cooperating teachers and trainee teachers before practicum to ensure that all parties are on the same path.

Keywords: Teaching practicum; trainee teachers; school cooperating teachers; different perceptions; practicum feedback

Abstrak

Latihan praktikum merupakan komponen penting dalam program pendidikan guru terutama di IPG. Semasa praktikum, guru pelatih menerima maklum balas mengenai amalan pengajaran mereka dari penyelia dan guru pembimbing. Namun begitu, terdapat aduan daripada para pelatih mengenai maklum balas berbeza yang diterima mengenai kekuatan dan kelemahan mereka dari kedua pihak tersebut. Akibatnya, ini mewujudkan kekeliruan dalangan pelatih. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti persepsi pensyarah pembimbing Institut Pendidikan Guru, Kampus Pendidikan Islam, guru-guru pembimbing dan guru pelatih Program PISMP TESL tentang kekuatan dan kelemahan guru pelatih di dalam pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris sebagaIPGi bahasa kedua dalam konteks Pendidikan di Malaysia. Soal selidik menggunakan dua konstruk telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data daripada semua responden: perancangan dan pelaksanaan. Hasil kajian itu menunjukkan terdapat beberapa persamaan dan perbezaan dalam persepsi mereka sekali gus mewujudkan kesedaran mengenai kepentingan perbincangan antara penyelia, guru pembimbing dan guru pelatih sebelum praktikum untuk memastikan bahawa semua pihak mempunyai pendapat yang sama.

Kata Kunci: Latihan praktikum; guru pelatih; guru pembimbing; perbezaan persepsi; maklumbalas praktikum

In accordance with Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, the IPGM is given the responsibility of training and producing highly competent and motivated teachers in various areas of specialization in primary schools. Due to this, IPGM aspires to transform itself into a world-class teacher training institute through its commitment to mould teachers who are passionate about promoting lifelong learning, promoting educational innovation, and inspiring the next generation to become productive and responsible Malaysians.

In order to achieve the above mission and vision, practicum has become one of the compulsory components for the PISMP TESL Programme at the Malaysian Teacher Training Institute which takes place in two phases. The trainee teachers have to complete 12 weeks of practicum in both phases when they are in Year 3 and Year 4. At this stage, the implementation of the programme focuses on the teaching and learning process. The main objective of teaching practicum is to expose trainee teachers to the first formal teaching and to ensure that they are adequately prepared to teach primary pupils in Malaysian schools. According to Farr. F (2011), teaching practicum is regarded as one of the most influential aspects of pre-service teacher education because it is their first hands-on experience with their chosen career and it creates opportunities for future teachers to develop their pedagogical skills.

Before practicum, the trainee teachers in IPGM are required to attend a week-long School-Based Experience (SBE) when they are in years one and two. The main purpose of SBE is to give the trainee teachers exposure to the real school environment where they will have to observe teachers teaching in class and learn more about how to conduct a lesson based on the lesson plan. In addition, the trainee teachers learn a subject named PRKA3012 (Planning of Teaching and Learning) before the commencement of the teaching practicum. This course is offered to enable trainee teachers to master content knowledge and skills to plan and execute teaching and learning.

During the teaching practicum, trainee teachers are placed in groups in primary schools located in areas near the campus. Each group is assigned a lecturer as a supervisor and cooperating teachers from the chosen school. The main role of the supervisor and the cooperating teachers is to assist trainee teachers' needs during practicum. During the practicum, trainee teachers will be observed three times by their supervisors and four times by the cooperating teachers. The last supervision is done jointly by both supervisor and cooperating teacher where they will confer and decide on the final practicum marks to be awarded to the trainee teachers. After every supervision, the supervisor or cooperating teacher will give feedback to the trainees on their strengths and weaknesses based on the criteria listed in the practicum evaluation form. Trainee teachers are also required to write a reflection after every teaching session to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses.

Hence, this study has been designed to investigate the Institute of Teacher Education, Islamic Education Campus lecturers, school cooperating teachers' and PISMP TESL trainee teachers' own perceptions of strong and weak areas of language teaching practice in a Malaysian context with the expectation that a comparative evaluation of the trainee teachers' performance would help to improve them as English language teachers. This study involved trainee teachers from PISMP TESL Semester 5 which is a programme for the Primary School Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Second Language. The structure of the programme focuses on training the trainee teachers to become prospective English Language teachers.

Problem Statement

During the practicum, trainee teachers would be evaluated on their teaching and lesson plans. They would also receive individual feedback on their teaching from the supervisor or cooperating teacher after the observation. The main goal of having immediate feedback is to provide detailed feedback on their teaching by concentrating on their teaching in detail by focusing on their strong areas and areas needing improvement (Eti & Karaduman, 2022). However, problems arose when there were complaints from trainee teachers regarding the different feedback received on their strengths and weaknesses from supervisors and cooperating teachers. The differences in the feedback given by the supervisors and cooperating teachers on the strengths and weaknesses created confusion among the trainee teachers. The supervisors and cooperating teachers were also complaining about the trainee teachers who were not able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and many of the trainees repeated the same mistakes in their teaching practice during the practicum.

Therefore, this study is conducted to investigate whether the problem really exists during practicum. Furthermore, to date, no recent study has been conducted to investigate trainee teachers' perceptions regarding their strengths and weaknesses in practicum particularly on the TESL trainee teachers at the 27 campuses of the IPGM since the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study is essential to investigate whether the three parties shared the same perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the trainee teachers during practicum.

Research Objectives

Based on the purpose of this study, the specific objectives are:

1. Identify the perceptions given by supervisors on trainee teachers' strengths and weaknesses during practicum.
2. Identify the perceptions given by cooperating teachers on trainee teachers' strengths and weaknesses during practicum.
3. Identify the perceptions given by trainee teachers on their strengths and weaknesses during practicum.
4. Identify the similarities and differences between the three parties on trainee teachers' strengths and weaknesses during practicum.

Research Questions

The findings of this study answered the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions given by supervisors on trainee teachers' strengths and weaknesses during practicum?
2. What are the perceptions given by cooperating teachers on trainee teachers' strengths and weaknesses during practicum?
3. What are the perceptions given by trainee teachers on their strengths and weaknesses during practicum?
4. What are the similarities and differences between the three parties on trainee teachers' strengths and weaknesses during practicum?

Literature Review

Importance of Practicum On Teacher Education

Teaching practicum is one of the most important stages in a teacher's education since it is regarded as the most influential aspect of teacher education. According to Leshem & Barhama (2007) cited in Ramesh and Premaraj (2023), teaching practicum is considered a pre-service training opportunity aiming to improve the professional competencies of trainee teachers who will take part in the education system in the future. The aim of the teaching practicum is to develop trainee teachers' knowledge and skills to prepare them for the 21st-century teaching and learning environment. To achieve the goal of training, teaching practicum is considered one of the most important components of teacher preparation (Campbell, 2016).

Accordingly, English language trainee teachers have to undergo the same training to be successful in their English language teaching profession This is due to the fact that a teacher needs a growing body of knowledge to help students achieve lifelong learning in order to be a competent teacher in the field of English language teaching (Marilyn, 2020). By exposing to a real classroom environment, trainee teachers will gain knowledge on understanding and contributing to different classroom practices, skills and learning experiences (Ramesh & Premaraj, 2023). Furthermore, teaching practicum provides a firm foundation for future teachers to practice the art of teaching in a

real school context (Marily, 2020). Brookfield (2017) stated that the teaching practicum experience can critically shape trainee teachers' perception of teaching and learning which English language teaching is built around.

Role of Supervisor / Cooperating Teacher

Supervisors are required to make contact with their allocated trainee teachers and ensure that their supervision visits are well coordinated so that the trainee teachers, school management and cooperating teachers are aware and well-prepared for such visits. The role of the supervisor is to observe the trainee teachers teaching and provide constructive comments and feedback that would contribute towards their profession. Pollock (2012) stated that supervisors also serve as liaisons between the institute, schools and trainee teachers.

Supervisors and cooperating teachers play an essential role in evaluating students' lesson plans and providing constructive comments, to support the trainee teachers' professional growth by facilitating the learning-to-teach process. The supervisors and the cooperating teachers are expected to make comments based on teaching strategies, classroom interactions and the use of resources. Hence, it is important for supervisors and cooperating teachers to be able to translate observed practices into constructive, formative feedback (Matsose, 2020). The supervisor is also expected to engage with the trainee teachers' cooperating teachers in exploring effective teaching approaches and strategies based on their observations and discussion. As stated by Jenkins (2014), there are a few criteria for practicum assessment namely the professional and educational profile of the student teacher; overall organization of the classroom; feedback from the cooperating teacher; and overall evidence of lesson preparation, communication, instructional activities, and assessment of learner. Both the supervisor and cooperating teacher allocate marks based on the criteria identified and their own observation of how the trainee teachers presented the lesson.

Much research exists on the supervisors' role in trainee teachers learning in non-peer learning contexts. The roles of supervisors in these contexts have been described as information providers, role models, facilitators and mentors, assessors, evaluators, planners and resource creators (Hall, 2017). Marilyn (2020) stated that supervisors described their roles as learner-centred and set goals jointly with students, and agreement on the role of supervision has been identified as a key part of supervisory relationships. A good supervisor has been described as focusing on teacher trainees' growth, professional development and a role model. Supervisors' identity is influenced by their image of themselves as teachers, their familiarity with adult learning principles, the perceived benefits and drawbacks of teaching, and humanitarianism. The supervisor's relationship with the student is also the key to the bond and mutual trust in the supervisor-student relationship (Oxford, 1990).

The role of feedback/importance of practicum feedback

Getting feedback from a supervisor or cooperating teacher is essential to having a successful practicum experience. The supervisors' and cooperative teachers' professional practice has allowed them to experience a multitude of different classes, each with a different group dynamic, different strengths and learning styles. By giving effective feedback, the trainee teachers will develop a repertoire and boost their self-confidence. Gan, An, and Liu, (2021) stated that having the knowledge and experience in teaching practicum will make the supervisors' and cooperative teachers' feedback about the trainee teachers' lessons invaluable since the feedback received can provide the trainee teachers with ideas, tips and tricks to improve their teaching style and strategies. Vatooy and Smith (2019) found that participants who were given immediate feedback showed a significantly larger increase in performance than those who received delayed feedback.

Methodology

Research Design

The study focused on a quantitative research method which was a cross-sectional survey. According to Fraenken and Wallen (2006), a cross-sectional survey allowed the researcher to answer research questions one, two, three and four. This method of design is particularly relevant for the researcher to get a general overview of different perceptions of TESL teacher trainees' strengths and weaknesses in the practicum. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items and was formulated based on the PR1 form. PR1 form is a standard form used by the Malaysian Teacher Training Institute as practical guidance to evaluate trainee teachers during practicum. The items were divided into 2 sections:

a) Section A: Planning (5 items)
b) Section B: Implementation (15 items)

The questionnaire also has an open-ended question asking the respondents to explain or state the examples of the strengths and weaknesses that are chosen. The answers given by the respondents will be analysed qualitatively to support the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire.

Respondents of The Study

The respondents of the study were 45 TESL trainee teachers June 2020 intake from the Institute of Teacher Education, Islamic Education Campus, Bangi, Selangor who were in their 3rd year. They were 35 females and 10 males from two different classes and their age ranged from 21 to 22 years old. In addition, 10 lecturers who were appointed as the supervisors from the English Language Department of the Institute of Teacher Education, Islamic Education Campus and 18 cooperating teachers who were their mentors in the schools where the trainees had their practicum were also involved in this study.

Data Gathering Method

A total of 73 online questionnaires were given to the respondents where they had to choose 5 main strengths and 5 main weaknesses of the trainee teachers at the end of the 3 months practicum. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive analysis to obtain information based on the questionnaire. According to Jackson (2016), descriptive statistics are numerical measures which describe a distribution by giving vital information on the central tendency of the distribution as well as the width and shape distribution. Respondents also were required to state explanations or examples of the trainees' strengths and weaknesses based on their perceptions.

Findings

The findings from this study were based on the questionnaires gathered from trainee teachers, supervisors and cooperating teachers on their perceptions of trainee teachers' strengths and weaknesses during practicum. Findings from the questionnaires were analyzed and summarized listing the rank-ordered top five main strengths and weaknesses according to the three parties. The explanations given by respondents were also analyzed to support the choice they made. Analysis was also done to identify the similarities and differences of their perceptions.

Table 1

Perceptions on Trainee Teachers Strengths and Weaknesses During Practicum

Items Of Criteria	Strengths			Weaknesses		
Planning	TT	S	CT	TT	S	CT
1. Able to write explicit, accurate, and clear lesson objectives according to DSKP.			44.4%	33.3%	60%	
2. Able to plan the lesson's content appropriate to the learning outcomes and DSKP.		50%	72.2%			
3. Able to plan a clear development of the lesson to achieve the learning outcomes.		60%	33.3%			
4. Able to plan very appropriate strategies with elements of ICT and the 21st century.					50%	55.6%
5. Able to select appropriate, interesting and sufficient resources for teaching and learning activities.		40%				
IMPLEMENTATION	TT	S	CT	TT	S	CT
6. Able to implement appropriate and precise teaching and learning strategies.						
7. Able to create a conducive learning environment efficiently.						
8. Able to motivate pupils.	66.7%		44.4%			
9. Able to have good class control.	44.4%	60%			40%	
10 Able to involve pupils actively in teaching and learning activities.	64.4%	60%	50%			
11 Able to use selected resources efficiently to achieve learning outcomes.						
12 Able to use ICT effectively to achieve the learning outcomes.				37.8%		38.9%
13 Able to implement the three-part lesson in a very systematic and organised way according to the plan.						
14 Able to deliver the lesson with appropriate speed to pupils' level of ability.	35.6%					
15 Able to give clear instructions and explanations.				44.4%	30%	38.9%
16 Able to manage time wisely.				64.4%	50%	44.4%
17 Able to apply the elements of HOTS correctly and appropriately in teaching and learning activities.				40%		61.1%
18 Able to implement creative and innovative teaching and learning activities.						

| 19 | Able to integrate values successfully and effectively at the appropriate time. | 37.8% |
| 20 | Able to achieve all the learning objectives successfully | |

Indicator:
TT – Trainee teacher   S - Supervisor   CT – Cooperating teacher

Table 1 presents the respondents' perceptions of the top five strengths of trainee teachers during their practicum. A majority of the trainee teachers (66.7%) perceived the ability to motivate pupils as their primary strength achieved through positive reinforcement strategies such as giving encouraging words, little gifts or prizes, interactive games and praising pupils' efforts. Additionally, trainees provided increased attention and guidance to foster motivation among pupils in learning English. They observed a positive change in pupils' learning behaviour, including increased enthusiasm and enjoyment during the lessons. The second strength recognised by trainee teachers (64.4%) was their ability to involve pupils actively in teaching and learning activities. Trainees achieved this by incorporating games and interactive activities that encouraged active participation in the classroom. They also emphasized the effectiveness of discussion and group work that required pupils to compete with each other was also effective to foster pupils' participation. Trainees also stated that remembering pupils' names was another strategy to ensure active classroom participation. Good class control was identified as the third strength by trainees (44.4%) primarily attributed to their clear and loud voices during teaching. They also employed effective class management techniques through control games such as "Eyes on Me" and "Simon Says" to maintain order in the classroom. The fourth strength of trainees was their ability to integrate values successfully and effectively at the appropriate time (37.8%). This was achieved by implementing suitable values that were aligned with the lessons, which were relatable and beneficial to pupils. The final strength was the ability to deliver the lesson with appropriate speed to pupils' level of ability (35.6%). Trainees ensured this by providing detailed explanations, notes, simple examples and confirming pupils' understanding before progressing to the next part of the lesson.

Regarding perceptions by the supervisors, three top strengths of the trainee teachers were identified each with an equal rating of 60%: their ability to plan a clear development of the lesson to achieve the learning outcomes, good class control and ability to involve pupils actively in teaching and learning activities. Supervisors recognized the trainees' ability in planning well-structured lessons with distinct activities for each stage, aligning with selected content and learning standards. They also noted the trainees' good classroom control through effective voice projection. Moreover, by implementing group activities, pupil-centred activities, and adapting textbook exercises in fun and challenging ways, trainees actively engaged students in learning.

The fourth strength observed was their ability to plan lesson content appropriate to the learning outcomes and DSKP (Standard-Based Curriculum and Assessment Document) (50%) as they demonstrated a strong understanding of the DSKP. Lastly, the fifth strength identified was the trainees' ability to select appropriate, engaging and sufficient resources for teaching and learning activities (40%). This was evident as trainees selected clear, colourful pictures and other relevant materials that were effectively incorporated into their lessons.

Meanwhile, the cooperating teachers identified the trainee teachers' main strength was their ability to plan the lesson's content appropriate to the learning outcomes and DSKP (72.2%) as the lessons were well planned and according to the current TS25 format. Another strength was the trainees' ability to actively engage pupils in teaching and learning activities (50%) where the teachers observed good pupils involvement. The next two strengths, the ability to write explicit, accurate, and clear lesson objectives according to DSKP as well as the ability to motivate students shared the same percentage (44.4%). The teachers observed trainees' good rapport with pupils was the main factor

that motivated pupils to learn English. Finally, the cooperating teachers recognized the trainees' ability to systematically develop a lesson for achieving learning outcomes (33.3%) as their fifth strength.

Table 1 also displays respondents' perceptions of trainees teachers' five main weaknesses during their practicum. The primary weakness identified by 64.4% of trainees, was the inability to manage time wisely (64.4%). This issue stemmed from trainees not adhering to the allocated timings for each stage in their lesson plans. They tended to spend more time on the pre and while stage, which resulted in their failure to carry out the post and closure stage. Consequently, they were unable to achieve all intended lesson objectives. The second major weakness was their inability to provide clear instructions and explanations (44.4%). This was evident when pupils frequently asked them to repeat instructions and explanations immediately after they were given. The likely cause was overly complicated or disorganized instructions that pupils found difficult to understand. The trainees' inability to apply the elements of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) correctly and appropriately in teaching and learning activities (40%) was the third main weakness identified. Some trainees even admitted that they did not incorporate any HOTS elements in their lessons due to uncertainty about implementation. Furthermore, the question levels used were generally limited to lower-order thinking skills, such as remembering and understanding. The subsequent weakness was the ineffective use of information and communication technology (ICT) in achieving learning outcomes (37.8%). Trainees cited insufficient school facilities, such as a lack of LCDs, prevented them from using interactive applications in the classroom. Lastly, 33.3% of trainees perceived their inability to write explicit, accurate, and clear lesson objectives according to DSKP (33.3%) as the fifth weakness. They faced difficulties creating lesson objectives that aligned with the chosen learning standards and accurately reflected the skills pupils needed to acquire at each stage.

The main weakness observed in trainee teachers by supervisors was their inability to write explicit, accurate, and clear lesson objectives according to DSKP (60%). Supervisors noted that trainees struggled to interpret learning standards accurately and translate them into clear and measurable lesson objectives, indicating a lack of understanding of the relationship between the two. The next significant weaknesses were the trainees' inability to plan very appropriate strategies with elements of ICT and the 21st century, and their inability to manage time wisely, both with the same percentage (50%). Trainees often relied on traditional chalk and talk methods and struggled to execute lessons within the allocated time, frequently spending excessive time on set induction or pre-stage. The fourth weakness identified was the trainees' inability to have good class control (40%) as trainees faced difficulties controlling the class when pupils became excited with the activities that they ignored the trainees' instructions. Apart from that, disorganised group activities also contributed to this issue. Lastly, the trainees' fifth weakness was their inability to give clear instructions and explanations (30%). This was attributed to their failure in giving proper instructions before an activity was carried out.

Cooperating teachers perceived the main weakness of trainee teachers was their inability to apply the elements of HOTS correctly and appropriately in teaching and learning activities (61.1%), most of them failed to integrate HOTS in their lessons. The second weakness was the inability to plan very appropriate strategies with elements of ICT and the 21st century (55.6%) where it was noted most trainees only relied on textbook-based learning. Thirdly, trainees lack the ability to manage time wisely (44.4%), because they exceeded the time allocated for it, especially during a 30-minute lesson. Finally, an equal percentage of cooperating teachers perceived trainees' weaknesses in their inability to use ICT effectively to achieve learning outcomes and to give clear instructions and explanations (38.9%). Cooperating teachers reported unsatisfactory ICT usage among trainees usage and a lack of hands-on activities using ICT. They also noted disorganized, unclear instructions given by trainees during lessons.

Table 1 also displays the differences and similarities in the participants' perceptions. Both

supervisors and cooperating teachers believed that the trainees' strengths were in the area of planning, with both parties selecting 3/5 planning criteria as the trainees' strengths. However, the trainees did not choose any planning criterion as their strengths; instead, all their strengths criteria fell under the area of implementation. There is clearly a perceptual gap between trainees and both of the mentors. The data on the trainees' weaknesses show a similar perception from all participants. All three parties perceived that trainees were weaker in the implementation area, where both trainees and cooperating teachers chose 4/5 criteria and supervisors chose 3/5 criteria.

A detailed analysis of the chosen criteria highlights further similarities and differences in the participants' perceptions. The analysis of item 1 (able to write explicit, accurate, and clear lesson objectives) reveals a discrepancy between the cooperating teachers' perceptions and those of the supervisors and trainees. The teachers perceived it as one of the trainees' strengths, while the other participants held the opposite view. This contradictory perception is also observed for item 9 (able to have good class control) with 60% of the supervisors considering it as a strength, whereas 40% of them perceived it as a weakness among trainees. However, there were several items on which all participants were in agreement. All the participants concurred that item 10 (able to involve pupils actively in teaching and learning activities) was one of the trainees' strengths. Moreover, they also agreed that item 15 (able to give clear instructions and explanations) and item 16 (able to manage time wisely) were two of the trainees' main weaknesses observed during their practicum.

Discussion and Recommendation

The findings from the study indicate that there are different perceptions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of trainee teachers during their practicum. These perceptions were analyzed from the perspectives of the trainees themselves, their supervisors, and cooperating teachers. The study reveals both similarities and differences in their perceptions, shedding light on areas where trainees excel and areas where they need improvement.

The results of the study revealed that trainees demonstrated awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses. This is evidenced by the fact that among the five main strengths identified by trainees, three were corroborated by either the supervisors, cooperating teachers or both. Likewise, concerning the five main weaknesses chosen by trainees, all the items were agreed on by either one or both the other participant groups. Nevertheless, they were also some areas that indicated contradictions between the three parties. The main contradiction was on the trainees' ability to write lesson objectives, as the cooperating teachers viewed it as a strength, which conflicted with the perspectives of the other parties. Another interesting point to note is the conflicting opinions among the supervisors about the trainees' ability to have good class control. This will cause confusion to the trainees if, in their second practicum, they receive different feedback from another supervisor as stated by Brookfield (2017) about the practice that they deemed very successful during their first practicum.

The analysis of the trainees' perceptions showed very interesting data in which none of the planning construct items were identified as their main strengths. This was probably because the trainees felt they still needed a lot of practice and guidance in planning their lessons. The findings correspond with Ali, Othman, & Karim. (2018) research stated trainees were not confident about their lesson planning and needed more guidance from supervisors and cooperating teachers. All five of the strengths were chosen from the implementation construct which was a surprise because it contradicted many other researches that reported trainees experienced challenges during practicum relating to classroom management, such as maintaining class control and engaging all students in their teaching and learning activities (Köksal, D. Genç, G., 2019, Albakri et al., 2017).

However, the analysis of their weaknesses shows the trainees identified 4/5 items from the implementation construct. Therefore, it seems that trainees perceived both their weaknesses and

strengths were from the same construct although for different reasons. For their strengths, the items identified were mostly to do with their ability to communicate with their pupils. In the weakness, they focused more on their lack of abilities or skills such as the ability to utilize ICT effectively, manage time and implement HOTS in the classroom. Two of the items chosen were linked to 21st-century classroom practices. Therefore, it is clear that trainees need more guidance from supervisors and cooperating teachers on these aspects.

To overcome this problem, there are several steps that should be taken by the Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education. Firstly, IPGM should conduct courses or briefings to the cooperating teachers before practicum to ensure they understand and know the expectations of the institute towards the trainees during practicum. Supervisors should also be invited to attend so they will be aware of the information received by the teachers. In addition, it is recommended that the three parties should meet together and discuss before the practicum session begins so that they can discuss the expectations of each party and avoid any confusion in their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the trainees. Besides, the supervisors and cooperating teachers should meet and discuss the performance of their supervisees during practicum instead of waiting until the end of practicum where they will observe trainees for the final evaluation. Furthermore, the teacher trainees should be under the supervision of the same supervisors for both practicum phases so that it is easier to monitor the teacher trainees' progress. Finally, this questionnaire should be given to trainees and supervisors either in the middle or the end of practicum so any issues or discrepancies can be addressed as soon as possible.

Conclusion

This study aims to illuminate the challenges and confusion experienced by trainee teachers during their practicum, ultimately enhancing their teaching practice. Furthermore, it seeks to promote awareness surrounding the significance of communication between supervisors and cooperating teachers prior to the practicum. This ensures alignment between both parties, paving the way for a successful second practicum that the trainees will face during their last semester. Constructive feedback from supervisors and cooperating teachers is crucial in fostering confident, well-equipped novice teachers with a strong foundation in both knowledge and practice.

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