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Teaching Practice in Education Colleges in Myanmar: The Impediments to Pre-Service Teachers' Practicum

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Abstract

This study investigated into the nature of teaching practice in Education Colleges in Myanmar to find out the obstacles of the pre-service teachers during their practicum. The mixed method research design was used. All the second-year Diploma in Teacher Education pre-service teachers in three Education Colleges (N= 573) in (2018-2019) Academic Year were surveyed, and (15) of them involved in the semi-structured interviews. The results showed that the impediments were concerned with students, classroom management, host school, pre-service teachers, instruction and education college. The most challenging obstacles were found in the domain of education college.

Keywords: pre-service teachers; practicum; teacher education; supervision

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Introduction

Nowadays, every nation puts quality in its priority as it needs qualified human resources with advanced knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become a developed country. The governments want to transform every area to be in line with the 21st century's demands. As Myanmar is in the transition period from military dictators to democratic governance, it is making reforms in all aspects of the nation acknowledging that education is one of the reforming processes to empower its human resources. As the quality of education of a country cannot exceed the quality of teachers, it is unquestionable that the quality and standard of teachers are essential in the education system to meet the national endeavors. Therefore, pre-service teacher training programs are playing an important role to produce well qualified teachers who are going to implement the national curriculum to achieve the goals of education. Thus, to equip such pre-service teachers with pedagogical content knowledge, teaching skills, and professional attitudes, teaching practice becomes an essential part of teacher training programs.

Importance of the Study

As Carr (2009) proposed that education is primarily a 'practical' rather than a 'theoretical' or 'technical' activity as the heart of the profession is not primarily theoretical or technical (as cited in Mattsson, Eilertsen, & Rorrison, 2011). Therefore, in teacher training programs, the practicum has been recognized as one of the prime components and as the essential part of teacher development process. Eksi and Gungor (2018) illustrated that the practicum covers supervised teaching, systematic observation, gaining familiarity with the real setting, and experiencing teaching practices with real learners. In other words, the practicum provides the connection between practice teaching on campus and actual work they will do in the future (Ganal & Andaya, 2015). Moreover, it introduces them to have an awareness of a genuine task on the nature of teaching experiences. However, Mutlu (2014) highlighted that new teachers often face many adversities when they start their profession as a result of ineffective aspects of teaching practices conducted by the teacher training institutions. Therefore, he mentioned that one possible way to improve the quality of the practicum would be unearthing the challenges experienced during this process.

Ganal and Andaya (2015) brought to light the problems and difficulties encountered by the prospective teachers during the practicum which were related to homesickness, financial adjustment, family, learners, classroom management, communication skills, instructional skills, instructional materials and evaluation tools preparation and analysis of test results, different feelings and emotions, and on adjustment to the cooperating school as a whole. Moreover, the findings of Eksi and Gungor (2018) also showed that the main categories of problems preservice-teachers experienced in the practicum are instruction-based, material-based, and syllabus-based problems. Moreover, the participants also reported that they felt frustration and disappointment due to the gap between ideal considerations at pre-service level and the real classroom atmosphere.

Therefore, this study intended to find out the difficulties experienced by the preservice-teachers during their teaching practice. In addition, it is expected that the results will be of great assistance to eliminate the challenges of practicum that is the heart of teacher training programs.

Review of Related Literature

According to the recent confirmation of the researchers, a teacher can make a bigger difference to the educational success of a child than most other school factors (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The quality and performance of teachers certainly affect the outcomes of student learning. Moreover, Evertson and colleagues asserted, based on the findings, that teachers who enrolled in formal preservice teacher training programs are more likely to be effective than those who do not have such training (as cited in Darling-Hammond, 2006). Therefore, it can be seen that pre-service teacher education plays an essential role in the achievement of the students. In Myanmar, the Reports of Comprehensive Education Sector Review Phase 2: Teacher Education, and Education Working Group acknowledge that a motivated and well-trained teaching force is a prerequisite for the quality education (Ministry of Education, Myanmar, 2017).

Therefore, according to the objectives of Education Colleges (EC) in Myanmar (Department of Higher Education, Myanmar, 2019), teaching practice is an integral component of the teacher training programs. It provides the teacher trainees countless opportunities to integrate their knowledge of theory and practice with the aim of developing their competencies in teaching profession. Perry (1997) defined teaching practice as the period of time in which a pre-service teacher gains first-hand experience of working with a particular group of children in real classroom settings which yields priceless opportunities for developing his or her professional understanding and teaching skills. Department of Higher Education, Myanmar (2019) affirmed that the objective of practicum is for student teachers to demonstrate their understanding of the course content by applying it effectively in a supportive and real classroom setting. Although the curriculum of basic education in Myanmar is centrally prescribed, each classroom will vary as Myanmar is a diverse country. The more exposure the student teachers get to teaching students and practicing their skills, the more confident they will be and able to respond to different situations (Department of Higher Education, Myanmar, 2019).

Teacher Education Programs in Myanmar

In Myanmar, two Universities of Education, University for the Development of National Races and twenty-five Education Colleges are the major resource centres training pre-service and in-service teachers. With the advent of Yangon University, on December 1, 1920, to raise the standard of high schools which produce university students, it was deemed necessary to train well qualified teachers who could bring up high school students. As such, "Diploma in Teaching" classes were started for the graduate students. In 1926, an interesting programme was seriously considered. The programme was the replacement of the Anglo-Vernacular Normal Schools by a Central Teacher's Training College which would work in conjunction with the University. Thus, the Teacher's Training College (TTC) was opened as a constituent college of Yangon University on *Pyi Road, Kamayut*. After the Second World War, in October 1946, when Yangon University was reopened, a unitary system was exercised, and then the Constituent Colleges became Faculties, and as such, Teacher's Training College became the Faculty of Education. University Trained Teacher's Certificate (UTTC) courses were then transferred to Directorate of Public Instruction, and later appeared as a State Training College for Teachers (STCT) in 1947 (Thaung Tut, 2015).

The education colleges have been offering different teacher training programs such as

Two-year Diploma in Teacher Education Program since 1988, One-year Preservice Primary Teacher Training Programme since 2014, One-year in-service primary teacher training program since 1978 and one-year in-service lower secondary teacher training program since 1994 (Mya Kyaw, 2018).

Trainees for a two-year Diploma in Teacher Education Program in education colleges were selected based on their marks of matriculation examination, which is a national examination. The number of pre-service teachers recruited in education colleges each year is between 4000 and 5000 depending upon the availability of hostel accommodation. Educational subjects, cocurricular subjects, academic subjects and teaching practice belong to the curriculum framework of Diploma in Teacher Education Program in education colleges. Education colleges use a credit system to assess their trainees. Therefore, in addition to the exam marks, tutorials, assignments, and performances in activities, every pre-service teacher has to complete teaching practice for 40 days during October and November in each year. In the first year, they are assigned to teach at the primary level and in the second year, at the lower secondary level for teaching practice. Before the commencement of practicum, teacher educators from methodology departments demonstrate teaching with the children from the practicing middle school. Then, all pre-service teachers have to do micro teaching with their peers under the supervision of the teacher educators of respective subjects. They have to go through teaching practice process twice during the training to get the diploma. Thus, it is evident that teaching practice plays an essential role in teacher training in education colleges in Myanmar.

Purposes

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of teaching practice in education colleges in Myanmar to find out the obstacles encountered by the pre-service teachers in those education colleges during their practicum.

The specific purposes are:

- To study how teaching practice is carried out in education colleges in Myanmar
- To investigate the obstacles encountered by the pre-service teachers during their practicum
- To find out the underlying reasons for these problems
- To find out the means and ways to overcome those obstacles
- To make suggestions on the teaching practice of education colleges in Myanmar

Research questions

The research questions are as follows.

- How is teaching practice carried out in education colleges in Myanmar?
- What are the obstacles encountered by the pre-service teachers of education colleges in Myanmar?
- What are the underlying reasons for these problems?
- What are the possible solutions to overcome those obstacles?

Research method

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was a mixed method design. Therefore, a descriptive survey was used to collect quantitative data by using a set of predetermined questionnaire. And, a series of interviews was made for the qualitative data because it is believed that quantitative results could be better understood with reference to qualitative discussion of the impediments.

Sample of the Study

The sample of the study was all the second-year pre-service teachers of Diploma in Teacher Education training in three education colleges– Yankin (YEC); Thingangyun (TEC); and Hlegu (HEC) - in Yangon Region, Myanmar in the (2018-2019) Academic Year, except those who were engaged in their class schedules during the survey. The sample can be organized as follows.

Table 1. Number of participants or pre-service teachers in the study

Name of Education College	Number
Thingangyun Education College (TEC)	177
Yankin Education College (YEC)	229
Hlegu Education College (HEC)	167
Total	573

* Note. 15 pre-service teachers were interviewed.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were a predetermined questionnaire based on the review of the previous works in this field; (Koross, 2016; Azeem, 2011; & Ekundayo, Alonge, Kolawole, & Ekundayo, 2014), and semi-structured interviews constructed by the researcher. The questionnaire was composed of 60 items which were the obstacles usually encountered by the pre-service teachers during their practicum: 7 items were the obstacles related to *students*, 5 items to *classroom management*, 17 items to the *host school*, 6 items to *pre-service teachers* themselves, 10 items to *instruction*, and 15 items to the *education college* itself. The rating scale was set in 5-point likert as “Strongly disagree (Sd)”, “disagree (D)”, “Undecided (U)”, “Agree (A)”, “Strongly agree (Sa)”. The interview form was comprised of six questions related to six areas of the obstacles encountered by the pre-service teachers during their practicum.

Procedure

First, the relevant literature was reviewed. Moreover, informal interviews with some teachers who finished the diploma from education colleges in the previous year were made on the obstacles they encountered during their practicum. Then, the instrument, a questionnaire was constructed. The expert review was carried out by three teacher educators (a retired professor of education, an associate professor of education from the Methodology Department, Sagaing University of Education, and an assistant lecturer from the Methodology Department, Yankin Education College) for the validation of the questionnaire. Then, the study was piloted with 20 pre-service teachers from Thingangyun Education College. The items were modified, and the data obtained from the pilot study were used to calculate the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The internal consistency for the questionnaire was (0.654). After that, the main survey was

completed in three education colleges in Yangon Region, Myanmar in March 2019. A series of interviews were made in one of these education colleges.

Analysis of the Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The quantitative data were analyzed by calculating the descriptive statistics to determine the degree of agreement or disagreement with the item of the obstacles. For the qualitative study, the semi-structured interview questions were prepared in terms of the categories of the obstacles, and all the interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Then, the responses were analyzed according to the predefined six areas of barriers usually encountered by the pre-service teachers during their practicum. All the materials were translated from Myanmar into English.

Findings of the problems related to students encountered by the pre-service teachers during their practicum

In order to determine the problems concerned with the students, the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and percentage) of the quantitative data was calculated. The result was shown in table 2.

Table 2. Mean scores on the problems related to students during the practicum

No	Item Statement	Sd	D	U	A	Sa	N	SD	\bar{X}	Remark
1	Students gave me respect.	5 (0.9%)	12 (2.1%)	17 (3%)	341 (59.5%)	198 (34.6%)	573	.691	4.25	Agreed
2	Students considered me as their teacher.	8 (1.4%)	22 (3.8%)	35 (6.1%)	314 (54.8%)	194 (33.9%)	573	.809	4.16	Agreed
3	Intellectual differences of students did not have any affect on my teaching.	44 (7.7)	311 (54.3%)	97 (16.9%)	109 (19%)	12 (2.1%)	573	.954	2.54	Disagreed
4	Physical differences of students did not have any effect on my teaching.	20 (3.5%)	120 (20.9%)	75 (13.1%)	266 (46.4%)	92 (16.1%)	573	1.096	3.51	Agreed
5	Students with different mother tongues did not have any effect on my teaching.	52 (9.1%)	169 (29.5%)	119 (20.8%)	178 (31.1%)	55 (9.6%)	573	1.164	3.03	Agreed
6	Students participated in classroom activities.	8 (1.4%)	13 (2.3%)	13 (2.3%)	303 (52.9%)	236 (41.2%)	573	.749	4.30	Agreed

7	Students actively participated in hands-on activities.	6 (1.0%)	9 (1.6%)	8 (1.4%)	296 (51.7%)	253 (44.2%)	573	.694	4.37	Agreed
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Out of the total of 573 pre-service teachers surveyed, 62% of them responded that they disagreed on the fact that the intellectual differences of students did not have any affect on their teaching ($\bar{X} = 2.54$), i.e., their teaching practice is affected by the intellectual differences of the students in the host school. Nonetheless, 94.1% of the pre-service teachers surveyed agreed on the statements that the students from the host school gave them respect ($\bar{X} = 4.25$) and 88.7% considered them as their teachers ($\bar{X} = 4.16$), the physical differences, and different mother tongues of the students did not have any affect on their teaching (62.5%, $\bar{X} = 3.51$ and 40.7%, $\bar{X} = 3.03$) respectively, and 94.1% of the students surveyed in the host school actively participated in the classroom activities and 95.9%, in hands-on activities, ($\bar{X} = 4.30$ and $\bar{X} = 4.37$) respectively.

From the result of *qualitative data analysis*, i.e., according to the interview scripts, the pre-service teacher (PT, hereafter) 1 and PT 2 felt that students did not pay respect to them and they were not obedient. They both assumed that it might be because they were strange to them. However, this result is different from the quantitative data.

Moreover, PT 2 and PT 10 shared:

“We found difficulty in our teaching practice as students made a lot of noise.”

PT 7 also stated:

“Students had very little interest in learning.”

Furthermore, PT 3 and PT 8 highlighted:

“Different backgrounds of students made us difficult in our teaching practice.”

It was in line with the result of quantitative data analysis. PT 3 explained the reason that insufficient number of teachers made them to take two classes at the same time. Her host school was exercising multiple class teaching. As a result, the teachers from the host school could not give much attention to the students individually, which led to different academic backgrounds in students. Moreover, PT 8 explained that some students took private tutoring at home but some did not. Therefore, she claimed that such situations made students have different learning backgrounds.

PT 3 also indicated that there was one student with autism. As that student disturbed others, she had to give a particular attention to him. Therefore, devoting too much time to him made it challenging to maintain the flow of her teaching.

In addition, PT 13 also shared:

“Students had lack of confidence in responding to teachers.”

She mentioned that most of the time, they kept silent without replying her questions. It made her teaching practice not to be effective and fluent according to her planned schedule.

As Nelson (2014) stated, asking the answerable questions first, asking them to discuss in a small group, and allowing them to write down the answers can be used to get the students' responses in class.

To arouse students' interest, pre-service teachers should use teaching methods that are relevant to the content and learning activities pertinent to the learners' age. The lecture method that most of the pre-service teachers used in their teaching practice was not effective for the primary level students that made them lose their attention on learning and caused chaos in the class. Trying to understand the nature of the students including their physical and psychological nature at their age without trying to cover the content in a given time may be one of the solutions of these problems.

Findings of the problems related to classroom management encountered by the pre- service teachers during their practicum

In order to figure out the problems related to the classroom mangement, the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and percentage) of the quantitative data was calculated. The result was shown in table 3.

Table 3. Mean scores on the problems related to classroom management during the practicum

No	Item Statement	Sd	D	U	A	Sa	N	SD	\bar{X}	Remarks
1	Classroom management was well established even though some students behaved badly.	12 (2.1%)	61 (10.6%)	56 (9.8%)	384 (67%)	60 (10.5%)	573	.864	3.73	Agreed
2	There was no difficulty in setting rules and regulations in classes.	14 (2.4%)	173 (30.2%)	86 (15%)	257 (44.9%)	43 (7.5%)	573	1.043	3.25	Agreed
3	There was no difficulty in setting rules and regulations of classroom activities.	13 (2.3%)	187 (32.6%)	85 (14.8%)	251 (43.8%)	37 (6.5%)	573	1.038	3.20	Agreed
4	There was no difficulty in classroom management as teacher student ratio is quite large.	71 (12.4%)	182 (31.8%)	59 (10.3%)	210 (36.6%)	51 (8.9%)	573	1.240	2.98	Disagreed
5	There was no difficulty in planning the physical environment of the classroom according to the methods intended to use.	30 (5.2%)	177 (30.9%)	33 (5.8%)	273 (47.6%)	60 (10.5%)	573	1.158	3.27	Agreed

By the result of *quantitative data* shown in table 3, 44.2% of pre-service teachers found difficulty in managing the classroom as the teacher-student ratio is very large (\bar{X} =2.98). On the contrary, 77.5% of them could manage the classes well (\bar{X} =3.73) and

difficulties were seldom found in setting rules and regulations for both classes and classroom activities and in arranging physical environment of the classroom (52.4%, \bar{X} =3.25, 50.3%, \bar{X} =3.2 and 58.1%, \bar{X} =3.27) respectively.

According to the *qualitative data*, it was disclosed by PT 1, PT 2 and PT 6:

"We had difficulty in classroom management as students were very playful and mad a lot of noise during teaching."

PT 1 said that she tried to manage them by changing their seating positions. Also, PT 6 pointed out that students did not understand what she was teaching. One of the consequences was that their attention was decreasing gradually resulting in misbehaving.

Moreover, PT 3, PT 4 and PT 5 pointed out:

"There was not enough teacher in the host schools."

This statement strongly supported the result of quantitative findings. They continued sharing that some host primary schools had only three teachers including the headmaster. This in turn resulted in a high teacher student ratio.

Additionally, PT 4 also found it difficult to manage the Kindergarten class as they were running in the class and did not pay any attention to her teaching. She stated that

"At that time, I was confused whether to go on my teaching or to stop their running in class."

PT 5 also shared:

"No partition between the classrooms made me difficult to manage the class as the noise from other classes interrupted my teaching."

Therefore, she mentioned that her voice could not overwhelm the noise and students did not hear her instruction.

PT 9 responded that as students were living in the same quarter and very familiar with her. Thus, they did not give much respect to her, and that made her difficult to manage the class.

To solve these problems, pre-service teachers have to find out the reasons of losing students' attention and making noise. Keser (2018) also pointed out several classroom management strategies; setting rules with the students at the very beginning and reminding these rules, setting good relationships with them and knowing them well, using different methods to teach and organize the activities before the class, staying quiet or raising the noise and ignoring the misbehavior.

Findings of the problems related to host schools encountered by the pre-service teachers during their practicum

With the aim of finding out the problems concerned with the host school, the descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation and percentage) of the quantitative data was calculated. The result was shown in table 4.

Table 4. Mean scores on the problems related to host schools during the practicum

No	Item Statement	Sd	D	U	A	Sa	N	SD	\bar{X}	Remarks
1	Permanent teachers from the host school friendly welcome me.	13 (2.3%)	15 (2.6%)	10 (1.7%)	208 (36.3%)	327 (57.1%)	573	.843	4.43	Agreed
2	There was no difficulty to go to the host school for teaching practice.	24 (4.2%)	42 (7.3%)	20 (3.5%)	218 (38%)	269 (46.9%)	573	1.072	4.16	Agreed
3	There was no difficulty in teaching to cover the assigned contents.	26 (4.5%)	152 (26.5%)	64 (11.2%)	270 (47.1%)	61 (10.6%)	573	1.113	3.33	Agreed
4	The instructional materials suitable to the lessons are easily available in the host school.	74 (12.9%)	292 (51%)	53 (9.2%)	127 (22.2%)	27 (4.7%)	573	1.111	2.55	Disagreed
5	There was no burden as the duties were evenly assigned together with the permanent teachers.	20 (3.5%)	54 (9.4%)	37 (6.5%)	363 (63.4%)	99 (17.3%)	573	.946	3.82	Agreed
6	There was no difficulty in taking a rest together in the same room with the permanent teachers.	25 (4.4%)	73 (12.7%)	48 (8.4%)	298 (52%)	129 (22.5%)	573	1.074	3.76	Agreed
7	The host school prepared my own schedule in advance/ before the commencement of the teaching practice.	71 (12.4%)	192 (33.5%)	31 (5.4%)	232 (40.5%)	47 (8.2%)	573	1.251	2.99	Disagreed
8	The host school allowed me to teach the subjects that I like.	43 (7.5%)	157 (27.4%)	26 (4.5%)	237 (41.4%)	110 (19.2%)	573	1.272	3.37	Agreed
9	Subject teachers observed and evaluated my teaching.	21 (3.7%)	67 (11.7%)	24 (4.2%)	380 (66.3%)	81 (14.1%)	573	.961	3.76	Agreed
10	Subject teachers gave me advice on how to teach.	17 (3%)	26 (4.5%)	16 (2.8%)	348 (60.7%)	166 (29%)	573	.872	4.08	Agreed

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11	The host school gave me a chance to choose the class.	53 (9.2%)	155 (27.1%)	27 (4.7%)	254 (44.3%)	84 (14.7%)	573	1.263	3.28	Agreed
12	The headmaster of the host school supervised me.	12 (2.1%)	17 (3%)	12 (2.1%)	299 (52.2%)	233 (40.7%)	573	.816	4.26	Agreed
13	The teachers in the host school cooperated with me in the activities of practicum.	10 (1.7%)	26 (4.5%)	21 (3.7%)	363 (63.4%)	153 (26.7%)	573	.797	4.09	Agreed
14	There was no difficulty concerning with the space in doing the activities inside and outside the classroom.	37 (6.5%)	171 (29.8%)	67 (11.7%)	241 (42.1%)	57 (9.9%)	573	1.158	3.19	Agreed
15	I was allowed to use the library and laboratory.	57 (9.9%)	125 (21.8%)	66 (11.5%)	249 (43.5%)	76 (13.3%)	573	1.226	3.28	Agreed
16	There were teacher manuals for all the subjects in the host school.	13 (2.3%)	66 (11.5%)	29 (5.1%)	277 (48.3%)	188 (32.8%)	573	1.022	3.98	Agreed
17	I participated in school activities besides teaching.	4 (0.7%)	29 (5.1%)	13 (2.3%)	360 (62.8%)	167 (29.1%)	573	.748	4.15	Agreed

According to the result of table 4, the preservice teachers uncovered their disagreement with these statements that the instructional materials are available and the timetables were prepared in advance before the practicum by the host school (63.9%, \bar{X} =2.55 and 48.7%, \bar{X} =2.99) respectively. It means that lack of instructional materials and weakness in planning a personal timetable for an individual pre-service teacher in advance were the problems related to the host schools.

Conversely, around 90% of them agreed with the statements concerning with the friendliness, cooperation and giving advice from the teachers, supervision from the head master, and participation of pre-service teachers in school activities (\bar{X} =4.43, \bar{X} =4.09, \bar{X} =4.08, \bar{X} =4.26 and \bar{X} =4.15) respectively. Plus, the items related to no difficulty in transportation, observation and evaluation by subject teachers and availability of teacher manuals were acknowledged by around 80% of them (\bar{X} =4.16, \bar{X} =3.76 and \bar{X} =3.98 respectively). Additionally, 74.5% of them responded that sharing the office room together with the permanent teachers was convenient (\bar{X} =3.76) and around 60%, they are allowed to teach the subjects and the classes they desired during the practicum (\bar{X} =3.37, \bar{X} =3.28) respectively. Around 50% of them found no difficulty in covering the assigned contents, working together with permanent teachers, doing the activities, and using the library and laboratory (\bar{X} =3.33, \bar{X} =3.82, \bar{X} =3.19 and \bar{X} =3.28) respectively.

From the *analysis of interview transcripts*, it was discovered from the statements of PT

3 and PT 5 that they were assigned as class teachers and asked to teach all the subjects because of the shortage of permanent teachers. Thus, they had to do all the duties of class teachers even though they had no such experience previously. PT 5 mentioned that sometimes there was no teacher in the class due to lack of teachers.

PT 2, PT 4, PT 6 and PT 7 asserted:

"The host schools did not prepare the schedules/timetables for us in advance."

This comment was consistent with the result of quantitative data analysis. They all claimed that they had no time to prepare lessons as they did not know which subject and class they were going to teach. PT 4 revealed:

"I was asked to teach in the place of a teacher who was absent from class resulting in no preparation of lessons in advance."

PT 6 also said:

"The subjects and classes I had to teach were changing every day during the practicum."

In addition, PT 4, PT 5, PT 10, PT 13 and PT 15 illustrated:

"There were no teaching aids in the host schools."

This can be found in consistent with the result of the analysis of the questionnaire data. PT 5 and PT 13 answered that they made teaching aids by themselves, and PT 10 stated that she used only the lecture method due to lack of teaching aids. PT 15 said that she made teaching aids by drawing the pictures by herself. Moreover, PT 13 pointed out that the permanent teachers from the host school used only textbooks, chalks, and blackboard in their teaching and there were no teacher's manuals for old curriculums (Grades 3 and 4). PT 5 also disclosed the insufficient teacher's manuals in the host school:

"There was only one teacher's manual for a subject. So I had to share with other teachers. Thus, I had a look at it for a while and prepared my lessons only when I arrived at school."

PT 4, PT 6 and PT 8 commented

"We were observed and received advice on teaching by the permanent teachers and headmasters from the host schools."

Additionally, all PTs revealed that there was no difficulty in communicating with the teachers and headmasters of the host schools as they were former students of those host schools and most of the teachers are their teachers when they were young.

The pre-service teachers should do preliminary visits to their host schools before their practicums to get the required information about the host schools; for example, students, resources, rules and regulations, subject teachers, class size and so on. That can help them to prepare in advance which in turn reduce the difficulties that they may encounter. Cohen, Manion, Morrison, & Wyse (2010) also mentioned that they need to record the physical features of the host school, its philosophy, grouping of students, schools' expectations of student teachers, policies, school organization, the classroom, control and discipline, rules, routines and protocols, resources, record keeping,

timetabling, teaching and learning styles used during their preliminary visits.

Findings of the problems related to pre-service teachers during their Practicum

To explore the problems related to preservice teachers the descriptive statistics of the quantitative data was calculated. The result was shown in table 5.

Table 5. Mean scores on the problems related to pre-service teachers during the practicum

No	Item Statement	Sd	D	U	A	Sa	N	SD	\bar{X}	Remarks
1	I prepared the lessons well.	6 (1%)	50 (8.7%)	61 (10.6%)	379 (66.1%)	77 (13.4%)	573	.808	3.8 2	Agreed
2	I reached school in time during my teaching practice.	8 (1.4%)	11 (1.9%)	16 (2.8%)	275 (48%)	263 (45.9%)	573	.753	4.3 5	Agreed
3	I could write the lesson plans well.	7 (1.2%)	27 (4.7%)	53 (9.2%)	370 (64.6%)	116 (20.2%)	573	.771	3.9 8	Agreed
4	I did not feel nervous while I was being observed by teachers from the host school.	75 (13.1%)	254 (44.3%)	103 (18%)	114 (19.9%)	27 (4.7%)	573	1.08 9	2.5 9	Disagreed
5	I conform to rules of the host school.	12 (2.1%)	10 (1.7%)	13 (2.3%)	325 (56.7%)	213 (37.2%)	573	.768	4.2 5	Agreed
6	There was no difficulty in creating teaching aids/instructional materials.	35 (6.1%)	308 (53.8%)	61 (10.6%)	142 (24.8%)	27 (4.7%)	573	1.05 8	2.6 8	Disagreed

The result of *quantitative data* shown in table 5 revealed that 57.4% of the pre-service teachers felt nervous when they were being observed by the permanent teachers from the host schools (\bar{X} =2.59). What is more, 59.9% of them found difficulties in creating instructional materials by themselves. Nonetheless, 93.9% of them agreed with the statements that they were punctual (\bar{X} =4.35) and they followed the rules prescribed by the host school (\bar{X} =4.25). Moreover, they responded that they prepared the lessons well and could write the lesson plans as well (79.5%, \bar{X} =3.82 and 84.8%, \bar{X} =3.98).

From the *analysis of interview transcripts*, the following obstacles were found out.

PT 2 and PT 13 acknowledged that they did not have mastery in the content. PT 10 also claimed that she had little knowledge of the new curriculum as she did not get any training on the new curriculum. Thus, she highlighted that:

“I did not have expertise in the content to be taught and could not explain the lessons in the new curriculum very well.”

PT 6 also expressed that she could not explain the lessons to the students well. PT 8 admitted:

“I could not write the lesson plan well.”

Her admission was not in line with the result of the analysis of questionnaire. What is more, the comments of PT 9, PT 14 and PT 15 illustrated this view:

“We found difficulty in preparing teaching aids, especially for Myanmar subject.”

PT 9 stated that there was no printer in her village even though she wanted to use photographs and charts. PT 14 mentioned that she could make only one kind of teaching aids – charts.

PT 11 explained that she found difficulty in trying to get hold of the students' attention.

To tackle these problems, first of all, they must have a deep understanding of the content, and then that content knowledge should be integrated with the pedagogical knowledge. Also, they have to try to understand the nature of the children and their learning styles and then they have to take this information into consideration in planning the lessons. Moreover, creating teaching aids and planning lessons ahead by collaborating with their peers and subject teachers from the host schools will be effective. Also, reflective practice will help them solve the problems related to themselves.

Findings of problems related to instruction encountered by the pre-service teachers during their practicum

To find out the problems with respect to instruction, the descriptive statistics of the quantitative data was calculated. The result was shown in table 6.

Table 6. Mean scores on the problems related to instruction during the practicum

No	Item Statement	Sd	D	U	A	Sa	N	SD	\bar{X}	Remarks
1	There was no difficulty in teaching by using teaching aids.	22 (3.8%)	163 (28.4%)	70 (12.2%)	273 (47.6%)	45 (7.9%)	573	1.075	3.27	Agreed
2	There was no difficulty in planning activities (inside and outside of the classroom).	21 (3.7%)	227 (39.6%)	75 (13.1%)	218 (38%)	32 (5.6%)	573	1.071	3.02	Agreed
3	There was no difficulty in using various methods of teaching.	19 (3.3%)	228 (39.8%)	74 (12.9%)	225 (39.3%)	27 (4.7%)	573	1.055	3.02	Agreed
4	There was no difficulty in using textbooks and teachers' manuals.	8 (1.4%)	121 (21.1%)	56 (9.8%)	342 (59.7%)	46 (8%)	573	.958	3.52	Agreed
5	There was no difficulty in	19 (3.3%)	236 (41.2%)	58 (10.1%)	236 (41.2%)	24 (4.2%)	573	1.061	3.02	Agreed

	helping the students to understand the contents.									
6	There was no difficulty in evaluating the performance of students during classroom activities.	7 (1.2%)	138 (24.1%)	89 (15.5%)	313 (54.6%)	26 (4.5%)	573	.939	3.37	Agreed
7	There was no difficulty in evaluating students' achievement (knowledge).	10 (1.7%)	175 (30.5%)	99 (17.3%)	267 (46.6%)	22 (3.8%)	573	.977	3.20	Agreed
8	There was no difficulty in evaluating students' achievement (skills).	16 (2.8%)	224 (39.1%)	98 (17.1%)	222 (38.7%)	13 (2.3%)	573	.991	2.99	Disagreed
9	There was no difficulty in evaluating students' achievement by using different types of assessments (formative assessment, summative assessment, etc.).	12 (2.1%)	187 (32.6%)	90 (15.7%)	274 (47.8%)	10 (1.7%)	573	.969	3.14	Agreed
10	There was no difficulty in giving feedback to students according to the results of assessments.	15 (2.6%)	174 (30.4%)	98 (17.1%)	262 (45.7%)	24 (4.2%)	573	1.000	3.18	Agreed

From the *quantitative data analysis* of the items related to instruction shown in table 6, the result indicated that 41.9% of the pre-service teachers had difficulties in assessing students' achievement especially their skills (\bar{X} =2.99). However, around 44% of them had no difficulty in planning activities, in using various teaching methods and in explaining the content (\bar{X} =3.02). Furthermore, it was shown that nearly 50% of them rarely found difficulties in evaluating students' understanding, in using different types of assessment and in giving feedback to students (\bar{X} =3.2, \bar{X} =3.14 and \bar{X} =3.18) respectively. Likewise, they disclosed that no adversities was found in using teaching aids, and textbooks and teacher's manuals (55.5%, \bar{X} =3.27 and 67.7%, \bar{X} =3.52). Besides, 59.1 % had no difficulty in evaluating students' performace during classroom

activities ($\bar{X}=3.37$).

In the results of the *analysis of qualitative data*, PT 2, PT 6 and PT 7 expressed that they could not explain the lesson well. They mentioned the reason was that they were not given exact timetables and were asked to teach the class on the spot without giving enough time for lesson preparation. That made PT 2 unable to use activities in the class as she could not prepare for it beforehand.

PT 7 found it difficult in teaching as the students had already learned the lessons in the syllabus in advance. PT 1 also found it difficult in teaching according to the prepared lesson plans as students did not understand what she was teaching. Thus, she usually changed her teaching method on the spot. PT 2 also revealed that sometimes she deviated her direction in teaching and did not know how to continue teaching.

To solve these problems, preliminary visits to the host schools should be done before the commencement of the practicum to prepare well. Moreover, they have to learn the curriculums and the nature of the students that they aim to practice before their teaching practice.

Findings of problems related to education colleges encountered by the pre-service teachers during their practicum

To determine the problems with regard to Education Colleges, the descriptive statistics of the quantitative data was calculated. The result was shown in table 7.

Table 7. Mean scores on the problems related to education colleges encountered by the pre-service teachers during their practicum

No	Item Statement	Sd	D	U	A	Sa	N	SD	\bar{X}	Remarks
1	Supervision from the education college was regularly done.	171 (29.8%)	261 (45.5%)	50 (8.7%)	79 (13.8%)	12 (2.1%)	573	1.054	2.13	Disagreed
2	Supervisors gave us a hand to achieve our teaching practice.	48 (8.4%)	83 (14.5%)	41 (7.2%)	340 (59.3%)	61 (10.6%)	573	1.121	3.49	Agreed
3	We were sent for teaching practice under proper planning.	19 (3.3%)	17 (3%)	35 (6.1%)	335 (58.5%)	167 (29.1%)	573	.875	4.07	Agreed
4	Supervisors gave us an orientation before leaving for teaching practice.	13 (2.3%)	17 (3%)	12 (2.1%)	284 (49.6%)	247 (43.1%)	573	.834	4.28	Agreed
5	Teacher educators gave us enough practical training for using different methods of teaching in various subjects	9 (1.6%)	27 (4.7%)	19 (3.3%)	270 (47.1%)	248 (43.3%)	573	.855	4.26	Agreed

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6	by doing demonstrations. Enough practical training for lesson planning was given before the teaching practice.	9 (1.6%)	16 (2.8%)	16 (2.8%)	277 (48.3%)	255 (44.5%)	573	.793	4.31	Agreed
7	Supervisors observed my teaching and pointed out the weakness in teaching and classroom management as well.	131 (22.9%)	246 (42.9%)	63 (11%)	103 (18%)	30 (5.2%)	573	1.172	2.40	Disagreed
8	Supervisors visited the host school and checked the lesson plans.	144 (25.1%)	254 (44.3%)	55 (9.6%)	104 (18.2%)	16 (2.8%)	573	1.114	2.29	Disagreed
9	The period of six weeks' practicing is enough.	48 (8.4%)	177 (30.9%)	119 (20.8%)	197 (34.4%)	32 (5.6%)	573	1.101	2.98	Disagreed
10	Enough practice for creating cheap and effective instructional materials was given before the commencement of teaching practice.	11 (1.9%)	29 (5.1%)	43 (7.5%)	342 (59.7%)	148 (25.8%)	573	.842	4.02	Agreed
11	Enough micro-teachings or peer-group teachings were conducted before teaching practice.	48 (8.4%)	153 (26.7%)	63 (11%)	237 (41.4%)	72 (12.6%)	573	1.212	3.23	Agreed
12	Supervisors gave enough feedback and comments based on the observations during micro teaching.	44 (7.7%)	118 (20.6%)	62 (10.8%)	285 (49.7%)	64 (11.2%)	573	1.153	3.36	Agreed
13	There was a cordial relationship with the supervisors.	12 (2.1%)	41 (7.2%)	65 (11.3%)	332 (57.9%)	123 (21.5%)	573	.891	3.90	Agreed
14	The chance for choosing the host school was given.	70 (12.2%)	75 (13.1%)	16 (2.8%)	245 (42.8%)	167 (29.1%)	573	1.346	3.64	Agreed

15	The experience of the practicum was shared in front of the supervisors and peers after teaching practice.	26 (4.5%)	43 (7.5%)	21 (3.7%)	310 (54.1%)	173 (30.2%)	573	1.024	3.98	Agreed
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According to the data of table 7, 75.3% of the preservice teachers asserted that teacher educators from education colleges seldom did supervision during the practicum ($\bar{X}=2.13$). Additionally, 65.8% of them affirmed that there was no observation and giving feedback from their teacher educators ($\bar{X}=2.40$) and 69.4% of them also reported that supervisors never visited the host schools and checked their lesson plans during teaching practice ($\bar{X}=2.29$). Interestingly, only 40% of them were consistent with the statement that the period of practicum, six weeks, was enough. Therefore, it means that supervision was not done by the teacher educators from education college, and they did not observe trainees' teaching and point out the weakness as they did not visit the host schools during the practicum. Moreover, the duration of practicum was not sufficient for teaching practice.

Preservice teachers supported the statements that supervisors gave enough feedback after peer group teaching and helped to achieve teaching practice (60.9%, $\bar{X}=3.36$ and 69.9%, $\bar{X}=3.49$) respectively. However, only 54% of them responded that enough peer group teachings were conducted before the practicum ($\bar{X}=3.23$) and the statements of enough practice for creating instructional materials and proper planning of practicum were agreed by 85.5% of them, ($\bar{X}= 4.02$ and 87.6%, $\bar{X}=4.07$) respectively. Likewise, around 90% of them acknowledged that the teacher educators gave an orientation, and enough practical training for using various methods of teaching and for lesson planning ($\bar{X}=4.28$, $\bar{X}=4.26$ and $\bar{X}=4.31$) respectively. Furthermore, 79.4% of them had a cordial relationship with the teacher educators ($\bar{X}=3.90$), 71.9% of them also got the chance to chose the host schools ($\bar{X}=3.64$) and 84.3% of them shared their experiences of teaching practice to teacher educators and peers ($\bar{X}=3.98$).

According to the analysis of the *qualitative data* related to the problems pertaining to education college, all the PTs claimed that there was no supervision from education college during their practicum, but their lesson plans were checked thereafter.

All the PTs asserted that the practice before the practicum was not enough for them because they did only one period of micro teaching with their peers and did not practice for every subject. They stated that one pre-service teacher had only a single opportunity to practice teaching before the practicum. Most of the PT mentioned:

“Each pre-service teacher should do one or two times of microteaching for each subject.”

PT 5, PT 7, PT 9, PT 12 and PT 15 revealed that they found it difficult in teaching practice even though they did practice before the practicum. They explained:

“We prepared teaching practice with our peers, but in reality, we had to teach the children. So, we wanted to practice our teaching with children in a real life setting.”

PT 3 and PT 14 echoed that they did not learn much about the new curriculum before

the practicum. That made them very difficult to teach the new content that was not familiar to them.

Most PTs pointed out:

“The period of practicum, six weeks, was not enough for teaching practice.”

It was consistent with the quantitative data analysis. Moreover, it was estimated that 75% of them gave their ideas that the duration of teaching practice should be at least three months.

Bond, Johnson, Patmore, Weiss and Barker (2018) described that in undergraduate teacher training course of many universities across UK, there is opportunity to learn from taught modules at university along with a block of periods spent at placement schools throughout the course. In postgraduate certificate in education, primary teacher trainees spend 18 weeks' school placement in one or two primary schools and secondary teacher trainees spend 24 weeks in secondary schools. The durations of practicum in some universities, for example, five student-teaching placements in two years (the first two are each nine weeks in length and the last three are each eighteen weeks) in the University of California at Berkeley, a full-year internship in the fifth year in Trinity University (Darling-Hammond, 2006). According to Mutlu (2014), the practicum lasts for two terms in four-year English Language Teaching (ELT) program in a university, in Istanbul, Turkey. During the practicum, the supervisor from the faculty has to make many visits to see and evaluate preservice teachers' performance.

Moreover, Mya Kyaw (2018), a retired headmaster of Yankin Education College, pointed out that teacher educators from education colleges did not go to the host schools and supervise the trainees during the practicum even though the journal of teaching practice and forms of assessments were used. However, there are supervisions of teacher educators in the Universities of Education during the practicum. It is one of the differences between the Universities of Education and Education Colleges even though both institutions are running teacher training programs. Also, he mentioned that there was a weakness in the cooperation between education colleges and township education officers leading to a failure to receive enough feedback.

Now, it was declared that two-year education colleges would be upgraded to four-year Degree Colleges in the coming 2019-2020 academic year. Therefore, the new curriculum for the upgraded four-year Degree course is currently being developed with the support of the Strengthening Pre-service Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM) Project, UNESCO. In the review of the Strengthening Pre-Service Teacher Education in Myanmar (2016), the duration of practicum in the 1st year is assigned to 30 days, 60 days in the 2nd year and 30 days in the 3rd year and 60 days in the 4th year. However, Strengthening Preservice Teacher Education in Myanmar (STEM) UNESCO (2016) stated that it is not feasible for teacher educators from education colleges to do supervision during the practicum as another pre-service teacher training program is underway when one batch of trainees is in teaching practice.

Discussion

The result of the study concerning with students showed that different learning backgrounds, less interest and participation of the students made teaching practice difficult. Moreover, it was indicated that there were difficulties in classroom

management as teacher-student ratio is quite large and students made a lot of noise. It is consistent with the study of Erdoan et al. (2010) who grouped the problems associated with classroom management; lack of motivation, breaking the rules and routines, lack of infrastructure, inadequate time management, ineffective classroom environment, and lack of interaction in classrooms. Furthermore, it is consistent with the findings of Keser (2018) who reported that classroom management problems generally stemmed from the noisy and talkative students and crowded classes.

In the area of the host school, it was found that suitable instructional materials were not available in the host schools in addition to inadequate number of permanent teachers. Plus, the host schools did not prepare timetables and schedules for pre-service teachers in advance. The significant finding of Azeem, (2011) is consistent with this result which mentioned that the majority of schools did not prepare the timetable for the pre-service teachers. Moreover, one of the findings of Ekundayo et al. (2014), teachers in the host schools did not perform the role of mentors to the pre-service teachers, is inconsistent with the result of this study even though his finding, unavailable instructional materials in the host schools, is consistent.

The results related to pre-service teachers showed that they did not have expertise in the content to be taught due to the little knowledge of the new curriculum which is underway and they found difficulty in preparing instructional materials. Furthermore, they felt nervous while they were being observed by the teachers from the host schools. Moreover, the results related to instruction stated that pre-service teachers could not explain the lesson to the students well and they had difficulty in evaluating students' achievement, especially the skills. The findings of Tok (2010) are consistent with these results of this study which showed that the problems experienced by the student teachers in the process of teaching practice are concerned with planning, using instructional subject matter knowledge, materials, motivation, communication, and time management and behavior management skills. The main results of the study of Baştürk (2016) are also consistent with these results which indicated that the pre-service teachers had some problems in assessment, organizing group studies, and incorporating students' interest into teaching.

The findings related to education college were that there was no supervision of teacher educators from education colleges and the duration of practicum was too short. It showed that the practice before practicum was inadequate as pre-service teachers did only one period of microteaching. The results of Ekundayo et al. (2014) are consistent with these results which pointed out the inadequate preparation of the student teachers for the practicum as micro-teaching was not always organized. Moreover, the findings of Leke-ateh, Assan, & Debeila (2013), the mentors or teacher educators were not sufficiently involved in teaching practice and the preparation was not enough for the experience, are also consistent with the results. It is also consistent with the statement of Ministry of Education, Myanmar (2017) which uncovered that currently, pre-service teachers have limited opportunities to practise teaching through practicum during their pre-service education. Moreover, it was stated that pre-service teachers have very limited supervision, feedback or guidance during the practicum.

Conclusion

This study aimed at exploring the problems encountered by the pre-service teachers during their practicum. The results showed that the pre-service teachers encountered the

problems associated to students, classroom management, host school, themselves, instruction and education college during their practicum. It was suggested that the research should be carried out in all education colleges across Myanmar as this study aimed at only preservice teachers from education colleges in Yangon Region, Myanmar. Moreover, as this study focused only on the problems related to students, classroom management, host school, preservice teachers themselves, instruction and Education College during their practice teaching, the challenges related to other components of practicum; township officers, headmaster and teacher from the host school, supervisors, teacher educators from the Education College, etc. should be observed to have a deeper understanding of the reasons behind these problems.

Suggestions

According to the findings of this study, some suggestions are made as follows;

1. Preservice teachers should be given an opportunity for preliminary visits to the host schools before the beginning of the practicum. This may help them to prepare well in order to diminish some obstacles in conjunction with students, instructional materials, classroom management, permanent teachers and instruction.
2. The host schools should prepare schedules or timetables for the pre-service teachers before the practicum starts as they should be given enough time to prepare the lessons well because they have no experience in teaching.
3. Pre-service teachers should have a thorough understanding of the curriculum, pedagogy, classroom management strategies and the nature of the children in order to achieve the objectives of teaching practice.
4. The duration of practicum should be more than six weeks as most of the pre-service teachers assumed that current length of teaching practice is not sufficient to improve their teaching skills.
5. In reforming the curriculum of education colleges, practice before practicum should be more emphasized than before, and pre-service teachers should be allowed to practice their teaching with children in a real life setting in addition to peer-group teachings.
6. Supervision or mentoring of teacher educators should be involved during the practicum as many findings showed that advice and feedback from teacher educators could contribute to the teaching practice of pre-service teachers.

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