

PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' STRESS DURING SCHOOL BASED TEACHING PRACTICUM: A CASE STUDY IN MAN 1 YOGYAKARTA AND MAN 3 SLEMAN

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ABSTRACT

School based teaching practicum takes a very important role in teacher education, since it allows pre-service teachers to gain more knowledge through teaching in the school. However, although it brings many benefits for pre-service teachers, teaching practicum is also considered to be one of the most stressful program. Particularly, among others, for pre-service English teacher, teaching practicum may generate high level of stress because of their feeling of self-unconfidence in using English language. The purpose of this study is to find out pre-service English teachers' causes of stress which they experienced during teaching practicum. This study was conducted using an observational study method, meanwhile the data were collected using three instruments namely observation, interview, and document analysis. Two pre-service English teachers from PBI UII who had undertaken teaching practicum in two Islamic senior high schools in Yogyakarta were involved as participants in this study. The result of this study revealed four main categories as the causes of pre-service English teacher stress: first teaching experience-related stress, classroom management-related stress, stressed of being observed, and English language teaching-related stress. Furthermore, some emergent findings regarding coping strategies toward teaching practicum stress are also found in this study.

Keywords: pre-service English teacher, stress, teaching practicum

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education around the world is prepared to develop future professional teacher in the future. One of many teaching preparation programs provided by education department is teaching practicum. It takes a very important role in teacher education and in preparing pre-service teacher. At the final year of studying in college, students of education major are required to do teaching practicum in the school, which should be passed by all of them before being an actual teacher. According to Caires, et al. (2012), teaching practicum is a continuous process in which student-teacher interacts with and acknowledges the rules, values, resources, and communication patterns integrated into school.

In addition, teaching practicum is likely very helpful for pre-service teacher. Caires, Almeida, and Vieira (2012) revealed that there are four main benefits of teaching practicum for pre-service teachers such as learning and supervision, professional and institutional socialization, emotional and physical impact, and career aspects. Nevertheless, teaching practicum also tends to be one of the most stressful program for pre-service teachers. Meanwhile, more specifically, pre-service English teachers are likely feel more stress compared to pre-service teachers from another major. Regarding this, Kim and Kim (2004) revealed that teaching sometimes makes even in-service English teachers feel anxious. Further, they also mentioned that limited English language proficiency is one of factors that generate

stress during teaching, followed by another factor such as lack of confidence, insufficient class preparation, and being compared with native teachers. Logically, if in-service English teachers might still feel under stressed on teaching, pre-service English teacher who still lack of teaching experience are more likely to feel higher level of stress during teaching.

Cause of stress that encountered by one pre-service teacher to another pre-service teacher may be different. However, these all become one of the serious problems for most of pre-service teachers for it may influence their teaching performance. As suggested by Murray-Harvey, Silins, and Saebel (1999), stress could influence pre-service teacher's behavior and class effectiveness, especially in relation to lower student achievement and increased student anxiety. Considering the phenomena mentioned earlier, this study aims to investigate the cause of stress that probably affects pre-service teachers' performance in teaching practicum. Although there has been a considerable numbers of a research in this area, most of them only investigate stress perceived by pre-service teachers in general. Thus, this study more specifically attempted to find out cause of stress in teaching English language practicum, particularly teaching practicum undertaken by non-native EFL pre-service teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term 'teacher stress' first time appeared in 1977 proposed by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1977, p. 299) as "a response by a teacher of negative affect (such as anger, anxiety or depression) accompanied by potentially pathogenic physiological changes as a result of the demands made upon the teacher in his role as a teacher". In several studies related to stress in teaching, experts assumed that the term of teacher stress has the same meaning with "anxiety" and "concern" (Cakmak, 2008; Fuller, 1969; Morris & Morris, 1980). In other words, the term "teacher stress" could be interchangeably used with "concern" and "anxiety" in teaching because these all are synonymous.

Assuming that teaching is one of the 'high stress' professions (Kyriacou, 2000; Travers & Cooper, 1996), it may inevitable that pre-service teacher also experiences stress while doing school based teaching practicum. Despite teaching practicum is valuable for pre-service teachers, it is considered to be one of the most stressful programs (Murray-Harvey, et al., 1999). Additionally, stress experienced by pre-service teachers at their teaching practicum may be tied to various negative results (Murray-Harvey, et al., Hart, 1987). For instance, Murray-Harvey, et al (1999) assumed that stress influences teacher behavior and reduce classroom effectiveness as well as impact on lower student achievement and increased level of student anxiety.

One of the factors generating stress experienced by most of pre-service teachers is related to their own psychology. This category consists of unfamiliarity with the classes, either students' behavior or classroom situations. As stated by Johnson (1996) that lack of knowledge about the students could lead pre-service teachers to having tension in which pre-service teachers feel difficult to understand the students' behavior and students' thought, and thus, they are likely to more focus on themselves rather than on the students. In addition, another concerns experienced by most of EFL pre-service teachers during teaching practicum is related to students' attitudes. Dealing with students that are outside of the box (e.g. disruptive students, extremely active students, extremely passive students) might bring out stress among pre-service teachers (Merc, 2011).

In addition, another cause of stress perceived by most of pre-service teachers is classroom management. Since teaching practicum is the first teaching experience for pre-service teachers, it sounds logical if they are highly anxious about classroom management issues because it is their first experiences in teaching and dealing with students from different backgrounds and different levels

(Barahmeh, 2016). In line with this, Bromfield (2006) emphasized that a fear of being unable to manage a class, keeping the students involved constantly, and managing chattering of students along the learning activity are cause of stress related to classroom management. From these arguments, it can be concluded that issues related to classroom management that mostly experienced by pre-service teacher consist of inability to deal with disruptive students, managing time, and keeping the students on the track while learning is running.

Furthermore, Kyriacou and Stephens (1999) claimed that another cause of stress is evaluation anxiety that refers to the experience of being observed by others. As Hart (1987) stated that what causes pre-service teacher anxiety on teaching practicum is evaluation which is widely related to the presence of someone else such as university supervisor, teacher, peers, researcher, and the others. Additionally, regarding supervisor and teacher, Mahmoudi and Ozkan (2016) revealed that the main cause of stress comes from university supervisor and teacher who are characterized as follow; do not give appropriate feedback to pre-service students, not allow them to have a role in the class, expect too high on their teaching performance, and not have a good relationship with them.

Meanwhile, in relation to English language teaching, Kim and Kim (2004) revealed that teaching sometimes makes even EFL in-service teachers feel anxious because of their limited English language proficiency as well as their lack of knowledge about linguistics and education, also followed with some coherent factors such as lack of confidence, insufficient class preparation, and being compared with native teachers. A common cause of stress perceived by most of EFL pre-service teachers during teaching practicum is related to students' learning motivation. Gan (2013) pointed out that pre-service teachers feel difficult to teach in the class that consists of students who are less motivated to learn English. Moreover, According to Barahmeh (2016), speaking English in front of classes generally generates high anxiety level amongst EFL pre-service teachers even though they have learned English in a long time.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed qualitative research design to gain insight into the central phenomenon of pre-service teachers' stress during teaching practicum. This study applied an observational study to collect the data. According to Altmann (1974), an observational study allows the researcher to observe and record the participants' behaviors, either as events or as states. Therefore, this study used an observational study method to find out the nature of stress which is experienced by pre-service English teachers during teaching practicum.

The participants of this study were two pre-service English teachers who had undertaken teaching practicum in two senior high schools in Yogyakarta. These participants were students of English language education in Islamic University of Indonesia (UII) batch 2015. The selection of participants were determined by considering maximum variation approach that presents a wide variety of participants' background in order to get different perspectives (Creswell, 2007).

The qualitative data in this study were gathered from several sources (i.e. participants, class, documents) using several techniques such as in-depth interview, observation, and document analysis. The interview is conducted to obtain deep information from the participants. Further, the researcher used observation as secondary data in this study and used document as additional evidence that validate the data from interview and observation.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are presented under four main categories as the stress generating factors namely first teaching experience-related stress, classroom management-related stress, stressed of being observed, and English language teaching-related stress.

First Teaching Experience-related Stress

Stress on the first phase of teaching practicum might be inevitable for pre-service teachers. Regarding this, two aspects could lead pre-service teachers into stress during teaching practicum such as unfamiliarity with the class and lack of teaching experience. These are based on the evidence from interview as follow

“I feel so nerveous and under pressure when I came to the class for the first time ”

“Firstly, because **I have not background knowledge yet about language class**, I only hear from what people said...”

”If I am asked about feeling, **it must be nerveous** because... **I have not teaching experience** yet even maybe I only get teaching experience in microteaching class.

The findings above were in line with Johnson’s (1996) argument that lack of knowledge about class and students could lead pre-service teachers to tension, which is pre-service teachers feel difficult to understand the students’ behavior and students’ thought. In conclusion, the first meeting on teaching stage inevitably makes pre-service teachers nerveous because they commonly still lack of experiences in teaching and they do not have much knowledge about the students and class profil.

Classroom Management-related Stress

One of the most common causes of stress experienced by pre-service teachers was related to classroom management. Coskun (2013) asserted the reason why most of pre-service teachers have difficulty in managing classroom; it may be because of the fact that pre-service teachers are not considered to be real teacher. From the result of interview, it is explained that being underestimated by the students could bring pre-service teachers into mental breakdown.

“I hope that they would be behave (well-behaved), and respect to pre-service teacher, which is they did not bully pre-service teacher. But in reality **theywere type of students who like to interrupt so that it indirectly made me experienced mental breakdown”**.

Moreover, the data from document analysis also frequently revealed that disrespectful and disruptive students are cause of stress which experienced by pre-service teachers during teaching practicum.

No.	Topics	Description
1	Identify the problem	<i>Some of my students were so noisy and did not want to respect me as a teacher at that time.</i>
2.	Why is the problem happening	<i>They did not feel happy because they were not being taught with their own English teacher.</i>

Table 1. Excerpt of Document Analysis

Further, lacking of teaching experience while managing the students who had various characters might trigger stress. The type of students that mostly emerged in the class was disruptive student, for instance, excess noise made by the students which was in form of background chatter, students talking about their agenda, and talking over the teacher (Bromfield, 2006). From the result of the interview, it was found

that there were students who liked to chatter and talk when the teacher was talking, thus, pre-service teachers felt quite worry about that and because it could disturb their concentration during teaching.

“...I was annoyed, like a mental breakdown. Which is we teach there, it definitely generates nervous. Even their (students) chirps are quite freak. So, my focus is distracted by them.”

Moreover, regarding classroom management, another aspect that causes stress among most of pre-service teachers is time management. From the interview, it is indicated that pre-service teachers particularly feel quite anxious on teaching practicum because of technical issues such as trouble on the speaker, connector cable, etc. These technical issues could confuse the time allocation that has been prepared in lesson plan. Further, limited time also could generate apprehension during teaching, as shown in the result of the interview below

“Why I did always look at the time? Because the exercise was just a little. I was worried if I explained the whole materies, the exercise could not be finished.”

Based on the observation notes above, it could be concluded that pre-service teacher might be worried whether the time would be sufficient or not to carry out all activities that fit to lesson plan. Those evidences corroborated the previous research conducted by Eksi & Yakisik (2016) which in the same way explained that time management cause pre-service teachers feel somewhat anxious during teaching practicum.

Stressed of Being Observed

Being observed by supervising teacher could cause anxiety among pre-service teachers. From the result of interview, both of the participants revealed that being observed by supervising teacher when teaching really made them nervous. One participant said that he/she was nervous because his/her supervising teacher was very terrifying, while the other participant gave a reason that he/she was nervous for the presence of supervising teacher due to his/her fear about receiving low grade result for his/her teaching performance.

“Supervising teacher? Actually I felt nervous and very very afraid because my supervising teacher was so creepy.”

“If supervising teacher... At first, what I felt was probably nervous, which is... we teach, I mean I teach, while the supervising teacher observed me. I was not afraid, but... I was afraid when I was teaching suddenly I made a mistake. Therefore, I was worried if the supervising teacher though and judged me like this “this undergraduate students could not teach”. Like that.”

The evidences above in line with the previous research conducted by Capel (1997) which claimed that one of major causes of anxiety on teaching practicum is being observed, evaluated, and assessed by supervisors. Further, although pre-service teachers has tried to do their best in teaching, they still did not know what their supervising teacher observed or expected from their teaching performance. This might lead them into stress during teaching practicum.

English Language Teaching-related Stress

For EFL in-service teacher, teaching English might be more challenging than native teacher. According to Kim and Kim (2004), teaching sometimes makes even EFL in-service teachers feel anxious because of their limited English language proficiency as well as lack of knowledge about linguistics and education. If in-service teachers possibly feel anxious during teaching, pre-service

teachers may be more anxious about that. The results of interview in this study mentioned that pre-service teacher felt nervous on using English because of their self-unconfidence about their English competence, in particular, pre-service teacher is likely to be afraid of making students more confused to understand the lesson.

“When I talked and delivered the material, which I should made the students understand, the students were even confuse or complicated when I used English language. That’s why I preferred to use Indonesian language”

Moreover, lack of vocabulary and grammar became the reasons why pre-service teacher sometimes avoided using English in the class. Consequently, pre-service teacher preferred to use the first language instead of using English.

“...I thought that I was afraid of making a mistake on grammar and vocabulary so that the students did not respect me anymore”

The data findings from mentioned above corroborated Sammephet and Wanphet (2013) finding which stated that most of pre-service teacher feel anxious on their teaching practicum because they lack of confidence in using English in the class and being afraid of making grammatical mistakes. For this reason, most of pre-service EFL teachers preferred to use their first language rather than use English in the class.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The conclusion in this study is based on the research finding and discussion on students’ perception about stress as they experienced during school-based teaching practicum. From the result of study, it is found that pre-service teachers encounter stress during teaching practicum because of some reasons which are categorized into four factors such as first teaching experience-related stress, classroom management-related stress, stressed of being observed, and English language teaching-related stress. Findings about each factor will be elaborated briefly within some points as follow

1. First Teaching Experience-related Stress

When two participants are asked and observed how did they feel at the first meeting of teaching practicum, both of them asked that they were very nervous. It is indicated that stress at the first teaching practicum may not be avoided by most of pre-service teachers. Two fundamental things become a reason why pre-service teachers felt nervous or stress on the first meeting of teaching practicum, namely lack of teaching experience and unfamiliarity with the students and class situation.

2. Classroom Management-related Stress

A common concern that leads most of pre-service teachers into stress during teaching practicum is classroom management. Specifically, regarding classroom management, pre-service teachers feel stress during teaching practicum because they feel unappreciated as a real teacher. This is illustrated by perception of pre-service teachers, their account in their report of practicum, and their field observation, that most of students often make a noisy and underestimate at pre-service teachers. Some disruptive students also become a reason why pre-service teachers feel stress. In addition, concerns about managing time that disturbed by technical issues and limited time also make pre-service teachers anxious during teaching practicum.

3. Stressed of Being Observed

Another factor-generating stress as experienced by pre-service teachers during teaching practicum is being observed. In this study, it is found that being observed by supervising teacher mostly makes pre-service teacher very nervous during their teaching. Particularly, in this case, terrify supervising teacher may trigger stress on teaching practicum. Further, supervising teacher assessment also influences pre-service teachers' teaching performance.

4. English Language Teaching-related Stress

In relation to English language teaching, pre-service teachers feel that they are also getting anxious on teaching practicum. It may be a little bit different from another subject; pre-service English teachers particularly face high level of stress in teaching English as foreign language. It is because most of pre-service teachers did not feel confident to use English in the class. They are worried that students become more confused and do not understand the lesson when they speak or deliver it in English. Moreover, for pre-service teachers, lack of vocabulary and grammar also brings about stress during teaching practicum.

In addition, based on the research findings, it was found some emergent findings about how did pre-service English teachers perceive their stress during teaching in which it is categorized into three coping strategies such as setting positive thinking, developing confidence, and creating an orderly classroom. Finally, this study can be concluded with the recommendations that are beneficial for some parties so that a successful teaching practicum can be achieved afterwards. First, in terms of pre-service teachers, they should think about possible causes of stress before going to the field of teaching practicum. It is also necessary to prepare effective coping strategies toward stress during teaching so that some concerns that suddenly emerged in the class can be managed properly. In addition, pre-service teachers need to create classroom activities that are fun and interesting so that the students will be not bored easily and more interested to learn English. Second, in order to extend the research area, future researcher should focus on investigating coping strategies toward stress during teaching practicum, particularly in context of English language teaching. Although a lot of studies have discussed about coping strategies, only a few of them that investigate English language teaching context. Therefore, future research about coping strategies will be beneficial for pre-service English teachers in general in order to alleviate their stress during practicum.

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