

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

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Abstract

Indonesian government seriously takes the issue of the teacher education graduates who are considered not to have an established ability to become professional teacher in school, even resulting in disagreement with the implementation of the program. This further calls for a more thorough investigation of the inherent legitimacy of new teachers in Indonesia, as well as their quality. The objective of this study was to reveal pre-service teachers' perceptions of their own competency and readiness to teach. This study employed a survey research design involving 67 undergraduate students of university in Lamongan. The result of this research showed that p value (.258) is greater than α (.05), suggesting that there was no correlation between pre-service teachers' perception toward their competence and readiness for teaching profession. Nevertheless, on their perceptions, the pre-service teachers perceived their

competence and their readiness were positively in good category and ready for teaching profession. By realizing and considering the aspects for the teaching profession, they feel more confident and ready to face the real environment of teaching as their profession.

Keywords: pre-service teachers, perception, competence, readiness

INTRODUCTION

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

The program affects all graduates of a teacher education program, including English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher. It inflicted some responses, including teacher education university academics who do not agree with the implementation of the program. Their justification is based on the assumption and argument that teacher education graduates are well-qualified to become instructors and are ready to work professionally. This statement therefore calls attention to the necessity for a more thorough investigation of new teachers' intrinsic legitimacy in Indonesia, as well as their quality (Julia, Subarjah, Maulana, Sujana, Isrokatun, Nugraha, & Rachmatin, 2020).

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

Teacher readiness also play essential role for teachers to work professionally. It is the willingness and preparedness in carrying out their roles as teachers, both emotionally, cognitively, behaviorally, and so on. Teachers' readiness has important role in preparing the pre-service teachers before facing profession as teacher. To achieve a job, people need to have good preparedness needed in work, both physical/behavioral readiness, mental readiness and cognitive readiness. Those

aspects may influence their readiness in carrying out or maintaining their jobs (Williford, Maier, Downer, Pianta, & Howes, 2013; Hatfield, Burchinal, Pianta, & Sideris, 2016; Mohamed, Valcke, & Wever, 2016).

The competence and/or readiness of teachers have become the focus on many studies. Mohamed, et al. (2016) focused on identifying the important areas in which these aspiring teachers must be developed before they can be ready for the classroom, particularly the central role of their teacher educators in developing their professional competence. This is essential for pre-service teachers to believe that they are competent and ready to teach in this discipline. Teachers are expected to be able to adjust to changing situations because there are so many changes occur in real situations. The new teachers that have been prepared their competence will feel confident to face the environment (Julia et al., 2020).

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

Because of these doubts, this study focuses on investigating the perceptions of pre-service teachers who are undergraduate students about their competence and readiness for their teaching profession, and measuring the correlation between pre-service teachers' perception of their competence and their readiness. In addition, this competency is expected to help pre-service teachers to develop their knowledge and skills during their careers to become professional English teacher and also help to achieve educational standards.

METHOD

To determine pre-service teachers' perceptions of their competence and readiness, the researcher conducted a survey research design and used questionnaires as the instrument. The researcher then conducted a correlational research design to find the correlation between pre-service teachers' perceptions of their competence and their readiness for teaching profession. The respondents in this study were 67 undergraduate students from the University of Lamongan. They had enrolled in a real teaching program in order to gain real-world teaching experience.

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

The researcher used Pearson product-moment of the SPSS 20 version to measure how accurate the instruments are in this research. After testing the questionnaires' validity through SPSS, the researcher found that all items were valid at point of .05 based on the Pearson correlation ($r > r\text{-table} = .3550$). For asses the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher measured the coefficient of Cronbach alpha in SPSS 20 version. To know the level of reliability, the result was determined based on the classification of correlation coefficient. The first questionnaire was claimed as a good test since it gained very high (very strong) reliability level with $r = .823$ ($r \geq 0.80$), while the second questionnaire was claimed high (string) reliability level with $r = .744$ ($0.60 < r < 0.80$) as can be seen in table 1 from SPSS 20 below.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

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

Then, the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the respondents via Google Form link due to the regulation of social and physical distancing. The 4-points Likert scale options were provided from the lowest to the highest levels: (1) never, (2) rarely, (3) often, and (4) always. Respondents should select the appropriate choice scales to indicate their perception on the statements. According to the scale, the higher the score the respondents select, the more they believe they agree with the statement.

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

The researcher then used SPSS to measure the correlation between the two variables. Finally, the researcher looked at the Significant (2-tailed) value to interpret the data. There is a correlation between the two variables if the Sig. (2-tailed) score is less than .05. Otherwise, there is no correlation between the two variables if the Sig. (2-tailed) is more than .05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

After collecting the data from the respondents, the researcher started to analyze the average scores of the questionnaires, measuring the correlation, and interpret the result. The result and discussion will be described and explained below.

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

Perception of Pre-Service Teachers' Competence

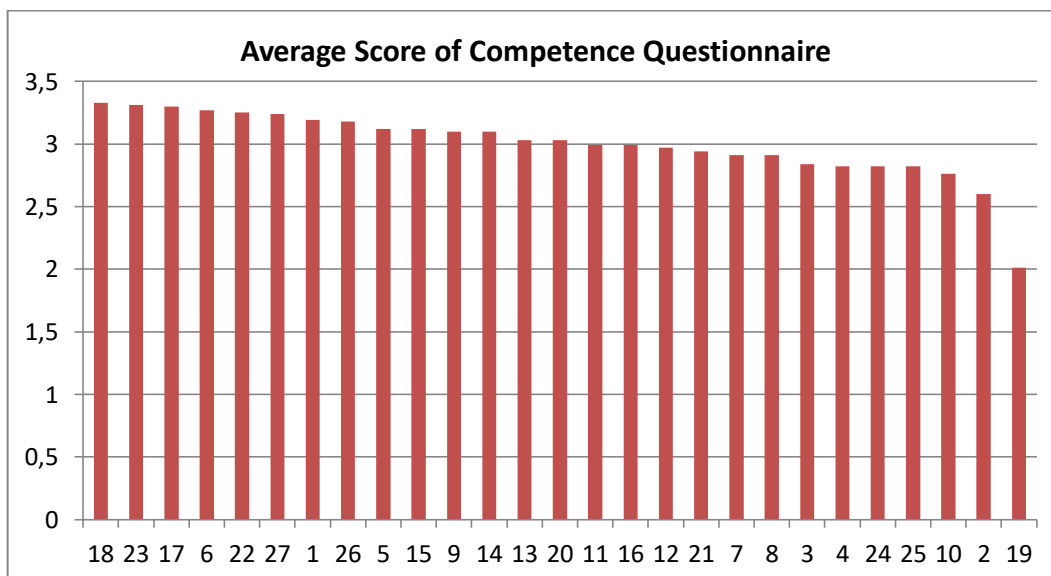


Figure 1. Average Score of Competence Questionnaire

Based on the Figure 1, it showed that the highest average score came from statement number 18 *"I practice fair treatment for the students."* with an average score was 3.33. It means many respondents agree that they treat their students fairly. While the lowest average score came from statement number 19 *"I demonstrate a good behavior to be a role mode"* with an average score was 2.01. There were only few respondents who felt confident to perceive themselves as a role model. Even though there were few respondents agreed to the statement, the score is still higher than 2, out of 4 scores which indicated that the respondents' perceptions on their competence were still positive.

Perception of Pre-Service Teachers' Readiness

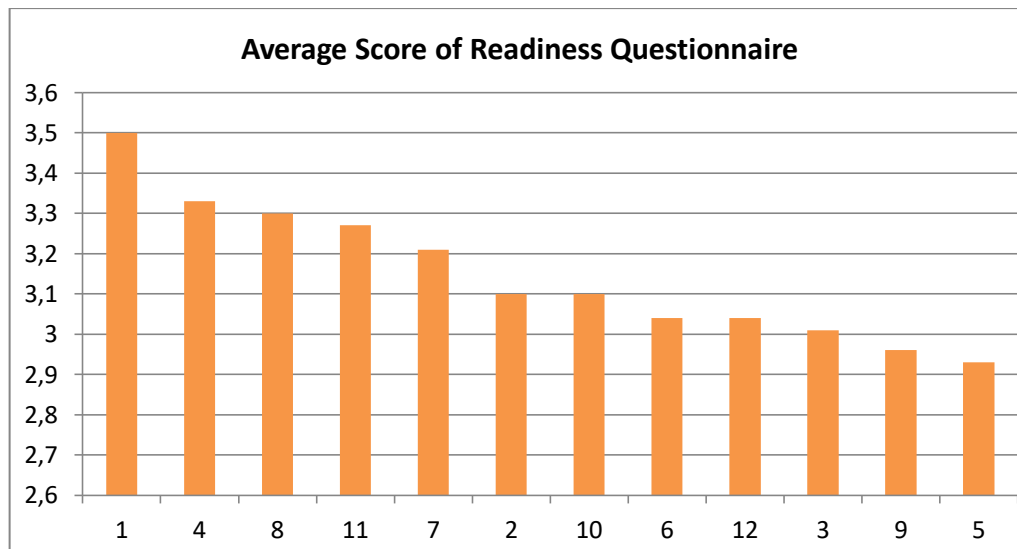


Figure 2. Average Score of Readiness Questionnaire.

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

service teachers were still perceived positively to their readiness for teaching profession.

Correlation Test

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

Table 2. Correlations result

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

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

Discussions

Based on the results in this research, it revealed that the majority of the respondents considered they were competent in all competency areas and ready as well for teaching profession. This result is in line with the study by Balyer (2017), Julia et al., (2020), and Tutyandari (2020), whose investigation results showed that the new

teachers' competencies and readiness were in good category. The respondents felt confident in their ability to carry out their profession as professional teachers in the future, mostly at the ethical standards and values,

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

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

Furthermore, based on the correlation test, the result is not in line with the research from Sulaiman (2017) which in his research found a moderately strong positive relationship between competency and readiness for creativity in teaching among trainee teachers in his research. He also stated that a teacher's professionalism can be measured by their ability to use multiple approaches or teaching tactics in the classroom. Those with a high degree of expertise and preparedness in teaching are more successful in delivering lessons to students and are better equipped to solve difficulties.

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

regulation of social and physical distancing, and less participants responded to the research, thus affecting the results obtained.

CONCLUSION

This research has identified and discovered the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their competence and their readiness for teaching profession. Based on the results, it can be concluded that the most pre-service teachers' thought that their competence were positive in all areas and ready for teaching profession. However, based on the results of the correlation test, this research showed pre-service teachers' perceptions of their competence does not correlate with their readiness for teaching profession.

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

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