CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is intended to investigate EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of mentoring support during field teaching practice. This chapter depicts the background of the study, the scope of the study, the research question, and the purpose of the study. Moreover, it includes the significance of the study and the definition of the key terms used in this study.

1.1   Background of the Study

Mentoring support has recently become a topic of empirical debate in education, as well as one of the most essential and crucial components for preparing future teachers (Chien, 2015; Graves, 2010; Iqbal, 2017; Nguyen & Baldauf, 2010). Mentoring is an effective approach in teacher education for improving teachers' professional development because it provides valuable opportunities for professional growth (Tawalbeh, 2021). Mentoring preservice teachers in general, and EFL preservice teachers in particular, has been advocated as a reform in preservice teacher education since the late 1980s (Hudson, Nguyen, & Hudson, 2009). Mentoring is required for any teaching program's mission is to train more qualified teachers (Walkington, 2005). In other words, mentoring is a central process that involves supervising scholar-teachers' tasks. There need to be more research studies on mentoring for the professional development of student practicum students throughout the teaching practicum period. Researchers, teacher educators, and teachers are all interested in the processes of school practicum and

their contribution to pre-service teachers learning. Some studies concentrated on mentors and the mentoring provided by experienced teachers in schools. In contrast, others concentrated on pre-service teachers and their concerns about the practicum process in their school placements. Other studies, however, have focused on the work of teacher educators in identifying ways to assist future teachers - pre-service teachers - in developing their knowledge of teaching prior to engaging in teaching experiences (Trumbull & Fluet, 2008).

Teaching practicum is one of the education programs for pre-service teachers. Pre-service teachers learned about teaching in various contexts, including lesson planning, implementation skills, classroom management, and the development of professional and personal qualities (Nora & Crisp, 2007; Yook & Lee, 2016). Pre-service teachers can practice their teaching before they face it in a real-life situation. During the teaching practicum, pre-service teachers will be equipped with some teaching theories that will allow them to maximize their teaching in a positive environment. Before beginning their teaching practicum program, they should complete a Microteaching course that will provide them with numerous teaching theories. They also have the opportunity to practice their teaching in a simulation class. Pre-service teachers can evaluate their teaching practice in class to improve their teaching. Teaching practicum plays an important role in teacher education, particularly in the understanding and improving language teaching.

Teaching practice in an educational context occurs when students practice teaching based on experience and theory learned in the institution. According to Marais (2013), the term "teaching practice" refers to the variety of experiences

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that pre-service teachers are exposed to while working in classrooms and schools. Furthermore, Rees, Pardo and Parker (2013) stated that each pre-service teacher's class, grade, and material or topic would impact their experience. Pre-service teachers with previous teaching experiences will understand and be able to estimate what they should do in their next teaching experience. Teaching practice is essential preparation for pre-service teachers before they apply what they have learned in their classes in the real world (Goh, 2009). Practicum is a field experience that enables students to observe and apply what they have learned in class in order to become professionals. Practicum is a course of study for teachers, doctors, nurses, and others that involve actually working in the field of study and applying what they have learned in school (Lawson, Çakmak, Gündüz, & Busher, 2015). Teacher education programs have gotten much attention as researchers and practitioners try to figure out how to best ensure graduates are prepared to teach all learners, and districts can reduce turnover rates (Ludwig, Kirshstein, & Sidana, 2010). Although teacher education programs produce a significant number of prospective teachers, not all graduates go on to work in the field.

In international context, research has conducted by Vásquez, Rosas and Martin (2019), the researchers focuses on the novice teacher's perception of past mentoring. The data indicates that mentors' personal characteristics were deemed to be the most important. However, instructors believe that variables such as school requirements and feedback are not commonly considered by their mentors, despite the fact that these components have an influence on the mentoring process. It is anticipated that through studying teacher perspectives, more knowledge regarding future EFL student teacher preparation would be gathered,

allowing programs to better meet the unique requirements of mentees during their practicum time.

Hennissen, Crasborn, Brouwer, Korthagen and Bergen (2011) investigated pre-service teacher perceptions of mentor teachers' developing use of mentoring skills. The research results show that six types of mentoring abilities were viewed by pre-service teachers as providing emotional support and five others as providing work aid. alterations in mentor instructors' frequencies of use of diverse skills, as noted by independent raters, coincided to a significant extent with alterations in mentoring skills. Meanwhile, Maddamsetti (2018) also conducted study which focuses on perceptions of pre-service teachers on mentor teachers' roles in promoting inclusive practicum. The data shows that a mentor teacher's open dialogues and readiness to host those pupils have a beneficial impact on their learning and progress. The data also show that mentor teachers' facilitative responsibilities in promoting inclusive settings overlap with the socio-cultural and political contexts of practicum schools and universities. The study closes with recommendations for improving the inclusion of diverse pre-service teachers through the collaborative responsibilities of numerous practicum stakeholders, such as preservice teachers, mentor teachers, practicum schools, and universities.

In Asian context, Nguyen (2013) conducted interviews with pre-service teachers in Vietnam regarding the impact of mentor assistance on psychological pre-service teachers during practicum at school. The research finding shows that preservice EFL instructors in the experimental group reported more psychological support from their peers than those in the control group. The empirical data for

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introducing a peer mentorship model for preserve EFL instructors during the practicum supports the necessity for a practicum reform. In addition, Nguyen and Baldauf (2010) also conducted a study that focused on the effectiveness of peer mentoring for pre-service teachers during practicum. The results show that school practicum senior teacher mentors, university supervisors, and self-assessment surveys, participants in the peer mentorship program improved significantly in their instructional practice ratings as compared to their peers. Peer mentorship might be an important factor in increasing the quality of pre-service teacher education programs.

Tawalbeh (2021) conducted a study on perceptions and suggestions of pre service teachers on mentoring experiences during practicum. The data show that the mentoring experience was satisfactory to the pre-service teacher. They are enthusiastic about the mentorship program and the mentor's tasks and obligations. However, some pre-service teacher are concerned about some aspects of their mentoring experience. Furthermore, the mentees provided a number of ideas for making the mentoring experience more successful.

In Indonesian context, Wati (2020) has conducted studies related to mentoring, researcher focused on how the impact of individual assistance. The results of this study indicate that individual mentoring allowed pre-service students to experience the four aspects, while the mentor teacher grew professionally in three areas: interactional skills, self-awareness, and attitude. In addition, Humaira, Rachmadtullah, Sesrita, Laeli, Muhdiyati and Firmansyah (2021) also conducted a study which focused on the pre-service teachers perceptions of university mentoring program. The result show that the mentorship

program that the university should create for inclusive primary schools in Indonesia should include academic and non-academic features that are collaborative and sustainable. In general, the university must be a resource center for inclusive education research and development that can answer the problem of implementing inclusive education at all levels of education.

A current study was also conducted by Rasmitadila, Megan and Reza (2022). The researchers investigated teachers perceptions of the role of universities in mentoring programs. Based on the findings of the study, it was discovered that universities' involvement in mentoring programs for inclusive elementary schools include developing effective instructional methods and providing human resources capable of implementing inclusive education in inclusive primary schools. This research is intended to serve as the foundation for policymakers, particularly those in universities, to develop appropriate and relevant mentorship programs for the issues confronting inclusive primary schools.

Kuswandono (2017) investigated mentor teachers' voices on pre-service English teachers' professional learning. The finding show that the mentors teachers' confidence in guiding PSETS during school-based practicum should be further enhanced. Pre-service English teachers (PSETs), according to the mentor teachers, need to study and experience more fundamental parts of teaching, such as interpersonal skills and emotional engagement in teaching, as well as leadership. Implications for teacher education are discussed in order to increase the quality of relationships between pre-service English teachers and mentor instructors.

So far, there is very little systematic research on mentoring for the professional development of student practicum students throughout the teaching practicum period. Even though several studies have been conducted on mentoring English Foreign Language (EFL) teaching (Awaya, Heyler, Linsky, Lum, & Wakukawa, 2003; Izadinia, 2015 b; Mann & Tang, 2012; Tasnim, 2020), there have been few studies on EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of mentoring support during field teaching practice. On the other hand, many researchers have yet to find pre-service teachers' perceptions of mentoring support. Hence, the present study aims to investigate EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of mentoring support during field teaching practice to fill the gap.

Investigating pre-service teachers' perceptions may provide EFL specialists with insights into improving mentorship programs (Tawalbeh, 2021). This research is critical because numerous issues concern students' perceptions during field practice. Furthermore, this research can serve as a reflection for school mentors, allowing future fieldwork activities to run more smoothly.

1.2   Research Question

Regarding the focus of the study that has been discussed earlier, the following research question is formulated "What are EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of mentoring support during field teaching practice?"

1.3   Scope of the Study

This study used a qualitative method to focus on the EFL Pre-service teachers' perceptions of mentoring support during field teaching practice. This

study involved seven six-semester EFL pre-service teacher that committed to teaching practice (PLP II). This study limits the broad areas to focus on pre-service teachers' perceptions of during field teaching practice. Four major domains were identified in the literature: 1) psychological or emotional support, 2) goal setting and career paths, 3) academic subject knowledge support, and 4) the existence of a role model.

1.4   Purpose of the Study

In this context, this present study aims to investigate EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of mentoring support during field teaching practice.

1.5   Significance of the Study

This study's result can give useful knowledge about mentoring support during teaching practice. It can always develop the researcher-self to be a future professional teacher. On the other hand, this study can provide information about the extent of guidance and support given to pre-service teachers during teaching practice. Mentors know what support they must provide to pre-service practicum during teaching practice. This research can be useful to provide some information about the guidance and support their pre-service will get from their mentors during teaching practicum so that the supervisor frequently has to supervise their students.

Finally, the result of this study will provide beneficial knowledge and information about the mentoring support during teaching practicum, and it can be a reference to further research in conducting similar research.

1.5   Definition of Key Terms

Mentor: the mentor is a teacher in a specific field of study who accompanies and guides students' practicum activities at school. A mentor is a teacher in schools where the practitioner guides students who practice according to their field of study. Mentor plays an essential role in guiding practical students in implementing PLP. Besides, the mentor is also significant in guiding students in doing teacher assignments apart from teaching (Dasmo & Sumaryati, 2014). Mentoring is a form of personal and professional partnership, usually involving a more experienced practitioner supporting a less-experienced one (Hudson & Nguyen, 2008). Yendol-Hoppey, Jacobs, and Dana (2009) categorize six types of mentoring, including that provided in (1) a yearlong internship, (2) an apprenticeship model, or by (3) retired educators, (4) cooperating teachers, (5) school-based mentors, and (6) full-time cohort mentors. In this study, expert teachers are chosen and considered as mentors.

Perception: the Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (Richards, Schmidt, Kendricks, & Kim, 2003) defines perception as the recognition and understanding of events, objects, and stimuli through the use of senses: sight, hearing, touch, and others. Perceptions based on past experiences, assumptions about human behaviour, knowledge of other circumstances, current moods/desires/wishes, and expectations. In this research, the perception was used to determine the extent of pre-service reachers' satisfaction with the support they received from their mentor during teaching practice.

Teaching practice: teaching practice is a core aspect of any teacher education program. It depends on the program's level. It is also a place for students to experiment with their acquired knowledge and apply it to what they learned in college. Numerous studies emphasized the value of practicum in teaching programs. Specific expertise is needed to make a student-teacher an appropriate teacher in the future. Also, teachers are required not only for pedagogical knowledge but also for pedagogical content knowledge (Othman, Hashim, Ariffin, Abdullah, & Yusof, 2019).