

Perceptions and Factors Affecting the Pre-Service Teachers' Field Study (FS) Observations

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Abstract

The development of pre-service teachers to teaching career are enhance through a field study. Field study is one of the major courses of pre-service teachers in which they are exposed to teaching environment in a school setting. Pre-service teachers are exposed to different teaching-learning process in a different classrooms and class subjects to observe how teaching takes place. This study aim to gather perceptions of the pre-service teachers during their field study observations and investigate the factors that affect their field study observations through survey and descriptive research. Using structured and unstructured questionnaires, twenty five (25) students enrolled in field study 6 "On Becoming a Teacher" and field study 5 "Learning Assessment Strategies were taken as respondents of the study. From the data gathered, analysis revealed that the demographic profile of the respondents are mostly 18-20 years old, single, parents educational attainment were baccalaureate degree holder and government employee with monthly income of between 15,000-20,000 Philippine money. Upon survey and interviews all (100%) of the pre-service teachers has positive perceptions of their field study observations in which it develops their quality of becoming a teachers. However, attitudes of the cooperating teachers, time management and subject loads are the factors that affect their field study observations. Thus, this study recommended that orientations between pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers must be conducted prior to pre-service teachers' classroom observations. Moreover, subject loads for the pre-service teachers during field study must be limited for them to focus the real teaching environment.

Keywords: field study, pre-service teachers, perceptions.

Introduction

Field study (FS) is an extended practicum program required by the Philippine Curriculum who offered education courses. FS is one of the major activities of BEAM's pre-service teacher training in which future teachers under Teacher Education Institution (TEI) are deploy to different schools for actual classroom observations (BEAM, 2009). Teachers and future teachers need to develop values making their profession as the noblest among others. Personality and outlook of individual person really matter so as to teachers and becoming teachers (Valdez, 2017). Future teachers should expose their selves to the realities of teaching for them to ponder whether they ready for a teaching career. Teacher Education and Development Program (TEDP) conceptualize a teacher's career path that should start pre-service to enhance the education and training of the future teachers.

Pre-service teachers undergo FS observation and practicum to a certain school to work with effective teachers as the supervising practitioners and mentors as well (Chester, 2013). FS subjects as field study courses are practical learning experiences, aligned to the professional education courses that provide opportunities for the pre-service teachers to capture teaching-learning experiences from the actual learning environment. Having their authentic learning experiences pre-service teachers can prepare themselves to become competent future teachers (ELC Handbook, 2004).

Teacher is primarily predestined for the classroom to teach. However, teachers need to relate her/his teaching to the communities such as the school community and the community outside the school. Teachers must be equipped with competencies during pre-service education programs so that they can easily understand the complex characteristics of different ethnic groups of their learners, different languages and social classes (Salandanan & Corpuz, 2012). Experiential learning is a valuable component of the teacher education program. Under the new teacher education curriculum, experiential learning courses consist of six (6) units of field study courses and six (6) units of practice teaching. Early exposure of the pre-service teachers in the actual learning environment will ensure better preparation and appreciation of the future teachers (ELC Handbook, 2004). FS observation and practice teaching offers great opportunities to the pre-service teachers to experiment and explore various aspects in teaching and classroom management. Learning from experience is unforgettable and considered as a suitable approach in preparing the future teachers (Grossman & McDonald, 2008).

Perceptions and factors affecting the pre-service teachers' field observation were investigated so as to obtain substantial information on how the pre-service teachers undergone their field study observations and identify the factors that positively and negatively affect their actual teaching observation and even practice teaching. Specifically it investigated the following:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents;
2. What is the perception of the pre-service teachers on their field study observations?
and
3. What are the factors affecting their field study observations?

Methodology

Participants

This study was participated by twenty-five (25) fourth year college majoring Bachelor of Science in Education at Jamaitul Philippine Al-Islamia (JPI), Marawi City Philippines prior to Marawi, Philippines. These 25 students are pre-service teachers enrolled in FS 5 and FS 6 subjects' school year 2016-2017. Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used considering they are the pre-service teachers who took field study observation and practice teaching as their practicum.

Design

This study used a descriptive research design. Descriptive research design involves the description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of the present nature, composition or processes observed and gathered during survey. This descriptive research design was used in describing the factors affecting the field study observations among re-service teachers and at the same time describe their perceptions during their field study observations.

Research Instruments

Instruments used includes structured and unstructured survey questionnaires which contains different parts namely: part 1 the demographic profile of the respondents, part 2 the interview for pre-service teachers perceptions during their field study observations, and part 3 the survey questionnaire on the factors that affect their field study observations.

Procedure

Prior to the conduct of the survey, the necessary research instruments were prepared, validated and reproduced. Furthermore proper entry protocol and respect of the intellectual right of the participants were strictly followed and their responses were treated with utmost confidentiality. Questionnaires for the personal/demographic profile of the participants and the checklist of the factors affecting their FS observation and practice teaching were given to them and retrieved afterwards. Personal interview to the participants was conducted according to their most convenient time and availability. Data gathered were tabulated and coded for data analysis.

Data Analysis

The gathered data were analysed both quantitative and qualitative analysis using descriptive statistical analysis and excerpt quotations respectively.

Results

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic profile includes age, civil status, parents' educational attainment, parents occupation, and monthly income of the participants parent.

Table 1. Age of the Pre-Service Teachers

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
18-20	15	60%
21-22	10	40%
23-24	0	0
Total	25	100%

Table 2. Pre-Service Teachers Civil Status

Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	24	96%
Married	1	4%
Total	25	100%

Table 3. Pre-Service Teachers Parents Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
Doctoral Degree	1	4%
Master's Degree	1	4%
Baccalaureate	15	60%
Vocational	5	20%
High School	3	12%
Elementary	0	0
Total	25	100%

Table 4.Pre-Service Teachers Parents Occupation

Parents Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Government Employee	15	60%
Private Employee	5	20%
Business	5	20%
Total	25	100%

Table 5. Pre-Service Teachers Parent Monthly Income

Monthly Income (PhP)	Frequency	Percentage
20,000 – 25,000	1	4%
15,000 – 20,000	14	56%
10,000 – 15,000	10	40%
Total	25	100%

Pre-service Teachers Perceptions

Perceptions of the pre-service teachers were limited only on their experiences during class observations and practice teaching.

Table 6.Pre-Service Teachers Perceptions during their Field Study Observations

Perception	Weighted Mean	Description
The pressure and time has taught me how to become responsible, manage time, and productive learner	4.0	Always
My field study observations developed my learning competence in varied ways	4.0	Always
I learned a lot during my field study observations and develop a passion to teaching.	3.6	Always
I develop different skills in teaching and classroom management in a diverse students	3.4	Often
My pedagogical content knowledge in teaching is enhance through my field study observations	3.5	Always
Overall	3.7	Always

Legend:

3.5 – 4.0 = *Always*

2.5 – 3.4 = *Often*

1.5 – 2.4 = *Seldom*

1.0 – 1.4 = *Never*

Factors Affecting the Pre-Service Teachers Field Study

Teaching is not an easy job. It requires patient, nobility, perseverance and arts. Pre –service teachers exposed to field study are exposed to different pressures and stress in dealing the students, managing the classroom, doing other school requirements, and working with their teacher supervisor. Factors that they encountered in the field varies accordingly to the school environment they are assigned. These factors may be advantageous or disadvantageous to their

studies and preparation for a teaching career. Table 7 summarizes the factors that are commonly experienced by the pre-service teachers during their field study observation and practice teaching.

Table 7. Factors Affecting Pre-Service Teachers Field Study Observations

Factors	Weighted Mean	Description
Attitude of the cooperating teachers	3.8	Always
Time management of the pre-service teachers	2.9	Often
Subject loads of the pre-service teachers	3.7	Always
Overall	3.47	Always

Legend:

3.5 – 4.0 = *Always*

2.5 – 3.4 = *Often*

1.5 – 2.4 = *Seldom*

1.0 – 1.4 = *Never*

Discussion

From the gathered data, results revealed that the pre-service teachers' demographic profile varies from each other, but mostly are mature enough (18-22 years old). This is implying that they are on its final stage for baccalaureate degree since Philippine Education system old curriculum requires only 6 years elementary, 4 years in high school and 4 years in Teacher Education program or BSEd/BEEEd Education. Furthermore, mostly are single, with parents who graduated a baccalaureate degree, government employed with a monthly income of between 10,000 – 20,000 PhP. This findings implied that the pre-service teachers prioritize their study by not marrying at early stage and despite of the low monthly income of their parents. They may be challenge since 60% of their parents are tertiary graduate and government employee, but despite of being employed their monthly income is still very low. These pre-service teachers aim to help their parents by augmenting their monthly income someday when they are already engaged as In-service teachers (Tables 1 – 5).

Upon survey and interviews, pre-service teachers perceived and believed that field observations trained them to become a teacher equipped with enrich pedagogical content knowledge. As shown in Table 6, pre-service acknowledge the importance of field study and indicate how field study shape them and enhance their skills to become a teacher, in which they said that their field study observations bring a lot of changes on their views in teaching and change their learning and teaching competence always.

Mitchell and Mckinnon (2001), research study on classroom approaches among Victorian teachers revealed that effective teaching should employ intellectual sharing, hands-on, independent decision making, assorted ways of learning experiences, open forum, peer tutoring, risk taking, intellectually challenging teaching procedure, promote specific aspects of quality learning, develop student awareness, and assess different aspects of quality of learning. Through field study observation and practice teaching of pre-service teachers, the pre-service teachers are exposed and trained already on the different teaching techniques and classroom management in which they can use when they are already engage in in-service teaching. Foller (2002) accounted productive pedagogies that students should be engaged on intellectual quality demands. Learning tasks must enable the students to transform their understanding, communicate their

understanding and ideas meaningfully through higher order thinking, deep knowledge, substantive conversation, and a good problem solver.

However, despite of the positive contributions of the field study observation and practice teaching employed to the pre-service teachers, it is undeniable that there are factors affecting their field study observations and practice teaching, which could hinder their positive outlook to teaching. Table 7 shows that the attitudes of their cooperating teacher always affects their class observations and practice teaching, their time management and subject loads also add burden to their workload while they undergo their field study observations and practice teaching. Upon interviews, the factors presented in Table 7 connote both positive and negative effects to the pre-service teachers. Excerpt below quoted relevance as justification to these claims.

The attitude of my cooperating teacher is.....

“Some cooperative teachers shared their styles in managing classrooms”

“Some Cooperating teachers are helpful in giving their techniques to classroom discipline”

“Some cooperating teachers help us adapt and learn their professional knowledge”

“Some of the cooperating teachers are too strict in dealing with us which made us aware of our strength and weakness coping mechanisms, and it bring fear to us to engage more in observing their classes”

“Some cooperating teachers taught positive personal values in dealing with the diversity of the learners in class”

“My cooperating teacher or teacher supervisor is so strict and I am afraid to approach her”. I cannot share to her the problems I encountered in the class particularly in disciplining the students”

Time management is....

“I’m comfortable with the time given to us by the cooperative teachers” 1 week is enough to observe”

“Forty minutes per visit give us opportunity to learn more”

“It’s too boring to stay 40 minutes a day waiting for time to pass out”

“Lack of time to answer those difficult questions, especially interviewing teachers”

“Submitting my requirements gives me more time to accomplish it”

“I have a difficulty in managing my time because I still have many subjects to attend to aside from field study”

“Forty minutes observing the class is good enough for me to learn various techniques in dealing the students and teaching the lessons to the students”

“Time management is very important to us pre-service teachers who took field study because we have so many things to prepare and to attend to like checking test papers, preparing the lessons, studying and doing requirements for our other subjects”

The subject loads....

“Lot of question keeps us bored, especially I’m loaded with my subjects”

“I cannot cope up with the instructions because of my busy work”

“I have one subject only so I can answer all of the questions in my FS handbook”

“Because of my subject loads, I have no time to observe”

Although I have a lot of subjects, I keep motivating myself to get free time in answering my FS handbook”

“My many subjects left that is simultaneously taken with my FS subjects hinder me to perform religiously my field study”. Due to my subject loads my field observations are affected and it limits my personal experiences in the world of teaching”.

Reports on the success of scaffolding literacy program mentioned that teaching must be on effective interactive teaching sequences (Bell, 2002). Learning experiences are designed to involved students preparing and presenting to real audience like FS courses. Mere (2003) viewed practicum as “teaching practice” for development of skills and techniques. Student learning in practicum is a complex process because every student teacher and every teacher educator experience it differently. Karckay & Sanli (2009) confirmed that pre-service teaching sometimes called as microteaching affects teaching competency of the future teachers. Classroom observations and observing student teachers in teaching is considered valuable experience for a pre-service teachers as trainee, equipping them with knowledge and skills prior to exposing the real world of teaching in in-service teaching.

Study of Lu (2010) revealed that learning among peers like field study observations and practice teaching of pre-service teachers are good training ground for future teachers. Pre-service teachers can also be coached by their cooperating teacher or among peers. Peer coaching or peer tutoring is an effective strategy of learning. Furthermore, it offers the necessary support to the pre-service teachers to develop their pedagogical content knowledge and professional skills. Many studies also confirmed the effectiveness of field study observation and practice teaching. Naming few of them, Hong (2010) and Yaman (2010), explicitly highlight in their research findings the importance of hands-on experiences of the prospective teachers. They believed that learning by doing is very important to pre-service teachers as they start to emerge and develop their teaching career. Exposing them to the real world of teaching through their actual involvement in executing the lesson and managing the class equipped them with the different techniques in teaching. The study of Ismael (2011) claimed that practice teaching as if microteaching provides varieties of learning experiences among prospective teachers. He further said, that perceptions and concerns of the pre-service teachers classroom observations and practice teaching is crucial in promoting quality teacher education outcomes

Conclusion and Recommendations

The realization of this study concluded that field study observations could bring both positive and negative outlook to the pre-service teachers. It is important to note that pre-service teacher’s needs proper guidance for them to bring out the best as they can so that they will grow professionally and become a role model to their future students. Recommendation been raised that the field study instructors and cooperating teachers must work cooperatively in guiding the pre-service teachers. Moreover, the field study instructor must guide the pre-service teachers in transforming the negativity that they observe during their field study observations to become their motivation by transforming all the negative observations that they had observe to a positive

transformation, as they will be going to engage actual teaching very soon. Orientations between pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers is necessary prior to pre-service teachers' classroom observations. Moreover, subject loads for the pre-service teachers during field study must be limited for them to focus the real teaching environment.

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