SOCIOEMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES OF TEACH FOR MALAYSIA (TFM) FELLOWS DURING THEIR TEACHING INTERNSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This article focused on the teaching internship experiences of fellows from the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) program. The authors examined changes in their perceptions and the effect of personal and related variables on the students' experiences. This research involved a cohort of 86 fellows, and the respondents were female (N = 77, 89.3%) and male (N = 9, 10.7 %). The ages of the respondents varied from 22 to 29 years old with an average of 25.7 years. Nearly half of the respondents carried out their teaching internship in a semi-urban secondary school (N =39, 45.3%), 34.9% (N = 30) in a rural secondary schools and 19.8% (N = 17) in a urban setting. Respondents' viewpoint was assessed using the Inventory of Experiences and Perceptions of the Teaching Practice (IEPTP; (Caires, Almeida, and Martins 2010), during their teaching internship period. Special attention was given to students' socio-emotional adjustment and its predictors. Based on some of the most significant findings of the present study, the authors reflect on some consequences for future intervention and research. Results show growing levels of adaptation and contentment, and the impact of gender, and school setting on their experiences. School resources and acceptance, supervisor's guidance and support, and the feeling of professional fulfillment were identified as basis factors of students' socioemotional adjustment. School resources and acceptance, supervisor's guidance and support, and the feeling of vocational fulfillment were identified as determinant factors of students' socio-emotional adjustment. Based on some of the most significant findings of the present study, the authors reflect on some implications for future intervention and research.

Keywords: Socioemotional impact, reflective practices, fellows' perceptions, teaching internship, experiences and emotions of fellows, personal and professional development.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini memberi fokus kepada pengalaman praktikum felo dari program Diploma Pendidikan Lepasan Ijazah (DPLI). Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji sosio emosi dan persepsi serta kesan pemboleh ubah kendiri yang berhubungan dengan pengalaman mereka dalam menjalani praktikum mengajar di sekolah. Responden kajian ini melibatkan 86 felo dan terdiri daripada responden perempuan (N = 77, 89.3%) dan lelaki (N = 9, 10.7%). Umur responden adalah di antara 22 hingga 29 tahun dengan min umur 25.7 tahun. Hampir separuh daripada responden yang menjalankan praktikum mengajar di sekolah menengah di kawasan bandar (N = 39, 45.3%), di pinggir bandar (N = 30, 34.9%) dan 19.8% (N = 17) di luar bandar. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengutip data ialah soal selidik Inventory of Experiences and Perceptions of the Teaching Practice (IEPTP) oleh Caires, Almeida, dan Martins (2010). Soal selidik ini mengandungi 59 soalan dan dianalisis mengunakan SPSS 20.0. Hasil kajian menunjukkan tahap penyesuaian di sekolah dan kepuasan berkerja semakin meningkat berdasarkan kepada jantina responden dan environmen sekolah pada pengalaman mereka. sumber Sekolah dan penerimaan, bimbingan penyelia dan sokongan, dan rasa kepuasan profesional telah dikenal pasti sebagai faktor asas pelajar pelarasan sosio emosi. Sumber sekolah serta penerimaan mereka sebagai komuniti sekolah, bimbingan dan sokongan dari mentor dan professional keguruan dikenal pasti sebagai faktor-faktor penentu dalam pelarasan sosio emosi responden. Berdasarkan kepada beberapa penemuan yang signifikan dalam kajian ini, pengkaji membuat refleksi kepada beberapa implikasi untuk melaksanakan penyelidikan seterusnya dalam kajian di masa depan.

Kata kunci: *Impak sosio emosi, latihan refleksi, persepsi felo, praktikum, pengalaman dan emosi felo, pembangunan personal dan profesional.*

INTRODUCTION

Socioemotional is a process that consists of variations that occur in an individual's personality, emotions, and relationships with others during one's lifetime (Santrock, 2007). Novice teachers face different problems during

their teaching internship experiences. These include but not limited to isolation, emotional problems, classroom management, discipline and lesson planning. Schlossberg (1989) described entering the professional world as the stage that involves more transitions and crises in human development, resulting in a "normal process of disorientation and reorientation, which marks the turning point in the direction of growth" (Bridges, 1980, p. 5). The first contact with the teaching profession, during the Preservice Teacher Training, is a simultaneous experience of survival and discovery (Caires, 2003). Therefore, the shift from the student's to the teacher's perspective leads to "a process of challenging and revisiting personal assumptions and beliefs" (Flores, 2006, p. 20), which may be felt in a stressful way.

Veenman (1984) proposed five domains of manifestation of socioemotional experiences during teaching internship. The first one is characterized by subjective experiencing problems, namely complaints of heavy workloads, stress, anxiety and physical symptoms. Another manifestation implies a change in the phase behaviour and the routine of teaching, the result of a set of external pressures that conflict with the beliefs of individuals. The third sign of the change of attitude, involves a progressive transformation of teaching styles to more conservative. A fourth manifestation is reflected by changes in personality and self-concept as a teacher. Finally, and in extreme cases, a high sense of frustration could end up leaving the teaching profession. Although the socioemotional experiences is a fairly common phenomenon among novice teachers the intensity and influence on novice teachers may vary (Brown, 2006; Caires, 2003). Head et al. (1996) found out that much of the initial stress is related to the absence of inadequacy of the coping strategies used to deal with the new challenges. For those individuals, the teaching internship may represent a traumatic or non-educating experience, characterized by lingering feelings of failure, and stress (Brown, 2006), and lack of self-confidence and self-esteem (Caires, 2001, 2003). The progress is scarce and the main daily concern is focused on survival (Kyriacou & Stephens, 1999).

Teach for Malaysia

Teach for Malaysia (TFM) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that is enlisting Malaysia's most promising future leaders in our mission to end education inequity. TFM fellows will serve as full-time teachers for two years in high-need secondary schools (Band 6 and 7), and commit to transform the education outcomes of less-privileged school children, through significantly improving their achievements and aspirations. In the long term, TFM alumni will form a different class of leaders, working in various sectors to expand education opportunity for all children in Malaysia. At the end of the two year fellowship, TFM's vision is for fellows to leave with:

  i.   Success in leading their classrooms to their ambitious academic and non-academic goals which place their students on an alternative life path

  ii. A deep-seated belief of what our mission is, why it is so, and confidence that the TFM model WILL end education inequity and can work in the Malaysian context

  iii. The awareness that they are part of a larger movement that is committed to ending education inequity

  iv. A clear understanding of the root causes of education inequity, and an appreciation of how their future career paths can address these root causes

  v.   Exposure and access to potential career paths that will lead to TFM Ambassador's significant influence in a variety of sectors, including education

To this end, TFM's training and support aims to:

  i.   Invest Fellows in the vision and mission of TFM, which includes the belief that the model can work *in our context*

  ii. Help Fellows to understand the nature of education inequity in Malaysia, i.e.:
       a. The scale, extent and the urgency of the problem
       b. Root causes of inequity – key barriers to success

  iii. Build the technical skills and knowledge required to be an excellent teacher in the placement school context

  iv. Build the mindsets required to be able to work effectively in placement school context

v. Strengthen Fellows' belief that these students' outcomes CAN be achieved through their own undertaking and effort, in collaboration with key stakeholders

vi. Enable Fellows to adapt and operate successfully in the Malaysian government school context, in terms of culture, language and stakeholder management

vii. Support Fellows in the classroom to successfully achieve their ambitious goals

viii. Build a strong cohort culture that reminds Fellows that they are part of a global movement that is committed to ending education inequity

ix. Provide Fellows with exposure and access to potential career paths that will lead to TFM Ambassadors' commitment within the Ministry of Education, or influence in a variety of other sectors, as well as an appreciation of how their future career paths can continue to address education inequity.

The TFM training framework is distinct from other teacher training due to its unique focus on underprivileged students. We recognize that for students in this context, who often come from extremely challenging circumstances, simply being an effective teacher is not sufficient – our teachers need to become agents of transformation.

As such, certain aspects of training are given additional emphasis:

i. Understanding inequity – many of the challenges faced by students in underprivileged schools stem from areas beyond the classroom, and may be caused by socioeconomic factors, school based factors or the expectations gap that often exists in such communities. Understanding the nature of the challenges faced, and the extent of the challenge involved in getting these students onto a different life trajectory is vital in preparing these Fellows. As such, a number of sessions are held throughout training, e.g. community visits, sessions on the context of education inequity in Malaysia, and a community project in their second year.

ii. Literacy training – students in placement schools face tremendous challenges in literacy – our training places heavy emphasis on literacy sessions to provide Fellows with strategies for coping with low levels of literacy in their classrooms.

iii. Additional support in school - in addition to the support of university lecturers, each Fellow is tied to school based mentors, a mentor from Institut Aminuddin Baki (IAB), as well as a mentor from TFM who will regularly visit and provide support to Fellows in schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The process of becoming a teacher has been widely studied and discussed in the academic communities around the world. As a result, research and publications in this field has increased significantly, especially in relation to teaching internship, which gradually has been recognized as playing a decisive role in preservice teacher education and early development (Arends 2009; Britzman 2003; Caires and Almeida, 2005; Evelein, Korthagen & Brekelmans 2008). Between the 1960s and early 1980s researchers attempted to identify the main focus of the training and the skills to achieve the effective teaching and student achievement. The main goal of teaching internship was the achievement and application of these skills in order to guarantee some level of pedagogical expertise in the classroom. The constant teaching internship of required behaviors; behaviour-specific feedback; and discussion of the fundamental principles underlying these behaviors were the main training methods. Precision and prescription were central in these instructional approaches (Thiessen 2000). During these two decades of research, there were also significant investments in the discussion and questioning of the key paradigms and teaching internships of preservice teacher education. The research also concern with the structure, goals and relevance of teaching internship in the preservice teacher education for those who chose the teaching profession (Kagan 1992; Veenman 1984; Zeichner, 1990).

In the 1980s there were significant shift in the research scenario. Focus gradually shifted to teaching and learning, which aims to guide teachers think about what they do, their cognitive processes during teaching and the various factors that they have to deal with their ongoing the interaction in the classroom (Bullough and Stokes, 1994; Doyle, 1979). By the late 1980s, two other central themes emerged strongly: the process of socialization of students to teachers (Furlong et al., 1988; Guyton & McIntyre 1990; McNally et al, 1997), and supervision methods, processes and relationships (Booth 1993; Glickman 1985; Maynard & Furlong 1994).

According to several authors the feeling of 'belonging' and the building of the first foundations of their identity as teachers depend upon the support that is received from the school administration and colleagues for their initiatives and opinions, as well as their professional and personal fulfillment. The acceptance and recognition gained by the newly arrived teacher from the different members of this complex social network is also significant (Lacey, 1977; McNally et al., 1997). Underlining the major role of this approach, some authors compare the socialization process of student teachers – in terms of its relevance and impact – to the scientific, procedural and pedagogical components of teaching internship. In addition, it has a significant impact on the performance of teachers in the classroom, their development and growth in the teaching profession, and to be kind to their teachers (Flores & Day, 2005; Hargreaves, 1992; Krecic & Grmek 2008; Lamote & Engels 2010).

With regard to the supervision of teaching internship, the initial investment largely theoretical, and focused on identifying some existing supervisory internships and paradigms they support. Additional efforts have been taken in relation to the definition of the roles and responsibilities of teachers and supervisors university cooperation, and in the articulation between them and the design and application of effective supervision strategies (Glickman 1985; Goldhammer, Anderson, & Krajewski 1980). Recently, the affective component-teacher relations supervisor-student relationship has come into focus. Some of the most relevant evidence in this area indicates an important role in the supervision of student teachers in the process of socialization and the learning and professional development, and also on their emotional and physical balance. In some cases, the affective component-relationship can act as 'buffers', reducing the level of tension and stress that is often experienced during this stage (Acheson & Gall, 1997; Alarcão & Tavares, 2003; Caires & Almeida, 2007).

Since the 1990s, social and emotional intelligence are also gradually emerging as a major in teacher education trainees. There is a lot of empirical support, especially in the arena of psychology, the emphasis on their contribution to the prosperity and success of individuals in their professional achievements (Sternberg, 2003). Among its core dimensions - relationship and empathy with others, perception, judgment and emotional expression, emotion management and openness to new experiences (Mayer 2000; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004) is now considered as relevant variables in the process of professionalization of young adults. When being a teacher, these variables can acquire a special importance to the needs of student teachers to adapt to the new situation, innovation and problem solving, team lead, and help students. Taking into account the impact of some social skills and emotional well-being of teachers on school performance, satisfaction and psychosocial development of students, and also on the quality of school life, skills development has been gradually receive special attention in preservice teacher education from 1990 onwards (Karatzias et al, 2002; Petrides, Frederickson & Furnham 2004; Rask et al 2002). Despite growing knowledge about the process of becoming a teacher, some key questions remain unanswered or have been approached superficially. Among these variables, literature highlighting personal characteristics, experience and resources of the student teachers, guidance and support from their supervisors and also the characteristics of their school ethos (Arregui, Pérez & García, 2009; Caires, Almeida, & Martins, 2010; Flores & Day 2005; Giebelhaus & Bowman, 2002; Haritos 2004; Lamote & Engels 2010; Newman 2000; Timmerman 2009).

Assuming that the teaching internship period of intense search and discovery of self and it is believed that it is the most relevant to analyze the life experience of those who learn to teach. This involves not only the scientific components, procedures and pedagogy in this process but also the individual as a whole. It is, therefore, important to focus on cognitions, emotions and meanings which appear, to hear dilemmas, doubts and concerns about student teacher teaching internship, as well as their driver, beliefs and expectations of the profession. It is further believed that holistic approaches is phenomenological and represent a valuable contribution to a deeper understanding of the complexity, dynamics and idiosyncrasies to become a teacher. Since 1996, ongoing research has been conducted to identify and evaluate student teachers' feelings and perceptions about their own teaching internship, and also the impact of this experience on the personal and professional development (Caires, 2001, 2003; Caires & Almeida, 2005, 2007; Caires, Almeida, & Martins 2010; Caires, Almeida, & Vieira, 2010). In the first stage of these investigations, which were focused on direct access to the 'voices' of the Student teachers, a qualitative approach prevailed.

Research Questions

In an effort to understand the overall impact of their experience on fellow socioemotional during teaching internship, and using the novice teacher's literature as a framework to interpret these processes, we carried out a study at the University Utara Malaysia. Taking fellow perspective into focus, we considered their feelings and perceptions during the entire 12 weeks of the teaching internship. In the study, we set three leading goals. First, we focused on fellow experiences and perceptions regarding five dimensions of their teaching internship (professional and institutional socialization, socioemotional aspects, support/ resources/ supervision, vocational

aspects, and learning and professional development) as well as the development of these perceptions and experiences during internship.

Second, we aimed to analyse whether personal characteristics had an effect on their perceptions regarding the five dimensions assessed during internship. More specifically, we analysed whether their perceptions and experiences varied according to gender and age. In addition, we also tested the effect of school setting.

Third, we aimed to assess the relation between the socioemotional aspects of their teaching internship and the other dimensions of this experience, while controlling for personal characteristics.

THE TOOLS BOX: METHODS

Teaching Internship at the Universiti Utara Malaysia

The teaching internship at the Universiti Utara Malaysia took place during the final year of the PGDE program, a 2-year diploma degree. Fellows were placed in a public secondary school, along with 2 or 3 other colleagues for 12 weeks (3 months). By the time this study took place, the fellows had assumed the position of teachers under supervision and, during that period, each of them was entirely responsible for the teaching, evaluation, and management of at least two classes. Their guidance and support was under the responsibility of two supervisors, one at the university and the other at the school (cooperating teacher). The contact with the university supervisor occurred only twice during their teaching internships. In addition, the university supervisor visited the school context approximately two times to join the cooperating teacher in the observation and assessment of the fellows' performance. The cooperating teacher had a more continuous role in the guidance of the fellows, occurring on a daily basis at the school setting. Each of the two supervisors was responsible for 70% and 30% respectively of the fellows' teaching internship grade.

Respondents

All Teach for Malaysia (TFM) fellows at the University Utara Malaysia who had to undertake a teaching internship were asked to participate in a study on the socioemotional experiences during teaching internship: 86 fellows' participated — final teaching internship (after one year of Postgraduate Diploma of Education). TFM fellows were requested to complete the questionnaires on their Socioemotional experiences during teaching internship. This research involved a cohort of 86 fellows, and the respondents were female (N = 75, 89.3%) and male (N = 9, 10.7 %). The ages of the respondents varied from 22 to 29 years old with an average of 25.7 years. Nearly half of the respondents carried out their teaching internship in a semi-urban secondary school (N =39, 45.3%), 34.9% (N = 30) in a rural secondary schools and 19.8% (N = 17) in an urban setting. Respondents' viewpoint was assessed using the Inventory of Experiences and Perceptions of the Teaching Practice (IEPTP), (Caires, Almeida, & Martins 2010), during their teaching internship period. Special attention was given to students' socio-emotional adjustment and its predictors. Based on some of the most significant findings of the present study, the authors reflect on some implications for future intervention and research.

Seven respondents did not provide this information. Only a small number (23.3%) of respondents stating that teaching is their first career choice. More than half of the respondents (N = 63, 73.3%) had some previous professional experience, (N = 26, 41.3%), as an engineer (N = 11, 17.5%), accountant (N = 9, 14.3%), counselor (N = 5, 7.9%), accountant (N = 3, 4.8%) and others various job (N = 9, 14.3%). That experience was full-time as well as part-time. Although earlier studies did not emphasise previous work experience as an important variable in the way fellows perceive their teaching internship, this study explored this matter to see if it may have some influence, based on the fact that some transversal skills necessary for adapting to the professional role (Herr & Cramer, 1992) may be acquired in other work settings, which, in turn, may facilitate the teaching internship experience.

Instrument

To assess fellows' viewpoints, we used the Inventory of Experiences and perceptions of the Teaching Practice (IEPTP), (Caires, Almeida, & Martins 2010), a 59 item questionnaire focusing on the following five dimensions of the teaching internship: professional and institutional socialization, socioemotional aspects, vocational aspects, support/ resources/supervision, and learning and professional development.

Table 1. Particulars of the Five Dimensions of the IEPTP

No. of dimensions	Aspect of Dimensions	Description of measurement
1	Professional and institutional socialisation	Evaluates quality of integration in school and teaching profession, and main difficulties in adapting to institutional rules and routines
2	Learning and professional development	Evaluates perceptions of competencies and knowledge developed, and diversity and adequacy of learning experiences
3	Socio-emotional aspects	Evaluates impact of teaching internship experience on self-esteem, self-efficacy, sleep patterns, and appetite
4	Support and supervision	Evaluates satisfaction levels with support provided by school and university supervisors
5	Vocational aspects	Evaluates sense of professional identity, and questioning of professional competence, vocation and anticipated levels of personal, professional, social and financial self-fulfilment within teaching profession

In the professional and institutional socialization subscale, we examined the quality of the fellows' adaptation process in the school and the teaching profession as well as the levels of satisfaction concerning school warmth, recognition and approval and resources and conditions available for the accomplishment of their assignments (e.g., 'I've a good relationship with the school's administration' or 'I felt that in my school a student teacher has a lower status'). In the socioemotional aspects subscale, we focused on the teaching internship's impact on the intra- and interpersonal domains, in terms of the tendencies of the psychosocial and psycho physiological changes (e.g., loss or gain of sleep, loss or gain of appetite, higher or lower self-esteem, higher or lower self-efficacy), and the intensity and meaning of some of those changes. Some representative items from this dimension are: 'I often felt tense and stressed during my teaching internship' or 'I've experienced sleeping problems (insomnia, nightmares, etc.) during teaching internship'. The vocational aspects subscale examined the extent of the querying concerning the vocation for the teaching profession, the applicants' future projects inside (or outside) the career, or the forecast levels of personal, social, financial, and professional fulfilment in their teaching career (e.g., 'I feel like a real teacher' or 'The teaching internship made me feel that I do not have the "vocation" to be a teacher'). The items of the support/resources/supervision subscale examined fellows' perceptions regarding the university and the school supervisors' performance. Their satisfaction levels in regard to the supervisors' emotional encouragement, modelling, logistical and technical back up exemplify some of the examined aspects was also evaluated. Some representative items from this dimension are: 'My university supervisor has been an important source of emotional support' or 'Working with more experienced teachers was a very important source of learning during my teaching internship'. Finally, the learning and professional development subscale explored the fellows' perceptions regarding the progresses made throughout the teaching internship in terms of competencies, skills, and knowledge, as well as the extension and diversity of the learning experiences. Table 2 show the internal consistency of the five subscales on the IEPTP Dimension. Following the table 2, Cronbach's Alpha for professional and institutional socialization are 0.76, learning and professional development (0.72), socioemotional aspect (0.64), support, resource and supervision (0.77) and vocation aspect (0.75).

Table 2. Reliability result on the IEPTP's dimension

Dimensions	N of Item	Cronbach's Alpha
Professional and institutional socialization	12	0.76
Learning and professional development	7	0.72
Socioemotional aspect	11	0.64
Support, resource and supervision	10	0.77
Vocation aspect	9	0.75

Internal consistencies (α) of the five subscales during teaching internship were the following: professional and institutional socialization ($α = .76$), socioemotional aspects ($α = .64$), vocational aspects ($α = .75$), support/resources/supervision ($α = .77$), and learning and professional development ($α = .72$). The majority ($n = 52$) of the items of the IEPTP were assessed on a 5-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Five items were qualitative (open) and called for reflection on the most significant aspects of the teaching internship (e.g., positive and negative feelings, positive and negative aspects of the supervisors' performance, the most important achievements resulting from the teaching internship). The remaining two items were mixed (i.e., they simultaneously included a Likert-type scale and an open component). In this last case, fellows were asked to justify their answer to the Likert-type scale part of the item. This instrument has shown adequate psychometric characteristics (*Comparative Fit Index (CFI)* = 0.903; *root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)* = 0.048) in a previous confirmatory factor analysis (Caires, Almeida &Vieira, 2010).

Procedure

The evaluation of the experiences and perceptions of fellows took place during their teaching internship. The questionnaire was sent by their university supervisor to each fellow and could be returned directly to the research team at the university, or sent back by mail. The envelope also contained a letter clarifying the goals and procedures of the study and reassuring its anonymous, confidential and voluntary nature. The statistical analyses were conducted with SPSS, version 20.0.

RESULTS

Becoming a Teacher: The Overall Experience

In order to describe the main experiences and changes perceived by the fellows regarding their teaching internship experience, Table 3 presents an overall picture of the results in respect of the five dimensions of IEPTP's. Data are presented in terms of means (M), and standard deviations (SD) among the IEPTP dimensions. Mean values of 4 or greater represent higher levels of satisfaction or lesser difficulties.

Table 3. Result on the IEPTP's dimensions during teaching internship

Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviations
Professional and institutional socialization	4.13	0.49
Learning and professional development	4.35	0.46
Socioemotional aspect	3.09	0.48
Support, resource and supervision	4.06	0.52
Vocation aspect	4.28	0.49

Results in Table 3 show that 'learning and professional development' is the greatest area of impact (M = 4.35). In fact, data indicate a reasonable sense of perceptions of competencies and knowledge developed, and diversity and adequacy of learning experiences. Results in Table 4, reveal a significant increase in the fellows 'vocation aspect' dimensions (M = 4.28) professional and institutional socialization, (M = 4.13). Similar tendencies were found in the 'support, resource and supervision' dimensions (M = 4.06), which pointed out the positive impact of the teaching internship on fellows development and learning, in addition to their perception of growing levels of autonomy, self-confidence and trust about the quality of the skills and knowledge acquired during teaching internship. These results also demonstrate the high satisfaction levels of the fellows with regard to the guidance and support received from their supervisors from the beginning to the end of the teaching internship. With regard to the fellows 'socioemotional aspect' results reveal a presence of medium satisfaction levels (M = 3.09) for aspects such as the impact of teaching internship experience on self-esteem, self-efficacy, sleep patterns, and appetite. The medium mean rates on this sub-scale (M = 3.09) reveal the pressure and sense of 'vulnerability' felt by many of these fellows. Some disturbances in their eating and sleeping patterns or significant levels of stress may also be responsible for the physical and psychological weariness reported by them.

Influence of Fellows Personal Characteristics on the Teaching Internship Experience

To achieve the second goal of this study, we analyzed whether the fellows personal characteristics had an effect on the way they experience and perceived the different aspect of the teaching internship. We tested the variables of gender by means of T-Test to analysis and assess whether there are differences between male and female

acceptance of IEPTP. With relation to age, we again assessed using the correlations coefficients to find out whether there are differences according to the age of fellows acceptance of IEPTP. With respect to the school location, the Anova carried out to assess whether there are differences based on fellows' acceptance of IEPTP in school location.

Table 4 shows the results of T-Test carried out to assess the effects of gender on those five dimensions during teaching internship. No differences were found between the acceptability of male and female on all the five dimensions of IEPTP. This is because the value of *p* obtained on all dimensions of IEPTP is more than 0.05 *(p> 5).*

Table 4. T-Test analysis on the effects of gender in the dimensions during teaching internship

Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviations	*p*
Professional and institutional socialization			
Male (n = 9)	4.32	0.588	0.259
Female (n = 77)	4.11	0.487	
Learning and professional development			
Male (n = 9)	4.59	0.22	0.149
Female (n = 77)	4.32	0.48	
Socioemotional aspect			
Male (n = 9)	2.98	0.199	0.531
Female (n = 77)	3.10	0.499	
Support, resource and supervision			
Male (n = 9)	4.08	0.785	0.849
Female (n = 77)	4.05	0.495	
Vocation aspect			
Male (n = 9)	4.36	0.566	0.687
Female (n = 77)	4.28	0.487	

Table 5 below presents the correlation of test results between the five dimensions assessed as well as the relations among those dimensions and the age. Result shows that there is an acceptance by the age of fellows for the "learning and professional development' dimension, $p < .01$. While for other dimensions show that there is no difference in acceptance by age ($p> 0.05$). For the learning and professional development dimension, the fellow age determine the level of acceptability. The higher the age of the fellows the lower acceptance of these dimensions, while the lower the age of the fellows the higher of acceptance of these dimensions.

Table 5. Correlation analysis dimensions during teaching internship

Dimensions	Age		
	N	*r*	*p*
Professional and institutional socialization	81	-0.138	0.220
Learning and professional development	75	-0.312**	0.006
Socioemotional aspect	74	-0.015	0.896
Support, resource and supervision	80	-0.136	0.228
Vocation aspect	80	-0.198	0.079

**p < 0.01*

This study further reported that there were no differences based on school location on IEPTP dimensions acceptance of respondents. This is based on Anova test as shown in Table 6 below where the value of p> 0.05.

Table 6. Group differences in the dimensions summary result ANOVA analysis

Dimensions	Mean Square	F	p
Professional and institutional socialization			
Between Groups	0.028	0.114	0.892
Within Groups	0.247		
Learning and professional development			
Between Groups	0.013	0.59	0.943
Within Groups	0.222		
Socioemotional aspect			
Between Groups	0.263	1.162	0.319
Within Groups	0.226		
Support, resource and supervision			
Between Groups	0.104	0.376	0.688
Within Groups	0.278		
Vocation aspect			
Between Groups	0.293	1.232	0.297
Within Groups	0.238		

The Teaching Internship's Socioemotional Impact

In an attempt to promote a deeper assessment and understanding of the teaching internship's impact on the fellows physical and emotional balance, as well the detection of any reality-shock manifestations, the following analyses concentrated on the results of the socioemotional aspects subscale. The analyses focused on descriptive information regarding fellows' answers to each of items comprised in this dimension during their teaching internship. In concrete, I aimed to assess the relation among the socioemotional aspects of the teaching internship assessed by the IEPTP, while controlling for personal characteristics.

Becoming a Teacher: A Stressful Beginning

Table 7 presents results concerning the 11 items included in socioemotional aspects dimension. Data regard the means and standard deviations during their teaching internship. Results in Table 7 reveal emotional and physical weariness (Items 24, 50 and 52) as the most obvious disturbances of this experience. I am often tense and stressed during my teaching internship (Item 29) were also highly mentioned as difficult domains. Table 7 also shows that item 34 (The teaching internship increased my social skills) and item 5 (The teaching internship has had a positive influence on my self-esteem) showed the highest mean value of 4.71 and 4.67. During their teaching internship, the answers to these two items overcame Level 4 of difficulty.Other items recorded a mean between 3.01 to 4.71 and this result clearly indicates that the fellows acceptance positively the impact of socioemotional effects.

Table 7. Socioemotional impact during teaching internship

No. of Item	Item	Frequency (%)					Mean (sd)
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	The teaching internship requires much paperwork that I need to complete.	6 (7.0)	6 (7.0)	21 (24.4)	37 (43.3)	16 (18.6)	3.59 (1.09)
5	The teaching internship has had a positive influence on my self-esteem.	-	1 (1.2)	2 (2.3)	21 (24.4)	62 (72.1)	4.67 (0.58)
9	Getting to my school daily has been a source of strain and hardship.	12 (14.1)	21 (24.7)	19 (22.4)	20 (23.5)	13 (15.3)	3.01 (1.30)

15	The teaching practice has been responsible for an increased physical weariness.	5 (5.8)	4 (4.8)	21 (25.0)	39 (46.4)	15 (17.9)	3.65 (1.02)
24	I have to take medication to be able to cope with the teaching practice pressures/demanding.	51 (59.3)	21 (24.4)	8 (9.3)	4 (4.7)	2 (2.3)	1.66 (0.99)
29	I am often tense and stressed during my teaching internship.	36 (41.9)	20 (23.3)	18 (20.9)	9 (10.5)	3 (3.5)	2.10 (1.17)
34	The teaching internship increased my social skills.	-	-	3 (3.5)	19 (22.4)	63 (74.1)	4.71 (0.53)
42	The teaching practice has psychologically wearing.	2 (2.4)	2 (2.4)	21 (24.7)	34 (40.0)	26 (30.6)	3.94 (0.93)
48	The competition with my teaching internship colleagues has been responsible for additional strains.	12 (14.0)	10 (11.6)	25 (29.1)	23 (26.7)	16 (18.6)	3.24 (1.28)
50	I have developed eating problems during this teaching practice.	42 (48.8)	22 (25.6)	12 (14.0)	9 (10.5)	1 (1.2)	1.90 (1.07)
52	There are moments when I want to give up.	35 (44.9)	24 (30.8)	10 (12.8)	7 (9.0)	2 (2.6)	1.94 (1.09)

Becoming Teaching: Negative Impact Experience during Teaching Internship

To examine whether there is a negative impact accounted by fellows during their teaching internship, this study has outlined the 12 items related to negative aspects to be evaluated by fellows. The finding of the study as shown in Table 8 shows that the fellows experienced a low level of negative impact. This is because the mean of all items displayed the negative impact is less than 2.70. For example, the mean for item 11 (I've had the worst classes in the school) and item 14 (I am not pleased with the lack of school's support to the individual initiative) recorded the highest mean of 2.66. While the mean item 49 (I am having troubles understanding the school's environment) had the lowest mean of 1.18. These results clarify that the respondents do not experience the negative impact during teaching internship.

Table 8. Negative impact toward fellows during their teaching internship

No. of Item	Item	Mean	Standard Deviations
11	I've had the worst classes in the school.	2.66	1.25
13	I'm afraid of the professional world.	2.35	1.24
14	I am not pleased with the lack of school's support to the individual initiative.	2.66	1.10
16	I am having difficult time learning/ understanding the school's ethos/organics.	2.01	1.03
19	It is very hard to work in teams in my school placement.	1.74	1.04
20	This teaching internship showed me that I do not have the "vocation" to be a teacher.	1.90	1.14
27	I lack support from my university supervisor in terms of technical orientation.	1.91	1.15
32	I am having difficulty with the schedule at my school.	2.01	1.10
36	I feel that in my school a student teacher has a lower status.	2.08	1.05
45	I am having difficulties "synchronizing" with other teachers.	2.06	1.07
46	I lack someone with whom I can share my teaching practice difficulties.	2.16	1.02
49	I am having troubles understanding the school's environment.	1.18	0.98

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The Challenges and Achievements of the Teaching Internship

The findings reflect the significant role of the teaching internship on becoming a teacher: a multidimensional and idiosyncratic process involving changes in different areas of the student teacher's development. In addition to its technical and conceptual components, the teaching internship experience is a period of considerable personal changes, with individuals going through numerous adjustments involving their own self-perception, professional identity, and ability to deal with the tasks, interlocutors, and emotions involved (Caires, 2010). For most of the respondents, the beginning of the teaching internship period was perceived as particularly stressful and demanding, involving many of the cognitive, emotional, and physical utterances related to reality-shock manifestations (Veenman, 1984). Substantial amounts of distress, changes in eating and sleeping patterns, perception of a diminished self-esteem, and higher levels of vulnerability were all difficulties expressed by the respondents in their first contact with the teaching profession. Yet, the data show that, gradually, most fellows overcame the initial difficulties and accomplished growing levels of school belonging, professional affiliation, and approval, as well as higher levels of satisfaction regarding the school's resources and overall support. Results also point to the emergence of a growing sense of being a teacher, increasing levels of confidence and self-assurance regarding the appropriateness of their earlier vocational choices, and an enthusiastic and highly committed attitude toward teaching, which is congruent with other studies (Friedman, 2006; Newman, 2000).

The Influence of Personal and Contextual Variables

Considering the dynamic features of this process (Veenman, 1984) and its dependence on the synergies of a large set of personal and contextual variables, we aimed to identify which variables influenced the way the fellows dealt with the socioemotional worries and the learning, social, and vocational challenges of the teaching internship. Gender, as well as the characteristics of the school's larger setting proved to be significant predictors in the course of this process, just as other investigations have previously revealed (Admiraal, Korthagen, & Wubbels, 2000). Additional findings point out the important role of the warmth, acceptance, and conditions offered to the newcomer, as well as the supervisors' support. Together, and with the sense of vocational fulfilment, they all seemed to represent determinant factors for the fellows' socioemotional adjustment and balance at both stages—beginning and end—of the teaching internship.

Implications for Intervention and Research

Even though there was an improvement through time, the socioemotional aspects of the teaching internship prevailed as the least-succeeded dimension of this experience and also the one involving significant amounts of stress and exhaustion. Given their consequences on the fellows' emotional balance, development, and performance there is a pressing need for the identification of appropriate intervention strategies and research in this area. Unfortunately, in the Malaysian scenario, this endeavour has very little expression, which is explained by not only the fact that the teaching internship is regarded as a minor component of the Preservice Teacher Education program, but also the belief that the emotional distress involved in the process of learning to teach is a rather natural part of the applicants' growth. In disagreement with this trend, we consider that research and intervention on softening these difficulties should be regarded as a significant enterprise.

Finally, we emphasize the need for additional attention to the contextual aspects of the teaching internship. In light of the significant influence that the school ethos has on fellows' institutional and professional socialization, learning, and socioemotional adjustment, it is necessary to be particularly careful regarding the selection of the schools that cooperate with the university and the way these partnerships are maintained. Besides the cooperation protocols, the coherence, stability, and quality of these educational projects depend on the continuous assessment and monitoring of both institutions' performance (e.g., existing conditions and resources, levels of involvement and support, produced know how on the reinforcement and expansion of their common goals and projects as well as on the assurance of real benefits for both partners and their clients. One limitation of this study is related to the dimensional validity of the IEPTP. Although the five dimensions yielded acceptable-to-good internal consistency at the beginning and end of the teaching internship, the factor validity of this instrument needs to be addressed. In fact, when I carried out a factor analysis the theoretical grouping of the items into five dimensions did not clearly emerge, with one of the dimensions being diluted in all five factors. These findings may derive from the nature and dynamics of the learning processes that take place during the teaching internship experience, which are also transversal to all the other dimensions.

Among the respondents of this study, and corroborating previous evidence, teaching internship is perceived as a particularly stressful and demanding period, which involves considerable amounts of distress, changes in psycho-physiological patterns and an increasing sense of weariness and 'vulnerability' (Caires 2001, 2003;

Caires, Almeida, & Martins 2010, 2010; Lamote & Engels 2010). Despite these difficulties, data also reveal fellows positive perceptions regarding their growing knowledge and skillfulness, their increasing sense of efficacy, flexibility and spontaneity in their performance and interactions, as well as the awareness of having achieved reasonable levels of acceptance and recognition amongst the school community. The results confirm previous findings that point out the multiple gains and achievements that take place during teaching internship (Arregui, Perez, & Garcia 2009; Caires & Almeida 2005;; Tillemma 2000).

As stated before, becoming a teacher depends on the interaction of multiple variables amongst which the personal characteristics and resources of the fellows, the guidance and support from their supervisors and the characteristics of the *ethos* of the placement school play a major role (Arregui, Perez, & Garcia 2009; Caires, Almeida, & Martins 2010; Flores & Day 2005; Haritos 2004). Accordingly, these findings demonstrate the presence of positive correlations between the four dimensions of the IEPTP, which shows that satisfaction and/or adaptation in one of these dimensions is associated with satisfaction and/or adaptation in the others. Therefore, it can be claimed that the warmth, acceptance and satisfactory conditions offered to the beginning teachers may determine not only their growing sense of 'belonging' but also their self-fulfillment regarding the teaching profession (Beck & Kosnick 2000; Caires & Almeida 2001b; Flores & Day 2005; Krecic & Grmek 2008). Additionally, the achievement and progression perceived in their skills and knowledge may also be partially explained by the quality of their socialization process within the school community. As expressed by many other authors, discussions about the theoretical and practical issues of teaching, the sharing and/or collaborative production of materials and advice provided by more experienced teachers may all contribute to the learning process of the fellows (McNally et al. 1997; Sanches & Petrucci 2002).

Finally, it is also important to emphasize the important role of the supervisor figure in line with many other studies that regard him/her as a key facilitator of the transitions of fellows and as an important source of pedogical and emotional support (Calderhead & Shorrock 1997; Caires & Almeida 2001a, 2007). In this study, the positive assessment of their supervisors' performance also helps to explain the positive perceptions of the achievements and progress occurred during teaching internship. Supervision is, in fact, a privileged setting for the sharing of reflection about and discussion around the phenomenological aspects of teaching internship (Caires 2003; Vieira 2009; Vieira et al. 2010). The sharing of experiences with their supervisors and other fellows, the joint exploration of the beliefs, perceptions and affects involved in teaching internship and the joint construction of meanings can all represent a significant opportunity for self-exploration, reflection of the teaching profession, shared knowledge and the strengthening of collaborative relationships amongst fellows, their supervisors and colleagues. These aspects may indeed help to hinder the communication problems, competitiveness and individualism frequently emerging within the group. It may also serve as a model for future relationships to be adopted within the classroom.

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