







The Influence of the Role of Teaching Assistance (TA) and Teaching Practice Program (TPP) Mentors in School on the Students' Life Skills

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Abstract. The mentor is a role model for students to learn teaching practice in school with the policy of the practice times' TA was longer than TPP. The purpose of this research is to analyze the difference in the influence of the role of TA and TPP mentors on the students' life skills. The sampling technique used in this research was purposive sampling. The population was 124 STKIP PGRI Nganjuk students taking TA and TPP. The sample was 84 students (36 students of TA as the experimental group and 48 students of TPP as the control group). The data collection technique used questionnaires with the Likert scale and interviews. The data analysis technique used a two-sample t-test. The result of the research that there was a significant difference between the students' life skills of TA and TPP. The mean difference was -1.68056 which means that the students' life skills of TA were better than TA. This result was due to the frequency of collaboration between STKIP PGRI Nganjuk and partner school TPP being longer than TA. The continuing research can be carried out on a collaboration strategy between higher education and TA mentors with more intensive debriefing and discussion.

Keywords: Mentor · Teaching Assistance · Life Skills.

1 Introduction

Higher Education in Indonesia is currently focusing on the outputs and outcomes of university graduates. Hence, they can keep up with changes and compete in responding to the challenges of today's times [1]. To create the desired graduates, the government has made a policy for the learning process in higher education institutions that is autonomous, flexible, innovative, and according to the needs of students. Of course, it's not just preparing a learning process supporting student competence, but also curriculum, facilities and infrastructure, and adequate human resources [2]. The forms of learning offered are also contained in the Ministry of Education and Culture Policy Number 3 in 2020 concerning National Education Standards. The Policy related to the learning process is included in one of the Independent Study Independent Campus (MBKM)

that focuses on education needs to answer the government's challenges in preparing its graduates. The MBKM program encourages universities to prepare facilities for the students's needs if they wish to study at non-university institutions.

Higher education actualizes its vision and mission by establishing cooperation with parties [3] that support the fields of education, research, and service for both lecturers and students [4]. It needs to be done so that universities can prepare graduates to compete in the world of work [5]. The search for a network of cooperation for the success of the MBKM program among universities, other educational institutions, industrial institutions, or government agencies requires an exploration of the basis for cooperation. However, this cannot be said to be easy because both parties must choose things that can mutually contribute or give a benefit. This is also an obstacle faced by UPN Veteran East Java which is not easy to get cooperation institutions, especially outside the study program and there is a complicated process of collaboration between universities due to differences in perceptions and the lack of compatibility between lecture times and activities outside the study program [6].

The role of the mentor support the student learning process outside the study program such as by providing opportunities for students to communicate suggestions and improvements during the internship process [7], and introducing university students to the students which are carried out by the mentor [8] on entrepreneurial activities, it can be carried out by mentors by introducing students to their customers. The competence of prospective workers is highly considered a form of qualification in recruiting employees of a company or institution. Soft skills as one of the competencies that have a big contribution to the world of work. The MBKM program that has been implemented at the Muhammadiyah University of Purwokerto has had an impact on students so that they can understand the areas of expertise in the internship and their soft skills [9]. Students as future Indonesian leaders must be challenged from the comfort zone of learning in the classroom environment to learning in the real world of work to be able to provide solutions to problems encountered in the village [10]. According to students of the aquaculture study program, learning activities outside the campus can increase soft skills by 57.14%, which is in the moderate category [11].

In responding MBKM program and actualizing the vision and mission, a university needs to establish cooperation both academically and non-academically from the local, national, and international levels. The First Vice head of STKIP PGRI Nganjuk said that the main graduate learning achievement was to produce prospective teachers at the junior high and senior high school/vocational school levels. In the previous year, the teaching practice program was held every 7th semester for about 2-3 months at partner schools. With the MBKM program, STKIP PGRI Nganjuk provides opportunities for students to take the practical learning program for 7th-semester students by participating in TA at school for 4-6 months or TPP at school for 2-3 months. Both programs have special requirements and the results of teaching assistance can also be recognized by learning activities in other lectures. The head of the study program said that TPP activities for 2-3 months were felt to be insufficient because students only had a little time to conduct school observations, teaching and learning activities, and even the development contribution to schools was not optimal. Through this offer of teaching assistance, it is hoped that students will be able to carry out their practice

more intensively with mentors for the learning and the quality of school partners' development. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the role of partners as mentors (teachers) to produce prospective graduates who have life skills as the competencies to be ready to compete in the world of work and business.

1.1 Students' Life Skills

The transformation of higher education is carried out because of the need for a professional workforce [12]. The inconsistency in the demand for qualifications and skills during college is not suitable for work practice [13, 14] and creates a competency gap for graduates, so universities offer skills programs before graduation [13]. The United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia are experiencing a shortage of prospective students in the field of teacher training because many institutions offer ready-to-work professional competencies [15]. Research [16] showed that teamwork, communication, and leadership skills do not meet the needs of graduates, so a hidden curriculum is needed, including soft skills and hard skills [17] both of which are part of life skills [18].

Graduate life skills are required to have leadership, communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and decision-making [19, 20, 21, 22]. The effectiveness of life skills produces knowledge, skills [23], attitude change, extracurricular and social [24, 25, 26]. Taylor University Malaysia's life skills program builds professional and interpersonal competence [21] as well as self-control abilities [27]. UNICEF data for 2018 [28] shows that life skills for ages 10 to 24 include self-awareness, interpersonal skills and thinking skills. Women's leadership is less effective than men's [29] while women are more capable of teamwork [22]. The challenges of the world of work require the readiness of higher education institutions through learning activities in Ministry of Education and Culture Policy Number 3 in 2020 concerning National Education Standards through the Independent Learning-Independent Campus Program (MBKM) so that graduates compete in the world of work and industry.

1.2 Teaching Assistance (TA)

Teaching assistant at schools has supported teachers by completing administrative tasks, adapting technology, and assisting the learning process to provide benefits for schools and students [30]. There are differences found in the development of students' thinking by teachers and teaching assistants, so it is necessary to examine the effectiveness of teaching models by paying attention to the role of teaching assistants in the classroom and the teacher's role in managing teaching assistants [31]. The involvement of teaching assistants in the learning process with teachers is something that needs to be identified, the clarity of work through training and opportunities for future career development. The opportunity for teaching assistants to broaden their skills in a new role is with an effective management and leadership approach to their professional development [32]. All personnel in partner schools become a part that can build teacher attitudes (basic competencies) of students and provide feedback in collaboration with partner schools.

The MBKM program in teaching assistance activities with funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture is called the Teaching Campus Program in batch I includes learning all subjects with a focus on literacy, numeracy, technology adaptation, and assisting managerial administration of schools as well as self-development through leadership and character from experience in school [33]. According to the results of research [34] the Teaching Campus Program can develop students in terms of insight, character, thinking skills, soft skills, and being able to work together with teachers and other students who cross fields of knowledge so that they can solve problems in society.

1.3 Teaching Practice Program (TPP)

Collaborative activities among schools can be actualized by collaborating schools and universities with internships at schools and field introductions at schools. This activity can build students' independence and carry out teamwork both with their mentors, their colleagues, and even with other teachers at school dealing with the learning process program, and administration of both class and school. Students can also provide constructive suggestions for student and school problems, so students can also improve their soft skills [35]. Postgraduate students in the United States and Canada also experience teaching practice activities, which lack training and development for postgraduate students such as effective training programs, consistency of mentors in providing feedback, intrinsic motivation, and practical application.

Higher education units are also externally demanded to produce graduates who are ready to work so that universities can carry out strategies to improve teaching quality and allocate resources that can provide benefits to students (undergraduate programs) who are mentored and taught as well as postgraduate students for professional development to be more competitive in the job market [36]. Essentially, the presence of postgraduate students has functioned as mentors and role models for the academic success of their students (undergraduate program) as well as mentoring students in scientific activities and student creativity [37]. TPP had a positive effect on student readiness to be teachers [38], while [39] it was stated that TPP activities did not affect readiness as prospective teachers.

1.4 The Role of Mentor

Students need mentors as role models [40]. Human relations between mentor and mentee [41] are by motivating [42] to increase the knowledge, skills, and confidence of the mentee [43, 44] through coaching, facilitating, guidance, and reflection [43, 44, 45]. Solving the problems of students' teaching practice in schools is a contradiction between the roles of lecturers and teachers [46]. Based on research conducted by [47] the mentor figure can influence the readiness of students to be teachers by 4.88%. The mentors guide students to understand teacher duties and provide teaching experience. The role of the mentor in the low category is an indicator of the development of the learning process because there are mentors who do not give prior instructions to students and tend to directly hand over the learning process to students. This actually can

be minimized with student orientation activities by observing the teacher's teaching methods in class and getting to know the partner school environment first [47]. The relationship between the teacher (mentor) and student teacher candidates (mentee) is similar to the relationship between teachers and students in teaching and learning engagement because this relationship can be in the form of social interaction with interpersonal skills between teachers and students [48]. Based on the background above, the purpose of this study was to analyze the differences between the influence of the mentor's role in TA and TPP on student life skills. It is hoped that this research can provide policies related to recognition policies and MBKM program materials that differentiate between TA and TPP in addition to the period for both practice and obtaining a mentoring strategy by collaborating with the school (TA mentor) with STKIP PGRI Nganjuk in planning debriefing and discussing learning activities that more intensively and the resulting output targets.

2 Method

This research used a type of quantitative research with an experimental-posttest-only design. An experimental class for students who do teaching assistance at school (implementation of the independent learning-free campus program) and a control class for students who do internships at school. The difference between the two classes is the duration of time and location of the practice program. The research location is STKIP PGRI Nganjuk. The sampling technique was purposive sampling to know the differences between the two classes. The population is 124 STKIP PGRI Nganjuk students who were taking TA and TPP. The number of samples was 84 students consisting of 36 TA program students as the experimental class and 48 TPP program students as the control class. The source of data used in this research is primary data in the form of questionnaires to students followed by interviews with several students. Data collection technique with a questionnaire using a Likert scale and interview. The independent variable is mentor participation and the dependent variable is student life skills. Indicators for knowing Life skills consist of cooperation, communication, and problem-solving [28]. Indicators of the mentor's role include coaching, bonding, facilitating, and reflecting [43, 44, 45]. The data analysis technique used a two-sample t-test by comparing the results of the experimental group and the control group [49].

3 Results

The results of this research include descriptive statistics from the control and experimental groups in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Statistical Descriptive of Research

Group	Group Statistics			
	M eans	std. Deviation	std. Means	Error

Life Skills	Experiment	2.7 6 778	.63746	.10624
	Control	4.4 8 583	.71335	.10296

The results of data analysis with the t-test using two samples are in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Result of Data Analysis

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Differences	std. Error Difference	Low- er	Up- per
Life Skills	Equal variances assumed	2,336	.130	-11,177	82	.000	-1.68056	.15036	-1.97968	-1.38143
	Equal variances not as- sumed			-11,359	79,437	.000	-1.68056	.14795	-1.97502	-1.38610

4 Discussions

Based on Table 1 the mean of the control group is higher than the mean of the experiment group. Based on table 2 above, there is a significant difference between the life skills of TA and TPP students with a mean difference indicating -1.68056 that the life skills of TPP students are better than TA. Based on interviews conducted with TA and TPP students, TA students obtained higher bonding than TPP students because TA students did the program longer than TPP students so their communication and problem-solving skills were better. The experienced TPP mentors in establishing cooperation produce students who have better coaching, facilitating, and reflection than TA mentors. The results of interviews with TPP students show that mentors provide debriefing or teacher task orientation activities to TPP students at school, mentoring activities for making learning tools, collaboration in class management and assignments, and providing reflections given by the teacher every week on teaching activities in class and ability to complete assignments and communication behaviour with both students and teachers and employees at school. Students' TPP activities seem quite good with (1) planning such as compiling teaching documents, (2) implementation such as using methods, providing learning materials, and being able to manage

classes, (3) evaluations such as giving assignments and tests, but it was found that several respondents did not make test questions [50]. However, it is different from the results of the research [51] that there are still some students who develop lesson plans using plans from mentor teachers and some students are also not able to describe measurable indicators. Student competencies measured in TPP are pedagogic competence, professional competence, personal competence, and social competence with the role of accompanying lecturers and mentors but the principal does not give roles directly to the TPP group [52].

Teacher education at the university level is urgently needed to produce prospective teachers to acquire professional knowledge and skills [12, 53]. At one of the universities in Finland, it was stated that future education teachers had two main objectives, namely Teacher as Researcher (TAR) regarding the realization of research-based education and Personal Practical Theory (PPT) which concern combining various elements experienced by students while studying at university level [54]. Prospective teachers who receive teacher preparation program simulation coaching [55, 56, 57] have significantly increased skills compared to students who do not receive this simulation so it has an impact on prospective teacher perceptions about responding to student behaviour and the ability to provide ideas for solving problems [55]. Learning simulation activities by mentors to students by coaching, bonding, facilitating, and reflecting [43, 44, 45].

Teaching with simulations has an impact on providing opportunities to show interpersonal behaviour and practice special skills by prospective teachers to their students. Besides, it will add practical experience, receive feedback, plan and implement teaching, class management and teach students with all needs and challenges, reflection, and repeated practice [58, 59, 60]. Prospective teachers more appreciate practical-oriented learning than theoretical [56, 60, 61] so prospective teachers do not always see a match between theory and practice [56, 63]. Prospective teachers get feedback about their teaching from their practice [64] and learning methods training can improve their skills [55, 65] and the quality of their teaching during the preparatory program even without relying on a mentor or a group of skilled people [54]. TPP activities are not just providing learning materials to students but also using appropriate learning methods by understanding the characteristics of students. But, some materials are difficult to apply with methods other than lectures so the lecturing method is quite effective in learning [66].

Teaching practice uses a reflective rubric of planning, and implementation, and it is used to improve the ability of prospective teachers to review their strengths and weaknesses [67]. Prospective teachers need teaching experience in schools to be able to acquire creative thinking, be able to solve problems, be able to collaborate, and have innovative skills [68]. Learning through teaching assistance by prospective teachers at Demangan Bangkalan Elementary School has adapted technology with PowerPoint and video media so that students are active and their learning is conducive [69]. Campus Teaching Programs at schools have 3 concepts of literacy, numeracy, and technological adaptation to make students and teachers enthusiastic and motivated to carry out teaching and learning activities effectively and efficiently [70]. The successful implementation of the Campus Teaching Program at Asshohwah IT Mid-

dle School is supported by several factors, they are students can develop their potential and communicate well with students, mentors and lecturers [71]. Results of digital literacy as a learning resource by prospective teachers show that computer technology skills are in the high category, informational skills in the very high category, and concern for digital-based learning media in the high category, while computational thinking skills have a fairly high category in solving problems by searching for information and computing [72].

The role of mentors and lecturers can provide direction to improve the pedagogic competence of prospective teachers [73]. The role of the learning mentor can build the skills of prospective teachers during practice so that they can provide support to students who experience learning difficulties [32]. Prospective teachers who experience unpreparedness for the student's behaviour and who do not do assignments tend to punish these students but with the guidance of prospective teachers involve students with learning objectives and maintain the dignity of prospective teachers in class [55]. Mentors can provide opportunities for students to prepare themselves when they receive new skills by managing emotions as an aspect of life skills [74, 75]. Life skills can be observed from the students' skills in communicating, collaborating, and problem-solving [28]. The mentor's approach to the mentee is facilitating the mentee by helping the mentee focus through the process of listening, asking questions, and discussing but the role of the mentor is not to tell what the mentor wants but rather to encourage, convince the mentee to explore options then make the right decisions/actions and overcome the problems encountered [76]. It is also supported that mentoring in practice programs in schools requires mentors who can model practice in teaching and providing quality guidance and assistance [15].

The mentoring program that has been undertaken by students provides an increase in the characteristics of life skills, It is adaptive because this mentoring program provides experience from mentors according to their fields [77] The mentoring strategy provides environmental support that can build students' emotions so that they get reinforcement, guidance and information from mentors [78]. The mentoring program is expected to be able to build the character and personality of the mentee because of the mentor's role [79]. This mentoring relationship will allow the mentee to build knowledge, and skills, develop networking opportunities [80, 81] and build self-confidence [80]. Based on the results of the research and theoretical analysis above, teaching simulation activities and providing feedback are provided by mentors to students through coaching, bonding, facilitating, and reflecting. The role of the mentor can influence student life skills including collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and developing network opportunities for both TA and TPP students. This research can provide other mentoring strategies with the role of a mentor through strengthening, and building character and personality for students so it can produce the development of network opportunities and build self-confidence for TA and TPP students.

5 Conclusion

From this study, it can be concluded that there are differences between the influence of the mentor role on life skills in TPP and TA students. The influence of the mentor's role on student life skills of TPP is better than TA because the frequency of cooperation between STKIP PGRI Nganjuk and mentors at TPP partner schools is longer than TA. Further research can be carried out with the cooperation strategy of the school as well as the TA mentor with STKIP PGRI Nganjuk to carry out debriefing planning and intensive learning discussion with the outcome targets for TA students.

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