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EFL Pre-service Teachers' and Interns' Expectations and Satisfaction of International Practicum: An Exploratory Study on Patterns and Influential Factors

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Abstract

This exploratory study explored EFL pre-service teachers' and interns' expectations and satisfaction of their overseas practicum. The data was collected from in-depth interviews with five fourth-year students in a regional university in Viet Nam, who participated in their international practicum in Thailand. Analyzed on the basis of a conceptual framework of personal, supervising, professional, and contextual elements, the results showed three distinctive patterns: (1) high expectations - high satisfaction, (2) medium expectations – high satisfaction, and (3) medium expectations – medium satisfaction. The findings also indicated various influential factors for each pattern such as confidence, creativity, supervision, mentors' manners, and expectation (mis)match. The research results highlighted three significant emergent issues: the role of personal element, the impact of the supervisor, and the importance of practicum work-load. The study suggested practical implications for EFL trainee teachers, EFL teacher trainers, and practicum organizers and administrators.

Keywords: International Practicum, Pre-service Teachers, Interns, Expectations, Satisfaction

1. Introduction

International practicum has now become a trend as a result of curriculum internationalization (Kabilan, 2013; Uusimaki & Swirski, 2014; Jin et al., 2019). In response to the trend, higher education institutions initiated various international partnership projects. One such a project is Pre-service Student Teacher Exchange in Southeast Asia or SEA-Teacher Project, for short, launched by SEAMEO in 2015 to provide opportunities for teaching practicum. Since then, various multilateral or bilateral partnerships have come into existence in various countries in the region as in Malaysia (Hendra et al., 2019), Thailand (Gilliland, 2015), and China (Yan & He, 2020; Jin, et al., 2020). Through these partnership initiatives, we do believe that the targets of all these practicum programs extend beyond the provision of professional opportunities. As Florio-Ruane (2001, p.30) confirmed, the value of "immers[ing]

students in cross-cultural experiences" lies in personal growth resulting from "learning about [them[selves as [they] try to learn about others'.

A great number of researches investigating overseas practicum have revealed a wide variety of benefits. The benefits can vary from gaining a global perspective (Parr & Chan, 2015; Tambyah, 2018), developing cross-cultural experience (Sahin, 2008; Wikan & Klein, 2017; Jin et al., 2020), developing partnerships between cooperating teachers and per-service teachers (Major & Santoro, 2016; Kahn-Horwits et al., 2017), to professional and personal growth (Fitzsimmons & McKenzie, 2006; Pence & Macgillivray, 2008; Ateskan, 2016). However, research themes are not just limited to benefits but open to other themes such as supervision or mentorship (Gilliland, 2015; Kahn-Horwitz et al., 2017), and expectations and satisfaction (Heng et al., 2012; Rahman & Nurullal, 2016; Marinakou & Giousmpasoglou, 2017). The last theme, expectations and satisfaction, can be considered one of the least explored among the ones listed as research tends to focus more on study abroad experiences with such sub-themes as the effects of short-term study abroad programs on students' L2 proficiency (Cutrone & Datzman, 2015; Hamoano-Bunce et al., 2019), and EFL students' motivation to study abroad (Williams & Oikonomidoy, 2017). The most evident problem with the studies following the theme is that they tend to concentrate on either students' expectations or their satisfaction, and it is hard to find any research that combines both aspects. Besides, in the EFL field, studies pursuing this theme tend to be more scarce. This gap ignites this study that aims to seek answers to the two research questions:

     1. What patterns of expectations and satisfaction do they experience during their international practicum?

     2. What factors can affect their patterns of expectations and satisfaction?

The research focus will be of great significance as the discovery of the patterns and their influential factors would help orient practicum organizers, coordinators, supervisors, and mentors towards better response to preservice teachers' diverse expectations and, therefore, better facilitation of preservice teachers and interns in the fulfillment of their expectations, thus generating better learning outcomes.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Expectations and Satisfaction

Lam & Ching (2007) indicated that gaining hands-on work experience, developing personal and professional skills and gaining professional knowledge were some of their expectations. Students majoring in different specializations tend to have different expectations. English for Tourism students normally focus their expectations on future career development while tourism and hospitality students concentrates on high or good prospects for promotion and personal growth (Chan et al., 2002). Andrade (2006) and Sherry et al. (2009) pointed out that researchers can also explore a wide variety of expectations within their interns, ranging from learning new ways of thinking and behaving, to making new friends, and improving their cross- cultural knowledge and skills.

Paulins (2008) found that practicum satisfaction offers students a great advantage as those who have satisfying practicum experiences tend to have a more positive outlook toward their career searching process and their educational institution. Interns acquire different satisfaction levels depending on what they receive from the practicum. Gupta et al. (2010) discovered that interns' satisfaction is affected by the benefits they gain from the practicum while Cord et al. (2010) showed that tasks assigned to interns may impact on their levels. Okay & Sahin (2010) indicated that students have greater levels of satisfaction when they receive job offers from the companies where they perform their internships than the others do not.

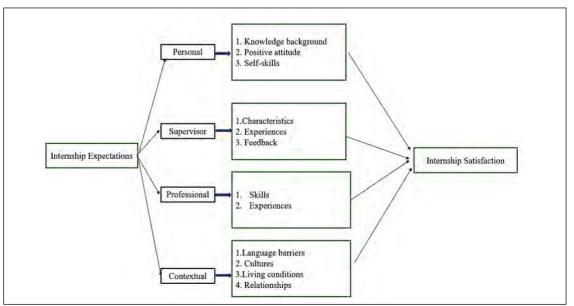### 2.2. Factors Affecting the Fulfillment of Expectations

Different influential factors discovered in different studies conducted in different contexts are framed according to the four general categories, namely, personal, supervisor, professional, and contextual.

Personal factors refer to the characteristics of students as interns. Wen (2010) found that characteristics necessary for their internship success may include academic preparedness, positive attitude and self-initiative; so to promote internship satisfaction, interns need to have their background knowledge or skills relevant to their practicum placements. In addition, personal qualities such as maturity and responsibility are expected to influence interns' performance which would eventually impact their satisfaction with the program (Heng et al., 2012). Paulins (2008) suggested that students express greater satisfaction with internships that provide them with positive experiences, by which they perceive greater personal benefits. If all these of personal qualities apply to certain internships, the results would be their personal growth, which, in turn, means satisfactory experiences of internships.

Mentors' or supervisors' fundamental duties may include guiding, supervising and providing verbal feedback to prospective teachers (Bonilla & Rivera, 2008). Rahman & Nurullah (2016) emphasized the role of feedback as its quality can generate confidence and a high level of contentment. Besides, as Fagan & Wise (2007) asserted, a supervisor's willingness and readiness to provide assistance can be significant for trainees, especially those who face difficulties. Moreover, mentors or supervisors' experience can play an important role. As Jaszay & Dunk (2003) remarked, if their supervising experience is limited, students will certainly suffer.

Professional factors comprise tasks assigned and work environment. Hackman and Oldham (1980) claimed that task characteristics were also associated with work satisfaction, motivation, and performances. Heng et al. (2012) indicated that work environment include learning and career development opportunities, supervisory and co-worker support, networking opportunities and organization satisfaction, which may become the essential elements of internship satisfaction. Mansour & Achoui (2008) suggested that practicum satisfaction is influenced by a mixture of both task and environment characteristics.

Contextual factors vary from characteristics of accommodation and internship locations to social interaction with people involved and school communities. Barton et al. (2015) revealed that the factors may become challenges due to the differences of their prior life experiences, language proficiency, and knowledge of practicum settings. Ruhanen et al. (2013) indicated that accommodation and places of an internship or practicum may affect satisfaction. According to Nur (2016), social factors are also very important for interns as interns need to interact with other people, especially with older people in school communities and that such interactions can strengthen their relationships and assist them in shaping their personalities.

2.3. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of expectations and satisfaction in international practicum

On the basis of the four different factors presented in the previous section, we would argue that all the factors can be combined so as to construct a logical conceptual framework for the study. These factors can be termed 'elements' as combined in the framework and all the details within each element can be called 'aspects'. As shown in Figure 1 below, detailed aspects can be added to each element. Personal elements may include such aspects as knowledge background, positive attitudes, and self-skills. Supervisor elements may consist of aspects like characteristics, experiences, and feedbacks. Professional factors can be composed of skills and experiences. And contextual elements comprise aspects such as language barriers, cultures, living conditions, and relationships. All these elements and aspects would contribute to some extent to internship satisfaction.

3. Method

3.1. Research Context

The practicum in this research is the result of the partnership between two universities, one in Viet Nam and the other in Thailand. The practicum, which lasts for 4 weeks, aims to offer students opportunities to gain deeper and wider professional knowledge and practice, and to raise their awareness of global citizens, as well as and to explore potential labor market when ASEAN countries joined a unified economic community in 2015. Besides, students are able to exchange culture, thus strengthening the relationship between the universities. Every year, in May, from the list of Thai universities that have agreed to receive interns, Vietnamese students begin their process of registration for the program. Then they are required to participate in a short orientation course about Thai culture, society, and people before starting their practicum in Thailand in early July or August.

3.2. Design

The main research method is an exploratory case study. With the aid of in-depth interviews, the study aimed at collecting narrated experiences after their practicum. The whole inquiry process was recursive and reflexive in nature, starting from collecting lived narratives through constructing interim texts to writing research texts as reports.

3.3. Participants

Five third-year students at University of Foreign Languages were selected with three of them majoring in English Language Teaching and two others majoring in English Language. Four criteria were used as the basis for the selection. Firstly, the international practicum was their first overseas endeavor. This criterion guaranteed that their expectations were real and true ones. Secondly, all the participants had to participate in a full four-week program. This criterion warranted that all of their expectations, whether fulfilled or not, would operate for the whole period of time. Thirdly, all of the participants would be at different language and professional proficiency levels. Finally, all of the participants would voluntarily participate in the study. The last two criteria ensured that the collected data would be enriched.

3.4. Data Collection

In-depth interviews were chosen as the main instrument of data collection because interviews could allow the researchers to explore and understand the researched subjects deeply and comprehensively as human expectations and satisfaction are completely subjective, unique, and totally individualistic.

Open-ended questions were used to facilitate enriched and nuanced data. Interviews were divided into two rounds with the first one focusing on expectations and the second on satisfaction. Such a division offered the researchers ample time for scrutinizing all the expectations before satisfaction data were collected.

3.5. Data Analysis

The coding process began with the detection of expectations and satisfaction with the use of their linguistic markers. For example, such phrases as "*I expected ...*" or "*I hope...*" were evident markers of expectations. Similarly, such markers as "*I am happy to...*", "*I found .... very helpful*" were typical examples of satisfaction. Then the process proceeded to the allocation of identified expectations and satisfaction to their relevant element, either personal, supervisor, professional or contextual. Illustrative quotes representing codes were also numbered in a systematic way for in-text citation. For example, IN01.04 meant an expectation or satisfaction appeared in the first interview and was listed as the fourth expectation or satisfaction in the same interview.

The analyzed data showed that expectations and satisfaction differed in their extents. Some expectations were high as participants placed a high hope for them while others were not as high for the degrees of hope placed on them were low. The same was true for satisfaction.

The degree of expectation would be determined according to the five criteria. An expectation which was listed as low or medium or high was to meet three-fifth of the following criteria. Firstly, the degree could be determined according to how strongly a participant self-evaluates his/her expectations. Secondly, the extent could be estimated according to how frequently their concerns or worries about the practicum were expressed. Thirdly, it could be evaluated according to how explicitly frequent the evidence of fear of difficulties or problems were. Fourthly, the extent could be identified in accordance with how strongly expectations were expressed. Finally, the degree could be ranked low, medium, or high according to how many expectations were expressed.

In the same way, satisfaction could be determined on the basis of the five criteria. The degree can result from the meeting of three-fifth of the criteria. Firstly, it could be detected according to how satisfied they felt, low, medium or strong. Secondly, it could be identified according to how many expectations were fulfilled. Thirdly, the extent could be discovered in accordance with how strongly their satisfaction was expressed. Fourthly, it could also be measured on the basis of how frequently dissatisfaction was evident. Finally, the degree could be estimated according to how strong their commitment to helping their future counterparts was expressed.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The Three Different Patterns

The data analysis showed the three distinctive patterns: high expectations – high satisfaction, medium expectations – high satisfaction, and medium expectations – medium satisfaction. The pattern of high expectations and high satisfaction was represented by only one participant, trainee teacher 01PL; the pattern of medium expectations and medium satisfaction was represented by two participants, 01HN and 03QH; and the pattern of medium expectations and high satisfaction was represented by two participants, 02TN and 04NT. The following description of each of the three patterns will be framed according to the four elements of the conceptual framework: personal, supervisor, professional and contextual.

4.1.1.   The First Pattern: High Expectations and High Satisfaction

High expectations

The trainee teacher claimed that he was quite confident in his professional knowledge and skills, and that he believed he was able to apply all these knowledge and skills, especially lesson planning, class management, and communicative skills. He confidently claimed, "Communicative skills and management skills will be able to be applied in the practicum effectively" (05PL-IN1.1).

The participant believed that a supervisor played a very important role. The type of supervisor he expected was a "friendly, well-qualified mentor who set up proper requirements for the practicum" (05PL-IN1.3). The types of feedback he would want from his supervisor were "quick, brief and fast" and "direct and easy to understand" (05PL-IN1.5).

What this participant expected the most regarding the professional element centered around two major things: creative teaching styles and improvement in students' skills. For a creative style to develop, he emphasized one important factor: high language proficiency. As he explained, "This good competence would definitely inspire students and then make the lesson deeply dug. If not, both the teacher and students would feel very bored" (05PL-IN1.7). In addition, although he thought he would keep his lesson plans as "simple" (05PL-IN1.8) as he could, what he would like to aim at in his lessons was to improve his students' skills, not their language knowledge by helping them during his teaching process.

In the last element, contextual, the participant mentioned three major aspects: the language barrier, cultural and living conditions. He believed that the language difficulty would directly affect his teaching process. Therefore, he seemed to figure out the challenge clearly, explaining, "I had to explain everything in English teaching lesson while students' language competence was not high." (05PL-IN1.9). However, with self-confidence in his language proficiency and also with his supervisor 's support, he said he would not be too concerned about this. As far as culture is concerned, what he would expect was to understand the differences between Thai and Vietnamese students with a view to help him improve his instructional skills. He said, "I want to know how different Thai students were in terms of their attitude or their need, in order to teach better" (05PL-IN1.10). As for living and working conditions, he said he would prefer to work in a place, which was a "comfortable" (05PL- IN1.11) and "well-equipped" dormitory (05PL-IN1.12). Finally, he would want friendly relationships with the supervisor, and collaborative and supportive relationships with the staff.

High satisfaction

The participant was quite satisfied with the application of professional knowledge and skills in the practicum. He reported that he managed to apply what he learned in his teaching process as well as what he had expected to. He explained, "I applied well what knowledge I accumulated because the practicum requirements were not too high. I was able to adapt easily" (05PL-IN2.1). He realized that he had taught his lessons smoothly and controlled all the skills fairly well, especially lesson planning, class management, and communicative skills. As he confirmed, "My students could understand the lesson I taught" (05PL-IN2.2), and "they were eager to learn" (05PL-IN2.3).

The trainee teacher was completely satisfied with his supervising teacher and his feedback. He remarked that his supervisor was not only "friendly" and "well-qualified" (05PL-IN2.1), but also "enthusiastic" and "open-minded." For him, the supervisor was especially "flexible" (05PL-IN2.10). He also showed high appreciation for the feedback that was "quickly and effectively" (05PL-IN2.4).

Most of his satisfaction resulted from three main sources: creative teaching styles, students' skill improvement, and valuable instructional experience. He received a lot of praise from the supervisor regarding his initiative to use "Thai language to explain the English vocabulary" (05PL-I1.5) with the assistance of the translation tool on the Internet. He was quite sure that he gained more experience in teaching the foreign students, which was the key to his satisfaction in the professional element.

The trainee teacher claimed that he managed to overcome his language barrier. He explained that his friends as well as he were lucky to find some Thai people who they were able to communicate with in English. Besides, he found it worth attempting to learn from the Thai culture as all the people he met were "friendly", "good [in their] nature" and "gentle" (05PL-IN2.7). In terms of living conditions, he contented with the clean and convenient dormitory as he expected, but he seemed unsatisfied with the urban transportation. Finally, for relationships with his roommates, he used three words to describe: "happy", "friendly" (05PL- IN2.8) and "pleasant".

4.1.2.   The Second Pattern: Medium Expectations and Medium Satisfaction

Participant 01HN

Medium expectations

With her confidence in her professional knowledge and skills, the participant claimed that she would apply her communication skills and improve her classroom management skills.

Regarding the supervising teacher, she expected to work with the one who was "devoted, thoughtful and easy going" (01HN-IN1.7). She believed that her supervisor could provide necessary documents, offered good suggestions and feedback about the trainee teacher's instructional performance. In addition, she hoped to communicate with the supervising teacher easily. And the kind of feedback she would like to receive most was direct ones as she thought the supervising teacher might not have sufficient time to provide comments by email. Moreover, she indicated that she would like to receive both "positive" and "negative" feedback (01HN-IN1.13), as positive feedback would encourage her to develop skills further while negative feedback would help her to avoid repeated mistakes.

In the professional element, she hoped to find an easy but effective way for designing lesson plans "creatively" and organizing classroom activities "smoothly". However, she did not seem to expect her student's language skills to improve within a short length of time. The trainee teacher thought that the practicum should be an opportunity to enhance her English fluency.

Besides, she expected accommodation to be "well-equipped" and "convenient" (01HN-IN1.20), and transport to be "easy to commute" (01HN-IN1.18). For social relationships, she would like to be "close to students or the supervising teacher to learn about their culture" (01HN-IN1.21).

Medium satisfaction

The preservice teacher reported that almost all her students were not English-majored, so their proficiency was too limited. Therefore, she had to reply on the supervisor to explain the lessons in Thai when the students did not understand, which made her dissatisfied.

As for the second element, she seemed not to be pleased with her supervising teacher's experience and expertise except for his characteristics that were a "nice, enthusiastic, easy-going" (01HN-IN2.6). She reported that her supervising teacher's English proficiency seemed to be limited as she found it difficult to understand all of her requirements. In addition, the supervising teacher's instructions seemed not to be clearly expressed so she found it very hard to conduct instructional activities well. As for the feedback, she expected to receive "direct", "positive" and "negative" ones (01HN-IN2.12; 01HN-IN2.9). Besides, she reported that her supervisor always praised her in general without showing the mistakes she had made and needed to avoid.

Regarding the professional element, her satisfaction was slightly reduced when she applied her instructional skills, especially classroom management. She explained that the students' English proficiency was so limited to communicate that she could not manage her class smoothly, and that this major problem made it hard for her to design various teaching activities.

As for the contextual element, her satisfaction was related to the three aspects: language barrier, culture and living conditions. She was satisfied when she managed to overcome her language barrier. She was quite pleased with the way Thai people behaved, especially when they greeted. Besides, she found Thai people "gentle, polite and helpful" (01HN-IN2.17). In terms of living conditions, she stayed in the dormitory which was not as properly equipped as she expected. Finally, as for social relationships, she was pleased with her friendly roommates who were ready to share their teaching experiences.

Participant 03QH

Medium expectations

With her confidence in her professional knowledge, the trainee teacher hoped to be able to apply all the instructional skills and communication skills she had acquired. She explained that once her teaching skills, especially her classroom management, were fully applied, she would have more valuable experience relevant to her future career. She added that to make classroom management more effective and to practice communication skills well, she hoped for "creating an active class and keeping good contacts with the students" (03QH-IN1.3).

The preservice teacher also expected her supervisor to act as a "counsellor or supporter" (03QH-IN1.6). She would also like her supervisor to be not only "friendly and open-minded" (03QH-IN1.7) but also "experienced and high expertise" (03QH-IN1.8). She expected that she would also learn much teaching experience from her supervisor. In addition, she seemed to expect to receive the "direct" feedback (03QH-IN1.11) since she would like to discuss directly with her supervisor who would help her to understand her teaching practice more deeply. Besides, she said that she would like to receive both kinds of feedback, positive and negative. As she explained, a trainee teacher would definitely have very limited teaching experience, so positive feedback may boost her knowledge and skills while negative feedback would help her overcome her weaknesses.

She also expected to improve her instructional skills, especially lesson planning. But she did not expect classroom management to be smooth. She thought that the language barrier would be the reason for management tasks being a real challenge.

The participant did not believe that she would overcome any language barrier because she was not quite confident in her English language proficiency, which was a real obstacle. She hoped that she would do more research into Thai culture, especially Thai people, since she was impressed by their "friendliness [and] kindness" (03QH-IN1.18). Regarding living facilities, as she thought the dormitory would be comfortable, she did not expect much from the accommodation. Finally, in terms of social relationships, she would prefer that relationships between staff and trainees would be more collaboratively supportive.

Medium satisfaction

The participant was fairly satisfied with the internship. She said, "I['ve] applied all of my acquired knowledge in my teaching process and realized that my students were able to adapt to the lesson well" (03QH-IN2.2). She was fairly pleased to communicate successfully with students in class.

In contrast, the teacher participant claimed she was not satisfied with her supervisor who had limited experiences and expertise. The type of feedback that she received was indirect, via e-mail, with which she was not contented because it did not facilitate direct discussion.

The participant, however, was quite satisfied with her designed lesson plans, which were effectively applied in classes. She noticed that all of her students were excited about the lessons she taught. In terms of class management, she found she managed her class quite well thanks to her knowledge of the English language. She pointed out that she was able to communicate with students in class without any problems.

She was also satisfied with overcoming the language barrier and social relationships with her roommates except for accommodation. She explained that she was not comfortable staying with Thai students. Besides, dormitory facilities were a real nuisance for her. She said, "I was uncomfortable using the public restroom in Thai student's dormitory" (03QH-IN2.12).

4.1.3.   The Third Pattern: Medium Expectations and High Satisfaction

Participant 02TN

Medium expectations

The participant expected communication skills to be applied in the practicum. Before the internship, she was concerned about her English language proficiency which might limit her communication with her mentor and friends. Therefore, she hoped that her English language proficiency would be improved.

The intern seemed not to show any worry about what type of mentor she was going to meet. She hoped for the one who was both "enthusiastic" and "patient" (02TN-IN1.4). She explained that a mentor should be patient in assigning work and supporting them. She expected to receive "direct", "positive and negative" feedback (02TN-IN1.6). As she explained, positive feedback, once given, would promote her strength, and negative feedback, once received, would help overcome her mistakes.

The participant, who majored in English for Tourism, expected her language skills to be applied. She also hoped to develop planning skills relevant to duties at the international office at the university.

The intern said that as she had learned about the Thai people via the video or the internet, she hoped to communicate with Thai people better and made more Thai friends. She claimed that a language barrier can be both a challenge and motivation to explore Thai culture more deeply. As she explained, it would be difficult to communicate with Thais, whose English language was too limited, but it was also a motivation for her to improve her language proficiency. As for transportation, she could commute anytime and anywhere by shuttle bus. Regarding social relationships, she hoped she would make more sociable and cheerful friends.

High satisfaction

The participant was quite pleased with the performance of her communication skills in the office as she had numerous chances to practice "listening and speaking skills"(02TN- IN2.5). As a result, she felt quite confident in communicating with the mentor. Soft skills such as "computer skills, photocopying, or typing" (02TN-IN2.6) were also frequently practiced, which she thought would be very important for her future job.

The intern reported that her mentor was "enthusiastic" and "patient" as she had hoped for. She added that the mentor himself guided her to visit various historical places after work. She also reported that she received direct comments which showed her both positive and negative aspects of her performance. She also had a chance to discuss the comments directly with her mentor.

On the professional side, she recalled that when she attended a number of university events, she "communicated with a lot of people" (02TN-IN2.15) and used various soft skills such as "organizing activities or events, text printing, translating" (02TN-IN2.16). She seemed to be very satisfied with her performance of these skills.

The student teacher demonstrated her great satisfaction with learning Thai culture, overcoming the language barrier and enjoying favorable living conditions. She was very pleased that Thai culture was not so much different from Vietnamese one, except for the greetings. She was also very satisfied with her communication with Thai people without any difficulties as a result of her attendance at a training course called "survival communication". She was very happy with her dormitory without a kitchen, which was clean and modern. Finally, she was very pleased with her kind staff and roommates, who were always willing to lend whatever equipment she needed.

Participant 04NT

Medium expectations

The participant's main expectation was to apply her acquired knowledge and skills. With her confidence in language skills, knowledge and skills in English for tourism as well as soft skills, she expected to be able to apply "communication, negotiation, problem and solving skills, and teamwork" (04NT-IN1.1) as well as "time management" and "computing skills" (04NT-IN1.3).

The intern expected to meet a mentor who could provide useful guidance on "not only professional knowledge, but also communication skills and computing skills" (04NT-IN1.4). She also hoped she would be instructed by the one who was not only "experienced" but also "friendly, enthusiastic" (04NT-IN1.4). In addition, because of possible language barriers she might face, and her very limited experience as an intern, she would not expect to communicate directly with the mentor. The kind of feedback she would like to receive should be "indirect" (04NT-IN 1.10). As she explained, this type of feedback would give the mentor more time to comment more deeply. Besides, she would want to receive feedback that was "more positive than negative" (04NT-IN 1.7). The reason was that negative feedback would help her to improve her personal skills, and to avoid unexpected mistakes.

The participant would hope to work in the university office so that she could use skills such as working on the computer, editing texts and using a copier.

Finally, the participant thought language barrier was a real challenge for her to overcome. Besides, she expected to stay in the dormitory, commute more easily, communicate more friendly with foreign friends.

High satisfaction

The participant was totally satisfied with the internship as she mentioned her effective application of professional knowledge and skills. She was able to communicate with the mentor and staff without any difficulty. She was fairly content with her receptionist skills. She performed fairly smoothly in the events of the university when she came into contact with Thais who could not communicate in English. She also found various opportunities to practice and develop soft skills, such as computer skills, time management skills. She demonstrated her confidence in the use of the software on computers, printers and photocopiers.

As for the mentoring element, "enthusiastic" and "good quality" (04NT- IN2.3a) were the exact words she used to describe the characteristics of her mentor. At work, her mentor was willing to assist her in completing her assignments. After work, the mentor was also a tour guide who took all the interns to different historic places and introduced the culture of Thai people. Besides, she admired the mentor's enthusiasm and good competences because he was not only ready to share all the experience of the work suitable for all staff, but also handled the job very well. Although his feedback was direct, which contrasted with her expectation, she found it useful as this helped her identify her strengths and weaknesses immediately. She confessed that her satisfaction with the mentor was beyond her expectations.

The intern was highly satisfied with her professional skills. She reported that all the skills she expected to apply were successfully applied. Soft skills such as typing texts editing, designing posters were practiced smoothly. She found much contentment with learning some new photocopying skills. In addition, she properly arranged her work, her studies, and her friend's meetings to improve her management skills.

For the contextual element, her satisfaction was manifested in these aspects: the language barrier and living conditions. She confirmed that she was not worried about language barrier as she was lucky to meet enthusiastic and helpful Thais. She was also satisfied with clean dormitory, comfortable transport, and good relationships. The intern was pleased with her helpful international students and sociable roommates.

4.2. Influential Factors on the Fulfillment of Expectations

The data analysis showed different influential factors that emerged in the three different patterns of expectations and satisfaction. These factors were considered as a decisive role in determining the degrees of the participants' expectations and contributing largely to the maintenance of the degrees of their satisfaction.

4.2.1.   Influential Factors in the First Pattern

In this pattern, there were four different factors: confidence, creativity, extensive experience of the supervisor, and expectation matches. Firstly, the participant clearly showed his confidence in not only his professional knowledge but also his application of the knowledge and skills. He was also confident in his teaching effectiveness. As he reported, "As I was able to communicate with my students during my teaching process, my students were eager to learn"(01PL.F3).

Secondly, his creative abilities were manifested in his very smart initiative of using Thai language. His creative solution to students' lack of understanding was highly appreciated by his supervising teacher. His satisfaction with this action continued to increase when other trainees learned from him and applied this technique to their classroom teaching.

The third factor was the knowledge management of the supervising teacher. During the practicum, the supervising teacher assigned proper work and discussed to find the best solution for the trainee's lesson plan.

Finally, expectation matches were the last factor in this case. Before the practicum, the participant expected to receive a "quick" and "effective" feedback. After the completion, he reported he received all the kinds of direct and positive feedbacks with praises.

4.2.2.   Influential Factors in the Second Pattern

In the second pattern three factors identified in this pattern include confidence in language proficiency, mentor/supervisor's positive personality and expectation matches. Participant 02TN who demonstrated her most evident confidence in her English proficiency remarked that she was able to understand what everybody said, and felt more confident. Similarly, participant 04NT showed her ability to deal with real communication as a receptionist. She reported that she communicated well with the people who did not know English well. Besides, she was lucky to meet friendly and helpful Thai friends, who supported her to overcome the language barrier.

Both participants 02TN and 04NT agreed that their mentors were friendly and enthusiastic. They said, "After working, she enthusiastically guides my group in the office to visit historic places and introduces Thai culture." (02TN and 04NT. F5). The participants indicated her mentor was not only ready to share all the experience of the work, but also completed every work very well.

Finally, expectation matches were an important factor. Participant 04NT reported that she did not receive indirect feedback, but she was not disappointed. Instead, she realized the benefit of this way and pleased to learn to apply it.

4.2.3.   Influential Factors in the Third Pattern

In the pattern, the three main factors include supervisors' limited experience, lack of facilities and expectation mismatches. Both participants 01HN and 03QH confirmed that the limited experience of their mentors was the main reason why they were not very satisfied. Participant 01HN said that her supervisor did not offer clear instructions so she did not know if she taught in the right path. Similarly, participant 03QH reported that she did not learn much from the teacher's experience.

The second factor was the lack of facilities in their dormitory. Both of them felt uncomfortable as staying there was a real nuisance. The last factor indicated in this pattern was an expectation mismatch. Participant 01HN was dissatisfied when her supervising teacher gave her only the positive feedback and no negative one. Similarly, participant 03QH was not pleased to receive the indirect one via email, which was contrary to her expectations.

4.3. Discussion

The discussion will concentrate on the three emerging issues: (i) the role of the personal element, (ii) the impact of the supervisor on the participants' satisfaction, and (iii) the importance of practicum length and workload.

4.3.1.   The Role of the Personal Element

The findings indicated that the personal element played a decisive role in the determination of the participants' satisfaction. Participant 05PL was a typical example of the role of this element. The two factors that made him a unique case in the pattern of high expectations and high satisfaction included confidence and creativity. As the findings indicated, this participant showed his great confidence in his strong expectations. In addition, he revealed no signs of worries before and during the practicum at all. The most decisive factor was his initiative of using Thai language to explain when Thai students showed signs of lack of comprehension during his lessons. The fact that this initiative was replicated by other participants, and praised by his supervisor increased his confidence, which in turn boosted his desire to apply more creative techniques. The findings support those of a study by Yazidu (2016), which confirmed that confidence is significant for setting up a positive sense of self-accomplishment and professional growth during practicum. It is evident that such factors as confidence and creativity could trigger and maintain trainee teachers' satisfaction.

However, both participants 04NT and 02TN showed another side of the role of this personal element. Although these participants did not show any clear signs of confidence before the practicum, they all claimed that their confidence grew significantly during and after the practicum. The reported that their confidence grew gradually in such areas as professional knowledge and skills and communication skills and that this increase contributed greatly to the increase in her satisfaction. These findings are in line with those of the study conducted by Muhammad et al. (2017), who showed that once conducted, the practicum, which was totally out of the comfort zone, definitely affected confidence level positively, especially in teaching. In addition, the result supported that of the study conducted by Cruickshane & Westbrook (2013), who asserted the impacts of the practicum on preservice teachers' confidence and autonomy.

4.3.2.   The Impact of the Supervisor

This second element showed obvious effects on the participants' satisfaction in the different patterns. The impacts could be both positive and negative. Supervisors' positive personalities such as friendliness, enthusiasm, flexibility and open-mindedness contributed significantly to the satisfaction of all the participants. These findings were in line with those of Rahman & Nurullah (2016) that emphasized the significance of amicable, dialogical and friendly rapport between supervisors and interns.

Conversely, other factors related to the supervisors exerted negative impacts on the trainee teachers, decreasing their satisfaction. Participant 01HN reported that her supervisor's feedback was too general to be learned professionally, and that his expertise seemed not to be up to the standard, which was responsible for her dissatisfaction. These findings are in line with those of Rahman & Nurullah (2016), which emphasized the phenomenon of the scarcity of the comprehensive and detailed provision of feedback from mentors. The problem can also be explained by the findings from the study of Hobson et al. (2009), confirming that because of differences among the quality and procedures of the mentoring process, some supervisors failed to fully understand their interns. Moreover, participants 02TN and 03QH reported that the language proficiency level of their supervisor was limited, and that they did not receive feedback as expected, decreasing their satisfaction. The study of Barton

et al. (2015) indicated that ineffective supervisors were those who did not communicate clearly, and that the opportunity of the intern would not improve during their practice when regular and effective feedback was not provided in time. In short, although this element was not decisive, it contributed to the increase or decrease of the participants' satisfaction.

4.3.3.   The Importance of Practicum Length and Workload

This issue emerged in the findings of all the participants. Unlike the important role of previous ones, this issue did not increase or decrease the degree of the participants' satisfaction, but it might affect the extent of satisfaction if combined with other issues.

Both participants 05PL and 01HN reported that the teaching hours for them were so limited that he could not accumulate sufficient teaching experience to grow professionally. Besides, participant 03QH confessed that the practicum length of time, which was one month, was too short for her to develop her professional skills. Participant 04NT indicated that her workload fluctuated, making it impossible for her to establish stable working habits. The findings are in line with those of the study conducted by Yazidu (2016), which confirmed that limited practicum time made it impossible for student teachers to get accustomed to their students and, therefore, they experienced a variety of conflicts with their students. It was evident that the majority of the participants realized that the length of time could affect their professional development.

5.   Conclusion and Implications

The results revealed the EFL preservice teachers' expectations and satisfaction were manifest in the three distinctive patterns: high expectations – high satisfaction, medium expectations – high satisfaction, and medium expectations – medium satisfaction. The study also discovered various influential factors for each pattern, including those connected with the interns (language proficiency confidence, creativity), and those associated with supervisors (professional knowledge, positive personality, experience) and those related to environments and patterns (facilities, (mis)matches).

From the results of the study, several important implications are suggested for students, teachers and administrators. For a successful international internship, prospective students should pay due attention to the following factors. First, EFL students should be fully aware of their expectations as awareness will ensure their preparedness and readiness. They should also pay special attention to such important factors as confidence, creativity, and language proficiency. Besides, they should make every attempt to improve their professional and cultural knowledge so that they can easily overcome potential language and cultural barriers. Moreover, students should also be prepared for necessary soft skills and communication competences.

The study identified the influential factors which may help cooperating teachers and supervisors in the host and home universities to have a general picture of what makes a successful internship. Therefore, if they are fully aware of the factors when they prepare their students for internships, it will be of great help for them.

Administrators need to pay attention to their interns' expectations and influential factors as an understanding of these will guide them in constructing the content of a pre-internship orientation course to prepare interns better for their future practicum.

The study has two major limitations. Firstly, the interview is the only tool utilized. The lack of triagulation may affect the validity of the research. Therefore, future studies should use additional methods of data collection such as journals or observation to ensure the capture of multiple dimensions of the same phenomenon. Moreover, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 practicum or internship was ceased; as a consequence, the main participants of the case study were chosen from the prior-to-2020 cohorts of preservice teachers and interns. This may undoubtedly affect the objectivity and precision of the data collected for the study as the participants who finished their practicum before the year 2020 may not remember what happened as exactly as they could.

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