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Challenges Pre-Service Teacher Trainees Face

During Their Teaching Practicum

Research Project

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ ٱلَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَٰلِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَٰلِحًا تَرْضَٰهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ

(النمل 19)

Abstract

This research was intended to investigate the challenges that pre-service teachers face during their teaching practicum. The participants were 32 pre-service teachers, 7 males and 25 females, who had to do the teaching practicum for about 30 days. They filled in the questionnaire (Cronbach Alpha= .81) especially developed for the purpose of this research. The pre-service teachers were teaching grades 7 and 8 at 32 basic schools. The findings showed that the pre-service teachers faced no major challenges during their teaching practicum.

Key Terms: challenges, pre-service teachers, teaching practicum

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Finally, we hope that this work can be useful for readers and pre-service teachers.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a foreign language

ELT: English language teaching

LAL: Language assessment literacy

Contents

Section One

1.1 Introduction

In real classroom situations, theories about teaching are put into practice. Consequently, it becomes a required course for college students whose qualification for graduation is education. Teaching practicums can aid in the development of pre-service teachers' professional identities (Zhu et al., 2018). Preservice teachers are students who enrolled in teacher preparation programs, working toward becoming teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2017). In the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, they are at year four at colleges and faculties of education and basic education.

Practice is crucial for instructors, says Farrell (2007:33), since it helps them learn more about their chosen profession، teaching in the long run. There are certainly difficulties and problems that come with beginning a career in teaching, though must be addressed. The study period leading up to graduation is the ideal time to address these issues and attempt to practice how to handle them. The greatest way for many pre-service teachers to learn pedagogical knowledge and abilities as well as professional competence as a teacher is through a teaching practicum, which often serves as their first experience (Hascher et al., 2004).

Sammephet and Wanphet (2013) show how the first classroom experience is viewed as a challenge for pre-service student teachers and how this could be a source of anxiety. Therefore, they suggest that before students finish the program, they should get many pre-service training sessions. There were three primary groups of achievements that could be found. Taking charge, growing in self-assurance, and maintaining discipline in the classroom were these. The essay also examines the significance of these findings in raising the standard of pre-service teacher education.

Hamad (2021) stated that new teachers encounter difficulties such as classroom management, lack of resource allocation, not being seen as a true teacher, along with dealing with students' disruptive behavior.

1.2 The Problem of the Study

In the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, the challenges that Pre-Service teachers face during their practicum have not been investigated thoroughly, although there have been a few studies on the topic. There is still information to be gathered about Pre-Service teachers' challenges during their teaching practicum. These challenges could be interpersonal or related to the experiences of Pre-Service teachers while teaching during their practicum. The interpersonal challenges include Pre-Service teachers' relationships with school principals and school teachers, while the challenges that these Pre-Service teachers face may include issues related to the program they teach, students' learning abilities, students' lack of motivation, classroom organization, lack of necessary teaching materials, and student assessment and behavioral problems.

1.3 Aim of this study

The aim of this study is to investigate:
- interpersonal challenges that pre-service teachers face with the principals and the teachers of the schools where these pre-service teachers teach.
- the challenges pre-service teachers face while teaching, including challenges with the program, students' learning problems, students' lack of motivation, classroom organization problems, lack of necessary teaching materials, student evaluation and assessment problems.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the interpersonal challenges that pre-service teachers face with the school principals and teachers during their teaching practicum?
2. What are the challenges that pre-service teachers face while they teach in the classroom?

1.5 Significance of this study

Since pre-service teachers will become teachers in the future, it is important to understand the challenges they face during their teaching practicum so that these problems can be eradicated and solutions be found for the challenges. The findings of this study can assist in identifying the challenges. Once the challenges are identified, colleges of education, the Ministry of Education, and schools can collaborate more effectively to address these issues and find solutions or, at least, reduce them. Additionally, the findings of this study can also benefit supervisors who go to schools to evaluate these pre-service teachers. With a better understanding of the challenges these pre-service teachers face; supervisors can provide proper guidance and suggestions to help them solve problems and deal with the challenges.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

This research is carried out in Erbil, and the participants are pre-service EFL teachers who teach at high schools and basic schools. We included 45 pre-service teachers and used a questionnaire to collect the data.
We did not have access to pre-service teachers in other cities, and we could not use interviews and classroom observations.

Section Two

Review of the Related Literature

The literature review will discuss the issues of the teaching practicum in the EFL teacher preparation program.

2.1 Pre-Service Teachers and the Practicum

In contrast to student teaching, a practicum is a component of a class and real-world training component of a program to develop skills and knowledge (Kolb, 2014). Student teaching is intended to provide aspiring teachers a chance to hone their techniques in a typical classroom setting. One of the most crucial components of teacher education is teaching practice, also known as the practicum, according to Farrell (2008). The pre-service teachers will have their first hands-on teaching experience during the practicum (Tuli and File, 2009). They will gain knowledge on how to instruct, beginning with theory and classroom management. Since the teaching practicum is thought of as the first opportunity for pre-service student teachers to practically experiment with their theories and knowledge in real practice, a number of hurdles and issues are anticipated to arise. According to Voss, Kunter, and Baumert (2011), a successful teacher is one who is knowledgeable about the subject's content and uses approaches that are appropriate for the student's grade level. The goal of teaching practicum courses is to develop future teachers as reflective professionals and to give them a real-world setting in which to put the knowledge they have learned in the courses.

Several study projects have looked into the difficulties pre-service student teachers encounter in a variety of settings. To start with, a study by Isma-ard, Wichamwk, and Chuanchom (2021) used a convergent methodology and used questionnaires and semi-structured focused group interviews as its research tools. Participants in this small study were B.Ed. students at a Thai university. In the quantitative phase, there were 78 participants; 17 of them took part in the semi-structured focus group interview. The results showed four aspects of different challenges and limits. This included elements of communication, instruction, student-related issues, and support-related issues. Most students seemed to experience comparable difficulties.

Vo Thi Kim Anh, Vincent Pang, and Lee Kean Wah (2018) found that implementing teaching practicum did not give student instructors enough chances to effectively develop their teaching skills. The teaching practicum was unsuccessful mostly due to inappropriate implementation strategies, slack collaboration between the university and high schools, and insufficient assistance. The researchers concluded that it is tough to teach English to EFL learners, especially during teaching practicum. Student-teachers require more instruction and experience in classroom management, class control, and communication skills in order to maintain discipline in class, make better use of their time, and build positive relationships with students, other teachers, and the school administration.-Student-teachers have excellent theoretical knowledge of teaching methods, subject matter, and how to prepare lesson plans, but they encounter problems and difficulties when trying to put this knowledge into reality.

2.2 Challenges pre-services teachers face

Pre-service teachers can share their personal educational ideas, theories, and understandings during teaching practice. It also gives them a chance to explore and put their knowledge and abilities in the field of teaching and learning to the test.

According to Abongdia, Adu, and Foncha (2017), the challenges of teaching involve circumstances and opportunities that necessitate teachers to make a specific effort to advantage something. Their study's findings indicate that the majority of these problems could be recognized by the student instructors, which the researchers believe is a good place to start looking for answers. The study suggests, among other things, that mentors in schools make sure student teachers receive assistance during their work-integrated learning since they need the chance to develop personally.

2.2.1 Interpersonal challenges

There are two broad categories of interpersonal roles that a teacher can play: those that take place in the classroom and those that take place outside of it. The main interpersonal interactions that teachers have with pupils take place in the classroom. The ability of the teacher to create specific fundamental circumstances, which are crucial in generating a healthy educational environment, revolves around interpersonal interaction abilities. warmth, empathy, respect, sincerity, concreteness, self-disclosure, immediacy, and confrontation are some of these requirements. The findings indicated pre-service teachers' positive feelings about collaborative and perceived learning and moderate feelings concerning the sense of community tends to be interwoven with the interpersonal engagement of the participants (Kacar, no date).

1. Pre-service teacher's relation with the school principals

Principals recognize and appreciate pre-service teachers who support one another, assist one another with problems, provide chances for kids, and act as sounding boards for ideas. Your principal must play a part in developing a relationship with you by showing appreciation, support, and assistance. All facets of the school are under the principal's control. Although the principle legally reports to the school's headmaster or an assistant headmaster, the principal has a variety of subordinates. Parents want their children to receive a quality education and to grow up in a safe environment (Stravakou and Lozgka, 2018).

2. Pre-service teacher's relation with the school teachers

Wan, Nicholas, and Williams (2010) explained that the influence of the variety of interactions that the pre-service teacher experiences with the people in the school community, however, is occasionally an underappreciated aspect of the professional experience. The pre-service teacher's relationship with their supervising teacher, who is in charge of giving them professional and emotional support, is crucial in this regard. From the initial data collection, before any experiential base in schools, through the various phases of their professional placements involving steadily increasing levels of professional responsibility, this study methodically tracked the evolving beliefs and perceptions of a group of pre-service teachers. The findings showed that the pre-service teachers' perceptions of effective teaching changed over time, moving from one of being in charge via knowledge to one of being in charge through charisma and developing relationships with their students.

2.2.2 Challenges pre-service teachers face while teaching

1. Challenges with the program they teach

Materials are important factors that affect the classroom teaching process during a teaching practicum. Materials for teaching aid in the process of teaching and learning; they should be created especially for them, allow students to plan and preview their lessons, and be flexible enough to accommodate improvisation and modification. Teaching materials are frequently the focal point of education and have a significant impact on classroom activities. Accordingly, the creation of instructional aids and resources is essential to the accomplishment of educational goals (Rahayuningsih, 2016).

2. Students' learning problems

Students learning problems include mistake correction, instruction methods, speech instruction, grammar instruction, and motivation. The pre-service teachers circulated the classroom to keep an eye on the pupils' work when they began working on written assignments. As soon as they discovered a mistake made by the pupils, they fixed it right away. Not only did they point out the incorrect word, but they also provided an explanation to help pupils become more adept at fixing their own errors. Pre-service teachers once thought that the hardest aspect of teaching a foreign language was correcting pronunciation. Three steps made up the structure that the pre-service instructors used to teach pronunciation. Initially, the word to be taught was written down together with its definition in the learners' original tongue, and they had to repeat it. Second, they indicated a word on a flashcard, and the pupils had to say it aloud in English. Third, the students utilized the flashcards in several exercises where they had to guess the word that was missing and the word order. Grammar instruction was once seen to be the easiest aspect of teaching, according to pre-service teachers. Nevertheless, throughout the teaching practicum, this belief was modified. Teachers encountered certain challenges that caused them to reconsider their approach to teaching grammar. Pre-service teachers thought that without motivation, they would not be able to teach English (Suárez Flórez and Basto Basto, 2017).

3. Student´s lack of motivation

Following a few meetings with the pre-service teacher, the student's behavior was beginning to change. To ensure that the students are paying attention to and participating in the class activities, the participants must remind each student and raise their voices. Collaboration amongst parents, educators, students, and ministries of education can result in increased motivation among students. Sadly, it has to be acknowledged that a large number of our pupils lack motivation and moral character. For teachers to address this kind of issue, more systematic and well-thought-out actions are required (Nababan and Amalia, 2021).

4. Student evaluation challenges

Evaluation has garnered attention in education, particularly in language education, despite its historical neglect (Cheng & Wang, 2007). This is because assessment is an essential component of the teaching and learning process. Language assessment literacy, or LAL, has been one of the main issues for the field of ELT's practitioners and scholars. There are five essential components of classroom evaluation, according to

Chappuis et al. (2012). These systems are created to cater to the unique informational requirements of their target users. They are built upon well-defined and suitable achievement objectives. They precisely gauge student performance. They provide results that are efficiently conveyed to their intended recipients. They engage students in self-evaluation, setting goals, monitoring progress, reflecting on their learning, and sharing their achievements. Language assessment literacy (LAL) of language educators is necessary to be able to carry out these qualities of classroom assessment successfully and effectively (Coombe, Vafadar, & Mohebbi, 2020). This is because teacher competency matters in order for good classroom assessment practices to occur, and language assessment literacy is a must for teachers. During the pre-service teaching practicum EFL teachers believe that the purpose of evaluation is to enhance the process of teaching and learning. During their teaching practicum, pre-service EFL teachers discover fascinating and expressive shifts in their ideas about assessment. Pre-service EFL teachers evaluate assessments in order to promote responsibility and progress.

5. Lack of necessary teaching materials

Pre-service teachers continue to seek out relevant resources for their pupils and confer regularly with their mentors. Choosing resources for the classroom presents a difficult challenge for language teachers because it gives the pupils a means of acquiring the English language. When it comes to introducing students to the language, the materials are essential. Thus, it is the primary duty of the material developers and the teachers to present developmentally appropriate, pertinent, and engaging content (Evans, 1998). The primary source of instruction and a major determinant of classroom activities are the materials (Kitao, 1997). Materials are crucial elements that impact the classroom teaching process during a teaching practicum. The creation of teaching materials is essential to the teaching and learning process. These materials should be tailored to the needs of the students, enable them to plan and preview their classes, and facilitate flexibility and improvisation. Teaching materials are frequently the focal point of education and have a significant impact on classroom activities. Accordingly, the creation of instructional aids and resources is essential to the accomplishment of educational goals (Rahayuningsih, 2016).

In order to transfer significant learning in a more practical and realistic manner that is more in line with the students' realities, teachers can take advantage of the playful and dynamic nature of didactic materials on their own. This highlights the significance of teacher training, as this research has shown that teachers lack the necessary training to carry out didactic teaching for a variety of reasons. While didactic material can serve as a substitute for practical and meaningful learning, its effectiveness largely relies on how the teacher incorporates and appropriates it within her methodological proposal (Olaya, 2022).

6. Classroom Organization Problems

In order to create a supportive environment for teaching and learning, classroom management is the activity in which the teacher oversees all circumstances or actions that take place in the classroom, such as distributing materials to the students and dealing with disruptive pupils. To achieve the educational goal, a teacher must be aware of everything that occurs in the classroom and effectively manage the environment. As a result, in order to create a system that works for groups or classroom management, the teacher should concentrate on creating and maintaining the classroom rather than on

identifying specific instances of misbehavior on the part of a student. The attitudes and beliefs of a teacher are required of all educators, even pre-service educators (Shin & Koh, 2007).

Pajeras (1992) asserts that the rapport between the instructor and students has an impact on classroom management because the teacher knows the characteristics of each student and can use that knowledge to discipline misbehaving students who could disrupt the teaching-learning process.

Finally, it is critical for teachers to regulate students' misbehavior in the classroom. The instructor requires tactics to control the misbehavior of the students. Before class begins, the instructor can establish a rule or contract. Then, when a student answers a question, the instructor can reward them with applause and words of appreciation. In order to decrease student misconduct or other issues that could impede the teaching-learning process, this can also help build relationships between teachers and students.

7. Student behavioral problems

In the classroom, during the teaching and learning process, the teacher plays a crucial role in managing student behavior and arranging the classroom environment to facilitate the educational activities. The relationship between the teacher and students in the classroom can significantly impact classroom management. This is because when the teacher comprehends the individual characteristics of their students, they are better equipped to manage those students who exhibit disruptive behavior, which could otherwise disrupt the teaching and learning process. In relation to the problem of connectedness, Cerit (2011) said that disruptive pupils have the potential to undermine the efficacy of the teaching-learning process. To preserve a good learning environment in the classroom, the teacher must devise some methods for dealing with misbehaving students, such as setting rules before class begins. Pre-service teachers may experience anxiety, unease, and a loss of confidence as a result of pupils' inappropriate behavior in the classroom. They may also tremble when addressing the class.

Section Three

Methodology

The aim of this research was to find out the challenges that EFL preservice teachers face during the teaching practicum. Challenges that are interpersonal with the school principals and teachers, and the challenges that pre-service teachers face while they teach in the classroom. In this section first the context of the study is explained, followed by the participants and the instrument used in this study, and at the end of this section data collection and analysis procedures that are used in this study, are explained.

3.1 Context background

At Year Four of their studies, students of English Department, College of Education, University of Salahaddin, have to do the teaching practicum for about 30 days. They go and teach at both basic and high schools under the supervision of English department and the school they teach. These student-teachers or pre-service teachers may face challenges during their practicum. This study was carried out in Erbil Governorate to investigate challenges faced by these preservice teachers.

	Frequency	Percent
For boys	5	15.6
For girls	17	53.1
Coeducational (for boys & girls)	10	31.3
Total	32	100.0

Table 3.1 *Type of the schools the pre-service teachers taught at*

The pre-service teachers taught at 32 schools, 5 of these schools were for boys, 17 were for girls, and 10 were coeducational as shown in Table 3.1.

Places	Frequency	Percent
City	26	81.3
Town	5	15.6
Village	1	3.1
Total	32	100.0

Table 3.2 *Place of the schools the pre-service teachers taught at*

The schools the pre-service teachers taught at were either in Erbil City, or towns and villages as presented in Table 3.2.

3.2 Participants of this study

The participants of this study were 32 pre-service EFL teachers, 25 females and 7 males, who were originally Fourth Year students of English Department, College of Education, University of Salahaddin that did the teaching practicum for about 30 days at 32 schools. They were kindly invited to participate and participated through filling in a questionnaire. The participants were teaching grades 7 and 8 at the basic schools as shown in Table 3.3. There were six other participants, but they had not taught grades 7 and 8, therefore, they were excluded in the data analysis.

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	7	21.9
Female	25	78.1
Total	32	100.0

Table 3.3 *Gender of the participants*

3.3 The instrument used in this study

A questionnaire (*Appendix A*) was developed through taking items from previous research papers [Isma-ard, Wichamwk, and Chuanchom (2021); Abongdia, Adu, and Foncha (2017)] and gathering experienced teachers' ideas and was validated by three referees who were experts in ELT and questionnaire development. Editing was made based on the three experts' comments and the supervisor of this research, and the number of items reduced to 26 from 35.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts as follows.

Part one of the questionnaire asked about the participants' background information including their gender, grades they taught, type of schools they taught at, and the place of the schools they taught at.

The second part of the questionnaire asked the pre-service teachers to state their opinions on a five-point Likert scale [Strongly agree= 1, Agree= 2, Neutral= 3, Disagree= 4, Strongly disagree= 5] about the interpersonal challenges they face with the school principals and school teachers.

The third part of the questionnaire asked the pre-service teachers to state their opinions on a five-point Likert scale [Strongly agree= 1, Agree= 2, Neutral= 3, Disagree= 4, Strongly disagree= 5] about the challenges they face while the teach at class.

The questionnaire proved to be reliable (*Appendix B)* as the Cronbach Alpha was .811 (Table 3.4)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.811	26

Table 3.4 *Reliability of the questionnaire*

3.4 Data collection and data analysis

The pre-service teachers' questionnaire (*appendix A*) was created online using Google Forms. The link to the questionnaire was sent to pre-service teachers and it nearly took one week until 38 pre-service teachers agreed to participate and filled in the questionnaire.

The data file was downloaded as an Excel file, and later on necessary adjustments were made to the data and the data were transferred into an SPSS file and analyzed through SPSS using means, percentages.

Section Four

Results and Discussions

This chapter is about presenting and discussing the results found about the interpersonal challenges pre-service teachers face during their teaching practicum. In the first section of this chapter, results of interpersonal challenges pre-service teachers face; challenges with school principals and challenges with school teachers are presented and discussed. The second section presents and discusses the results that are about challenges pre-service teachers face while they teach in the class.

4.1 Results of Interpersonal Challenges Pre-Service Teachers Face

Here results of the first research question, which were about challenges pre-service teachers face with school principals and challenges pre-service teachers face with school teachers, are presented and discussed.

4.1.1 Means and frequencies of challenges pre-service teachers face with the school principals

According to the results obtained from the questionnaire, it can be said that the pre-service teachers may not face major challenges with the school principals.

	Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		out of 5	%	%	%	%	%
1	**challenges with the school principals**						
1.	The principal treats me as one of his/her ordinary teachers	1.8750	43.8	31.3	18.8	6.3	0.0
2.	The principal asks me to participate in school staff meetings	2.5625	28.1	25.0	18.8	18.8	9.4
3.	The principal listens to my opinions	2.4063	18.8	43.8	25.0	3.1	9.4
4.	The principal respects me as a teacher	1.7188	59.4	25.0	6.3	3.1	6.3
5.	The principal helps me in solving my school problems	2.2188	25.0	53.1	6.3	6.3	9.4

Table 4.1 Means and frequencies of **challenges pre-service teachers face with the school principals**

The mean for item 1 was 1.87; 43.8% of the participants strongly agreed with this statement, and 31.3% agreed while only 18.8% said they were neutral which means that they were not sure whether if they face challenges regarding this item or not (Table 4.1).

As shown in Table 4.1, the mean for item 2 was 2.56 which meant that the teachers were concerned that they may face challenges in this regard. Here, 18.8% of the participants were neutral about this statement, more than half of the participants had

positive opinions about this item as most of them either strongly agree (28.1%) or agree (25%) with it.

The mean of item 3 was 2.40, showing that 18.8% strongly agreed and 43.8% of the participants agreed with this statement, at the same time 25% said that they were neutral, while 3.1% of the participants disagreed and 9.4% had faced real challenges in this regard (Table 4.1).

Regarding item 4 and item 5, the pre-service teachers faced no major challenges because 59.4% strongly agreed, 25% agreed, and 53.1% of the participants respectively agreed that they were respected and helped in solving problems by the principals (Table 4.1). This meant that the principals respected the preservice teachers and helped them in solving problems.

The above results could be due to the fact that pre-service teachers have been doing their teaching practicum at schools for years, therefore, principal have accustomed to them and are gradually developing skills to deal with these pre-service teachers.

Similar to this study, Imsa-ard *et al.* (2021) also found that pre-service teachers didn't face challenges with the school principals that most pre-service teachers were not worried about communication with their school principals.

4.1.2 Means and frequencies of challenges pre-service teachers face with the school teachers

The results in Table 4.2 indicate that the pre-service teachers might not face any major challenges with the school teachers.

	Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		out of 5	%	%	%	%	%
2	challenges with the school teachers						
6.	The teachers treat me as one of themselves	1.8125	46.9	31.3	18.8	0.0	3.1
7.	The teachers involve me in their school/group activities	2.0312	37.5	34.4	18.8	6.3	3.1
8.	The teachers listen to my opinions	2.0312	34.4	40.6	18.8	0.0	6.3
9.	The teachers discuss school / student problems with me	2.2500	31.3	34.4	21.9	3.1	9.4
10.	The teachers support me when I need help in school	2.0313	34.4	46.9	9.4	0.0	9.4

Table 4.2 Means and frequencies of **challenges pre-service teachers face with the school teachers**

In Table 4.2, if the means and the percentage are considered, it can be seen that pre-service teachers may not face challenges for example the means for item 6 was 2.25 because 31.3% of participants strongly agreed and 34.4.% agreed while 9.4% of pre-service teachers disagreed and faced challenges.

The means for 10 was 2.03 which shows that 34.4% strongly agreed and 46.9% agreed with this statement, but 9.4% of participants disagreed that teachers support them and need help in school (Table 4.2).

The fact that pre-service teachers did not face major challenges in their relations with the school teachers perhaps because the school teachers have graduated from colleges of education and basic education and had teaching practicum before their graduation and have a sense of what it means to be a pre-service teacher and as a result develop positive relations with pre-service teachers. It can be suggested that more research needs to be done to prove or reject these hypotheses.

Similar to this study, Imsa-ard *et al.* (2021) also stated that pre-service teachers were not worried about communication with the school teachers, that their school teaches encouraged them during their teaching practicum.

4.2 Results of the challenges pre-service teachers face while teaching

In this section, the results of the second research question, which was about the challenges pre-service teachers face while they teach in the class are presented and discussed.

4.2.1 Means and frequencies of challenges pre-service teachers face with the program/textbook they teach

Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	out of 5	%	%	%	%	%
1 Program/textbook I teach						
11. I am able to teach this textbook, it is easy for me	1.5313	59.4	28.1	12.5	0.0	0.0
12. The textbook is easy for the students	2.4687	9.4	43.8	37.5	9.4	0.0
13. Listening and Speaking skills received great attention	1.8438	40.6	34.4	25.0	0.0	0.0

Table 4.3 Means and frequencies of **challenges pre-service teachers face with the program/textbook they teach**

As presented in Table 4.3, the mean for item 11 was 1.53; 59.4% of participants strongly agreed and 28.1% agreed to this statement, while 12.5% of pre-service teachers said that they were neutral, and pre-service teachers did not encounter any challenges in this regard.

The mean for item 12 was 2.46 which shows that participants may not face challenges in this regard, here we have 9.4% of participants strongly agreed and 43.8% agreed but 9.4% of the participants disagreed with that the textbook easy for the students.

Table 4.3 shows that the mean for item 13 was 1.84 which presented that the pre-service teachers faced no major challenges in this regard.

The mentioned results could be due to the fact that pre-service teachers have mastered their English and teaching skills, the textbooks are at the level of the students, and focus is giving to speaking and listening skills in the textbooks.

This finding is in congruent with what Hamad (2021) also found that the pre-service teachers didn't face challenges in regard with the program/textbook they teach. Ozturk (2021) also realized that pre-service teachers agreed with the statements of the items about the program/textbook they teach during their teaching practicum.

4.2.2 Means and frequencies of challenges pre-service teachers face in regard with students' learning problems

	Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		out of 5	%	%	%	%	%
2	**Students' learning problems**						
14.	The students' level in English is good	2.8125	21.9	9.4	40.6	21.9	6.3
15.	The students understand the meaning of the texts	2.7813	18.8	18.8	31.3	28.1	3.1
16.	The students understand the listening while they listen to the sound tracks played using the speaker	2.5313	12.5	40.6	34.4	6.3	6.3

Table 4.4 Means and frequencies of **challenges pre-service teachers face in regard with students' learning problems**

As it can be seen in Table 4.4, the means for item 14 and item 15 were 2.81 and 2.78 which tells us that 21.9% of participants strongly agreed and 40.6% were neutral while 6.3% of the participants strongly disagreed that the students level in English is good, and 18.8% strongly agreed also 31.3% agreed but 3.1% strongly disagreed in this regard about the students' understanding of text.

Based on the findings, the pre-service teachers faced no real challenges regarding the students' learning problems this could be because the students were at grades 7 and 8 and usually students at these grades are more seriously involved in learning and try better compared to other grades.

Unlike this study, Hamad (2021) realized that most of student-teacher stated that unfortunately the English level of the pupils was not good and they could not understand or communicate even simple phrases.

4.2.3 Means and frequencies of challenges pre-service teachers face in regard with students' lack of motivation

	Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		out of 5	%	%	%	%	%
3	**Students' lack of motivation**						
17.	The students are motivated to learn English	2.2812	21.9	43.8	25.0	3.1	6.3
18.	The students do their homework in time	2.5313	9.4	37.5	46.9	3.1	3.1

Table 4.5 Means and frequencies of **challenges pre-service teachers face in regard with students' lack of motivation**

The means for items 17 and 18 were 2.28 and 2.53 (Table 4.5); which means that the pre-service teachers were indecisive about whether they face challenges in this regard or not. Among the participants, 21.9% strongly agreed and 43.8% agreed to this statement, but 6.3% of the participants strongly disagreed that the students are motivated to learn English. While 9.4% strongly agreed and 37.5% agreed and 3.1% of the pre-service teachers strongly disagreed that the students do their homework on time.

4.2.4 Means and frequencies of challenges pre-service teachers face in regard with Classroom organization

	Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		out of 5	%	%	%	%	%
4	**Classroom organization problems**						
19.	The number of students in the classroom is manageable	2.5000	28.1	31.3	15.6	12.5	12.5
20.	The desks can be arranged in various ways according to each activity	2.8125	12.5	18.8	50.0	12.5	6.3
21.	The students can do pair work	2.2812	18.8	40.6	34.4	6.3	0.0
22.	The students can do group work	2.2188	18.8	46.9	28.1	6.3	0.0

Table 4.6 Means and frequencies of **challenges pre-service teachers face in regard with Classroom organization**

As presented in Table 4.6, the mean for item 19 was 2.50, which means that 28.1% strongly agreed, and 31.3% agreed while 15.6% of pre-service teachers were neutral, and 12.5% disagreed in this regard.

The means for item 20 was 2.81; 12.5% of participants strongly agreed and 18.8% agreed 50.0% were neutral and 12.5% disagreed with this statement (Table 4.6). This presents that the pre-service teachers had not faced any real challenges in this regard.

The means for items 21 and 22 were 2.28 and 2.21 because 40.6% agreed and 34.4% were neutral, but 6.3% of the participants disagreed that students can do pair work, and 46.9% strongly agreed and 28.1% were neutral and 6.3% of them disagreed that the students can do group work (Table 4.6).

Pre-service teachers are generally well-trained in classroom organization, and students do pair work and group work in other classes. That is why teachers did not report any major challenges regarding classroom organization.

Unlike this study, Katja (2022) found that pre-service teachers faced a few challenges in regard with Classroom organization.

4.2.5 Means and frequencies of challenges pre-service teachers face in regard with lack of necessary teaching materials

Items		Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		out of 5	%	%	%	%	%
5	**Lack of necessary teaching materials**						
23.	Audio-Visual aids (data show projectors, speakers, pictures) are available for teaching	2.7500	12.5	40.6	18.8	15.6	12.5

Table 4.7 Means and frequencies of challenges pre-service teachers face in regard with lack of necessary teaching materials

As stated in Table 4.7, the mean for item 23 was 2.75 which means that 12.5% strongly agreed and 40.6% agreed while 18.8% of the participants said they were neutral, but 15.6% disagreed and 12.5% strongly disagreed it presented that the pre-service teachers faced a few challenges in this regard. It means that in more than half of the cases teaching materials were available for the preservice teachers to use and this was not a major challenge for these preservice teachers.

4.2.6 Means and frequencies of challenges pre-service teachers face in regard with student evaluation and assessment

	Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		out of 5	%	%	%	%	%
6	**Student evaluation and assessment problems**						
24.	I am responsible for evaluating the students while I teach in this period	1.8438	46.9	25.0	25.0	3.1	0.0
25.	I have sufficient knowledge about various ways of evaluating students	1.9375	34.4	43.8	18.8	0.0	3.1
26.	I test and evaluate all language skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking)	1.6875	46.9	37.5	15.6	0.0	0.0

Table 4.8 Means and frequencies of **challenges pre-service teachers face in regard with student evaluation and assessment**

The mean for item 24 was 1.84 which shows that the pre-service teachers faced no major challenges in this regard because 46.9% of the participants strongly agreed and 25.0% agreed while 3.1% of the pre-service teachers disagreed with this statement.

The mean for item 25 was 1.93 because 34.4% strongly agreed and 43.8% agreed in this regard while 18.8% of pre-service teachers said they were neutral but 3.1% strongly disagreed that they know about evaluating students (Table 4.8).

The mean for item 26 was 1.68 and 46.9% of the participants strongly agreed, and 37.5% agreed, while 15.5% were neutral. It means that the pre-service teachers didn't face challenges in this regard (Table 4.8).

Similar to this study, Ozturk (2021) found that pre-service teachers faced some challenges in regard with student evaluation and assessment.

Section Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

This research was about investigating the challenges that EFL preservice teachers faced during the teaching practicum; interpersonal challenges and challenges while they taught in class.

In the literature, various studies confirmed that preservice teachers face a variety of challenges while they teach during their practicum. Some of these challenges were interpersonal, and others were related to teaching. However, in this current study no major challenges were found. This could be due to the fact that the participants have not filled in the questionnaire with full intention, or there may have been no major challenges at all; therefore, further research is needed using other data collection techniques.

From the findings of this research, it can be concluded that pre-service teachers face very few interpersonal challenges with the school principals and school teachers. The school principals and teachers have received the pre-service teachers before; perhaps that is why, they are helpful with preservice teachers during their practicum.

The pre-service teachers face no major challenges while they teach, and they have no difficulties in teaching the program. They also have little problem with the students' learning difficulties. The pre-service teachers do not think that students lack motivation.

Pre-service teachers are capable of organizing their classrooms well, and there are few challenges that pre-service teachers face regarding the lack of the necessary teaching materials and they are capable of evaluating students' progress.

5.2 Suggestions and Recommendations

It can be suggested that future research regarding challenges that pre-service teachers face during their teaching practicum be done using interviews and classroom observation because in this research only questionnaires were used. When interviews and classroom observations are used, other aspects of this problem or issue could be discovered.

Principals of schools are essential in creating a suitable setting for pre-service teachers to practice; thus, it is advised that they handle cases as learning experiences and offer support in both the logistical and psychological domains.

It can be recommended that school teachers and principals be more informed about how to deal with the pre-service teachers during their teaching practicum. It can also be recommended that the colleges that prepare teachers or pre-service teachers equip their teachers with knowledge that helps them face the challenges they may face while they teach in classes. Challenges are related to the program they teach, students' learning problems, students' lack of motivation, classroom organization problems, lack of necessary teaching materials, and knowledge about how to evaluate students.

It is advised that pre-service teachers try harder to read more on subjects like confidence building, classroom management, and teaching challenges. Additionally, they must view teaching as a process of learning and make an effort to maximize their time management efforts.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Pre-Service Teachers' Questionnaire

Good Day,

I would like to invite you to participate in this research entitled '**Challenges Pre-Service Teacher Trainees Face during Their Teaching Practicum**'. Filling in this questionnaire shows your agreement to participate in this research project. Your name will remain anonymous and your information will only be used for this research. You can withdraw form participation anytime you want to do so. Your responses help the researchers identify these challenges and may lead to action to better pre-service teachers' situations while teaching during their practicum in the future. We request that you provide what truly describes your circumstances. Your responses will only be used for the purpose of this research. Filling in this questionnaire takes approximately 20 minutes.

   Thank you for your time and cooperation.
Tick ☑ the cells that best describe the reality.
I agree to participate in this research by filling in this questionnaire ☐

Part One: Background Information
1. Gender: **a.** Female ☐   **b.** Male ☐
2. I taught at   **a.** Grades 5 & 6 ☐
                b. Grades 7 & 8 ☐
                c. Grades 10-11 ☐
3. The school is   **a.** for boys ☐
                b. for girls ☐
                c. coeducational (for boys & girls) ☐
4. Where do you teach?   **a.** city ☐   **b.** town ☐   **c.** village ☐

Items	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Part Two: Interpersonal Challenges Pre-Service Teachers Face					
i **challenges with the school principals**					
1. The principal treats me as one of his/her ordinary teachers					
2. The principal asks me to participate in school staff meetings					
3. The principal listens to my opinions					
4. The principal respects me as a teacher					
5. The principal helps me in solving my school problems					
ii **challenges with the school teachers**					
6. The teachers treat me as one of themselves					
7. The teachers involve me in their school/group activities					
8. The teachers listen to my opinions					
9. The teachers discuss school / student problems with me					
10. The teachers support me when I need help in school					

	Items	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Part Three: The challenges pre-service teachers face while teaching						
i	**Program/textbook I teach**					
11.	I am able to teach this textbook, it is easy for me					
12.	The textbook is easy for the students					
13.	Listening and Speaking skills received great attention					
ii	**Students' learning problems**					
14.	The students' level in English is good					
15.	The students understand the meaning of the texts					
16.	The students understand the listening while they listen to the sound tracks played using the speaker					
iii	**Students' lack of motivation**					
17.	The students are motivated to learn English					
18.	The students do their homework in time					
iv	**Classroom organization problems**					
19.	The number of students in the classroom is manageable.					
20.	The desks can be arranged in various ways according to each activity					
21.	The students can do pair work					
22.	The students can do group work					
v	**Lack of necessary teaching materials**					
23.	Audio-Visual aids (data show projectors, speakers, pictures) are available for teaching					
vi	**Student evaluation and assessment problems**					
24.	I am responsible for evaluating the students while I teach in this period					
25.	I have sufficient knowledge about various ways of evaluating students					
26.	I test and evaluate all language skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking)					

End of the questionnaire.

Appendix B

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
VAR00001	55.8750	119.145	.391	.803
VAR00002	55.1875	115.899	.358	.804
VAR00003	55.3438	114.039	.527	.795
VAR00004	56.0313	115.257	.469	.798
VAR00005	55.5313	116.709	.389	.802
VAR00006	55.9375	121.351	.272	.807
VAR00007	55.7188	115.047	.522	.796
VAR00008	55.7188	117.112	.427	.800
VAR00009	55.5000	116.000	.403	.801
VAR00010	55.7188	114.402	.502	.797
VAR00011	56.2188	120.693	.435	.802
VAR00012	55.2813	123.757	.205	.809
VAR00013	55.9063	124.281	.174	.810
VAR00014	54.9375	120.706	.224	.810
VAR00015	54.9688	116.676	.402	.801
VAR00016	55.2188	118.886	.368	.803
VAR00017	55.4688	117.483	.414	.801
VAR00018	55.2188	122.951	.236	.808
VAR00019	55.2500	120.129	.202	.813
VAR00020	54.9375	123.286	.163	.812
VAR00021	55.4688	121.612	.305	.806
VAR00022	55.5313	121.612	.314	.806
VAR00023	55.0000	118.194	.308	.806
VAR00024	55.9063	118.733	.423	.801
VAR00025	55.8125	122.931	.212	.809
VAR00026	56.0625	124.899	.159	.811