

# The Perception of Islamic Education Trainee Teachers Regarding The Implementation Strategy of Practicum in Johor, Malaysia

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i1/20594>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i1/20594

**Published Online:** 14 January 2024

## Abstract

This study was conducted to understand the trainee teachers' perspectives on the implementation of teaching practice (LM) in the Diploma in Islamic Education program at the Johor Islamic Studies College (MARSAH). The objective of the study was to identify the trainee teachers' views on the implementation of practicum, the strategies used, and their perspectives on guidance and supervision during practicum. The study employed a quantitative methodology with a questionnaire administered to 113 trainee teachers selected as the study sample. Data from the questionnaire were analyzed descriptively using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 19.0 to obtain mean, percentage, and standard deviation. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested and obtained a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.894. The findings indicated that trainee teachers acknowledged that the teaching practice (LM) they underwent had achieved the set goals. They also agreed that the implementation strategy of practicum at MARSAH was in good condition. However, they expressed that despite the good level of guidance and supervision by lecturers and mentor teachers, there were weaknesses in the differences in guidance methods between lecturers and mentor teachers. Therefore, the study suggests that the implementation of practicum at MARSAH and institutions managing teacher education programs should adhere to current procedures, practices, and research to ensure the production of future professional teachers. The practicum management and schools are also advised to appoint only lecturers and mentor teachers who have proven to provide full commitment during practicum guidance and supervision sessions.

**Keywords:** Perception, Islamic Education Trainee Teachers, Teaching Practice, Strategy

## **Introduction**

The systematic and quality teacher education program can produce quality teachers (Salleh, 2016; Hidayat & Mahani, 2022). According to Hashim Yaacob & Abdul Jalil Othman (2007), a quality teacher can be defined as an individual who is clear and understands their responsibilities (Salleh, 2016; Mardzelah *et al.*, 2022). In this regard, several institutions have been established to organize teacher education programs, ensuring the continuity and quality of such programs, such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the National Commission of Teaching, and America's Future in the United States, the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) in Hong Kong, and the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore (Salleh, 2016; Teong *et al.*, 2022).

Meanwhile, teacher education programs in Malaysia are managed by three institutions: the Malaysian Institute of Teacher Education (IPGM), formerly known as Teacher Training Colleges, Public Higher Education Institutions (IPTA), and Private Higher Education Institutions (IPTS) (Ministry of Education Malaysia, KPM, 2012). IPGM is responsible for training and preparing prospective primary school teachers throughout Malaysia, while IPTA and IPTS are responsible for preparing secondary school teachers.

The practicum component is seen as crucial in the pre-service teacher training curriculum recognized by many researchers (Subahan & Ismail, 2016; Sam *et al.*, 2016; Roslan *et al.*, 2017; Madzalan *et al.*, 2021). This component is not only implemented in IPGM, IPTA, and IPTS conducting teacher training programs but also globally (Mahaya Salleh, 2016; Esra Tekel *et al.*, 2022).

Practicum, in general, refers to teaching practice prescribed by IPG, IPTA, or IPTS conducting diploma and degree education programs in any field (Azhar *et al.*, 2007 & Roslan *et al.*, 2017). Teaching practice is crucial for a trainee teacher before they become actual teachers in schools (Fuad *et al.*, 2015; Said *et al.*, 2023). Additionally, the practicum component is the core in producing novice teachers through exposure to real experiences and situations, enabling the application of all the knowledge learned (Fuad *et al.*, 2015; Roslan *et al.*, 2017; Said *et al.*, 2023). Through practicum, trainee teachers have the opportunity to practice knowledge, theory, and skills in the teaching and learning process (Hasnah *et al.*, 2015; Madzalan *et al.*, 2021). According to Salleh (2016), the practicum component provides an opportunity for trainee teachers to experience real-life situations in teaching activities. The experiences gained by trainee teachers through reflection and continuous improvement can lead to innovation in teaching and learning (Hasnah *et al.*, 2015; Madzalan *et al.*, 2021)

## **Problem Statement**

Trainee teachers under supervision inevitably encounter various issues and challenges during their practicum (Ab. Hamid *et al.*, 2017; Zaidah *et al.*, 2022). According to the MARSAH Practicum Coordinator's records, some of the mistakes made by trainee teachers include the failure to prepare daily teaching plans and reflections over an extended period, prolonged absenteeism from school, thereby violating approved leave regulations during the practicum session, arriving late at school, and more. Such problems can potentially impact their public

service duties as future teachers (Fuad *et al.*, 2015; Hidayah *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, trainee teachers must understand the goals and objectives of the practicum to become responsible and dedicated educators in the future.

Furthermore, there are challenges faced by trainee teachers who do not receive adequate guidance from supervisors and mentor teachers in schools. According to Fuad *et al.* (2015), this issue arises from the busy nature of other tasks. Moreover, some trainee teachers express dissatisfaction when they do not receive cooperation from administrators, particularly principals, in terms of access to facilities at school. Additionally, other problems arise concerning the implementation strategy of the practicum, the duration of the practicum, briefings and guidance provided by teachers to trainee teachers, and collaboration between MARSAH and schools, as well as the Islamic Education Division of the Johor State Islamic Religious Department, especially regarding the placement of trainee teachers.

All these issues undoubtedly have repercussions on trainee teachers, educational institutions, relevant agencies, and the teaching profession as a whole. Therefore, as MARSAH is the sole private higher education institution specializing in religious studies in the state of Johor, training and producing future religious teachers who will serve in Johor State Religious Schools (SAKJ), a comprehensive study is needed. This study aims to examine the perceptions of trainee teachers (GP DPI MARSAH) regarding the practicum process, formulate standards, and assess the effectiveness of practicum management. Trainee teachers who have undergone practicum in schools around the state of Johor will be the primary focus of this research, aiming to identify effective goals and strategies for practicum implementation and assessing the level of guidance and supervision provided by supervising lecturers and mentor teachers..

### Research Methodology

This research employs a quantitative survey method to elucidate phenomena by analyzing data obtained from questionnaires. In conducting this study, the researcher utilized two research methods, namely field research and literature review. The survey questionnaire distributed to the study sample served as the tool for field research. On the other hand, the literature review aimed to search for and collect relevant materials and information related to the research issues.

The study was conducted in the vicinity of the Johor state only. A total of 113 students from the Diploma in Islamic Education program at Kolej Pengajian Islam Johor (MARSAH) were selected as the study sample. In this article, findings are presented in the form of mean and standard deviation and then interpreted based on the table 1.0 below:

Table 1.0

#### *Scale and interpretation*

Scale Min	Interpretation
1-00-1.99	Low
2.00-2.99	Average
3.00-5.00	High

### Research Findings

Descriptive analysis involves frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation to determine the level of trainee teacher perceptions regarding the implementation strategy of the practicum. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2.0 below.

Table 2.0  
*Percentage Analysis, Mean, and Standard Deviation of Trainee Teacher Perceptions Regarding Practicum Implementation Strategies*

N	Item	1	2	3	4	5	Min	S.P	Interpret s
1	The practicum duration can achieve the practicum objectives	-	3 (2.7%) )	17 (15.0%) )	47 (41.6%) )	46 (40.7%) )	4.2 0	0.7 9	High
2	The practicum duration can achieve the practicum objectives.	-	3 (2.7%) )	13 (11.5%) )	47 (41.6%) )	50 (44.2%) )	4.2 7	0.7 7	High
3	The practicum guide module provided contains sufficient practicum information	3 (2.7%) )	4 (3.5%) )	22 (19.5%) )	44 (38.9%) )	40 (35.4%) )	4.0 0	0.9 7	High
4	There is collaboration between the Department of Education and General Studies at MARSAH with schools and the Islamic Education Division of	4 (3.5%) )	3 (2.7%) )	19 (16.8%) )	36 (31.9%) )	51 (45.1%) )	4.1 2	1.0 1	High

the Johor  
State  
Department  
of Islamic  
Affairs.

**The Minimum Average Score**

**4.1**

**High**

**5**

The conducted survey consists of 4 questionnaire items, namely questions 1 to 4. Data analysis in Table 2.0 indicates a minimum overall score for trainee teacher perceptions towards practicum implementation strategies at 4.15, indicating a high level. The highest-scoring item is the School Orientation Plan (ROS) combined with the practicum session, meeting the needs of trainee teachers with a minimum score of 4.27. Meanwhile, the lowest minimum score is for the item 'Practicum guide module provided contains sufficient practicum information,' indicating a minimum score of 4.00.

### Discussion

The success of a practicum or teaching training (LM) in any institution is contributed by the aspect of practicum implementation strategies used. If trainee teachers can understand and internalize these practicum implementation strategies, everything planned and experienced by them from the beginning to the end of the practicum will proceed smoothly. This aligns with the findings of Masitah *et al* (2019), stating that an effective teaching and learning process (PdP) involves integrating elements of technology, information and communication, as well as creative and innovative elements in line with the needs and suitability of students. Therefore, a teacher needs to understand the suitable strategies to be used.

The findings of this study indicate that trainee teachers' perceptions of practicum implementation strategies are at a high level. The overall minimum perception score of trainee teachers towards practicum goals is 4.15. Therefore, the majority of MARSAH's Diploma in Islamic Education trainee teachers agree that practicum implementation strategies are well understood and internalized.

The second item in this study's findings is that the duration of the practicum set by MARSAH can achieve the practicum's objectives. MARSAH has set a 12-week practicum, while the third item, the School Orientation Plan (ROS) for 2 weeks, combined with the practicum session, can meet the needs of trainee teachers in practicum training. Although both items received high interpretation readings, indicating that MARSAH's trainee teachers feel the practicum duration is sufficient to achieve the practicum objectives.

However, these findings differ from Abdul Hakim's (2014) study, stating that trainee teachers of the Bachelor of Islamic Education at UniSZA feel that the practicum experience is still insufficient to become a real teacher (Jin, 2023). Therefore, continuous efforts are needed to develop their knowledge, professional skills, and attitudes.

In the 2-week School Orientation Plan (ROS), MARSAH's trainee teachers are exposed to the working atmosphere and culture of the school. Among these, trainee teachers need to gather complete information related to the school's organization, facilities available at the school, the number of classes and students in the school, regulations set by the Islamic Education Division JAINJ, and much more. The findings of this study, showing a high interpretation, align with Fuad *et al* (2015) study, stating that the School Orientation Plan

(ROS) running for 2 weeks can provide an initial overview of the working atmosphere in the school.

In the third item of this study's findings, MARSAH's trainee teachers provided an overview that the practicum guide module provided contains sufficient practicum information, but the minimum is at the lowest level compared to the other three items. The practicum guide module can be understood when trainee teachers comprehend the information presented by the practicum unit during the practicum briefing. These findings are in line with the studies of Fuad *et al* (2015) and other researchers who believe that this practicum guide should be comprehensively understood by trainee teachers as it contains information about the practicum implementation period, the required teaching time for trainee teachers at school, practicum regulations, and much more.

MARSAH has established good cooperation with the Islamic Education Division of the Johor State Islamic Religious Department (BPI JAINJ) and schools to facilitate the practicum process. This is evidenced by the high interpretation found in this study. Among the established cooperations are the placement approval of trainee teachers in schools, practicum briefings, and the appointment of mentor teachers. These findings align with the studies of Fuad *et al* (2015); Abdul Hakim (2014), who agree in their respective studies that there is cooperation between schools and the education department to facilitate the practicum process experienced by trainee teachers.

MARSAH highly depends on cooperation from BPI JAINJ for the trainee teacher placement process. This process will be coordinated with the District Islamic Education Office (PPID). Afterward, PPID will inform the school about the presence of trainee teachers who will undergo the practicum. Furthermore, MARSAH calls the principal and mentor teachers involved in this practicum to attend the practicum briefing. Without close and solid cooperation, it will undoubtedly hinder the practicum journey of MARSAH's trainee teachers. Therefore, the researcher suggests that the practicum implementation strategy at MARSAH is going well but needs improvement to ensure that future practicums continue to yield positive and excellent results.

## **Conclusion**

The results of this study indicate that the perceptions of trainee teachers regarding the objectives of the practicum are at a high level. The overall mean perception of trainee teachers regarding the practicum objectives is = 4.53. Therefore, the majority of MARSAH Islamic Education Diploma trainee teachers from the 2014 intake agree that the practicum objectives are achieved as expected. Additionally, the findings of this study also show that the perceptions of trainee teachers regarding the implementation strategies of the practicum are at a high level. The overall mean perception of trainee teachers regarding the practicum objectives is = 4.15. Hence, the majority of MARSAH Islamic Education Diploma trainee teachers from the 2014 intake agree that the implementation strategies of the practicum are well understood and internalized.

Furthermore, the study's findings reveal that the perceptions of trainee teachers regarding guidance and supervision during the practicum are at a high level. The overall mean perception of trainee teachers regarding the practicum objectives is = 3.51. Therefore, the majority of MARSAH Islamic Education Diploma trainee teachers from the 2014 intake agree that guidance and supervision during the practicum are at a satisfactory level.

Practicum serves to provide theory, knowledge, skills, and experience to trainee teachers. Through the practicum, trainee teachers are expected to integrate theory with practical teaching and learning, apply various teaching and learning strategies and skills, apply assessment and evaluation skills, cultivate positive attitudes, enhance self-esteem, internalize and practice professional teaching values, develop their potential as educators through portfolio construction using reflection and self-assessment, optimize the use of various sources and technologies in the teaching and learning process, and master various strategies, planning, and implementation of co-curricular activities. Therefore, trainee teachers who have a clear understanding of the objectives of the practicum, firmly grasp the implementation strategies of the practicum, and receive guidance from mentor teachers and supervising lecturers are capable of producing trained teachers who are professionals in building the Islamic education system in the country, especially in the state of Johor.

Therefore, the conclusion of this study suggests that the implementation of the practicum at MARSAH and institutions managing teaching programs should adhere to the latest procedures, practices, and research to ensure the production of professional future teachers. The practicum management and school management are also recommended to appoint lecturers and mentor teachers who have proven to provide full commitment in the guidance and supervision sessions of the practicum. By taking these steps, it is hoped that the teaching training program can continue to improve the quality of teaching and produce more competent teachers.

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