The contribution of Internship toward soft skill competencies of pre-service teachers

Elisa¹, K Mutiara¹, A Hamid¹, M Syukri¹, H Mazlina¹ and Musdar²
¹Departement of Physics Education, Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh, 23111, Indonesia
²Departement of Physics Education, University of Serampi Mekkah, Banda Aceh, 23245, Indonesia
E-mail: kaslielisa@unsyiah.ac.id

Abstract. Teaching is a diverse performance and requires a variety of knowledge and several skills including soft skills. But soft skills are more difficult to do and to teach. Therefore, the internship is an alternative way to practice these skills to physics students in teacher training and education faculty. Thus, this study aims to identify the contribution of internship value to students’ soft skills competencies. The study applied a descriptive survey method. A total of 36 students from a public university in Banda Aceh were selected using a purposive sampling method. Instruments used for data collection were multiple-choice test questions related to students’ soft skill competencies and apprenticeship data. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS through product-moment correlation test and correlation coefficient formula. The results showed that the contribution of apprenticeship value to students’ soft skills competencies is 0.48% with a correlation coefficient of 0.022 (very weak). Hence, it is suggested that the learning process should be emphasized in direct practice so that more competencies can be developed by students graduating from physics education department.

1. Introduction
Teaching practice training (internship) has long been applied at the university in the education department [1]. Academics have acknowledged that exploring students with “real life” experiences through training can bridge the gap between theory and practice [2]. The internship is real teaching activities that must be implemented by education department students to apply various sciences, attitudes, skills that have been acquired during lectures and to develop and improve the competencies that must be possessed by a teacher in the learning process [3]. The importance of the internship program has been discussed by many researchers such as Lloyd and Briston [4], Barney and Pleban [5], Griffith and Wilson [6] and Beck and Kosnick [7]. Most of these studies critically discussed that changes in attitudes are what students must have when they have completed the program. Students may have good attitudes, better skills, and maturity, but their moods (anxiety, job satisfaction, perception, and efficiency) can change unconsciously throughout the periods [8]. Therefore, the internship program needs to be carried out to improve teachers’ professional competence toward teaching skills. Teaching is a diverse performance and requires various knowledge and several skills including hard skills and soft skills to solve problems in the classroom [9]. Hard skill is the ability to adjust concepts, methods, and evaluations to improve students’ skills [10]; while, soft skills include...
the ability to communicate, work together in teams, leadership and problem solving [11,12,13]. Both of these skills are very important for education department students because their future job is becoming a teacher. To add, teachers as educators are required to have soft skills in achieving educational goals to overcome various problems that occur during the learning process by developing and improving teacher competencies such as through teacher education programs. The programs play important roles in influencing teachers’ knowledge as educators which will affect conducting teaching practices [14,15].

Soft skills can increase one’s competence and ability to subsidize the development of communication and transformation [16,17]. Soft skill competency is one of the most important parts for teachers to adapt and interact for their successful careers and work [18]. However, sometimes there are gaps between hard skills and soft skill competencies so that many universities fail to train interpersonal skills to new graduates where the skills will prepare them to quickly adapt to the work environment [19-22]. Skills gaps are defined as skill levels that are inadequate or do not meet the requirements of their current work [23]. Furthermore, hard skill only contributes 15% for an individual to acquire a job and is able to maintain the job; while soft skill contributes 85% to the success of a job [24]. Thus, soft skills are also crucial to be taught to university students because graduates with good soft skills will find better employment opportunities [25,26].

In general, soft skills are more difficult to be implemented and taught because these skills grow through experience in a collaborative work environment [27]. However, for students of the physics education department, internship activities are an alternative way to practice soft skills where during the internship activity students will be assessed regarding their ability in carrying out teaching practices. Therefore, the main objective of this research is to explore and identify to what extent the apprenticeship values contribute to students’ soft skills competencies. It is hoped that this research will be a new reference to improve the quality of students’ competencies as pre-service teachers’ candidates.

2. Research Method

This research applied the descriptive survey method. The sample selected by the purposive sampling technique were 36 physics students of 2014 academic year. The instrument used was multiple-choice questionnaires compiled based on soft skill competency indicators including authoritative, noble, wise, honest, disciplined, tolerant, fair, sincere, responsible, and communicative and social skills [28,29,30]. Internship data obtained from documentation studies at the administration of physics education department will then be tested the correlation with the test results. The data was analysed using SPSS through the Product Moment Correlation test as well as the Correlation Coefficient Formula to identify to what extent the contribution of apprenticeship value toward students’ competencies.

3. Results and Discussion

The results showed that the apprenticeship value has a positive contribution to students’ soft skill competencies (0.48%). This is in line with research conducted by Tandi and Soenarto [31] revealing that students’ achievement in the teaching profession course contributes positively to internship students’ competencies (14.025%). Furthermore, it was found that the results of the correlation between students’ soft skill competencies and the internship score are 0.022 (very weak). This is due to the differences in the values obtained in the soft skill competency test and the internship activities. The average value obtained by students in the soft skills competency test is 67.5 while in the internship activity is 86.7 or almost all students obtain A score.

The low value obtained can be caused by several factors both internal and external factors. Internal factors are factors that come from the individual itself, such as interests, talents, motivations; whereas external factors are factors that come from outside of an individual, such as environmental factors. Another factor that can influence a research finding is researchers’ mistakes in scoring correct answers to items in the research instruments, careless correction which will potentially lead to an inaccurate
assessment, as well as errors invalidating items used as a set of tests such as errors in the use of difficult and ambiguous languages and sentences [32].

It is identified that the development of students’ soft skills is different in each student. Moreover, soft skill competencies are not obtained in a special course; however, it is obtained through learning with intensive training [28]. Besides, soft skill competency is the result of a combination that can shape one's skills in managing themselves and interacting with others to build a good relationship. Students’ soft skills can be developed and taught by lecturers in universities [33]. Lecturers can use soft skills to develop students’ characters through students’ activities both personal and intrapersonal. Besides, lecturers can also develop soft skills as a basis for character learning in universities, which consists of three alternative ways: through the course learning, through the use of lecture methods, and through making lecturers as role models for students [34,35]. In addition to lecturers, tutors also have a role in improving the competency of pre-service teachers’ candidates, especially when carrying out teaching and training activities from which through guidance tutors can improve students’ competencies and motivate students to improve themselves according to the required standards [36]. The development of students’ soft skill competency can also be developed through students’ activity program such as discussion activities that can develop communication, ethical or moral ways [37] or it can be obtained through the education of national character aiming to improve the quality of pre-service teachers’ candidates soft skill competency [38].

The internship is one of the educational courses implemented in the form of an internship. The internship program is training carried out to improve teachers’ professional competence [18]. At the end of the course, students will be evaluated by a guidance teacher regarding their competency and performance during the internship, where If the students’ competency and performance are good, then they will obtain good scores and vice versa. Although the study indicated that the contribution of apprenticeship value toward students’ competencies is low; however, it is still possible for students to have good soft skills which can be done through learning and teaching practice (internship) [35]. Furthermore, Wagiran et al. [39] also explained that learning educators can apply an integrative approach model aiming to strengthen students’ soft skills. The development and the implementation of this model increase learning effectiveness particularly improve the readiness of prospective teachers when carrying out their main tasks and roles as educators or teachers.

Hence, lecturers or tutors must improve students’ soft skill competencies. Besides, it is suggested to teacher training institutions to enhance their roles to produce professional teachers [3]. Teacher Training and Education Faculty as a teacher training institution plays important role in producing highly qualified graduates through teaching training programs (internship) aiming not only to produce highly qualified graduates in education but also to develop and improve students’ competencies [29,35].

4. Conclusions
It is concluded that the contribution of the apprenticeship value to soft skills competencies is 0.48% with a correlation coefficient of 0.022 (very weak). It is suggested to students to enhance their competencies in teaching practice activities both microteaching and internship. It is also suggested to Teacher Training and Education Faculty institution to use a variety of models that can improve students’ hard skills and soft skills competencies in the learning process so that students obtain values which are by their competencies.

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