

Challenges and Opportunities for History Education Teachers: Post Covid-19 Pandemic Era

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ABSTRACT

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KEYWORDS:

Placement challenges
History Education graduates
Marketability
Willingness to seek placement

CITATION:

Lee, B. N. (2022). Challenges and Opportunities for History Education Teachers: Post Covid-19 Pandemic Era. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 7(3), e001334.
<https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v7i3.1334>

This paper discusses the Challenges and Opportunities of History Education Teacher Placement: The Post-Pandemic Era of Covid 19. Descriptive quantitative research methods were used in this study. The population for this study is focused on students of History Education Faculty of Psychology and Education at a public university in Sabah who are in the first year and second year of study that is session 2020 & 2021. The results show that the dominant factor of vacancies in finding placements to serve other than public schools is teaching education or History subjects in private secondary schools. However, History Education students still feel grateful if they are destined to teach in non-government and non-option schools. They are also willing to shoulder responsibilities in the workplace without much grievance. Given the difficulty of getting a job in the post-pandemic era of Covid-19. Recognizing the current needs, History Education students are also willing to equip themselves with the skills to explore various online or non-online platforms to develop a teacher career regardless of options.

Contribution/Originality: This paper provides a logical analysis of the challenges and opportunities of teacher placement in history education: the post-pandemic era of Covid 19. By integrating the findings and perspectives of empirical research, the literature review addresses research questions and has additional research power. It can also help outline different and interdisciplinary areas of research.

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) will make a special one-off recruitment involving a total of 18,702 teachers for grade DG41 which is also open to non-education graduates to overcome the issue of teacher shortage in the country. Education Minister Datuk Dr Mohd Radzi Jidin said the move was aimed at addressing the shortage of teachers in Sabah, Sarawak, Selangor and Johor as well as efforts to achieve planning under the National Rehabilitation Plan. According to him, the recruitment will, among others, focus on filling teacher vacancies for certain subjects which has caused a gap in teaching staff to become the main challenge of the current national education system.

The Ministry of Education will work with the Education Services Commission (SPP) to ensure more orderly planning with a new approach by the ministry together with the SPP and the Public Service Department (JPA). Recruitment advertisements will be issued by SPP on July 7, 2021 and placement will begin in October in stages. The shortage of teachers for the states involved involves primary and secondary schools especially in certain subjects such as English, Malay Language and Islamic Religious Education. For primary schools, there are five subjects with a shortage of teachers, namely English, History, Special Education, Islamic Religious Education and Information and Communication Technology. For secondary schools, there is a shortage of teachers for Malay, English, Special Education, Islamic Religious Education and Design and Technology. Through a new recruitment approach through the collaboration of SPP and JPA, will provide opportunities to interested and qualified graduates as prescribed. Many wonder if they have qualifications in education but are not called to teach. In this context it is because of the mismatch of the subjects. The supply (of education graduates) available is very limited. However, for this recruitment will give priority to education graduates but at the same time a new approach is used in order to overcome the issue of teacher mismatch for certain subjects ([Hidayah, 2021](#)).

Substantial government expenditure is allocated each year to develop higher education in Malaysia. In addition to the provision of money, the growing number of institutions of higher learning is an important indicator of the country's efforts in providing greater opportunities for its citizens' access to higher education. However, the problem of graduate unemployment and difficulty in finding employment are problems that give rise to a negative perception of the country's higher education development policy. In terms of human capital development, the increase in spending money as well as the increase in the number of institutions of higher learning is a positive indicator to create greater opportunities for society to obtain higher education and therefore the growth of human capital accumulation in the country. However, unless the increase in the number of graduates is commensurate with employment opportunities of their same level of education and field of study, this could mean that the country's higher education is less successful in producing a workforce that suits market needs. This is a Malaysian dilemma shared by similar developing countries when the increase in highly educated students is unable to meet the needs of the existing job market. This difference in supply and demand for graduate labor poses many problems and not least the role of institutions of higher learning and study programs offered but also the quality of graduates. The main objective of this article is to discuss the challenges and opportunities of placement as a driver of enhancing the placement capacity of post-pandemic History Education graduates of Covid-19. Case studies involving History Education students will be able to provide relevant information to assess aspects of the development of marketability practices for History Education graduates of higher learning institutions, especially in the Faculty of Psychology and Education, Universiti Malaysia Sabah in meeting the needs of the job market accurately.

2. Literature Review

Marketability is a concept that is difficult to measure and define ([Harvey, 2001](#); [Pegg, Waldock, Hendy-Isaac & Lawton, 2012](#); [Sewell & Dacre Pool, 2010](#)). The concept of employability seems to evolve in line with changes in work patterns and workforce models. [McQuaid and Linda \(2005\)](#) state that although employability was an unclear concept in the past decade, it now plays an important role in determining UK labor market policy, in some European countries and other countries as well. Employability is

now seen as a key target in most labor market policies and labor strategies in most countries especially for graduate marketability. University graduates hold high positions in the economy and many countries regard them as the social elite and consequently as a working group to access high incomes that have the potential to fulfill the careers of knowledge workers.

Even so, there are differences among graduates about their labor market outcomes. Studies show the relationship between individual factors and market factors that influence the employability of a particular individual. The marketability of graduates is not only determined as a result of a discipline -specific program of study or professional study, but also the ability of graduates to promote broader skills such as communicative, problem solving, interactive skills, demonstrating initiative and competence. Further, employability also encompasses aspects of attitudes and personal attributes of loyalty, commitment, honesty, punctuality and integrity. This suggests that employability encompasses aspects of proactive action, personal management attitudes and individual career management abilities in an effort to obtain a desired career (Clarke, 2008).

Graduate marketability refers to the skills that graduates need to possess to obtain and retain employment (Latisha & Surina, 2010) through the learning of new skills for different functions as demanded by employers or industries (Malaysia, 2010). Whereas according to Hillage and Pollard (1998), the ability to work has the ability to get the first job, keep it, and acquire a new job if needed. Harvey (2001) defines graduate employability as the ability of graduates to demonstrate the qualities required by employers for future organizational needs. Job skills are a set of personal achievements, understandings, and attitudes / qualities that indicate an individual is potentially better able to get a desired job and succeed in a career choice. In general, job skills are aspects of the skills and knowledge that students need to possess to complete them to meet the various job demands in the labor market after they graduate.

The marketability aspect of development graduates is an important core in higher education to enable them to work well in the job market. In addition to knowledge skills, employers also demand good personalities from graduates. Among the important factors to consider are the ability to adapt to the firm's culture and the desire to learn continuously (Cai, 2012; Bui & Porter, 2010). Eric, Serge and Karim (2015) explored the gap between industry expectations and perceptions of engineering graduate skills groups in the Middle East and North Africa regions. They measured the importance that engineer managers place 36 skills relevant to engineers. The results showed a significant gap between managerial expectations and satisfaction with all 36 skills. Managers feel that graduates need improved communication, time management, and continuous learning. Managers report that recent engineering graduates demonstrate overall readiness for employment. Yee et al. (2015) found that employers demand more independence and leaders, rather than followers, and graduates are more inclined to management. A competitive labor market requires cooperation and understanding between firms and universities. In response, universities are able to develop curricula in nurturing leadership -inclined graduates under academic delivery who are knowledgeable about current market needs.

Marketability skills play an important role in the current job flow. However, all studies evaluated graduates and those who had graduated. There are few studies that look at problems at the undergraduate level. To fill the vacancy, this study will look at the problem of referring to masters as a unit of analysis as graduate marketability problems

cause graduate unemployment rate increase and negatively impact university image as national institution of higher learning, human capital development, economic development and investment in higher education. Skills that students will acquire during their education and that will be useful to them in their future careers. In the case of history, the skills identified were self-discipline, self-direction, freedom of thought and initiative, ability to work with others, ability to gather, manage and use evidence and information, analytical and problem -solving abilities, both oral and written skills, intellectual integrity and maturity, empathy and imaginative insight. In fact, benchmarking training is craft-driven training, which definitely focuses on the skills maintained by the custodian of the discipline as something that is attached to it and expects students to acquire it upon graduation.

2.1. Statement of Problem

The Education with Honors (History) program is now one of the programs that are the main choice for students to enter Institutions of Higher Learning (IPT) whether public or private. However, does just receiving a degree in the field of History education make this prospective History teacher really ready to serve in the teaching profession that is full of this challenge. This is because, although there are many History trainee teachers who were born from educational institutions but according to the Minister of Education Dr. Mohd Radzi Bin Md Jidin (Faris, 2021), there are still schools that lack teachers including History teachers. He also stated that there are teachers who are not offered jobs in urban or rural areas. Ihsan (2021) states that in order to acquire skilled educational human resources, the country needs to train and supply adequate educators. This shows that developed countries depend on skilled human resources and in order to do so, teachers who are educators must be given opportunities in order to achieve that goal. Placement here is associated with the opportunity to serve. The components of this placement cover aspects of the History Option, pedagogical skills as well as teacher attitudes (Mudhovozi, 2021). Prospective History teachers build their current self-competencies through the learning process in universities or educational institutes. These placement competencies mastered by prospective History teachers will help shape teachers 'self -decisions and also build students' excellence (Embi, 2011). Faculty of Psychology and Education, Universiti Malaysia Sabah is an organization that trains prospective History teachers in the field of History education. The issue of readiness to find a place or be placed in public or private schools in urban or rural areas is one of the elements of readiness that must be present in prospective History teachers. It has to do with the attitude and willingness of prospective teachers to find work and contribute to the development of human capital, especially in urban or rural areas. Therefore, are trainee teachers from the Faculty of Psychology and Education, Universiti Malaysia Sabah ready to find work or be placed to serve in public or private schools in rural areas and non-elective areas? Therefore, this study was conducted to find out the level of readiness of prospective History educators in finding work and providing services no matter where they are after graduation.

2.2. Objectives of the Study

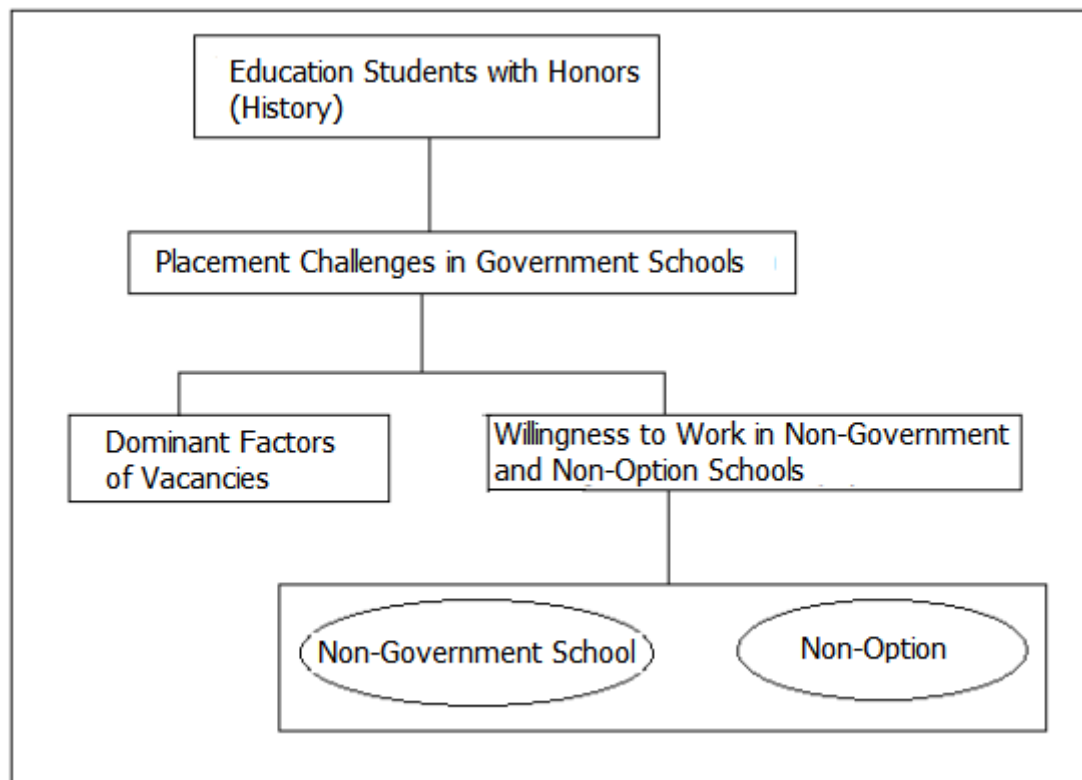
- i. Identify the challenges and placement opportunities of History education teachers in the post-pandemic era of Covid-19.
- ii. Identify a conceptual framework for developing the placement of History Education graduates.

- iii. Identify placement challenges and opportunities as drivers of improving the placement capacity of Covid-19 post-pandemic History Education graduates.

2.3. Study Conceptual Framework

The framework of the study such as [Figure 1](#) serves to explain the actual concept of the study conducted. The research framework is usually presented in the form of a mind map to facilitate reading to understand the overall idea of the study.

Figure 1: Study Conceptual Framework



3. Methodology

Descriptive quantitative research methods were used in this study. It aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, condition or phenomenon. It can answer the question of what, where, when and how are the challenges and opportunities of placement of History education teachers in the post-pandemic era of Covid-19. Descriptive research design can use a variety of research methods to investigate one or more variables.

The population for this study is focused on History Education students of the Faculty of Psychology and Education, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) who are in the first year and second year of study that is session 2020 & 2021. The total number of History Education students in the first and second years is 45 students. The purpose of taking this first year student as a respondent is because they have followed the entire History Education program in the "Open Market" available at UMS. They are prospective teachers who will look for placements to teach later. Based on the table, if the study population is 45

people, then the researcher must take all 45 respondents to be sampled in the study. However, the study sample of 45 people was purposefully selected from the total number of History Education students in the first and second year of study, namely the 2020 & 2021 sessions (Bar Fluet, 2021). In constructing this questionnaire, the researcher used an item in the form of a checklist that is the method of using the Likert Scale. Likert scale type items require respondents to answer by marking a choice of answers according to levels one to five as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Likert Scale

Likert scale	1	2	3	4	5
Feedback	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Less Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Source: Saul McLeod (2019), (Andrew et al., 2021)

4. Findings & Discussion:

In this study, the total number of respondents involved was 45 people. Based on Table 2, the data shows that 100 percent are students of the Education with Honors (History) Program of the Faculty of Psychology and Education, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) who are in the first and second year of study, namely session 2020 & 2021. They are expected to graduate in 2024 & 2025.

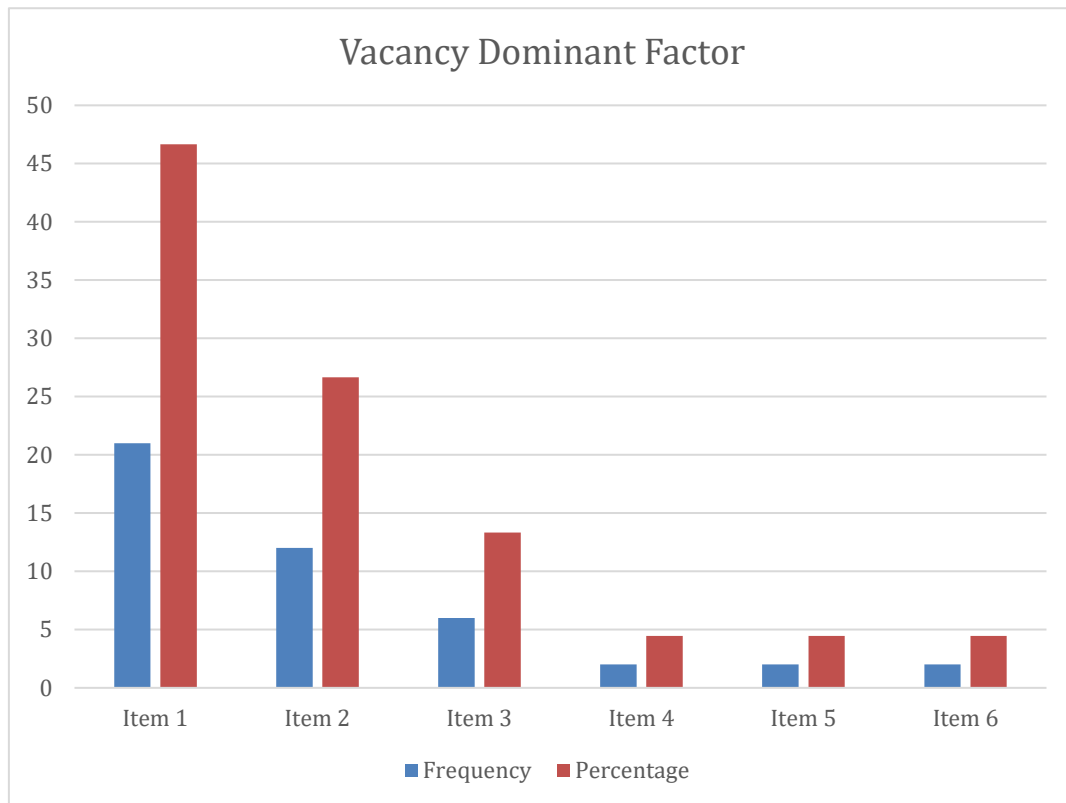
4.1. Analysis Regarding the Dominant Factors of Vacancy in Finding Placement To Serve

Based on Table 2 and Figure 2, it is found that the percentage value obtained shows that 21 people representing 46.67 percent of the total respondents chose to be placed to teach History in private secondary schools. Meanwhile, a total of 26.66 percent of the 12 people chose to be placed to teach History in private primary schools, followed by a total of 6 people representing 13.32 percent of the respondents chose to be placed to teach subjects other than History in private secondary schools. Next, 4.45 percent, that is, 2 respondents chose to be placed to teach subjects other than History in private primary schools. As for the factor of non-educational vacancies in the public and private sectors, and self-employment, each is 4.45 percent, which is a total of 2 people.

Table 2: Dominant Factors of Vacancies in Finding Placements to Serve Other Than Public Schools

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Vacancy for History Education (Private High School)	21	46.67
Vacancy for History Education (Private Primary School)	12	26.66
Education Job Vacancies (Private High School)	6	13.32
Education Job Vacancies (Private Primary School)	2	4.45
Non-Educational Vacancies in the public and private sectors	2	4.45
Self-employed	2	4.45
Total	45	100

Figure 2: Percentage Graph for the Dominant Vacancy Factor



4.2. Analysis of Placement Readiness in Non-Government Schools

Based on Table 3, Figure 3 and Figure 4 below, it is seen that the average overall mean score value for readiness to teach in non-government schools is high at 3.97 with a standard deviation of 0.772. The average obtained shows that overall the students of History Education of the Faculty of Psychology and Education, UMS have a high level of readiness in terms of readiness to teach in non-government schools. Based on the items found in the acceptance aspect, the item Ready to explore various online or non-online platforms to develop a teacher's career showed the highest mean score of 4.28 with a standard deviation of 0.619. While the item ready to make adjustments after registering to serve in non-government schools is the lowest mean score of 3.80 with a standard deviation of 0.943.

Table 3: Placement Readiness in Non-Government Schools

Item	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Interpretation of Mean Score
It is acceptable to teach in non-government schools than in government schools	3.97	0.764	High
Feel grateful to get a place to teach in a non-government school	3.89	0.834	High
Willing to make adjustments after enrolling to serve in a non-government school	3.80	0.943	moderate

Willing to serve in non-government schools without any grievances	3.92	0.781	High
Accept teaching placements offered even though the school was non-government and had to be away from family	3.97	0.688	High
Be willing to explore a variety of online or non-online platforms to develop a teacher career. Examples: youtube, tik tok, google meet, google classroom, tuition center, kindergarten, kindergarten and others.	4.28	0.619	High
Overall Average	3.97	0.772	High

Figure 3: Graph of Mean Score for Readiness to Teach in Non-Government Schools

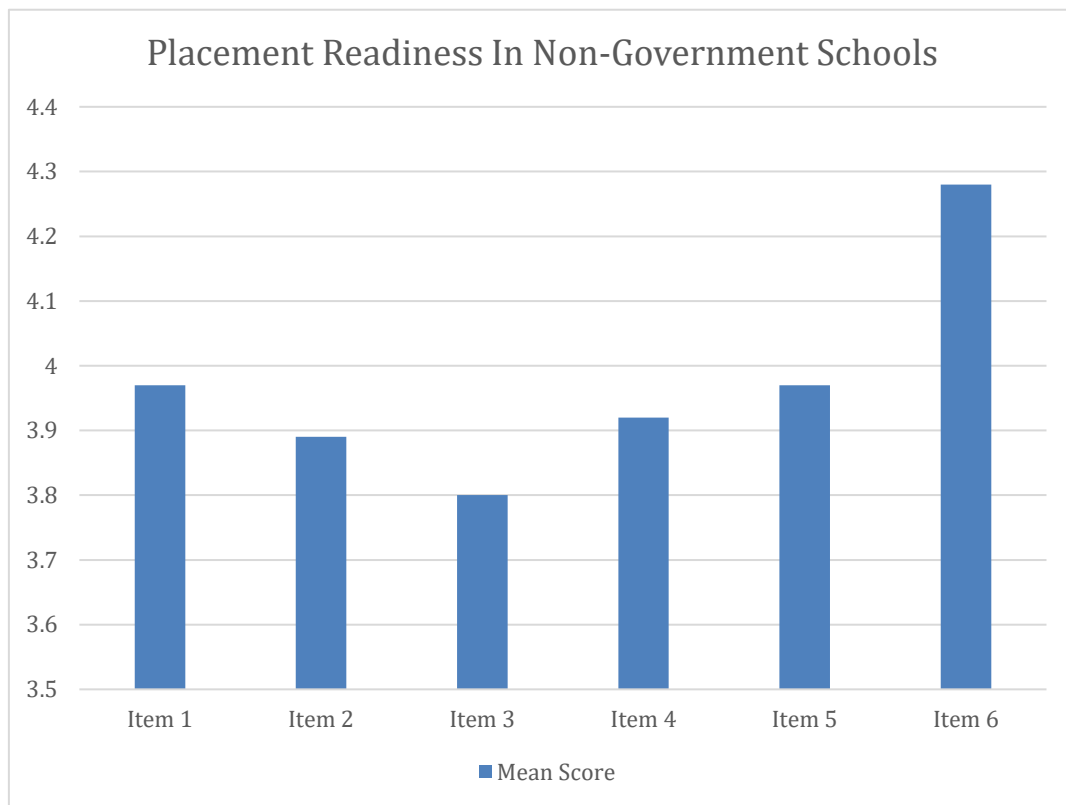
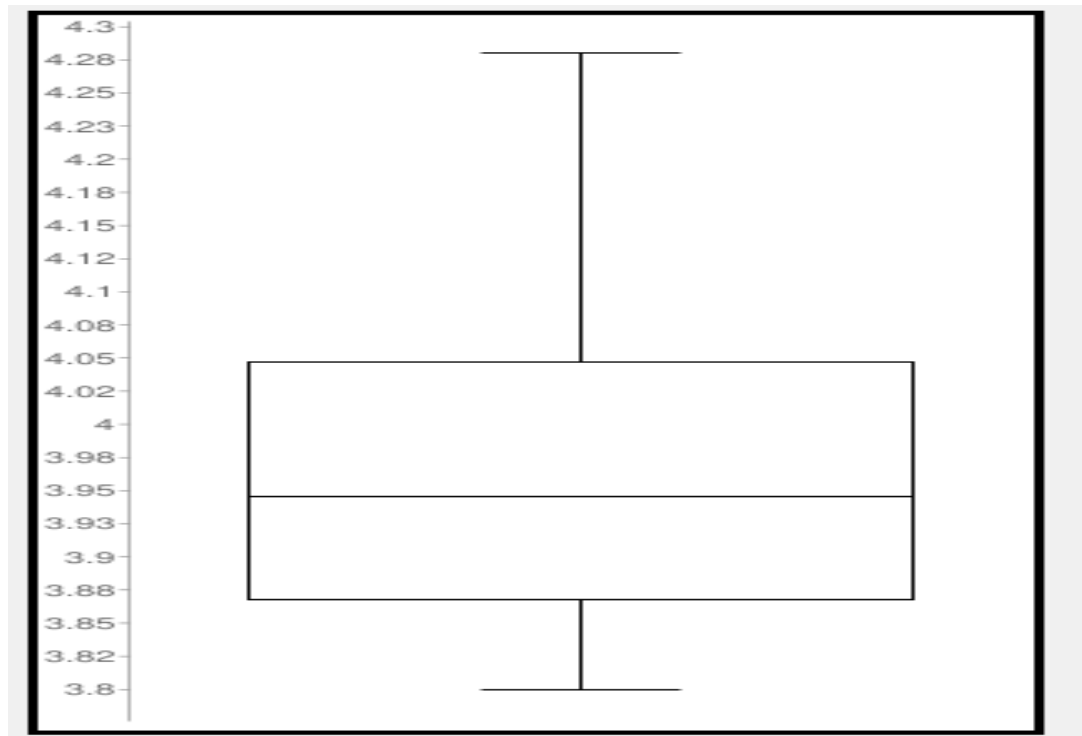


Figure 4: Boxplot of Mean Scores for Teaching Readiness in Non-Government Schools



4.3. Analysis of Readiness to Teach Non-Option Subjects

Based on Table 4, Figure 5 and Figure 6, it is seen that the average overall mean score value for teaching non-option subjects is high at 3.95 with a standard deviation of 0.774. The average obtained shows that overall the students of History Education of the Faculty of Psychology and Education, UMS have a high level of readiness in terms of readiness to teach non-option subjects in government and non-government schools. Based on the items found in the acceptance aspect, items willing to explore various online or non-online platforms to develop a teacher's career regardless showed the highest mean score of 4.26 with a standard deviation of 0.621. While items ready to make adjustments to teach non-option subjects had the lowest mean score of 3.78 with a standard deviation of 0.945.

Table 4: Readiness to Teach Non-Option Subjects

Item	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Interpretation of Mean Score
It is acceptable to teach non-option subjects in non-government schools or government schools	3.95	0.766	High
Feel grateful to have the opportunity to teach non - option subjects in non - government schools or government schools	3.87	0.836	High
Willing to make adjustments to teach non -option subjects in non-government schools or government schools	3.78	0.945	Moderate

Willing to teach non-option subjects in non-government schools or government schools without any complaints	3.90	0.783	High
Accept the responsibility of teaching non-option subjects in non-government schools or government schools despite having to learn knowledge regarding new subjects being taught	3.95	0.690	High
Be willing to explore a variety of online or non-online platforms to grow a teacher's career regardless of options. Examples: youtube, tik tok, google meet, google classroom, tuition center, kindergarten, kindergarten and others.	4.26	0.621	High
Overall Average	3.95	0.774	High

Figure 5: Graph of Mean Score for Readiness to Teach Non-Optional Subjects

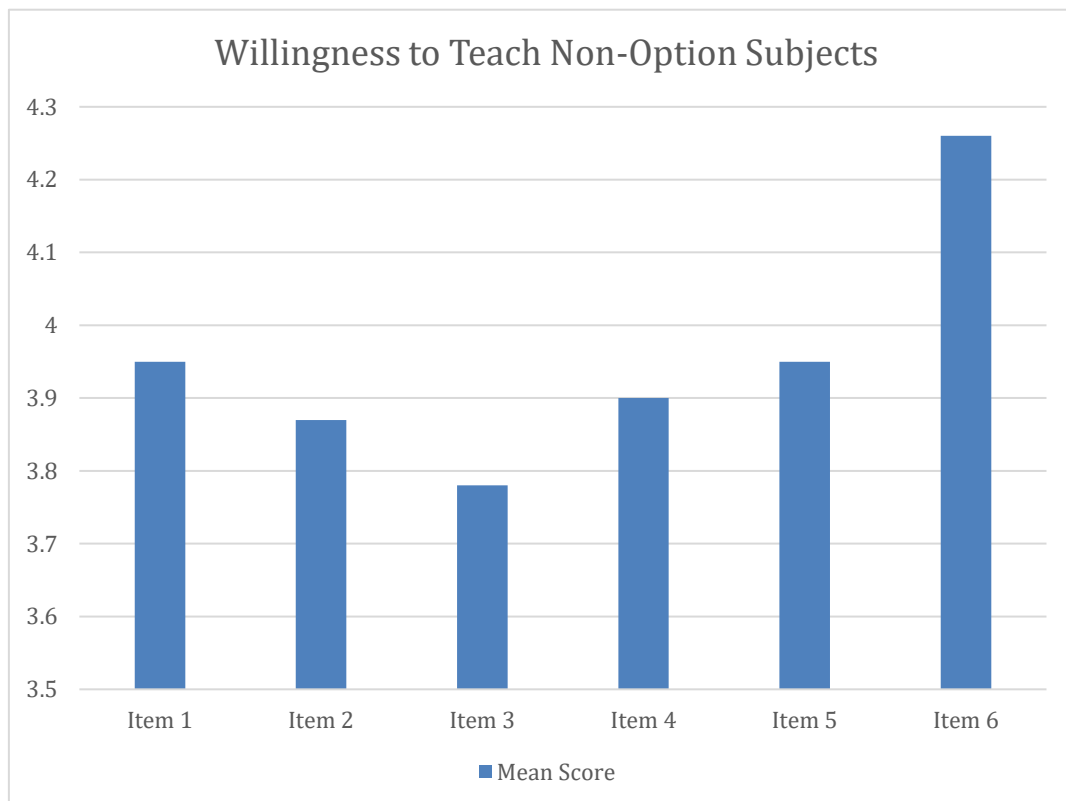
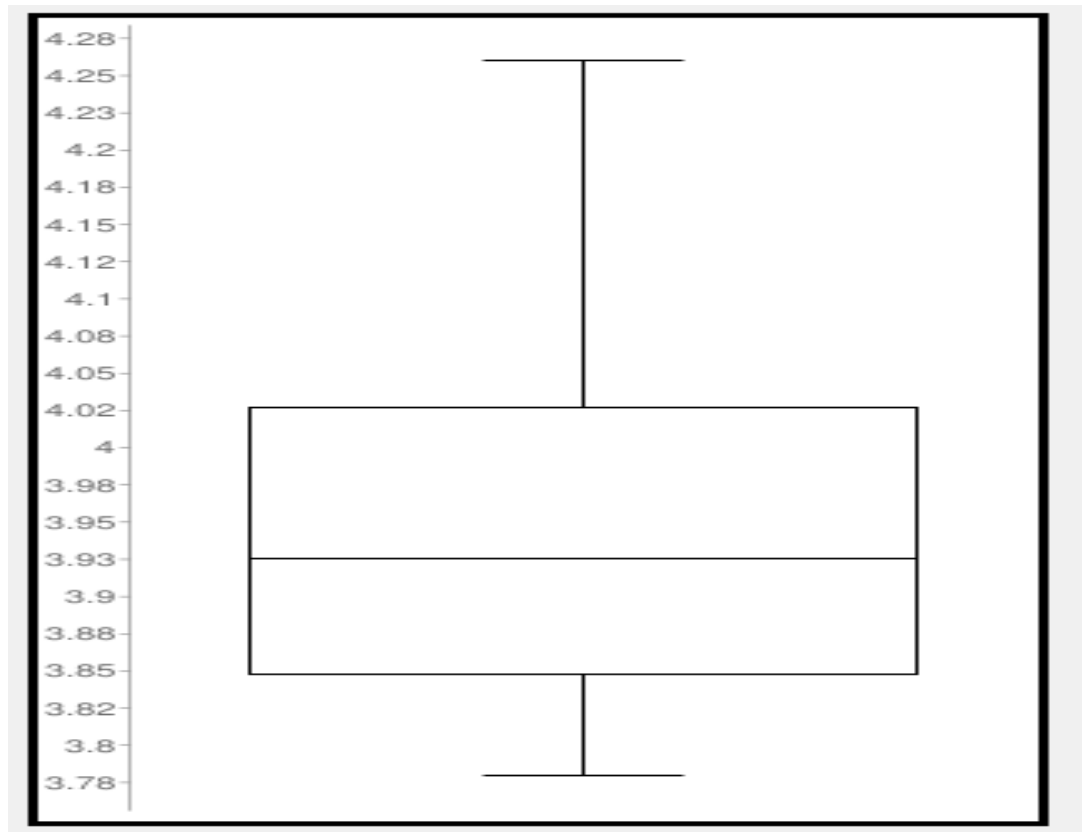


Figure 6: Mean Score for Readiness to Teach Non-Optional Subjects



5. Discussion

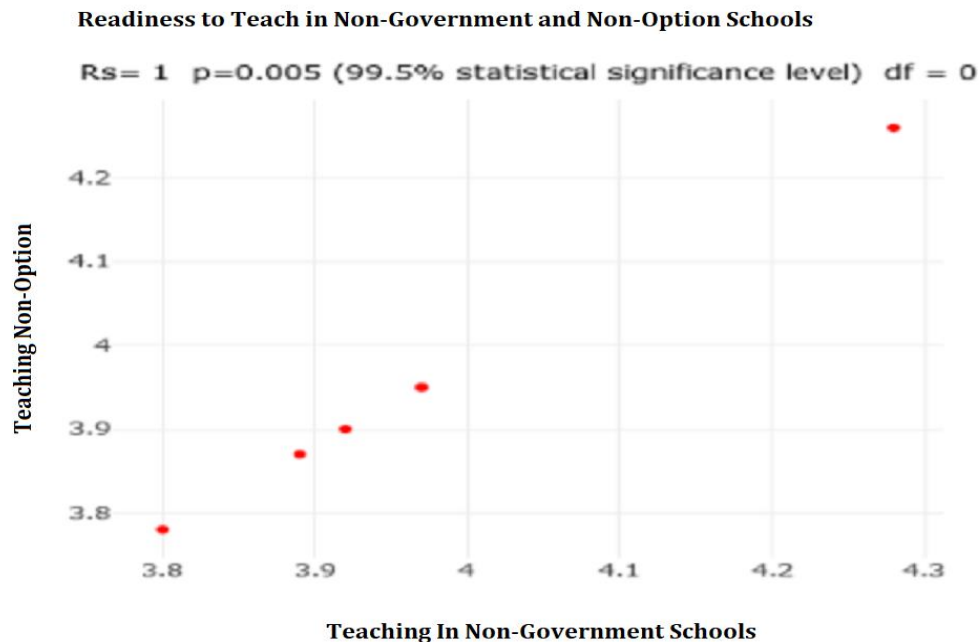
5.1. Dominant Factors of Vacancies in Finding Placements to Serve Other Than Public Schools

Based on the results of the study, it was found that almost half of the History Education students of the Faculty of Psychology and Education, UMS which is 46.67 percent representing 45 people choose to teach education or History subjects in private secondary schools. This may be because they have become familiar with the mind-set of the History Education Program in the early stages of their studies. They chose to teach education or History subjects in private primary schools, which is 26.66 per cent. The third factor is choosing to teach subjects other than History in private secondary and primary schools. Positively, it is seen as a necessity because today a teacher needs to be multi-disciplinary knowledgeable to undergo multi-tasking in school. Next the History Education students chose to venture into non-educational fields in the public and private sectors. This is because maybe they are thinking about survival to get a job. An encouraging percentage (4.45%) of the choice to be self-employed is evidence that History Education students are willing to become entrepreneurs in education or non-education online or offline in the future if they do not have the opportunity to teach in government or private schools.

Figure 7 shows that the critical value of p (probability) and significance level: $p = 0.005$ (statistical significance level 99.5%) Degree of freedom: degree of freedom = 0. The conclusion is that there seems to be a very strong positive correlation of $R_s (+1)$ value. There was a 0.5% probability that the null hypothesis was correct, $p = 0.005$ (99.5% statistical significance level). Therefore, the researcher must accept the alternative

hypothesis (that there is a very strong positive correlation between the study data sets) and reject the null hypothesis that there is no correlation. Correlation does not indicate cause and effect. One variable cannot cause another

Figure 7: Readiness to Teach in Non-Government and Non-Option Schools



5.2. Readiness to Teach in Non-Government Schools

The findings of the study show that the readiness of the students of the History Education Program towards teaching acceptance in non-government schools is at a high level. The findings also prove that the students of the History Education Program still feel grateful if they get a place to teach in non-government schools. It is known that the History Education Program is "open market" and UMS or the government is not bound by the offer of teaching placements in government schools. Therefore, the students of the History Education Program seem to understand when it is found that they are ready to make adjustments after registering to serve in non-government schools. In fact, the findings also prove that most are willing to serve in non-government schools without any complaints. As such, their acceptance of the teaching placements offered even when the school is non-government and forced to be away from family is true. However, they still feel the need to be prepared to explore various online or non-online platforms to develop a teacher's career, if they do not have the opportunity to teach in government or non-government schools.

5.3. Willingness to Teach Non-Option

The results of the study found that the students of the History Education Program can be accepted to teach non-option subjects in non-government schools or government schools at a high level. Students of the UMS History Education Program were found to feel grateful if they had the opportunity to teach non-option subjects in non-government schools or government schools. In fact, they are also willing to make adjustments to teach non-option subjects in non-government schools as well as government schools. The findings of the study also show that they are willing to teach non-option subjects in

non-government schools as well as government schools without any complaints. In fact, they also accept the responsibility of teaching non-option subjects in non-government schools or government schools even though they have to learn knowledge about the new subjects taught. As such, students of the History Education Program are willing to explore a variety of online or non-online platforms to develop a teaching career regardless of options. This situation is due to the "open market", in addition to acquiring knowledge of History and educational pedagogy options, indirectly it can also help them to be better prepared to adapt if they do not have the opportunity to teach option subjects. This is because according to Harun (2006), trainee teachers need to show a positive attitude towards the teaching career even though the profession is quite challenging and has a lot of stress.

6. Conclusion

From the discussions that have been done, there are some conclusions that can be concluded that the dominant factor of vacancies in finding placements to serve other than public schools is teaching education or History subjects in private secondary schools. However, History Education students still feel grateful if they are destined to teach in non-government and non-option schools. They are also willing to shoulder responsibilities in the workplace without much grievance. Given the difficulty of getting a job in the post-pandemic era of Covid-19. Recognizing the current needs, History Education students are also willing to equip themselves with the skills of exploring various online or non-online platforms to develop a teacher career regardless of options.

Acknowledgement

Part of this article's data was contributed by respondents of the Bachelor of History Education Program, Faculty of Psychology and Education, Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

Funding

This study received funding from Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this study.

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