



Long Paper
**Experiences of the Pre-service Teachers: A Journey of
Discovery**

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Abstract

Many empirical studies demonstrate the importance of teaching internship courses in helping pre-service teachers achieve their career goals and personal development. However, the extent to which pre-service teachers can optimize the outcomes of this course depends significantly on their experiences throughout it. These experiences can either facilitate or hinder their professional and personal growth. This research aimed to explore the experiences of pre-service teachers at Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Tagudin Campus, for the Academic Year 2022-2023 during their teaching internship course, using a mixed-method explanatory research design. Data collected through a survey questionnaire and structured interview questions underwent document analysis, specifically descriptive analysis for the questionnaire and thematic analysis for the interview data. The study revealed that the pre-service teachers' experiences before deployment had a mean score of 3.14, categorized as 'Good (G)', indicating that the preparatory activities were deemed adequate for their forthcoming responsibilities. During deployment, the mean score improved to 3.94, classified as 'Very Good (VG)', reflecting a notably successful performance at their cooperating schools, exceeding average expectations. However, upon returning to the university, the mean score declined to 1.72, denoted as 'Poor (P)', indicating a significantly unfavorable experience. This highlights the need for enhanced focus on the post-deployment phase to address the challenges encountered and improve overall outcomes. Supporting this result, pre-service teachers recommended the development of a revised Teaching Education Program curriculum, and development guidelines to better support the teaching internship course and improve their experiences.



Keywords – Teaching Internship Course; Overall Experiences; Before Internship; During Internship; After Internship

INTRODUCTION

The quality of education depends on the quality of its teachers, the backbone of any educational system. Herewith, for a better future, we must empower our teachers. To realize this, aspirant teachers need to undergo formal training that will start with their undergraduate degree in education. With this degree, they will be introduced to different theories of learning until the day comes when they can finally put them into practice through a teaching internship.

The teaching internship course is essential for the professional development of future educators, yet its effectiveness is heavily influenced by the experiences pre-service teachers encounter throughout their internship. These experiences, both positive and negative, are crucial in determining the overall success of the internship. This is evident in various studies that highlight the experiences of pre-service teachers in their teaching internships both before and during their internships.

Positively, pre-service teachers are often assigned to competent schools that offer a solid foundation for their professional development, as highlighted by Gonzales, Collado, and Mila (2020). These placements are designed to deliver high-quality training and exposure to effective teaching practices. Additionally, pre-service teachers experience support from university supervisors, who play a crucial role in this process by providing essential guidance and encouragement that significantly enhance the internship experience (Greiner, 2019). When supervision is frequent and engaged, it greatly benefits pre-service teachers, helping them navigate the complexities of teaching.

However, challenges do persist. Research indicates that supervision can sometimes be inconsistent. This is because some pre-service teachers experience infrequent supervisor visits, as evidenced by the study of Poolathodi and Areekkuzhiyil (2020), which negatively impacts the internship experience and underscores the importance of regular and engaged oversight. Further, Aldabbus (2020) identified issues with inadequate guidance from cooperating principals, while Cabanlit (2019) observed that cooperating teachers' incompetency, resulted in variable support. Additionally, pre-service teachers encounter difficulties related to gaps in academic preparation (Alanazi, 2019; Ferrer, 2021; Nga, 2021), insufficient resources, and substandard infrastructure at cooperating schools (Mahmood & Iqbal, 2018; Massod, Siddiqui, & Arif, 2022). The stress associated with instructional and administrative tasks (Ganal, Andaya, & Guiab, 2015; Navera & Ursua, 2020) and various psychosocial stressors (Gutierrez et al., 2016; Dods, 2016; Gorospe, 2022) further complicate their experience.

While there are positive aspects to these experiences, the prevalence of negative factors underscores the need for substantial improvements in the internship course. Addressing these issues is crucial to enhancing the effectiveness of the course and better preparing pre-service teachers for their future roles.

As a pre-service teacher at Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Tagudin Campus, for the Academic Year 2022-2023, the researcher observed various challenges during the teaching internship course. To validate these observations, the researcher conducted informal interviews with fellow pre-service teachers across specializations. The results showed that, like the researcher, they experienced both positive and negative aspects, with negative experiences being more prevalent. This led the researcher to focus the study on these experiences.

A review of existing literature revealed significant research gaps. Specifically, there is a lack of studies addressing the experiences of pre-service teachers in the Philippine context, particularly at the locale of this study. Furthermore, no research has focused on the teaching internship course in this setting. Most existing studies concentrate on specific phases rather than providing a comprehensive overview of the entire experience, highlighting the need for a more thorough investigation.

In response to these gaps, this study examined the teaching internship experiences of pre-service teachers from Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Tagudin Campus, for the Academic Year 2022-2023. It explored their experiences before, during, and after the internship, addressing factors such as pre-deployment requirements, orientation by cooperating schools, the spiritual dimension of psychosocial well-being, and recognition. The findings contribute to the development of a comprehensive teaching internship course theory and policy recommendations for improvement.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore the experiences of the pre-service teachers of Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Tagudin Campus, for the Academic Year 2022-2023 in their teaching internship course. Specifically, it sought answers to the following sub-problems: 1. What is the extent of the experiences of the pre-service teachers before the internship: teaching competence and internship requirements; during the internship: orientation, cooperating school performance, cooperating school resources, teaching tasks, support, and psychosocial well-being; and after the internship: recognition? and 2. What pieces of advice can pre-service teachers give to improve or overcome these experiences?

LITERATURE REVIEW

On Teaching Internship

The teaching internship is a critical component of teacher education programs, serving as a vital bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical classroom experience. This immersive experience allows pre-service teachers to apply their academic learning in real-world settings under the guidance of experienced educators, fostering significant growth both professionally and personally.

On a professional level, teaching internships greatly enhance key competencies. Research highlights that these experiences improve essential skills such as self-confidence, time management, and coping mechanisms, which are crucial for effective teaching and classroom management (Auni, Zulfikar, Akmal, Dina, & Alfiatunnur, 2022). These practical skills are fundamental for managing classroom dynamics and engaging students effectively.

Additionally, structured internship programs and accessible placements positively influence career readiness and employability by helping pre-service teachers develop critical career skills and attitudes (Bawica, 2021). The integration of technology, such as mobile portfolio apps, further supports professional development by increasing teaching enthusiasm and self-efficacy. These technological tools, especially when paired with mentor support, enhance the practical application of teaching skills and overall effectiveness (Michos, Cantieni, Schmid, Müller, & Petko, 2021).

In terms of personal development, teaching internships are equally impactful. They play a crucial role in shaping pre-service teachers' professional identities and personal growth. Direct engagement with the teaching environment clarifies roles and responsibilities, fostering a deeper commitment to the profession. The support and feedback from mentors are essential, as they strengthen pre-service teachers' self-efficacy and emotional investment in their careers (Hongyu & Xiaohui, 2017). This personal growth includes a positive shift in attitudes toward teaching, which reinforces their commitment and aids in making informed career decisions (Ivanova, 2018).

Moreover, teaching internships contribute to personal development by broadening pre-service teachers' perspectives on education and cultural understanding. Exposure to diverse educational contexts and cultural practices helps develop a more nuanced worldview and fosters respect for different educational environments (Auni, Zulfikar, Akmal, Dina, & Alfiatunnur, 2022). This enhanced cultural awareness supports pre-service teachers in connecting with students from various backgrounds and adapting to different educational settings.

In conclusion, teaching internships are essential for the comprehensive development of future educators. They effectively bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and

practical application, enhancing both professional competencies and personal growth. By improving employability, fostering a strong professional identity, and broadening cultural perspectives, teaching internships prepare high-quality educators capable of meeting the demands of the education field. The continuous support and development of these programs are vital for ensuring that pre-service teachers are well-prepared for their future roles and personal development.

On the Experiences of the Pre-service Teachers

The teaching internship course plays a crucial role in the professional development of future educators, as demonstrated by recent studies. The effectiveness of this course, however, largely depends on the experiences encountered by pre-service teachers throughout their internship journey. These experiences have the potential to either facilitate their success or impede their progress. Consequently, extensive research has been conducted globally to examine the experiences of pre-service teachers both before and during their teaching internships.

Before Internship

The teaching internship course begins not when pre-service teachers enter their cooperating schools, but from the moment they are enrolled in the program, carrying forward the knowledge and skills acquired during their university studies. Before their placement in the cooperating schools, the teaching competencies developed through their academic training can significantly enhance their self-confidence. This confidence, in turn, is crucial for their effective performance in the field.

Teaching Competence

Preparing for the internship phase, pre-service teachers often confront challenges in lesson planning, which can affect their overall readiness. Difficulties in formulating clear objectives, selecting appropriate subject matter, and structuring lessons logically have been highlighted. Alanazi (2019) notes that despite the acknowledged importance of lesson planning, pre-service teachers frequently struggle to develop detailed and effective plans. Ferrer (2021) further emphasizes that issues in creating well-structured lesson plans impact pre-service teachers' preparedness, while Nga (2021) adds that these challenges in designing logical and effective lesson plans leave many feeling inadequately equipped for their teaching roles. In essence, while the intent and importance of lesson planning are well recognized, the persistent difficulties encountered by pre-service teachers in this area underscore a crucial gap in their preparation. Addressing these challenges is vital for enhancing their readiness and ensuring that they are well-prepared to meet the demands of their teaching roles effectively.

During Internship

The true challenges emerge when pre-service teachers commence their internships at the cooperating schools. The experiences encountered during this phase, supported by both the university and the cooperating school, are instrumental in facilitating their learning. However, akin to the experiences before their deployment, empirical evidence indicates that pre-service teachers face both positive and negative experiences during their teaching internships.

Cooperating School's Performance

Gonzales, Collado, and Mila (2020) highlight those pre-service teachers rated the overall performance of cooperating schools as excellent, reflecting the positive impact of well-supported learning environments. This positive rating suggests that many cooperating schools provide effective support, conducive learning environments, and valuable professional experiences. However, variations in performance across different schools indicate that the quality of support and resources can differ significantly. These variations can influence whether the experiences of pre-service teachers are positive or challenging. For instance, schools that offer strong mentorship, well-maintained facilities, and a collaborative atmosphere are likely to enhance the learning experience, while those lacking in these areas might present obstacles.

Cooperating School's Resources

Mahmood and Iqbal (2018) report that inadequate physical infrastructure and limited resources pose challenges for pre-service teachers and affect their ability to deliver effective lessons. Massod, Siddiqui, and Arif (2022) further detail that issues such as scarce instructional materials and large class sizes contribute to a less supportive teaching environment and impact the overall teaching experience. When resources are insufficient or poorly managed, pre-service teachers may encounter significant obstacles that hinder their effectiveness and professional growth, underscoring the critical need for well-maintained facilities and adequate instructional support to enhance the teaching and learning experience.

Teaching Tasks

In the realm of instructional tasks, difficulties in classroom management and communication skills, as identified by Ganai, Andaya, and Guiab (2015), frequently undermine pre-service teachers' confidence and effectiveness. Navera and Ursua (2020) further emphasize that challenges related to lesson planning and classroom management exacerbate these issues. Similarly, administrative responsibilities, including managing assignments and engaging with school administrators, as noted by Collantes (2021), can overwhelm pre-service teachers, contributing to increased stress and detracting from their focus on essential teaching duties. These findings highlight the necessity for targeted support and training to

assist pre-service teachers in navigating these complexities, thereby enhancing their overall development and preparedness for future teaching roles.

Support

The role of college supervisors is crucial in supporting pre-service teachers during their teaching internships. They oversee performance, coordinate with school officials, and facilitate feedback and reflection sessions. Greiner (2019) highlights that perceived competence support from university supervisors significantly influences pre-service teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education. This underscores the importance of continuous, supportive interactions in fostering positive educational attitudes and self-efficacy. On the other hand, Poolathodi and Areekkuzhiyil (2020) found that infrequent supervisor visits can negatively impact the internship experience. This finding emphasizes the need for regular and engaged supervision to provide consistent guidance and encouragement.

The role of Cooperating Principals is crucial in overseeing the placement and performance of pre-service teachers. They are responsible for assigning qualified mentors, coordinating with teachers and college supervisors, and ensuring that pre-service teachers do not substitute for absent teachers. Aldabbus (2020) found that a lack of cooperation and insufficient guidance from principals can significantly hinder the effectiveness of the internship, creating challenges for pre-service teachers. Conversely, when principals are actively involved and supportive, they enhance the internship experience by providing valuable mentorship and fostering a more cohesive learning environment. This underscores the importance of proactive and collaborative engagement from school leadership to ensure a successful internship.

Cooperating Teachers play a vital role in supporting pre-service teachers by critiquing lesson plans, fostering collaboration, encouraging reflection, sharing innovative teaching strategies, offering practical advice, recommending instructional resources, and assisting with school forms. As mentors within the deployment school, their support is crucial. However, Cabanlit (2019) observed that cooperating teachers often depend on personal experience rather than formal training, which can lead to inconsistent support. Nevertheless, inconsistencies and a lack of structured guidance can undermine the internship experience. These findings emphasize the need for well-defined support mechanisms to ensure a more effective and supportive internship for pre-service teachers.

Psychosocial Well-being

The physical demands of teaching present considerable stressors for pre-service teachers. Gutierrez et al. (2016) emphasize that the energy and stamina required for teaching contribute significantly to overall stress levels, affecting health and focus. The long hours in the classroom and the physical exertion involved in managing activities can lead to fatigue and decreased effectiveness, highlighting the need to address these physical demands to support pre-service teachers' health and professional development.

Mental stress is also a prevalent issue, despite generally positive mental health outlooks. According to Dods (2016), high levels of stress adversely impact overall well-being and effectiveness during internships. The pressure to perform well, meet expectations, and adapt to new environments can overwhelm pre-service teachers, resulting in mental fatigue and reduced job satisfaction. Effective support systems and coping strategies are crucial for enhancing their mental resilience and ensuring a more positive internship experience.

Emotional challenges, such as anxiety from high expectations, further complicate the internship experience. Gorospe (2022) notes that these emotional strains affect self-efficacy and overall well-being, adding to the stress of internships. The pressure to meet both personal and professional standards can lead to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt. Providing robust emotional support and fostering a positive, empathetic learning environment are essential for helping pre-service teachers manage these challenges and build confidence in their teaching abilities.

Social interactions and support are also critical. Collantes (2021) identifies issues such as uncooperative fellow student teachers and infrequent class observations by cooperating teachers as significant challenges. These social factors can create a difficult environment, impacting the overall internship experience. Building a supportive network and ensuring regular, constructive interactions with peers and mentors is important for mitigating these social challenges and enhancing the learning experience.

Finally, financial difficulties, including transportation costs, add to the stress experienced by pre-service teachers. Ganal et al. (2015) observe that financial strains can affect focus and performance and further complicate the internship experience. Managing expenses while fulfilling internship requirements can be a substantial burden, affecting both academic performance and personal well-being. Addressing these financial challenges through support mechanisms or stipends can alleviate some of these pressures, allowing pre-service teachers to concentrate more effectively on their professional development.

Extensive research, both internationally and nationally, has explored the experiences of pre-service teachers throughout their internships. This research covers their experiences before and during the internship period. The findings reveal that pre-service teachers encounter a range of both positive and negative experiences during their journey, highlighting the complex nature of their professional development.

On the Pieces of Advice of the Pre-service Teachers to Improve and/or Overcome their Experiences

Pre-service teachers, having firsthand experience with the internship course, are ideally positioned to offer valuable insights into necessary improvements. Their recommendations underscore key areas for enhancement. According to the study by Bakırcı

and Fili (2018), pre-service teachers emphasize the need for comprehensive guidelines to improve the effectiveness of teaching internship courses. Specifically, they recommend that college supervisors provide detailed information about course expectations at the start of the semester. Additionally, it is crucial for supervisors to consistently monitor and evaluate teaching practices to ensure their effectiveness. Facilitating better integration and communication between pre-service teachers and other staff members is also important to avoid feelings of exclusion and to ensure familiarity with new systems or procedures. Furthermore, cooperating schools should be easily accessible, well-equipped, and free from overcrowded classrooms to create a conducive learning environment.

In conclusion, the recommendations provided by pre-service teachers not only suggest critical improvements but also reflect their negative experiences within the internship course. The call for comprehensive guidelines, effective supervision, and improved communication underscores the challenges pre-service teachers face, indicating gaps and deficiencies in the current system. Addressing these issues is essential for transforming the internship experience into a more supportive and effective component of teacher training, ultimately benefiting both pre-service teachers and the educational institutions involved.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, as outlined by Plano Clark (2011) and cited in Subedi (2016). This approach involves two phases: initially, quantitative data is collected and analyzed, followed by the collection and examination of qualitative data to expand on and explain the quantitative results. The integration of these phases provides a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

In this study, the design was used to explore pre-service teachers' experiences in their teaching internships. Quantitative data assessed the extent of these experiences before, during, and after the internship, while qualitative data provided insights and recommendations to enhance these experiences, thereby complementing the quantitative findings.

Sampling

This section outlines the sources of data for this study, including the research setting, sampling, and participants.

Research Setting

This study was carried out at the Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC), Tagudin Campus, which is situated in the barangay of Quirino, Tagudin, Ilocos Sur. The said campus is

one of the 7 campuses of ISPSC. The Accrediting Agency of Charter Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCU), Inc. placed the state college third among the State Colleges with the most programs granted Level II accreditation status in 2022.

Sampling

This study didn't use any sampling technique in either quantitative or qualitative methods of gathering data as the researchers employed total enumeration, a technique where members of the whole population are measured. According to Bullen (2022), a sample size of 100 is generally adequate for reliable results, so the inclusion of all participants was deemed appropriate. For qualitative data, data saturation (Damyanov, 2023) was achieved by analyzing data from 25 participants who provided unique and representative insights.

Research Participants

Participants were graduating students from the College of Teacher Education at ISPSC, Tagudin Campus, who completed their teaching internship during the Academic Year 2022-2023. This included 23 students from the Bachelor of Elementary Education program, 11 from the Bachelor of Physical Education program, and 67 from the Bachelor of Secondary Education program, with specializations in English, Science, Filipino, and Mathematics.

Research Instrument

This section details the instruments used to gather data for this study and outlines the ethical considerations adhered to.

Instrumentation

The study employed both a questionnaire and an interview to collect the necessary data.

Questionnaire

A validated, researcher-designed questionnaire was utilized to evaluate the extent of pre-service teachers' experiences during their teaching internship. The development of the questionnaire was grounded in relevant literature, including *Teaching Internship* (Borabo, 2018) and *My Practice Teaching Handbook and Portfolio* (Borado & Borabo, 2015), in addition to insights gained from informal interviews with participants. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, a rigorous content validation process was undertaken. This process involved three experts in the field: two College Supervisors overseeing pre-service teachers in the Bachelor of Elementary Education, Bachelor of Secondary Education, and Bachelor of Physical Education programs, and one instructor specializing in Observations of Teaching-Learning in Actual School Environments and Participation and Teaching. These experts utilized a validation rubric to assess the questionnaire's content. The validity was determined using a

scale where scores ranging from 1.00 to 1.79 were categorized as "Not Valid" (NV) and scores from 4.20 to 5.00 were classified as "Very Highly Valid" (VHV). The experts' evaluations yielded scores of 4.83, 4.83, and 4.67, respectively, resulting in an average mean score of 4.78, which is classified as VHV. This high rating indicates that the questionnaire is exceptionally effective in fulfilling its intended purpose.

Interview

An open-ended interview was conducted to gather insights into pre-service teachers' recommendations for improving their experiences. The use of open-ended questions allowed participants to articulate their views and suggestions in their own words, thus providing a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of their experiences (Albudaiwi, 2018). This approach was intended to complement the questionnaire by addressing aspects that were not fully explored in the survey. To ensure the interview guide effectively captured the intended insights, it underwent a rigorous content validation process. The guide was reviewed by three experts: a language teacher, a research teacher, and an expert in the field of teaching. These experts assessed the guide using a validation scale where scores ranging from 1.00 to 1.79 indicated "Not Valid" (NV) and scores from 4.20 to 5.00 were classified as "Very Highly Valid" (VHV). The experts provided scores of 4.83, 4.67, and 4.67, resulting in an average mean score of 4.72, which falls within the VHV range. This high level of validity confirms that the interview guide was meticulously designed to assess the intended aspects, thereby reinforcing the overall credibility and reliability of the research instrument.

Data Gathering Procedure

Phase 1: Approval

A consent letter, signed by the research adviser and Dean, was submitted to the Campus Administrator of Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Tagudin Campus, who then signed it for approval.

Phase 2: Distribution

With approval in hand, the researcher presented the letter to the Dean of the College of Teacher Education and received permission to conduct a one-time data collection in the Audio-Visual Room (AVR) on May 19, 2023. The researcher checked the attendance of 4th-year students, distributed the consent forms and surveys, and introduced the study. Participants were briefed on the study details and signed the consent form before completing the survey.

Phase 3: Retrieval

The researcher collected the signed consent forms and survey sheets, organizing them by specialization for easier follow-up if needed.

Data Analysis

This section outlines the statistical methods employed for analyzing the quantitative data in this study, as well as the approaches used for the qualitative data analysis.

Quantitative

The researchers used the mean to analyze the quantitative data, summarizing the central tendency of responses from the questionnaire. The mean was calculated with the formula $\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$, where \bar{x} is the average score, $\sum x$ is the sum of all responses, and n is the total number of responses. This method provided a single value representing the average experience reported by the pre-service teachers, enabling a clear overview of the data.

The interpretation of mean scores followed a predefined scale to categorize the extent of experiences reported by pre-service teachers. Scores ranging from 4.20 to 5.00 were classified as Excellent (E), indicating outstanding experiences. Scores between 3.40 and 4.19 were deemed Very Good (VG), reflecting strong positive experiences. A range of 2.60 to 3.39 was considered Good (G), showing satisfactory experiences. Scores from 1.80 to 2.59 fell into the Fair (F) category, representing average experiences, while scores between 1.00 and 1.79 were rated Poor (P), indicating less favorable experiences. This categorization provided a comprehensive view of the overall experiences of pre-service teachers during their internship.

Qualitative

For the qualitative component, thematic analysis was conducted on the saturated data. This approach involved identifying patterns and themes from interview transcripts and other qualitative data. The process, as described by Ho and Limpaecher (2020), included familiarizing with the data, coding, categorizing, and grouping codes into themes. The themes were then reviewed, revised, and used to write detailed narratives. To validate the results, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with one participant from each specialization, all of whom confirmed their agreement with the findings.

RESULTS

Extent of Experiences of the Pre-Service Teachers in their Teaching Internship

Before Internship

Figure 1 illustrates the extent of experiences of pre-service teachers before their deployment, encompassing two main factors: teaching competence and internship requirements. Teaching competence reflects their readiness in key areas such as subject mastery, lesson planning, pedagogical strategies, classroom management, creation of instructional materials, assessment tools, and creation of action research. This level of competence significantly influences their confidence as they transition into student teaching roles. On the other hand, internship requirements include the documents submitted and activities attended, such as university orientations, necessary paperwork, pinning ceremonies, and relevant seminars. Compliance with these requirements also affects their confidence and perception of the course, which in turn impacts their experience during the internship. Together, these factors provide a comprehensive overview of pre-service teachers' preparedness and experiences leading up to their deployment.

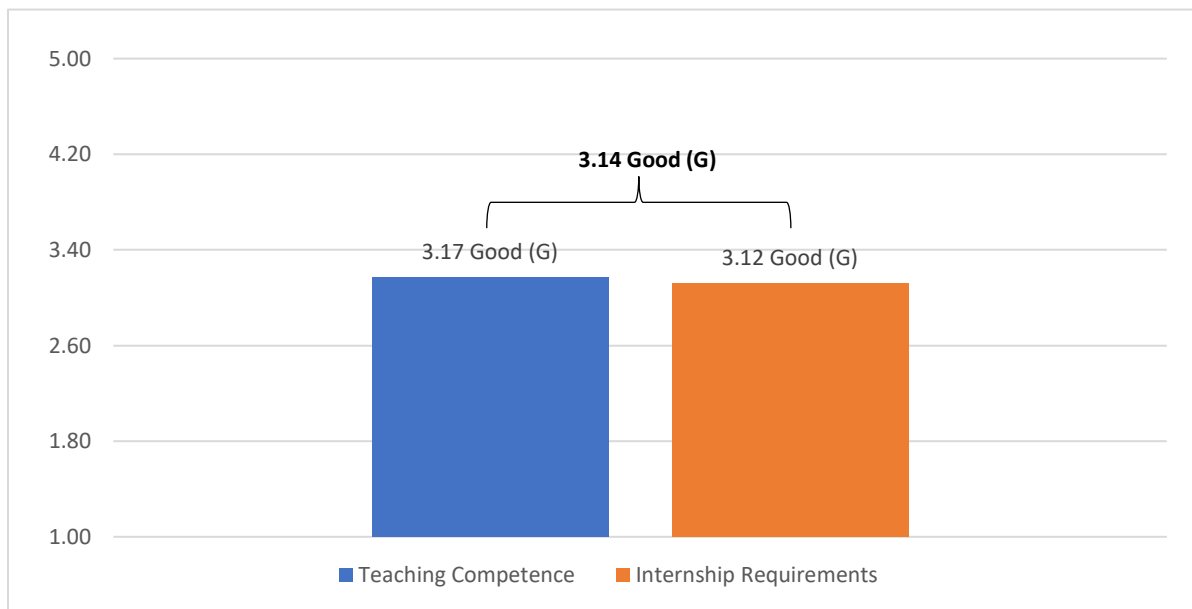


Figure 1. Extent of Experiences of the Pre-service Teachers Before Internship

During Internship

Figure 2 illustrates the extent of the experiences of pre-service teachers during their deployment to cooperating schools, focusing on six key factors: orientation, cooperating school performance, cooperating school resources, teaching tasks, support, and psychosocial well-being. The orientation factor encompasses the experience of any orientation provided by the deployment school, which is crucial for introducing pre-service teachers to school protocols, professional expectations, and key personnel. This initial orientation is essential for ensuring their smooth integration and understanding of the school's procedures. Additionally, the cooperating school performance evaluates the competence of the selected school, which significantly impacts the depth of learning and professional development pre-service teachers can achieve. Consequently, they need to be placed in schools with a strong performance record and sufficient resources.

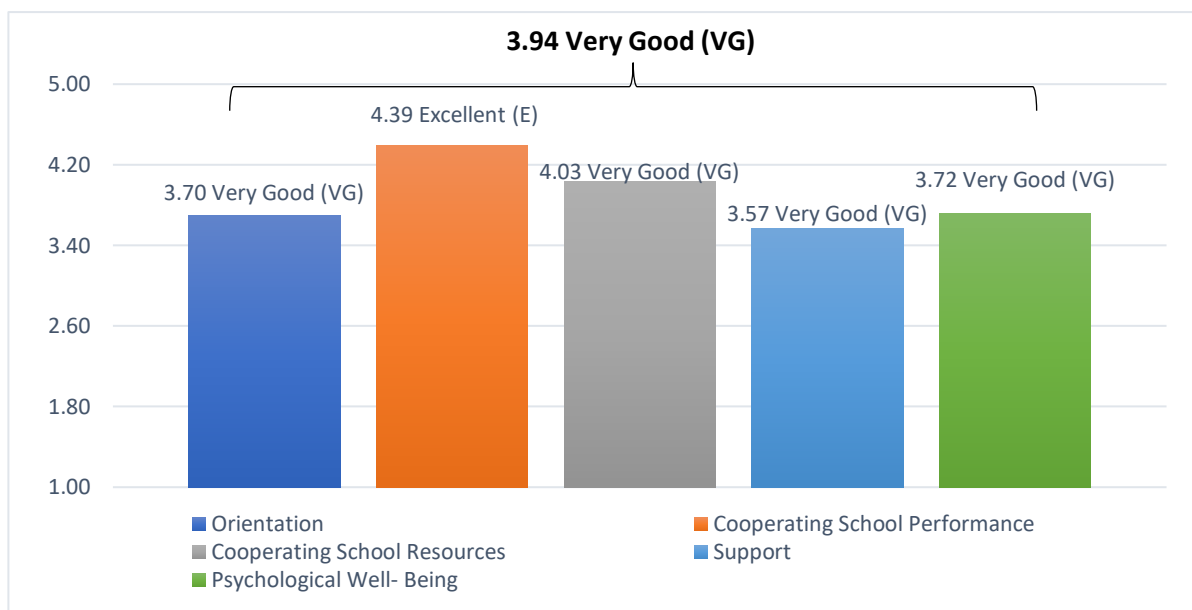


Figure 2. Extent of Experiences of the Pre-service Teachers During Internship

Moreover, the availability and adequacy of cooperating school resources, including teaching materials and facilities, play a critical role in the effectiveness of the teaching experience. Teaching tasks encompass both instructional and administrative components. Instructional tasks involve designing and delivering lessons, assessing student learning, and adapting teaching methods, while administrative tasks include managing classroom records, coordinating schedules, handling communications, and ensuring policy compliance. Both components are integral to the teaching role and must be practiced under mentor supervision. Additionally, support from college supervisors, cooperating principals, and cooperating teachers is crucial for the success of pre-service teachers, as it makes their experience in the deployment school much smoother and more manageable. Lastly, psychosocial well-being covers the physical, mental, emotional, social, financial, and spiritual aspects of their lives, which affect their overall effectiveness and success during the internship. Collectively, these

factors provide a comprehensive understanding of pre-service teachers' experiences and professional growth during their deployment.

After Internship

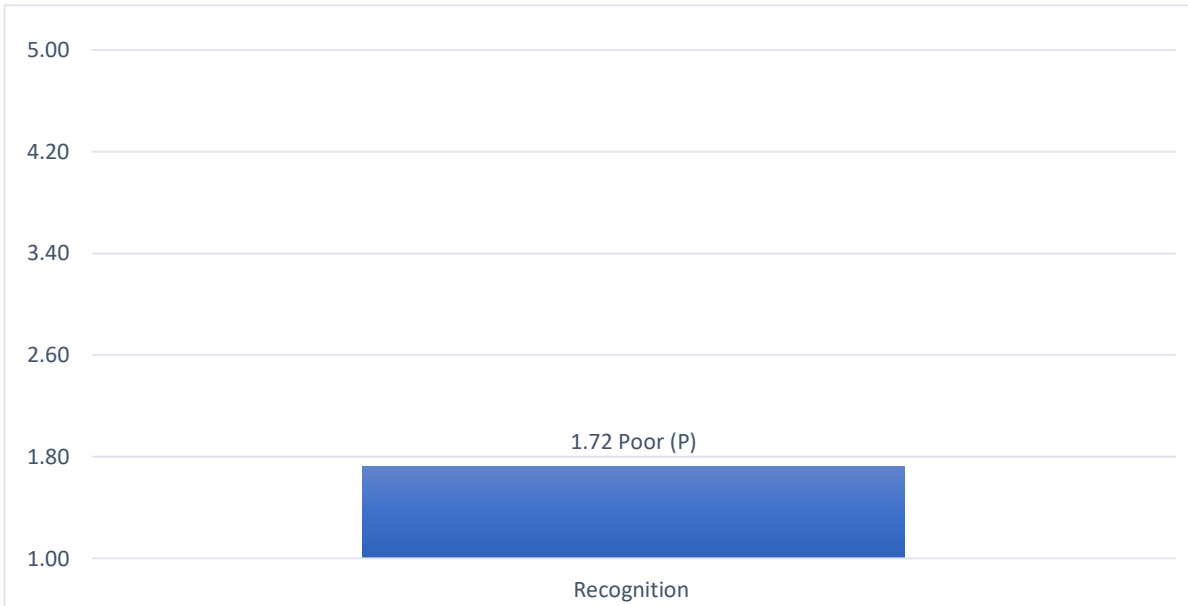


Figure 3. Extent of Experiences of the Pre-service Teachers After Internship

Figure 3 illustrates the extent of experiences of pre-service teachers upon returning to the university after their teaching internship. It specifically addresses the recognition aspect of the teaching internship course, evaluating how both the cooperating school and the university acknowledge and validate the efforts of pre-service teachers in fulfilling the requirements of the internship. The recognition component is crucial in this course as it not only formalizes and validates the pre-service teachers' practical experiences but also provides them with a sense of accomplishment and professional validation. This acknowledgment is essential for reinforcing their confidence, motivating continued professional growth, and ensuring that their contributions are officially recognized within the academic and professional community.

On the Pieces of Advice of the Pre-service Teachers to Improve and/or Overcome their Experiences

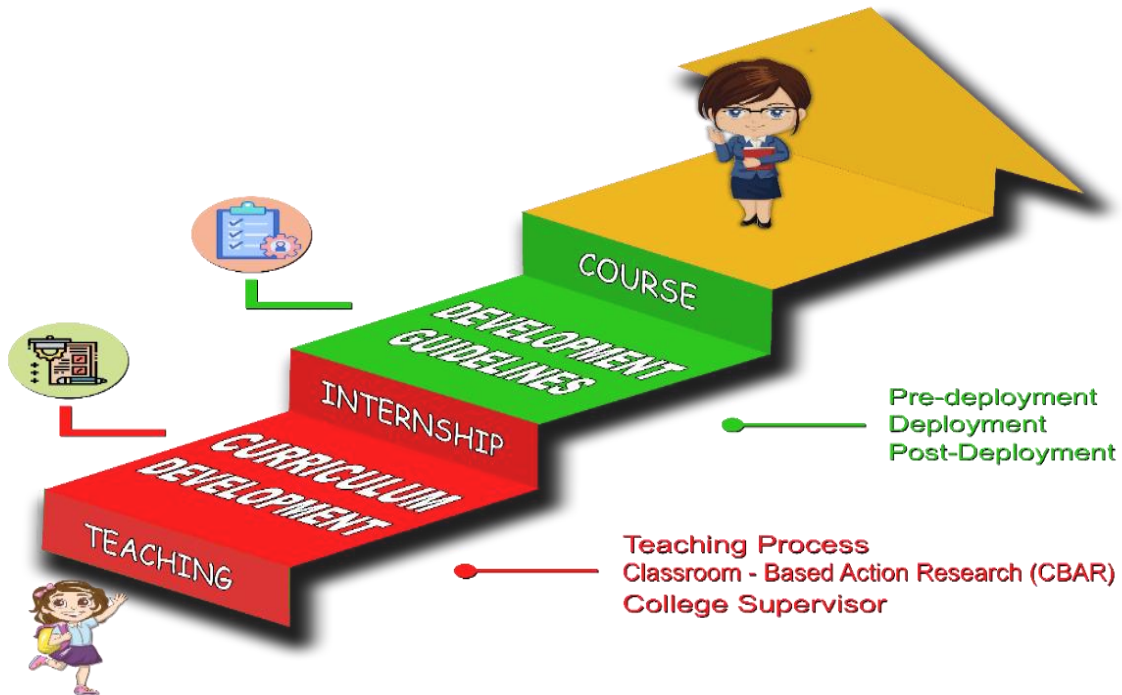


Figure 4. Teaching Internship Course Theoretical Diagram

Figure 4 presents a theoretical diagram developed based on saturated data from pre-service teachers regarding recommended improvements that the university could make to enhance their teaching internship experience. This diagram is informed by their experiences before, during, and after the internship, as detailed in Figures 1 to 3. It synthesizes the feedback and suggestions provided by pre-service teachers to propose actionable changes that could improve the overall internship experience and address identified gaps.

Just as illustrated by the diagram, which depicts a novice teacher's journey, the necessity for transformative changes is highlighted, beginning with curriculum development and followed by the establishment of development guidelines. These steps are crucial for guiding pre-service teachers toward achieving their goal of becoming accomplished educators.

DISCUSSION

Extent of Experiences of the Pre-Service Teachers in their Teaching Internship

Before Internship

The pre-service teachers' preparatory experience before their internship received a mean score of 3.14, which was rated as 'Good (G)'. This indicates that their preparation was generally effective, providing a solid foundation for their teaching roles. However, while the 'Good' rating reflects satisfactory readiness, it also highlights opportunities for improvement. Specifically, enhancing teaching competence and streamlining the internship requirements process could significantly boost their preparedness. Addressing these areas could lead to a more robust and comprehensive preparation, ensuring that future cohorts are exceptionally well-prepared for their teaching internships.

Specifically, their teaching competence, with a mean score of 3.17, was interpreted as 'Good (G)'. This rating indicates that the pre-service teachers were reasonably well-prepared for their teaching roles, meeting standard expectations. The 'Good' rating reflects the effectiveness of the structured and comprehensive training they received over their three-year preparation period. This training provided them with a solid foundation in essential teaching skills and knowledge, which is fundamental for effective teaching. The structured approach ensured they acquired the core competencies needed for their roles. However, the 'Good' rating also highlights that while their preparedness was commendable, there is potential for further development. Enhancing areas such as subject mastery, lesson planning, pedagogical strategies, classroom management, the creation of instructional materials and assessment tools, and action research could significantly strengthen their teaching competence. By focusing on these areas, pre-service teachers can deepen their expertise and improve their effectiveness in the classroom. Thus, while the rating is positive and reflects a strong level of readiness, it also suggests opportunities for ongoing improvement to further elevate their teaching practice.

Regarding the teaching internship course requirements, an average mean score of 3.12 was obtained, indicating a 'Good (G)' rating. This rating signifies that the management of the internship course requirements was generally effective, although there are areas for improvement. The orientation sessions were successful in clearly conveying the internship's procedures and requirements, providing a solid foundation for pre-service teachers. The pinning ceremony was notably well-executed and positively received, serving as a significant event. Seminars offered essential content on curriculum planning and professional ethics but could benefit from more comprehensive material and extended duration. Despite these successes, the documentation process encountered notable inefficiencies, including difficulties in obtaining required documents and associated costs, which impacted the overall efficiency. Overall, while the structured approach to the internship was effective in meeting

its requirements and supporting pre-service teachers, addressing the identified areas for improvement could further enhance the program's effectiveness.

During Internship

The pre-service teachers' experience during their internship received an impressive mean score of 3.94, which was classified as 'Very Good (VG)'. This score reflects a notably successful and enriching period, underscoring the substantial support from their university, cooperating schools, and families. The high rating highlights their effective performance and significant growth, while also indicating that further refinement could elevate their experience to the highest level of achievement.

Delving deeper, the orientation factor achieved an average mean score of 3.83, which was categorized as 'Very Good (VG)'. This result highlights the effectiveness of the orientation process for pre-service teachers. The high rating reflects well-coordinated efforts, including the College Supervisor's clear communication of expectations, the Cooperating Principal's thorough introduction of school policies, facilities, and personnel, and the Cooperating Teachers' clear guidance on schedules. These elements demonstrate strong adherence to DepEd Order No. 3 series of 2007 or the Guidelines in the Deployment of Pre-Service Teachers on Experiential Learning: Field Study and Practice Teaching. While the orientation achieved a 'Very Good' rating, underscoring its overall success and effectiveness, there is still scope for continued enhancement to elevate the process to the highest possible standard of excellence.

The cooperating school performance factor achieved an impressive average mean score of 4.39, which was rated as 'Excellent (E)'. This finding is consistent with Gonzales, Collado, and Mila (2020), who reported that pre-service teachers rated cooperating schools highly due to supportive learning environments. In the context of this study, the 'Excellent' rating underscores that these schools not only meet but significantly surpass prescribed standards. Their strong academic performance, positive community reputation, and effective management highlight their exceptional quality and commitment to providing a superior educational experience for pre-service teachers.

Additionally, the cooperating school resources factor received a commendable average mean score of 4.03, which was categorized as 'Very Good (VG)'. This rating highlights the substantial resources provided that greatly supported pre-service teachers during their internship. The school offered ample master teachers for effective mentoring, adequate instructional materials and equipment, and financial support for various activities. Facilities were well-maintained, with spacious, well-lit classrooms, safe environments, and ample spaces for both indoor and outdoor activities. The presence of a convenient canteen further enhanced the pre-service teachers' experience. Although the resources were highly beneficial and received a 'Very Good' rating, indicating their excellence, there remains some opportunity for further improvement to achieve the highest standard of quality.

Moreover, the teaching tasks factor received an average mean score of 4.28, which was rated as ‘Excellent (E)’, indicating exceptional performance in both instructional management and administrative responsibilities. The pre-service teachers demonstrated outstanding proficiency in instructional management through meticulous preparation, effective lesson planning, and the use of diverse teaching resources and strategies. Their ability to identify learner needs, implement differentiated instruction, and maintain positive classroom environments further highlighted their high competence. Simultaneously, their administrative capabilities were exemplary, as they efficiently handled non-teaching duties, supported school programs and activities, and actively participated in school events. This remarkable performance underscores not only the pre-service teachers' dedication and skill but also the comprehensive guidance and mentorship provided by cooperating schools, which facilitated their successful fulfillment of professional responsibilities.

Furthermore, the extent of support experienced by pre-service teachers, reflected in an overall mean score of 3.57 and categorized as ‘Very Good (VG)’, indicates a strong level of assistance provided during their internships. This rating demonstrates the effectiveness of the support system, although it also points to specific areas where enhancements are needed to further improve the overall internship experience. College Supervisors provided adequate support; however, their effectiveness was somewhat limited by shortcomings in regular observations, evaluations, and consistent communication. This is consistent with findings by Poolathodi and Areekkuzhiyil (2020), who identified infrequent visits from supervisors as a significant challenge for pre-service teachers. Their research underscores the necessity for more frequent and supportive supervision to enhance the overall internship experience. In contrast, the Cooperating Principal demonstrated substantial support through effective placement with qualified teachers, conducting regular performance conferences, maintaining coordination with college supervisors, and ensuring that pre-service teachers were not assigned non-teaching duties. Additionally, Cooperating Teachers delivered exemplary support by providing thorough critiques of lesson plans, promoting collaboration, encouraging reflective practices, and offering valuable strategies and resources. Collectively, this diverse support from various stakeholders resulted in the ‘Very Good’ rating, reflecting a largely positive and effective internship experience. While the combined efforts of College Supervisors, the Cooperating Principal, and Cooperating Teachers greatly contributed to the overall quality, there are specific areas that require enhancement to achieve the highest standards of support. Addressing the gaps identified in regular observations, evaluations, and communication, as well as optimizing the placement and mentoring processes, could elevate the program to an outstanding level, ensuring even greater effectiveness and satisfaction for pre-service teachers.

Ultimately, the psychosocial well-being factor achieved an average mean score of 3.72, which was categorized as ‘Very Good (VG)’. This score reflects a generally positive experience across several critical dimensions. Physical well-being was robust, indicating that health concerns did not impede their responsibilities. Mental well-being demonstrated resilience and sound decision-making despite challenges. Emotional well-being was characterized by effective emotional management and adaptability. Social well-being was notably strong,

reflecting supportive and positive relationships within the school environment. Conversely, financial well-being was significantly lower, highlighting substantial financial difficulties that align with findings from Ganal et al. (2015), who reported that pre-service teachers often struggle with covering transportation costs, which adds to their stress. They observed that these financial strains negatively affect pre-service teachers' focus and performance, further complicating their internship experience. In contrast, spiritual well-being was exceptionally resilient, underscoring a strong spiritual connection despite the demands of the internship. Overall, while most dimensions of well-being were effectively managed, addressing financial difficulties could further enhance the support and overall experience for pre-service teachers.

After Internship

The post-teaching internship experiences of pre-service teachers yielded a mean score of **1.72**, indicating a **'Poor (P)'** level of experience. This underscores the unfavorable nature of their experience upon returning to the university, highlighting the necessity for increased emphasis. Specifically, the recognition factor received a low average mean score of 1.72, which was categorized as 'Poor'. This score underscores a substantial deficiency in the acknowledgment of pre-service teachers' efforts during their teaching internships. Although the Cooperating School issued Certificates of Completion and the College Supervisor assigned appropriate grades, the absence of a formal Recognition Program by the University significantly contributed to the inadequate recognition. This gap in acknowledgment is further reflected in the overall lack of formal celebrations or additional commendations for the pre-service teachers' hard work and achievements. The limited recognition may result in diminished motivation and a sense of underappreciation among pre-service teachers, highlighting a critical need for a more robust and comprehensive recognition system to fully honor their contributions and enhance their overall internship experience.

On the Pieces of Advice of the Pre-service Teachers to Improve and/or Overcome their Experiences

Curriculum Development

Based on the participants' experiences during their teaching internship course, the study highlights a clear desire for revisions to the Teaching Education Program curriculum. Participants have suggested modifications, including additions, eliminations, emphases, and improvements. Their recommendations specifically address enhancements to the teaching process, integrating classroom-based action research, and refining the roles and responsibilities of college supervisors.

Teaching Process

Teaching is inherently a multifaceted process that encompasses planning, implementation, evaluation, and revision. This underscores the need for educators to excel in each of these areas. To achieve effectiveness, it is crucial not only to possess skills in these domains but also

to maintain robust psychosocial well-being, which is vital for sustaining overall effectiveness. The participants' experiences during their teaching internships likely highlighted the importance of these factors, which is reflected in their advice. Their feedback primarily focuses on lesson planning, content and pedagogy, learning environments, test construction, instructional materials, and the integration of psychosocial well-being topics—elements that are crucial for becoming competent educators.

Specifically, participants recommended the inclusion of a curriculum development course and the integration of content knowledge within teaching courses. They also suggested enriching pedagogical knowledge through observations and workshops, emphasizing classroom management, and teaching the use of various relevant instructional materials. Additionally, they advocated for a stronger focus on the Table of Specifications (TOS) in Assessment of Learning courses.

Furthermore, participants highlighted the need to incorporate psychosocial well-being—covering physical, mental, emotional, social, financial, and spiritual dimensions—into all courses within the Teaching Education Program. This integration is crucial for ensuring that future educators maintain a high quality of life and effectively fulfill their teaching and administrative responsibilities.

Classroom-based Action Research

Action Research is a fundamental component of the Bachelor of Education degree and has been incorporated into the teaching internship course for participants in this study. This requirement can introduce significant complexity, time demands, and costs. As a result, participants have recommended adjustments to improve the teaching internship experience. Specifically, they advised eliminating Action Research as a requirement within the internship and introducing a dedicated course focused on Action Research. This change is aimed at ensuring a higher quality of output and more effective engagement with the research process.

College Supervisor

College Supervisors are integral to the teaching internship course, serving a role comparable to that of mentors for pre-service teachers. Their primary duty is to guide the interns in achieving optimal outcomes. Therefore, pre-service teachers must be paired with a supervisor of exceptional quality. In line with this, participants recommended appointing a supervisor who is not only highly competent due to their extensive experience but also approachable and conducive to effective collaboration. Specifically, they advocated for a supervisor who can engage constructively with all interns and provide thorough supervision. This would enhance communication, allowing interns to feel more comfortable seeking guidance, thereby fostering a more supportive and productive learning environment.

Development Guidelines

The framework of a course is typically outlined by its guidelines. In this context, the findings of this study reveal that participants seek well-established guidelines for the teaching internship course. Specifically, they have expressed a need for detailed guidelines encompassing the pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment phases of the internship.

Pre-deployment

The pre-deployment phase is a crucial component of the teaching internship course, as it significantly contributes to the preparation of pre-service teachers for a successful and effective internship experience. This phase encompasses orientation and the fulfillment of internship requirements, which are essential for ensuring that pre-service teachers are adequately prepared.

In this context, participants have provided several recommendations to enhance pre-deployment activities. They advised that the College Supervisor should ensure that cooperating schools are thoroughly briefed about the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) before the deployment. Additionally, pre-service teachers should receive a comprehensive orientation regarding the teaching internship course. This orientation should cover the activities to be completed, the associated schedule, learning outcomes, and grading criteria, which will help guide their efforts throughout the internship. These recommendations align with the findings of Bakırcı and Fili (2018), who similarly emphasize the importance of providing detailed information about course expectations at the beginning of the semester.

Furthermore, participants recommended that the orientation cover the standards for submitting required documents before the internship begins, the specifics of required paperwork, and their submission deadlines. It should also address the roles and responsibilities of both pre-service teachers and their supervisors.

Regarding pre-deployment requirements, participants suggested organizing a well-coordinated pinning ceremony, providing comfortable and affordable internship uniforms, and conducting effective pre-deployment seminars to better prepare pre-service teachers for their internship experience.

Deployment

The deployment phase is the most critical component of the teaching internship course, as it is where significant learning takes place. This phase encompasses orientation, support, and teaching tasks, which are fundamental to the internship experience. In light of this, participants have offered several recommendations to enhance these aspects.

For orientation, participants advised that the College Supervisor be present on the deployment day to address key matters, such as the communication letter and the contract, which should be discussed directly with the pre-service teachers. Additionally, they

recommended that the cooperating principal provide a thorough orientation on the school environment, including the assignment of competent cooperating teachers, and the allocation of pre-service teachers to diverse groups of learners and subjects (for elementary teachers).

Regarding support, participants recommended that the College Supervisor conduct regular supervisory visits, facilitate peer-teaching opportunities among pre-service teachers, and offer counseling services to address any challenges faced by the interns. These suggestions align with the recommendations from Bakırcı and Fıli (2018), who emphasize that supervisors should consistently monitor and evaluate teaching practices to ensure their effectiveness.

In terms of teaching tasks, participants recommended providing pre-service teachers with a broader range of instructional and administrative responsibilities to better prepare them for their future roles as educators.

Post-deployment

The provision of rewards often enhances motivation, encouraging individuals to either improve their performance or maintain high standards. In this context, participants recommended establishing a recognition program for pre-service teachers. This program would offer pre-service teachers an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and receive awards from both their university and the cooperating school, serving as a tangible acknowledgment of their efforts and achievements during their teaching internship.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the theoretical framework developed in this study, the following policy recommendations are proposed for both the Teaching Education Program Curriculum and the Teaching Internship Course:

For the Teaching Education Program Curriculum:

1. **Curriculum Development Course:** Introduce a dedicated course focused on curriculum development to equip education students with the skills necessary for designing diverse curricula.
2. **Teaching Courses:** Ensure that teaching courses provide comprehensive training in content knowledge, pedagogical strategies, and classroom management.
3. **Assessment of Learning:** Enhance the Assessment of Learning course to include in-depth instruction on constructing Tables of Specification (TOS) for effective test design.
4. **Technology for Teaching and Learning:** Utilize the Technology for Teaching and Learning course to teach students how to create both traditional and technology-based instructional materials.

5. Field Study 2: Participation and Teaching Assistance: Transform Field Study 2 into a practical workshop aimed at refining teaching skills through hands-on experience.
6. Psychosocial Well-being: Integrate a module on enhancing psychosocial well-being across all education courses, addressing self-care, time management, coping strategies, positive social interactions, financial management, and personal development.
7. Classroom-based Action Research (CBAR): Require that CBAR proposals be developed during Field Study 2 and continued through the Teaching Internship course to ensure practical application and follow-through.
8. Selection of College Supervisors: Consider the attitude and professional demeanor of prospective College Supervisors when appointing them for the Teaching Internship course.

For the Teaching Internship Course:

1. Pre-deployment:
 - Documentation and Agreements: Ensure that the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), communication letters, and pre-service teacher contracts are reviewed with the host school before deployment.
 - Guidelines Review: Provide comprehensive discussions on DepEd Order No. 3 Series 2007 and the Guidelines for Experiential Learning to pre-service teachers.
 - Document Standards: Establish clear standards for document submission, including deadlines and required paperwork.
 - Uniforms: Ensure that teaching internship uniforms are both comfortable and cost-effective.
 - Pinning Ceremony: Organize a well-structured pinning ceremony that symbolizes the transition of pre-service teachers into their professional roles, incorporating formal recognition and motivational elements.
 - Pre-deployment Seminar: Conduct a pre-deployment seminar lasting two weeks, focusing on topics aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST).
2. Deployment:
 - Accompaniment: The College Supervisor should accompany pre-service teachers during their deployment.
 - Principal Orientation: Orient the principal on their responsibilities, including:
 - Introducing pre-service teachers to the school environment.
 - Assigning them to competent cooperating teachers.
 - Facilitating rotations to expose pre-service teachers to different learner groups.
 - Providing a broad range of teaching, instructional, and administrative experiences.

- Assistant Supervisors: Appoint assistant supervisors to oversee pre-service teachers in specific specializations.
 - Supervision Visits: College Supervisors and assistant supervisors should visit pre-service teachers at their cooperating schools at least once a week.
 - Peer Support: Group pre-service teachers who are deployed at the same school to foster collaboration and mutual support.
 - Counseling Services: Offer weekly counseling sessions from the Guidance Office to support pre-service teachers.
3. Post-deployment:
- Recognition Program: Implement a Recognition Program to allow pre-service teachers to reflect on their experiences and acknowledge their contributions during the teaching internship.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The pre-service teachers' experiences prior to deployment, while solid, require substantial enhancement to achieve a level of excellence. During deployment, their experiences were positive but needed further refinement to meet the highest standards. Conversely, the post-deployment phase reflects a significant decline, necessitating extensive improvements to address critical gaps and elevate the experience to a superior level. Addressing these areas of improvement is crucial for significantly enhancing the overall quality of the pre-service teachers' teaching internship course experience and ensuring that the program provides comprehensive support throughout all stages.

In response to these findings, pre-service teachers have strongly advocated for the development of a comprehensive Teaching Education Program curriculum and well-defined development guidelines for the teaching internship course. This feedback underscores the urgent need for substantial improvements to ensure consistent, high-quality support throughout the internship.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Dean of the College of Teacher Education approve the proposed policy for the curriculum and development guidelines as outlined in this study. Should the Dean opt not to approve the policy, it is advisable to explore alternative measures to revise the Teaching Education Program curriculum and refine the development guidelines for the teaching internship course. Such actions are essential to provide pre-service teachers with the necessary support and address the challenges identified in their post-internship evaluations.

IMPLICATION

The findings from this study offer valuable insights into pre-service teachers' experiences, which led to the development of a new theoretical framework for the Teaching Internship Course. This framework informed targeted policy recommendations aimed at enhancing both the Teaching Education Program Curriculum and the Teaching Internship Course. Implementing these recommendations can enable universities to significantly improve their teacher preparation programs by refining internship experiences, better aligning academic training with practical teaching demands, and strengthening partnerships with cooperating schools. These enhancements will contribute to the overall quality of teacher education, ensuring that pre-service teachers are better equipped for their professional roles. Future research should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of these policy changes and their impact on teacher development while incorporating stakeholder feedback will be crucial for refining the theoretical framework and ensuring that the policies effectively address identified needs.

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DECLARATIONS

Conflict of Interest

The researcher declares that there are no conflicts of interest related to the conduct of this study. The design, implementation, and reporting of the findings presented in this study were not influenced by any affiliations, financial interests, or personal relationships.

Informed Consent

All participants were thoroughly informed about the study and voluntarily provided their full consent before participating in the research.

Ethics Approval

Approval to conduct the study was granted by the relevant ethics committee or institutional review board.

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