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How Do Teaching Internships Shape Preservice Teachers' Preparedness for Classroom Practice? A Mixed-Methods Study

Junrui Li[1]*, Marini Binti Kasim[2], Nor Fauzian Binti Kassim[3]

[1]PhD candidates, School of Education, College of Arts and Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Jitra, Kedah, Malaysia, 06010

[2]Associate Professor, School of Education, College of Arts and Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Jitra, Kedah, Malaysia, 06010

[3]Dr, School of Education, College of Arts and Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Jitra, Kedah, Malaysia, 06010

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Author's Email :
li_junrui@ahsgs.uum.edu.my, marini@uum.edu.my, nor.fauzian@uum.edu.my

Author's Orcid :
0009-0006-0302-6822, 0000-0002-5911-2950, 0009-0008-3027-9803

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Abstract

This paper explores the potential impacts of teaching internships on preservice teacher readiness to practice in the classroom as mixed-methods research. The effects of the internship duration, intensity and the quality of the mentorship were evaluated with the help of quantitative data (300 respondents) and qualitative interviews. The results show that exposure to internship and mentorship has a significant effect on preparedness with mentorship being the most reliable predictor. The qualitative findings emphasize the enhancement of confidence, the acquisition of skills, and professional identity, as well as difficulties in classroom management. The research concludes that structured internships with effective mentorship are fundamental in producing competent and confident teachers in the modern learning institutions.

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Introduction

Background to the study

The concept of teacher preparedness has become one of the burning issues of modern education systems since it affects the quality of instruction, classroom performance, and academic achievements directly. The competencies of prepared teachers are supposed to be integrated such as pedagogical knowledge,

classroom management, adaptability, and responding to the needs of different learners. Nevertheless, recent studies have shown that most teachers in the preservice level still experience challenges in their transition of programs in teacher education to the real classroom setting. Such difficulties can be attributed to insufficient access to authentic teaching situations in training, which leads to the absence of practical competencies, i.e. the ability to implement lessons, make decisions, and interact with the classroom (Mahinay, Fuentes and Bernadez, 2024).

In reaction, teaching internship (often called practicum or field experiences) has now become the focus of early teacher education. The aim of an internship is to expose the preservice teachers to practical teaching practices so that they can put theory into practice and acquire professional skills in the process. Modern research indicates that internships contribute greatly to teaching competence especially in pedagogical decision-making, identity, and classroom interaction. As an example, Cai, Zhu and Tian (2022) confirm that the experiences of interns help to build their professional identity and engagement, which strengthens the process of transforming them into practitioners. Likewise, the recent empirical studies indicate that the internships have a great effect on development of certain teaching skills such as instructional strategies and classroom participation management (Prieto-Prieto et al., 2024).

However, despite this fact, one of the major problems of teacher education is the lack of connection between the classroom practice and theoretical teaching. The programmes offered in universities tend to focus on pedagogical theories whereas the classroom setting demands context-based judgement, real-time problem-solving, and adaptive teaching processes. According to recent studies, internships are not a sure way of becoming prepared; instead, their usefulness lies in organized support systems of mentoring, feedback, and reflective exercises. Indicatively, Bastian (2024) discovered that the positive change in the professional skills of preservice teachers in the process of internships was closely associated with the presence of reflection and the ability to combine theory and practice, instead of the teaching experience itself. Moreover, the systematic review of practicum research indicates that the quality of the internship is inconsistent, as there are differences in mentoring, institutional support, and learning experience that may cause uneven developmental outcomes among preservice teachers (Li and Peng, 2024).

Due to the growing complexity of contemporary classrooms and the mounting demands on teachers, there is need to investigate the effects of teaching internships on the preparedness of preservice teachers in a more systematic and comprehensive way. This research fills this gap by taking a mixed-methods approach to examine the quantitative effects, as well as the qualitative experiences related to internship-based learning, and thus adds to the better comprehension of teacher preparation in the modern educational setting.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to research the scope of teaching internships in the context of preservice teachers' preparedness to classroom practice. The study is informed by the following objectives in order to accomplish this objective:

1. To examine the impact of teaching internship duration and intensity on preservice teachers' preparedness for classroom practice.
2. To evaluate the effect of mentorship quality during teaching internships on preservice teachers' preparedness for classroom practice.
3. To explore preserve teachers' perceptions and lived experiences of teaching internships in shaping their preparedness for classroom practice.

Significance of the study

This study is important because it can be used to add to the research on teacher education in theory and practice. The study can guide policymakers, curriculum designers, and teacher educators in improving the structure and support systems of internship by providing empirical evidence of the effectiveness of teaching internship. Furthermore, the combination of quantitative and qualitative results allows developing a more profound perspective on the preservice teacher development, covering the

methodological constraints of the literature. Finally, this study will be used to design more efficient teacher education programs that can better equip preservice teachers with the realities of classroom practice.

Literature Review

Concept of Teaching Internships

Teacher education programs also include teaching internships commonly known as practicum or field experience, which give preservice teachers a highly structured chance to use theoretical knowledge in actual classroom settings. These internships are aimed at closing the long-standing gap between the university-based learning and the real-life teaching experience by allowing the preservice teachers to directly participate in the instructional process under the guidance of the more experienced ones. Modern studies underscore the fact that internship programs enable acquisition of the necessary teaching skills such as delivery of lessons, classroom dynamics and professional ethics (Xie et al., n.d). The teaching internships are mainly aimed at facilitating the transition between the student and the professional teacher through the support of experience and reflection. In this stage, preservice teachers are supposedly shouldering more responsibility in planning lessons, classroom management as well as measuring student performance. This slow introduction enables them to gain confidence and competence in real teaching situations. Besides, internships allow teacher education institutions to assess the performance-based readiness of preservice teachers to engage in professional practice as a result of performance-based assessments and feedback mechanisms (Valenzuela et al., 2025). Teaching internship Structurally, teaching internships are generally part of final-year teacher education programs and entail placement in partner schools during a designated period. Such programs typically incorporate mentoring, observation, co-teaching and independent teaching. These organized experiences guarantee that the preservice teachers are exposed to a variety of classroom scenarios and this increases their versatility and professional identity development. On the whole, teaching internships can be seen as an important tool that helps to match theoretical training with the reality of classroom practice in the modern world.

Teacher Preparedness for Classroom Practice

The construct of teacher preparedness to classroom practice is multidimensional and it includes pedagogical competence, classroom management skills, and emotional preparedness. The recent literature underlines that preparedness goes beyond the technical instructional skills to the cognitive, behavioral, and affective aspects that are required to teach effectively in a varied educational setting (Patterson and Hartley, 2026). Pedagogical skills are one of the key aspects of preparedness that entail lesson planning, instructional techniques, and evaluation practices. The preservice teachers are supposed to exhibit skills of creating interesting lessons, differentiating content to the needs of the learners and teaching with effective pedagogical methods. Empirical studies indicate that teaching internships can contribute to these skills significantly as they allow active teaching and direct feedback (Bastian et al., 2024).

Another important element is classroom management, which means the capability to establish a favorable learning atmosphere, discipline, and control the behavior of students. Research shows that classroom management competence may be acquired by the preservice teachers by relying on the exposure to the actual classroom scenario during internships in which they learn how to deal with various student behaviors and teaching difficulties (Valenzuela et al., n.d). Emotional preparedness such as confidence, resilience and stress management is also critical. Studies have proved that emotional and mental health play a major role in determining the teaching performance and readiness, where teachers that are emotionally prepared are more effective and adaptable (Baluyos and Adorna, n.d). In general, teacher preparedness is a complex concept that is informed by technical skills and individual qualities and teacher internship is an important aspect that contributes to the achievement of these related aspects.

Role of Experiential Learning

The theory of experiential learning offers a conceptual base of how teaching internship plays a role in

developing preservice teachers. The conceptual approach to learning by Kolb Experiential Learning Theory is based on the view of learning as a cyclic process characterized by four stages that include concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The model is especially applicable in teacher education, as learning takes place through the direct contact with classroom practice, and then, it is reflected in and adjusted (Setiono et al., 2026). In the teaching internship, preservice teachers are subjected to real life experiences, through lessons and activities with students. The reflections that come after these experiences are that of reflective observation, where they critically examine their teaching practices which are usually mentored or supervised. This reflection allows them to discover strengths and areas of improvement, which shapes abstract conceptualization, in which theoretical understanding is perfected. Lastly, preservice teachers use this knowledge by actively experimenting in later teaching scenarios, and that concludes the learning cycle (Nghia and Tai, 2017). Recent research indicates that the Kolb model needs to be changed in accordance with the modern requirements of education, which focuses on flexibility and contextualization of the teacher training programs (Setiono et al., 2025).

The models of reflective practices also supplement experience learning because they prompt the preservice teachers to critically analyze their teaching experiences. Reflection does not only improve self-awareness but also encourages lifelong professional growth. The combination of the reflective practice and experiential learning allows preservice teachers to internalize the teaching competencies and acquire adaptive expertise (Nirmala et al., 2025). Therefore, experiential learning is an important theoretical framework to explain how internships help in the process of transferring theoretical knowledge to practical teaching competence.

Empirical Studies on Internships & Preparedness

Empirical studies that have been conducted recently have still shown that teaching internships have a great role to play in improving the readiness of preservice teachers to classroom practice. As an example, Ronfeldt, Brockman and Campbell (2018) discovered that long-term and properly designed clinical experiences have a positive impact on instructional effectiveness and preparedness, especially in lesson delivery and student engagement. On the same note, Zeichner Kenneth (2010) emphasizes that practice-based teacher education, such as internships, enhances the combination of theory and practice in decision-making abilities in the classroom. Moreover, Darling-Hammond Linda et al. (2017) state that quality field experiences, facilitated by mentorship, have a strong impact on classroom management and pedagogic competence. However, challenges persist. Research shows that the difference in the quality of mentoring and school conditions can affect the outcomes of the internship, resulting in the inconsistent level of preparedness of the preservice teachers. These results indicate that although internships play a crucial role in teaching competency development, their success is closely related to the design of the programs, the quality of supervision, and contextual support.

Literature Gap

Although a lot of research has been conducted on teaching internships, the literature is disjointed in describing the way in which teaching internships influence the readiness of preservice teachers to engage in real classroom practice. The majority of research is done on individual outcomes like the acquisition of skills or overall preparedness without a systematic study of the combined development of the pedagogic competence, classroom management, and emotional preparedness as an integrated construct of preparedness. Moreover, the current literature is more inclined to measure the internship effectiveness on general grounds, and little focus is given on the impact of particular internship experiences (e.g., teaching responsibility, feedback, and exposure to real classrooms) on these aspects of preparedness. The other important limitation is that the previous research mostly follows a quantitative approach of preparedness or qualitative descriptions of experiences, but does not combine the two. This leaves a gap in the comprehension of the relationship between perceived experiences of preservice

teachers in internships and the quantifiable degree of classroom preparedness.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This research paper used a mixed-methods research design, namely convergent parallel approach, to investigate the role of teaching internship in pre-service teacher preparedness to practice in classrooms. The mixed-method research involves quantitative and qualitative data to explain the complex phenomena in education comprehensively due to the combination of numeric tendencies and experiences (McLeod, 2024). The convergent design allows simultaneity in the gathering and analysis of the two datasets and integrating in the process of interpretation in a manner that assures complementarity and triangulation. This method was chosen since the preparedness of teachers is a multidimensional construct that incorporates both measurable and subjective perceptions. The quantitative data reflected the overall trends in the levels of preparedness, whereas the qualitative data helped to learn more about the experiences of the participants during the internships. The combination of the two strands also makes the findings more valid and robust because it will be possible to cross-verify the results and deeper interpret the internship experience in the context of real-life classrooms.

Participants

The research was conducted on 300 preservice teachers undertaking Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program in two state universities. The respondents were chosen based on a stratified random approach and had to represent the subject specialisations (i.e., science, mathematics, and humanities) and internship placement settings (urban and rural schools). The sample size was calculated with reference to previous mixed-methods educational researches, which are usually represented with 80-300 participants that are analyzed quantitatively and with a smaller subgroup of participants that are investigated qualitatively. The sample size was 10 participants who were purposely chosen to take part in qualitative interviews in order to have various views on the performance levels of the internship (high, medium, and low preparedness) among the entire sample. The participants were all at least 12 weeks of teaching internship-time experience that involved classroom teaching, lesson planning and student assessment. All subjects have given an informed consent and the institutional review board has granted ethical approval before data collection.

Data Collection Methods

Quantitative Data Collection

A structured questionnaire (with a five-point Likert scale 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) was used to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire was used to gauge important aspects of teacher preparedness such as instructional competence, classroom management, assessment skills, and professional confidence. Likert scale surveys are common in education research because they can be used to measure attitudes and competencies to enable statistical comparison among the participants. The questionnaire was done online so that it is accessible and efficient. A total of 300 valid responses were received, yielding a response rate of 93.3%.

Qualitative Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews with 10 preservice teachers were used in collecting qualitative data. During semi-structured interviews, participants have an opportunity to share their experiences in detail and stay on track with the research goals (Costa, 2024). The interviews examined the perceptions of the participants concerning their experience of internships, challenges during the classroom sessions, and how the internship enhanced their professional preparedness. The individual interviews were mainly 30-45 minutes, and through video conferencing. All interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of the participant and transcribed word-to-letter to analyze. The mixture of surveys and interviews provided a methodological triangulation that enabled the study to grasp the general trends and contextualised experiences, which is a major strength of mixed-methods research in the field of education (Costa, 2024).

Instruments

The questionnaire tool was formulated on the basis of the already existing teacher preparedness frameworks and validated scales applied in the recent educational research. Expert review was selected as a method of ensuring content validity as three academic scholars in the field of teacher education assessed the clarity, relevance, and correspondence of items to the research objectives. It is well known that expert review is one of the best ways to enhance the quality of questionnaires and decrease measurement errors (Olson, 2010). Reliability was tested using a pilot study with 10 preservice teachers. In the case of qualitative data, an interview protocol was created, which included open-ended questions in accordance with the objectives of the study. Member checking was also used to improve the credibility as the participants were given access to the summaries of the interviews to ensure that there was accuracy and interpretation. Member checking is an established method of enhancing the validity and reliability of the qualitative research results (Motulsky, 2021).

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data was analysed with the help of SPSS (Version 26). The level of overall preparedness was evaluated with descriptive statistics such as standard deviation, mean, and frequency distributions. Also, the relationship between the internship experiences (independent variable) and teacher preparedness dimensions (dependent variables) was investigated by use of multiple regression analysis. Regression analysis is suitable in determining the strength and direction of relationships among variables in learning researches.

Qualitative Analysis

The thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data, and the results were obtained through a six-step methodical procedure; familiarisation, coding, theme generation, review, definition, and reporting. Thematic analysis allows the researcher to recognize patterns and meaning in the data collected in qualitative form which gives deep insights into the experiences of the participants. In order to increase reliability, two researchers were to independently code and any differences were to be resolved through discussion.

Integration of Data

As per convergent mixed-methods design, quantitative and qualitative results were combined in the process of interpretation. The results of this integration could be compared and validated, and a thorough understanding of the impact of teaching internships on the preparedness of preservice teachers was obtained. This mixed-method type of research is characterized by such integration and enhances the overall validity of results.

Ethical Considerations

In this research, the ethics of educational research were followed. Data collection was preceded by ethical approval of the relevant institutional review board. An information sheet on the purpose of the study was given to all the participants, and an informed consent was taken. The participation was voluntary and the respondents were assured that they had the right to pull out at any point without facing any penalty. The privacy and anonymity were ensured through the use of codes to identify the participants and exclusion of any identifying information in the data. All data were safely kept and they were used in the research only. The research adhered to international ethics of research, which guaranteed integrity, transparency, and protection of the participants in the course of research.

Analysis

Qualitative Analysis

Gender Distribution Table

Table 1- Gender Distribution Table

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	160	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Male	140	46.7	46.7	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

The table in which the gender spread is presented reveals that of 300 respondents, 160 (53.3%) were women and 140 (46.7%) were men. This means that the sample is comparatively equal with a small greater number of female participants. The equal-near representation makes the results more reliable as there is less gender bias and the views of both groups are properly represented. This even distribution indicates that the findings can be generalized to male and female preservice teachers without any significant demographic distortion.

Age Group Distribution Table

The age distribution reveals that most respondents fall within the 24–28 age group (42.7%), followed by 28–32 (37.3%), while smaller proportions are 20–24 (10.7%) and above 32 (9.3%). This shows that the majority of participants are in the normal age of preservice teachers who are in the process of getting professional training. The superiority of the mid-range age groups imply that the respondents are probably mature and well exposed academically to offer valuable ramifications about internship experiences. The fact that the percentage of younger and older participants is relatively low suggests that the conclusions are mostly based on the views of those people, who are still enrolled in teacher preparation programs.

The internship duration table indicates that most of the respondents experienced moderately long internships with 42.0% of the respondents taking between 4 and 8 weeks and 39.7% taking between 8 and 12 weeks with 9.3% taking 1-4 weeks and 9.0% taking over 12 weeks. This distribution indicates that majority of the participants were adequately exposed to classroom settings, which is critical towards acquisition of teaching competencies. The focus within the 4-12 week range suggests that internships tend to be designed to offer moderate-level of meaningful practical experience. Nonetheless, the comparatively low proportion of extended internships may suggest a scarcity of chances to be immersed and this could influence more whole-hearted skills development.

The analysis of reliability shows that the internal consistency is high in all constructs. The alpha values of the Cronbach are:

- Ready to classroom practice: 0.853.
- The length and severity of internship: 0.870.
- Mentorship quality: 0.862

The values of all the values are higher than the recommended scale of 0.70, which proves that the scales of

Table 2: Age Group Distribution

Age Group					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-24	32	10.7	10.7	10.7
	24-28	128	42.7	42.7	53.3
	28-32	112	37.3	37.3	90.7
	Above 32	28	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Internship Duration

Internship Duration					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-4 Weeks	28	9.3	9.3	9.3
	4-8 Weeks	126	42.0	42.0	51.3
	8-12 Weeks	119	39.7	39.7	91.0
	More than 12 Weeks	27	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	

measurement are consistent and reliable. This implies that the questionnaire items have a good ability to measure their respective constructs and that data obtained are reliable in later statistical analysis. The reliability of the study is high, which enhances validity.

Table 4: Reliability Analysis

Scale: Preparedness for Classroom Practice	
Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	**N of Items**
.853	5

Scale: Internship Duration and Intensity

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	**N of Items**
.870	5

Scale: Mentorship Quality

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	**N of Items**
.862	5

The results of the normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) are p = 0.000. These values are below 0.05 and this means that the data is not normally distributed. This implies that parametric tests (including Pearson correlation) cannot be used. Therefore, non-parametric tests (Spearman rho) should be used to analyse the relationships among variables. This measure will guarantee the validity and accuracy of the statistical analysis.

The analysis of the correlation shows that there are strong positive associations among the variables. Specifically:

- The length and strength of internship with readiness: r = 0.828 (p < 0.01)
- Mentorship quality with preparedness: r = 0.851 (p < 0.01)

Table 5: Test of Normality

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Preparedness for Classroom Practice	.134	300	.000	.929	300	.000
Internship Duration and Intensity	.125	300	.000	.921	300	.000
Mentorship Quality	.117	300	.000	.921	300	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 6: Correlation Analysis

Correlations					
			Preparedness for Classroom Practice	Internship Duration and Intensity	Mentorship Quality
Spearman's rho	Preparedness for Classroom Practice	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.828**	.851**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	300	300	300
	Internship Duration and Intensity	Correlation Coefficient	.828**	1.000	.830**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	300	300	300
	Mentorship Quality	Correlation Coefficient	.851**	.830**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	300	300	300

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7: Regression Model Summary Table

Regression Analysis				
Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.883a	.780	.779	.515425057656024
a. Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship Quality, Internship Duration and Intensity				

Summary of the regression model indicates:

- R = 0.883
- R^2 = 0.780
- Adjusted R^2 = 0.779

Table 8: ANOVA

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	280.498	2	140.249	527.921	.000[b]
	Residual	78.902	297	.266		
	Total	359.400	299			
a. Dependent Variable: Preparedness for Classroom Practice						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship Quality, Internship Duration and Intensity						

The results of ANOVA indicate:

- F = 527.921
- p = 0.000

- Length of internship under the quality of mentorship: r = 0.830 (p < 0.01)

These findings suggest that the positive changes in internship exposure and quality of mentorship are closely linked to the increased preparedness levels. The quality of these correlations indicates that the two variables are important in determining the preparedness of preservice teachers to classroom practice. These relationships are not by chance as the statistical significance also supports.

TIt means that the internship duration/ intensity and the quality of mentorship explain 78% of the preparedness variation. This is an exceptionally powerful model, indicating that the independent variables are very effective predictors of preparedness. The explanatory power is significant

Table 9: Coefficients

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
B		Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.331	.089		3.712	.000
	Internship Duration and Intensity	.346	.048	.361	7.144	.000
	Mentorship Quality	.541	.049	.558	11.059	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Preparedness for Classroom Practice						

as it indicates the value of practical experience and mentorship in the development of a teacher.

The regression model is statistically significant because the value of the significance of less than 0.05. It implies that the model fits the data well and the independent variables combined have a substantial impact on preparedness. The large F-value also shows a strong predictive ability.

The coefficients table shows the individual contribution of each predictor:

- Internship duration and intensity:
  - **β = 0.361, p = 0.000**
- Mentorship quality:
  - **β = 0.558, p = 0.000**

Both variables have a significant positive impact on preparedness. However, mentorship quality has a **stronger influence** compared to internship duration. This suggests that while practical exposure is important, the **quality of guidance and feedback** plays a more critical role in enhancing preservice teachers' readiness.

The coefficients table indicates the respective contribution of each of the predictors:

Internship duration and intensity:

- β = 0.**361, p = 0.000**
- **Mentorship quality:**
- **β = 0.558, p = 0.000**

Both variables have a significant positive impact on preparedness. The quality of mentorship is, however, a stronger factor than mentorship duration. This indicates that although practical exposure is essential, the quality of guidance and feedback is more critical in the development of preservice teachers readiness.

Qualitative Findings

Theme 1: Confidence Development

In this theme, the role of teaching internships in enhancing the confidence of preservice teachers in actual classroom setting is articulated. Respondents emphasized a gradual change in the initial anxiety into a sense of greater confidence with exposure to practice.

"At the beginning, I felt nervous and unsure about standing in front of students, but with each lesson I gained more confidence in delivering content. Over time, I became comfortable interacting with students and managing class discussions. The internship allowed me to believe in my abilities as a future teacher." (P3)

"Initially, I doubted my capability to teach effectively, especially when students asked unexpected questions.

However, repeated teaching sessions helped me improve my confidence and communication skills. By the end of the internship, I felt more prepared and confident in handling a classroom." (P9)

These reactions demonstrate that confidence building is an ongoing process which is impacted by actual teaching experience. Constant practice helps preservice teachers to get rid of fear and hesitation. The results show that internships are essential in the process of making theoretical learners confident practitioners who are equipped to handle classroom duties.

Theme 2: Classroom Challenges

The theme brings out the different issues that preservice teachers struggle with especially handling the classroom behaviour and adjusting to all learning environments. Participants also pointed out that classroom environments are more complicated than anticipated.

"One of the biggest challenges I faced was managing students who were not paying attention during lessons. It was difficult to maintain discipline while also focusing on delivering the lesson effectively. Sometimes I felt overwhelmed trying to control the class environment." (P1)

"I found it challenging to address different learning levels within the same classroom. Some students required extra attention while others progressed quickly, making lesson delivery difficult. Adjusting my teaching methods in real time was not easy during the internship." (P7)

These answers suggest that classroom management is one of the major areas of challenge to preservice teachers. The difference between theoretical training and the actual classroom challenges is felt

during internships. These difficulties underscore the necessity of more practical training and support systems in the teacher education programs.

Theme 3: Skill Acquisition

This theme is concerned with acquiring the necessary instructional skills in internships, such as planning lessons, delivering them, and engaging students. Respondents noted great enhancement in practical skills.

"The internship helped me improve my lesson planning skills by teaching me how to organise content effectively.

I learned how to structure lessons in a way that keeps students engaged throughout the class.

This experience made me more confident in preparing and delivering lessons." (P5)

"During the internship, I learned how to use different teaching strategies to make lessons interactive.

I also improved my communication skills and learned how to explain concepts clearly to students. This practical experience was much more valuable than theoretical learning alone." (P10)

These reactions indicate that internships are a field where experiential learning and skill development are offered. Preservice teachers get practical experience that enhances their teaching skills. The results imply that internships are necessary to fill the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching.

Theme 4: Mentorship Support

This theme explores the impact of mentorship on preservice teachers' learning experiences and preparedness. Mentors were noted to be essential in offering guidance, feedback, and emotional support to the participants.

"My mentor provided detailed feedback after each lesson, which helped me identify my mistakes. Their guidance allowed me to improve my teaching techniques and classroom management. Having a supportive mentor made a significant difference in my learning experience." (P2)

"The encouragement from my mentor helped me stay motivated throughout the internship. They guided me on how to handle difficult classroom situations and improve my teaching style. This support increased my confidence and helped me develop professionally." (P8)

These reactions underscore the fact that mentorship is an important aspect of making teaching internships effective. Constructive feedback allows to reflect and improve, and emotional support enhances confidence. Nonetheless, internship success hinges to a great extent on the quality and regularity of mentorship.

Discussion

The paper set out to discuss the relationship between teaching internship and the readiness of preservice teachers to practice in the classroom based on the length of the internship, intensity of internship, quality of mentorship, and experiential learning. The results of the quantitative and qualitative studies present a solid case that teaching internships can contribute to preparedness, especially by creating a structured exposure and quality mentoring.

Impact of Internship Duration and Intensity on Preparedness

The quantitative results showed that there is a strong positive correlation among internship period, preparedness ($r = 0.828$) which means that the greater the exposure of the preservice teachers to classroom setting the better their preparedness. It follows the past studies indicating that teaching internships offer a valuable stage to put theoretical knowledge into practice and thus improve teaching abilities and classroom management (Rif'attullah and Ciptangingrum, 2024; Prieto-Prieto et al., 2024). Theoretically, this observation can be explained by Kolb Experiential Learning Theory which states that learning is a process that takes place through practical experience and reflexivity. Internships will enable the preservice teachers to be active in teaching, reflecting on their experiences and refining their practices in the long run. Likewise, recent research has indicated that internships play a role in preservice teachers acquiring practical teaching skills such as lesson planning, teaching, and classroom

interaction (Bastian et al., 2024). The qualitative results, though, suggest that, as much as exposure to an internship can help in increasing preparedness, it can also present preservice teachers with real classroom issues, especially in dealing with diverse learners and maintaining discipline. This implies that it is not only the period of the internship but the quality of the experience and support offered to the internship is also important.

Role of Mentorship in Enhancing Preparedness

The quality of mentorship is another important conclusion of this research as it affects preparedness (0.558) more than the period of internship. This implies that mentors have a significant role in influencing the development of preservice teachers in terms of guidance, feedback, and support. The existing literature is a powerful supporter of this finding because it underlines the fact that mentorship is one of the most important factors of successful teaching internships. As an illustration, a recent study indicates that a successful mentoring process improves the confidence of preservice teachers, their reflective thinking, and teaching ability (Scorcescu et al., 2024). In a similar manner, mentoring studies have also demonstrated that preservice teacher feedback assists students in recognizing their areas of weakness and enhancing their teaching to greater levels of preparedness.

Moreover, qualitative results support this finding since the participants repeatedly indicated that positive feedback and emotional support provided by mentors helped them a great deal in enhancing their confidence and teaching skills. It is in line with Cai et al. (2022) who discovered that mentorship can impact the preservice teachers in terms of professional identity by helping them to become more self-efficacious and engaged (Cai, Zhu & Tian, 2022). Nevertheless, the inconsistency in the mentioned quality of mentorship described by participants is that there is a possibility that inconsistent guidance can restrain the effectiveness of internships. This raises the question of systematic mentorship systems and adequate training of mentors to guarantee uniform and quality mentorship.

Development of Confidence and Professional Identity

The results also indicate that teaching internships play a great part in developing confidence in preservice teachers. Both quantitative and qualitative results indicate that the benefits of repeated teaching experiences are self-efficacy and reduced anxiety. The findings are consistent with the previous research, which suggests that internships have a significant impact on the growth of the preservice educators in the aspects of professional identity and confidence (Cai, Zhu and Tian, 2022). The opportunity to work as an intern enables the preservice teachers to become practitioners instead of students to give them a sense of belonging in the teaching profession. In addition, the fact that internship variables correlated greatly with preparedness supports the argument that the development of confidence does not occur in a vacuum but is influenced by the experience and positive mentorship. This emphasizes the significance of applying experiential learning with guided practice and reflection.

Challenges in Classroom Practice

Although the results are positive, the research also revealed a number of challenges encountered by preservice teachers especially in classroom management and in accommodating the needs of diverse students. Such results are consistent with the current literature that shows that preservice teachers tend to have difficulties with making decisions and controlling the classroom in real-time during their internships (Heinz, 2024). The existence of these challenges implies that teacher education programs might have to be more focused on the practical training on classroom management and differentiated instruction. The findings also suggest that preservice teachers need more guided assistance in internships to be able to cope with these challenges.

Implications for Teacher Education

The findings of this study have important implications for teacher education programs. First, institutions should ensure that teaching internships are of sufficient duration and intensity to provide meaningful learning experiences. Second, mentorship should be prioritized, with structured training and clear guide-

lines for mentors to enhance their effectiveness. Furthermore, teacher education programs should focus on integrating theoretical knowledge with practical application, ensuring that preservice teachers are adequately prepared to handle real classroom situations. As highlighted in recent literature, the practicum plays a central role in shaping teachers' professional development, resilience, and commitment to the profession (Heinz, 2024).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This paper explored the influence of teaching internship experiences on the readiness of preservice teachers to classroom practice through a mixed methodology. The results are a strong case that internships are a great way to improve preparedness by exposing students to real-life experience, developing of skills, and socialization in a profession. The quantitative findings showed that the duration/intensity of internship and the quality of mentorship have significant positive correlations with preparedness, and mentorship is the best predictor. The regression model has a high explanatory power, and this shows that these factors collectively explain a significant share of variance in preparedness, which is why they are the key elements of teacher development. These results affirm that experiential learning experience is necessary in closing the gap between the theoretical and actual classroom learning. This was also complemented by the qualitative results that showed that internships are related to the development of confidence, practical skills acquisition, as well as the formation of professional identity. Yet, they also revealed the ongoing issues, especially classroom management and meeting the needs of diverse students. Also, differences in the quality of mentorship were found to be a significant problem that influenced the effectiveness of the internship experiences.

Recommendations

In the light of the results of this research, a number of suggestions are presented to improve the success of teaching internship in equipping preservice teachers to be effective in the classroom.

- First, teacher training schools must focus on establishing systematic mentorship. The findings indicated that mentorship quality is the best predictor of preparedness hence mentors ought to be trained to make consistent, constructive, and reflective feedback. Studies have shown that effective mentoring can greatly boost professional competence and self-efficacy of preservice teachers (Cai et al., 2022). The institutions also ought to put in place clear mentoring guidelines so that consistency in support can be achieved in the internship placements.
- Second, teaching internship should be optimised in terms of length and intensity in order to offer valuable practical experiences. Although moderate-length internships are widespread, the readiness can be enhanced by providing more active teaching and less observation. Research has revealed that long and comprehensive practicum experiences are closely linked with enhanced teaching preparedness and classroom efficacy (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).
- Third, teacher training programs must emphasize more on classroom management training and adaptive teaching strategies. The results showed that the preservice teachers are experiencing major issues with dealing with student behaviour and various learning needs. This gap can be bridged by combining simulation-based learning and case-based teaching strategies. Recent studies indicate that effective classroom management training is an essential factor that enhances the effectiveness and confidence of teaching (Huang et al., 2026).
- Lastly, learning institutions are to encourage reflective practice and theory-practice integration. Reflective journals, peer discussions, and guided evaluations can be encouraged to help improve the outcomes of experiential learning among preservice teachers. Reflective practice has long been identified as one of the crucial elements of professional identity development and teaching performance enhancement (Yuan and Lee, 2021).

In general, these suggestions can be used to enhance the effectiveness of teaching internships and equip future educators with the knowledge and skills needed to work in the real classroom setting.

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