



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH AND EMERGING TRENDS

Home Page : www.jaret.in

ISSN No : 3049-0553



Fully Open Access

Research Paper

Role of Internship in Teacher Education Programmes

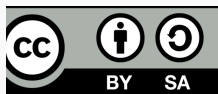
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Abstract

Teacher education programmes play a vital role in shaping competent, professional educators who can effectively contribute to society's development. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen internship programmes to ensure meaningful and impactful teacher training. The internship is a crucial component of teacher education programmes that plays a significant role in developing competent, confident, and reflective teachers. It bridges the gap between theory and practice, enhances professional skills, and prepares student teachers to effectively face the realities of the teaching profession. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen internship frameworks by ensuring sufficient duration, quality mentorship, and meaningful engagement in school activities. In conclusion, internships are not merely a formal requirement but a transformative experience that shapes competent, reflective, and responsible educators. Strengthening this component will ultimately improve the overall quality of education and student learning outcomes. 13.5% of high school teachers have low, 76.5% have moderate, and 10% have high personality traits. The result inferred that 18% of high school teachers have low, 72.5% have moderate, and 9.5% have a high level of Internship. The internship component in teacher education programmes plays a pivotal role in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical classroom experience. It provides prospective teachers with an opportunity to engage directly with the realities of school environments, thereby enhancing their professional competence, confidence, and teaching effectiveness.

Keywords: Internship, Teacher Education, etc.



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1 INTRODUCTION

Teacher education programmes play a vital role in shaping competent, professional educators who can effectively contribute to society's development. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on improving the quality of teacher preparation by integrating practical experiences with theoretical knowledge. One of the most significant components introduced for this purpose is the internship programme. An internship in teacher education serves as a structured, supervised practical training phase in which pre-service teachers engage directly with real classroom situations, thereby gaining firsthand experience of the teaching-learning process.

Traditionally, teacher education programmes were largely theory-oriented, focusing on educational psychology, pedagogy, and subject content. However, the lack of adequate practical experience often led to a gap between what student teachers learned in institutions and what they were expected to do in actual classrooms. Internship programmes have emerged as a solution to bridge this gap by providing opportunities for experiential learning. Through internships, student teachers can apply theoretical

concepts in real-world settings, experiment with teaching strategies, and deepen their understanding of classroom dynamics. Internship is not merely a period of practice teaching; it is a comprehensive professional training experience that includes lesson planning, classroom management, student assessment, and participation in school activities. It enables student teachers to interact with students, collaborate with experienced teachers, and understand how educational institutions function. This exposure helps them develop essential teaching competencies, such as communication skills, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and adaptability. Moreover, internships foster professional values, ethical practices, and a sense of responsibility among future teachers.

Another important aspect of an internship is the development of reflective practice. During the internship period, student teachers are encouraged to evaluate their own teaching, identify strengths and weaknesses, and make necessary improvements. This reflective approach enhances their professional growth and prepares them for continuous learning throughout their careers. Furthermore, internships help build confidence and reduce anxiety among pre-service teachers by familiarising them with real classroom challenges before they enter the teaching profession. In the context of modern education, where classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse and technology-driven, internship programmes also provide opportunities to integrate innovative teaching methods and digital tools. Student teachers learn to use information and communication technology (ICT), adopt learner-centred approaches, and address students' varied needs. This practical exposure is essential for preparing teachers who can meet the demands of the 21st-century education system.

Despite its importance, the effectiveness of internship programmes depends on proper planning, supervision, and collaboration between teacher education institutions and schools. Challenges such as limited duration, inadequate mentoring, and lack of resources can affect the quality of internship experiences. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen internship programmes to ensure meaningful and impactful teacher training. An internship is a crucial component of teacher education programmes that plays a significant role in developing competent, confident, and reflective teachers. It bridges the gap between theory and practice, enhances professional skills, and prepares student teachers to effectively face the realities of the teaching profession.

Rationale of the Study

The quality of education largely depends on the effectiveness and competence of teachers, making teacher education programmes a critical area of focus. In recent years, internships have been recognised as a vital component of these programmes, providing practical exposure and professional training for pre-service teachers. However, despite its inclusion in the curriculum, concerns remain regarding the actual effectiveness, implementation, and outcomes of internship programmes in developing teaching competencies.

This study is undertaken to examine the role of internships in teacher education programmes and to understand how far they contribute to bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom practice. Many student teachers struggle to apply pedagogical concepts in real teaching situations, which can affect their confidence and performance. Therefore, it is essential to analyse whether internship programmes adequately prepare them for the realities of the teaching profession.

Furthermore, the study aims to identify the strengths and limitations of existing internship practices and suggest measures for improvement. By exploring the experiences of student teachers, this research seeks to enhance teacher education programmes, ultimately leading to better teaching quality and improved learning outcomes in schools.

Review of Literature

F. W. Adams et al. (2021) conducted a study on the importance of internships in teacher training programmes. The findings revealed that internships play a crucial role in developing practical teaching skills, classroom management abilities, and professional competencies among pre-service teachers. The study emphasised that real classroom exposure significantly enhances confidence and teaching effectiveness. S. Parveen (2012) examined the effectiveness and challenges of internship programmes in teacher education. The study found that while internships provide valuable practical experience, issues such as lack of supervision, limited duration, and inadequate feedback hinder their effectiveness. The researcher suggested improving mentoring systems for better outcomes.

A. K. Mohapatra et al. (2022) explored pre-service teachers' perceptions of internship programmes. Results indicated that most student teachers viewed internships as essential for linking theory with prac-

tice. The study also highlighted that internships help in developing reflective thinking and problem-solving skills.

J. Lobo (2023) analysed the effectiveness of teaching internship programmes in enhancing professional development. The findings showed that internships improve communication skills, teaching strategies, and adaptability in classroom situations. The study also emphasised the importance of structured evaluation and feedback.

S. Khalil (2020) focused on improving practice teaching during an internship. The study revealed that proper planning, collaboration between schools and training institutions, and the use of modern teaching methods are essential for successful internship programmes. It also recommended extending internships to improve skill development.

Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to examine the role of internship in teacher education programmes. The specific objectives are:

- To understand the benefit of internships in teacher education programmes.
- To analyse the role of internship in developing teaching competencies among pre-service teachers.
- To examine how an internship helps bridge the gap between theory and classroom practice.
- To study the impact of internship on professional development, including skills, attitudes, and values of student teachers.

Hypotheses of the Study

Null Hypotheses (H_0)

- There is no significant role of internship in developing teaching competencies among pre-service teachers.
- There is no significant relationship between the internship experience and gender.
- There is no significant difference between rural and urban schools in their Internship.
- There is no significant difference among Rural, Urban and Semi-Urban schools in their Internship.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

The study will adopt a Descriptive Research Design.

- Descriptive design helps to describe the current status of internship programmes.
- A correlational design helps identify relationships between internship and teaching competencies.

2. Population of the Study

The population consists of pre-service teachers (B.Ed. students) enrolled in teacher education institutions.

3. Sample of the Study

Sample Size: 600 student teachers . Sampling Technique: Random Sampling
Area: Selected teacher education colleges

4. Tools for Data Collection

The following tools will be used:

1. Questionnaire

To collect data on internship experiences
Structured with Likert scale items

2. Internship Scale

To measure teaching skills and classroom performance

3. Observation Schedule

To assess actual classroom teaching behaviour

4. Interview Schedule (Optional)

To gather in-depth information from student teachers

5. Variables of the Study

Independent Variable: Internship Programme

Dependent Variables:

- Teaching Competencies
- Classroom Management Skills
- Professional Development

6. Data Collection Procedure

- Permission will be obtained from institutions
- Questionnaires will be distributed to student teachers
- Observations will be conducted during the internship
- Data will be collected and compiled systematically

7. Statistical Techniques

The collected data will be analysed using:

- Mean and Standard Deviation
- t-test
- Correlation (Pearson's r)
- Percentage Analysis
- Data will be used only for research purposes

Testing Hypothesis

Hypothesis:1

There is no significant role of internship in developing teaching competencies among pre-service teachers.

The above table indicates that 70% of high school teachers have a moderate to high level of teacher behaviour (70). The above table indicates that 16% of high school teachers have a low level of teacher behaviour, 77% have a moderate level, and 7% have a high level. The table above indicates that 13.5% of high school teachers have low levels of personality traits, 76.5% moderate, and 10% high. The above table indicates that 18% of high school teachers have low, 72.5% moderate, and 9.5% high levels of teaching competencies.

Table 1: LEVEL OF INTERNSHIP OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

Dimensions	Low		Moderate		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Teacher Behavior	34	17.0	140	70.0	26	13.0
Professional Competency	32	16.0	154	77.0	14	7.0
Personality Traits	27	13.5	153	76.5	20	10.0
Internship in Total	36	18.0	145	72.5	19	9.5

Hypothesis:2

There is no significant relationship between the internship experience and gender.

Table 2: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE SCHOOL IN THEIR INTERNSHIP

Dimensions	Male (82)		Female (118)		Calculated t-value	Remarks at 5% level
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Teacher Behaviour	48.82	5.79	43.85	5.17	0.04	NS
Professional Competency	36.26	5.87	36.27	5.09	0.02	NS
Personality Traits	47.65	7.66	47.39	7.76	0.23	NS
Internship in Total	132.72	15.64	132.51	14.74	0.10	NS

(At 5% level of significance, the table value of 't' is 1.96)

The above table indicates that there is no significant difference between male and female in their teacher behaviour, professional competency, personality traits, and overall Internship.

Null Hypothesis: 3

There is no significant difference between rural and urban high school teachers in their Internship.

Table 3: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN SCHOOL IN THEIR INTERNSHIP

Teaching Intelligence & Dimensions	Rural (125)		Urban (75)		Calculated t-value	Remarks at 5% level
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Teacher Behaviour	40.29	5.90	49.75	4.40	1.99	S
Professional Competency	36.22	5.85	36.33	4.63	0.15	NS
Personality Traits	47.53	8.09	47.44	7.06	0.08	NS
Internship in Total	132.04	16.75	133.86	11.86	0.73	NS

(At 5% level of significance, the table value of 't' is 1.96) It is inferred from the above table that there is significant difference between rural and urban in their teacher behaviour in Internship.

But there is no significant difference between rural and urban in their professional competency, personality traits and Internship in total.

Null Hypothesis: 4

There is no significant difference among Rural, Urban and Semi-Urban school in their Internship.

(At 5% level of significance for df 2.197 the table value of 'F' is 3.04) It is inferred from the above table that there is no significant difference among Rural, Urban and Semi-Urban in their teacher behaviour, professional competency, personality traits and Internship in total.

Recommendations

1. Orientation programmes are conducted for the pupils, which should improve the pupils' social interaction.
2. Students should be motivated and encouraged to use library resources not only to enhance their knowledge but also to understand the various kinds of people and their relationships.

Table 4: DIFFERENCE AMONG RURAL, URBAN AND SEMI-URBAN SCHOOL IN THEIR INTERNSHIP

Internship & Dimensions	Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Variance	F-value	Remarks
Teacher Behaviour	Between	8.34	2	4.17	0.14	NS
	Within	5895.22	197	29.92		
Professional Competency	Between	104.63	2	52.31	1.78	NS
	Within	75782.34	197	29.35		
Personality Traits	Between	14.19	2	7.09	0.12	NS
	Within	11911.81	197	60.47		
Internship in Total	Between	280.25	2	140.13	0.61	NS
	Within	45428.00	197	230.60		

3. Students should be motivated to participate in co-curricular activities.
4. The curriculum should be framed according to the needs of pupils and give attention to each student.
5. The administrators should help to develop the students' interpersonal relationships and intrapersonal relationships by conducting various seminars and symposiums.
6. The administrators should select the appropriate teachers who have an appropriate educational qualification for the specific subject.

Suggestions For Further Research

Based on the findings, the investigator has given the following topics for further research.

1. A study on the relationship between social intelligence and the Internship of primary, elementary and higher secondary teachers.
2. The present study is limited to the Tirunelveli district. A similar study could be done in other districts.
3. The present study has only two variables: social intelligence and Internship. A similar study could be conducted by taking other variables, such as interpersonal intelligence and musical intelligence.
4. Relationship between emotional intelligence and the Internship of high school teachers.
5. Relationship between co-curricular activities and Internship of high school teachers.

Conclusion

The internship component in teacher education programmes plays a pivotal role in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical classroom experience. It provides prospective teachers with an opportunity to engage directly with the realities of school environments, thereby enhancing their professional competence, confidence, and teaching effectiveness. Through active participation in lesson planning, classroom management, student assessment, and co-curricular activities, interns develop essential pedagogical skills and a deeper understanding of learners' needs. Moreover, internships foster reflective practice, enabling student-teachers to critically evaluate their teaching methods and improve them. The guidance and feedback from mentor teachers and supervisors further contribute to interns' professional growth. It also helps in nurturing important qualities such as adaptability, communication skills, problem-solving ability, and ethical responsibility, which are crucial for effective teaching. The study highlights that well-structured and adequately supervised internship programmes significantly influence the preparedness of future teachers. However, the effectiveness of internships depends on proper planning, collaboration between institutions and schools, and continuous monitoring. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen internship frameworks by ensuring sufficient duration, quality mentorship, and meaningful engagement in school activities. In conclusion, internships are not merely a formal requirement but a transformative experience that shapes competent, reflective, and responsible educators. Strengthening this component will ultimately improve the overall quality of education and student learning outcomes.

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Cite this article as

Sai Prakash Narasingu, *Role of Internship in Teacher Education Programmes*, International Journal of Advanced Research and emerging trends, Vol(2), Issue 4, (2025).