



Cover Page



IDENTIFYING THE PRESENT BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF SCHOOL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMMES: PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT-TEACHERS

¹Dr. Madhumita Baidya and ²Ananya Baidya

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia

³Research Scholar, Department of Education, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia

Abstract

School internship is an integral component of B. Ed curriculum. It is very significant approach to enhance core teaching aptitudes and skills among the B.Ed. student-teachers. It performs a vital role in integrating the educational theory into real practice. It enables the student-teachers to better comprehend their respective task and professional responsibilities. However, besides several benefits, the student-teachers may confront varied challenges during the school internship programmes. Therefore, the present research tends to analyze the perceptions of student-teachers concerning the present benefits and major challenges faced by them during such programmes. The researchers will adopt qualitative research approach where semi-structures questionnaires will be used as data collection tool. The B.Ed. third semester student-teachers will constitute the sample and the findings will be analyzed and interpreted by using thematic analysis. Through this study, the researchers delve to provide some meaningful insights regarding suggestive measures for overcoming various confronting challenges. Finally, the present analysis may help the student-teachers to discharge their professional duties with adequate awareness and sensitivity in the long run.

Keywords: School Internship Programme, Its Benefits and Challenges, Perceptions of Student-Teachers, Measures, Present Significance

Introduction

The school internship programmes act as a vital aspect of the pedagogical curriculum involved in Teacher Education such as in B.Ed. course that aim to provide necessary knowledge and desirable skills imperative for the professional skill building of the student-teachers. It is a structured learning approach that offers a better opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge into actual practice. It enables the student-teachers to acquire the essential competencies of effective teaching. It improves the existing knowledge and experiences of the student-teachers by enhancing their skills related to interaction and communication, linguistic aspects, subject-matter expertise, pedagogical knowledge, leadership, and management. However, through school internship programme, student-teachers may better comprehend the strategies of effective classroom management, adoption of appropriate methods of teaching, formulation of proper learning designs, control of student's behaviour in classroom, preparation of suitable assessment mechanisms. The student-teachers may obtain primary knowledge and direct experiences of teaching through such programmes. The internship programme has positively influenced the teaching performance of student's teachers in real school setting (Parveen & Mirza, 2012).

Therefore, school internship programmes prepare the student-teachers for their career in teaching profession so that they may become efficient as well as successful teachers in future. Despite of several benefits, the student-teachers also may confront various challenges during their school internship programme. The student teachers usually face several problems during their internship programme related to using of teaching-learning materials, managing classroom, establishing effective communication and for this, the teacher educators are required to provide adequate guidance and counseling to mitigate such problems (Panda & Nayak, 2014). After the implementation of two-year B.Ed. programme, majority of the pupil-teachers reported to face several challenges related to infrastructural facilities, non-availability of necessary teaching staffs, study materials to conduct the internship programme effectively and smoothly for the development of appropriate pedagogical skills (Mahajan & Rana, 2017). Hence, such challenges are required to be addressed adequately and skillfully so that internship programme may enable the student teachers to develop their learning experiences and increase their level of confidence in teaching profession.



Cover Page



Concept of School Internship Programme

The school internship refers to a programme that engages student-teachers in training with a school for a specific duration of time in acquiring teaching skills. It is specifically designed to provide the student-teachers with hands-on direct experience in teaching in practical setting. Such programmes help student-teachers to reflect on their teaching practices, enable them to recognize their areas of strengths and weaknesses in teaching, boost adequate confidence to work with the students in a classroom and thereby assist them to develop their professional competencies. The school internship is regarded to be an experiential learning approach that aims to improve the experience and teaching skills of student-teachers undergoing B.Ed. programme. Such training programme offers better scope to comprehend the theoretical aspects of effective teaching, their core components, and basic principles in real situations. **The three important stages of school internship include the following-**

- a. **Pre-Internship Stage** (Preparatory Stage for Teaching of Student-teachers)
- b. **During Internship Stage** (Performing Stage of Actual Teaching of Student-teachers)
- c. **Post-Internship Stage** (Reflective Stage of Teaching by Student-teachers)

The essential components of school internship programme basically include the following aspects-

- a. Preparation of the learning designs
- b. Preparation of the teaching-learning materials, teaching-aids
- c. Participation in teaching activities
- d. Indulge in classroom observation
- e. Interaction and communication with students
- f. Delivery of instructions according to the students' strengths and weaknesses
- g. Organization of community-based activities
- h. Engagement in co-curricular activities in school
- i. Assessment of students' academic performance
- j. Formulation of report on internship evaluation for student-teachers

Literature Reviews

Ali and Muhammad (2018) carried out a qualitative study following research paradigm of interpretivism to determine the role of internship programme for both professional and personality development of university students in Pakistan. The obtained data were analyzed through software NVivo version 11. The findings explicated that students developed their intrinsic motivation, regularly, confidence, work responsibility as personality development and developed skills for teamwork, collaboration, practical solutions to problems arising out of real-world phenomenon as professional development.

Jogan (2019) conducted a study on trainee teachers to assess the status and challenges of internship programme. The researcher followed survey method where samples were chosen through purposive sampling technique. Data got analyzed by percentage analysis. The findings exposed that the trainee teachers reported high satisfaction of their internship programme that helped them to acquire integrated teaching skills.

Das and Pallai (2020) carried out a study to determine the importance of school internship in Assam. The researchers adopted descriptive survey method for their study. The findings of the study showed that most of the interns reported to face several pedagogy-related issues during internship. However, proper supervision, necessary guidelines, adequate cooperation and proper as well as flexible environment at work might help the interns to develop effective teaching skills.

Bellur (2023) presented a paper highlighting the importance of internships for specially the pre-service teachers in integrating the theoretical aspects of teaching into practical situations, developing as well as delivering proper lesson plans



Cover Page



for effective teaching, evaluating own teaching style and thereby improving through feedback obtained from supervisors and peer groups.

Kaur (2024) conducted a research study to determine the effectiveness of internships for student teachers in B. Ed in Amritsar. The researcher adopted descriptive survey method where random sampling technique was followed to choose the sample and percentage analysis was employed for data analysis. The findings revealed that in general the internship programme was effective in developing practical experience of teaching among the student teachers. However, some improvements were required for making the internship programme free from any challenges that were faced by the student teachers which included classroom management and distance to reach practice schools.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows-

1. To elicit the perceptions of student-teachers pursuing B.Ed. course on school internship programme with respect to-
 - a. Identify the major benefits obtained by student-teachers through school internship programme
 - b. Determine the significant challenges experienced during their school-internship programme
 - c. Elucidate the several measures for overcoming the challenges experienced during school internship programme
2. To summarize the present significance of school internship programme for the student-teachers in B. Ed curriculum.

Research Questions of the Study

1. What are the perceptions of student-teachers pursuing B.Ed. course on school internship programme with respect to the major benefits obtained by student-teachers through school internship programme?
2. What are the perceptions of student-teachers pursuing B.Ed. course on school internship programme with respect to the significant challenges experienced during their school-internship programme?
3. What are the perceptions of student-teachers pursuing B.Ed. course on school internship programme with respect to the several measures for overcoming the challenges experienced during school internship programme?
4. What is the present significance of school internship programme for the student-teachers in B.Ed. curriculum?

Materials and Methods of Present Study

In the present research study, qualitative research approach has been utilized by the researchers to obtain the necessary data through interviews. Qualitative research approach helps the researchers to collect relevant data regarding various aspects about individuals' knowledge and understanding, thinking, observation and array of experiences (**Welman & Wilston, 2020**). Thematic analysis was employed by the researchers to analyze the perceptions exhibited by the student-teachers about the benefits and challenges of school internship programme. Through thematic analysis, the researchers tried to present the obtained information adequately so that student-teachers' perceptions that were gathered may get reflected, analyzed, and interpreted in a vivid manner within the study (**Mayring, 2018**).

In the present study, student-teachers pursuing B.Ed. Programme in Purulia constitutes the population where about ten student-teachers from two private B. Ed. Colleges were involved. Before conducting the research study, informed consent was gathered from the participants. The researchers collected the required data using semi-structured and open-ended questionnaire in Google forms and in-depth interviews. For the present study, the researchers adopted convenience sampling because many of the student-teachers were not willing to participate in the study. The open-ended questions encompassed on major benefits, significant challenges, and measures for overcoming the challenges faced by student-teachers during the school internship programme



Cover Page



For addressing the formulated research questions of the present study, the researchers adopted thematic analysis for analyzing the obtained responses from the participants. Based on **Braun and Clarke (2006)**, the researchers of the present study followed the guide related to thematic analysis (six-phases). These include the following phases:

- Phase 1: familiarizing the obtained data of the research study
- Phase 2: formulation of initial codes
- Phase 3: identifying themes
- Phase 4: reviewing of the identified themes
- Phase 5: defining the identifying themes and their suitable naming
- Phase 6: generation of the report

Discussion and Findings

The present study investigated the perceptions of the B.Ed. student-teachers on the present benefits and challenges of school internship programme in B.Ed. course. The major themes were identified by the researchers based on the formulated research questions of the present study. These include –

1. Based on Research Question 1: The major benefits obtained by student-teachers through school internship programme

Identified Themes	Explanation
Teaching-Learning Skills	Classroom Management, framing appropriate learning designs, developing suitable learning materials and methods of assessment of students
Practical Experience	Reflection on the regular teaching experiences, to analyze the ongoing classroom situations
Understanding the Students' Need	Recognizing individual differences, identifying students' strengths and weaknesses, accommodating students' diverse abilities
Developing Soft Skills	Interpersonal skills, interactive skills, collaboration and leadership skills, behaviour management, time management skills
Career Development	Skills for Teaching profession, curriculum developer, leadership positions

One of the **student-teacher A** commented that *"I will gain knowledge, i can develop my teaching-learning skills, my interaction with students-teachers will increase and lot of things"*

Another **student-teacher C** opined that *"As a student teacher, the school internship programme at the end of my B. Ed course will provide various key benefits like practical experience, overcome the fearness of real-life classroom environment, improve teaching skills, effective classroom management, conference etc"*.

The **student-teacher H** commented that *"I will get experience of understanding the perspective of students, their mentality and approach in their education as well as in their growth and development."*



Cover Page



2. Based on Research Question 2: The significant challenges experienced by B.Ed. student-teachers during their school-internship programme

Identified Themes	Explanation
Related to Classroom Management	Creating positive culture in classroom, maintaining discipline, managing disruptive behaviour of students, engaging students, establishing proper interaction, maintaining proper classroom organization
Related to Time Management	Preparing and executing learning designs, staying focused in class, maintaining class time and subject schedule, keeping track of own teaching progress as well as students learning performance
Related to use of Teaching Aids	Illustration and demonstration of concepts, engaging students in class discussion, organizing group activities, delivering course materials by suitable teaching-learning materials
Related to Preparation Learning Designs	Designing meaningful and interesting lessons, incorporating varied teaching methods, catering to diverse needs of students' learning, monitoring, and assessing students' progress
Related to Child Psychology	Understanding social and emotional development of students, recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, their learning needs

One of the **student-teacher B** commented that *“As a student teacher I faced several types of challenges during my B. Ed course. These are as follows --- Time management, to understand the individual differences, engaging all students Classroom management, Lack of resources, Lack of lessons planning, short duration to achieve the learning goals.”*

The **student-teacher E** mentioned significant challenges that included- *“Classroom Management: * Maintaining student attention and engagement. * Handling disruptive behaviour. * Establishing clear expectations and routines. * Framing Learning Designs: * Creating engaging and effective lesson plans. * Aligning learning objectives with activities and assessments. * Adapting plans to meet diverse student needs. * Instructional Delivery: * Delivering lessons clearly and effectively. * Using appropriate teaching strategies. * Managing time effectively. * Dealing with unexpected disruptions.”*

Another **student-teacher G** remarked that *“Challenges are everywhere and it's best to give our best efforts to overcome it. As a trainee teacher what I felt is that, we have to keep presence of mind in understanding the minute details of a child's mentality. Patience is the key to understand them. At the same time, one has to maintain some strictness in order to foster development in the students. Another problem is communication. Students often hesitate to talk to their teachers. They often hide their feelings with the presumption of being sacred to interact at the very first place.”*



Cover Page



3. Based on Research Question 3: The several measures for overcoming the challenges experienced by B.Ed. student-teachers during school internship programme

Identified Themes	Explanation
Observation Protocols	Reviewing lesson for teaching, preparing tools for classroom observation, student behaviour, student participation, student, and teacher interaction
Regular Feedback	Evaluating students' progress, teaching practices, understanding learning experiences
Cooperation from Mentors	Regular guidance from mentors, collaborative teaching, access to educational resources, promoting inclusive environment and student's engagement
Improving the support systems	Effective training, improved mentorship, improved communication, resource facilities, support from school and peer groups
Effective Communication	Improved communication with mentors, school administrators, peer groups, students

In the present research study, some suggestive measures have been provided by the student-teachers to overcome the challenges faced by them during the school internship programme.

One of the **student-teacher B** opined that *“thorough pre-internship training, dedicated mentorship from experienced teachers, regular feedback loops, structured observation protocols, opportunities for classroom practice, addressing anxieties through support systems, and incorporating diverse learning environments to prepare them for real-world classroom dynamics.”*

Another **student-teacher D** commented that *“I would suggest that need dedicated mentorship from experienced teachers, regular feedback and evaluation, diverse classroom exposure, addressing anxieties through support systems, and try to build a good relationship between student and trainee teachers”.*

The **student-teacher F** pointed out some measures like *“Open Communication, Peer Observation and Reflection, Collaborative Planning, Regular Feedback, Stronger Mentorship”* for overcoming the confronting challenges faced by them during school internship”.

The **student-teacher H** remarked that *“The trainee teacher should maintain the following - 1. Keep patience 2. Be considerate and understanding 3. Be strict 4. Not to be judgemental at the very first place. 5. Prepare the checklist of students' progress. 6. Prepare remedial strategies for the students. 7. Communicate with the student's guardian if needed. 8. Encourage the creative and critical prospects of the students. 9. Shower praises. 10. Motivate them every time”.*

Present Significance of School Internship Programme for the B.Ed. Student-Teachers

One of the student-teacher C commented that *“In school internship programme a student teachers can build practical experience which helps them to apply in real world or classroom. And it also helps to gather more expertise on self-assessment, self-reflection, job readiness and so on in teaching field.”*

The student-teacher D commented that *“Because it provides hands on experiences in real class room settings that shapes aspiring teachers preparing them for the diverse and dynamic world of education, and also allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge, develops essentials teaching skills, builds confidence.”* **The student-teacher I** said that



Cover Page



“Without school internship programme the B. Ed students are not able to understand the current situation of those schools and they do not have the experience also.”

The present significance of the school internship programme for the student-teachers are summarized below-

1. **Obtaining direct experience of teaching** in actual classroom setting enable student-teachers to improve their learning experience so that they may address the confronting challenges of internship programme viably.
2. **Providing wide exposure to knowledge** and other related information about the subject help the student-teachers to develop their existing skills of teaching as well as pedagogical knowledge.
3. **Developing essential soft skills** among the student-teachers such as interpersonal skills, interactive skills, collaboration and leadership skills, behaviour management, time management skills which are quite imperative to control a classroom situation during teaching-learning process.
4. **Instilling self-confidence** among the student-teachers through self-directed learning may be possible through school internship programme. Such programme **enhances the autonomy of the student-teachers** and thereby prepare them for teaching profession. Building confidence among student-teachers **to utilize creative and innovative teaching** strategies in classroom
5. **Offering opportunity to integrate theoretical knowledge into real teaching practice** help the student-teachers to get reflected on their regular teaching experiences and to analyze the ongoing classroom situations more efficiently.
6. **Acquiring essential pedagogical skills** enable the student-teachers to acquire new insights of teaching practice considering the goals of education and the diverse needs of learning of the students. It helps the student-teachers to get prepared for teaching activities by framing appropriate learning designs, developing suitable learning materials and methods of assessment of students.
7. Enabling the student-teachers **to understand the significant role and professional responsibilities** of an effective teacher.
8. **Fostering adequate skills and experiences** among the student-teachers **in coordinating** different school activities and programmes for ensuring active and more participation of students in such activities.
9. **Acting as a gateway for career development** and employment in teaching profession of the student-teachers by through **inculcation of necessary values, skills, behaviour, and attitudes towards teaching.**
10. **Improving the teaching capabilities of the student-teacher** to foster effective and successful teaching-learning process so that they may identify the potentialities and weaknesses of students in classroom during teaching.

Conclusion

In the present study, the researchers intended to summarize the perceptions of the student-teachers regarding the present benefits and challenges of school internship programme in the B.Ed. course through thematic analysis. The researchers observed that the school internship programme benefitted the student-teachers in various aspects of acquiring the skills of teaching and pedagogy. Despite of several benefits, the student-teachers basically confronted some significant challenges during their internship which were required to be tackled skillfully. According to the perception of the student-teachers, the school internship programme has not been always feasible for them. However, for overcoming the challenges faced by the student-teachers, some suggestive measures have been identified by them. It may be concluded that the educational stakeholders must adopt proper and effective guidelines to address the varied challenges faced by the student-teachers and thereby ease their difficulties in different aspects of school internship programme.

References

1. Agnihotri, R. (2016), B.Ed. Internship Programme: A Study of its Impact on Student-Teachers. *International Journal of Education and Management Studies*, 6(2), 207-213.
2. Ali, A., & Muhammad, A. K. (2018). Understanding the role of internship as an activity based learning: A case study. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 5(2), 92-106.



Cover Page



3. Bellur, R. E. (2023). Role of internship programme in B. Ed. curriculum: Student perspective. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research*, 12 (1(5)), 113-118.
4. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
5. Cresswell, J. W. (2012). Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (4th ed.). Pearson Education Inc.
6. Das, R., & Pallai, P. (2020). Study on internship in teacher education in Assam. *International Journal of Management*, 11(8), 599-618.
7. Jogan, S. N. (2019). Evaluating the effectiveness of a school internship. *International Journal for Social Studies*, 5(2), 227-235.
8. Kaur, H. (2024). Evaluating effectiveness and challenges in B.Ed. student teacher internships. *Shodh Sari- An International Multidisciplinary Journal*, 03(04), 67-76.
9. Mahajan, A., & Rana, S. (2017). Problems faced by pupil-teachers during two year B.Ed. programme. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research (JETIR)*, 4(11), 202-203.
10. Mayring, P. (2018). Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken (Qualitative Content Analysis) (10th ed.). Weinheim, Germany: Beltz.
11. Panda, S., & Nayak, R. N. (2014). Problems of student teacher during internship program: issues and concerns. *BEST: International Journal of Humanities, Arts, Medicine and Sciences*, 2(8), 61-66.
12. Parveen, S., & Mirza, N. (2012). Internship Program in Education: Effectiveness, Problems and Prospects. *International Journal of Learning and Development*, 2(1), 1-5.
13. Welman, M., & Wilston, L. (2020). Research methods and techniques. *Journal of Public Administration*, 76(4), 12-30.