

Problems and encounters of the student interns of Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College

Bolinas, Joey B. ✉

Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Philippines (saintbojo@gmail.com)

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Abstract

The study determined the problems and encounters of the BEEd Pre-service Teachers of ISPSC, Tagudin Campus. Specifically, it sought to answer the degree of seriousness on the problems and encounters they met in their teaching internship and what validated action plan can be proposed in their teaching internship. The participants were the 38 BEED student interns enrolled in the program during the Academic Year 2023–2024. The study used a descriptive-quantitative method. The instrument used was a modified survey questionnaire. The research findings indicate that pre-service teachers have positive relationships with cooperating teachers but faced significant challenges in various areas; and the developed action plan was very highly valid and perceived as highly useful. From the drawn conclusions, it is suggested that supervisors and administrators should investigate the effectiveness of mentorship and support systems in improving the pre-service teachers' teaching experience; the study could explore any potential factors that may influence the success of the action plan, conduct a follow-up study on the action plan wherein researchers could assess impact on pre-service teachers' professional development and teaching practice; and future researchers could enhance the scope of their study by including other programs.

Keywords: problems, encounters, pre-service teachers

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1. Introduction

A teaching internship is one of the courses required for those who want to pursue a teaching career. The teaching internship is a key part of the pedagogical practice of undergraduate teacher education. All teacher education programs include a teaching internship as a prerequisite to preparing students to become certified teachers. In order to become equipped and competent teachers in the country, aspiring teachers are taught the basics of learning-centered teaching at this stage and immersed in a real classroom experience (Rogayan & Reusia, 2021). Internship programs commonly known to support and provide students with the key skills and attitudes they needed for employment through the practical application of learned theories and knowledge in a real work environment.

In any practicum teacher education program in the Philippines, teaching demonstration is the most challenging task for pre-service teachers during the internship program (Magday & Pramoolsook, 2021). Real classroom demonstration plays a vital role in training interns, enabling them to apply their acquired knowledge and practical skills to become teachers among students. When performing a classroom demonstration, there are various encounters in the classroom environment involving students, cooperating teachers, and technology that could affect the performance of the teaching interns. Therefore, how pre-service teachers deal with their feelings and problems during classroom demonstrations should be explored to determine coping strategies that allow them to shed their negative emotions to effectively maintain confidence and poise in teaching. As previous studies have examined teacher interns' encounters during classroom demonstrations in an online or actual environment, the researcher was interested in delving into the encounter determination and management strategies of the elementary student interns during a face-to-face classroom demonstration. This research investigated the encounters and problems of BEED Pre-service Teachers of ISPSC Tagudin Campus.

Conceptual Framework - The purpose of this study was to determine the problems and encounters faced by pre-service teachers pursuing the degree Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) of the Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC) Tagudin Campus. Although internships are essential to the professional development of aspiring teachers, not much study has been done on the problems and encounters experienced by BEED pre-service teachers in this setting. In this study, the researcher investigated various experiences of pre-service teachers enrolled in the College of Teacher Education (CTE) internship program, with a focus on their interactions within cooperating schools, guidance received from cooperating teachers, CTE supervision, and overall satisfaction. The researcher gained better understanding of the intricate tapestry of experiences faced by pre-service teachers as they manage the intricacies of classroom teaching, lesson planning, student engagement, and professional growth through in-depth questionnaires. In addition, the researcher had captured the intricate dynamics of mentorship and support from cooperating teachers, evaluating how these connections contribute to the interns' sense of confidence, competence, and growth.

Furthermore, the researcher investigated the role of the CTE in giving direction, feedback, and resources to student interns during their practicum journey, emphasizing the significance of competent supervision in molding their educational experiences. The researcher hoped that could shed light on the perceived benefits of the CTE internship program by unearthing insights into how involvement in this program improves interns' teaching skills, personal growth, and readiness for future professional roles. Through this quantitative investigation, the researcher aimed to provide a comprehensive knowledge of the student internship experience in the context of teacher education, throwing light on the elements that contribute to meaningful learning and professional development in the field of education.

Statement of the Problem - The study aimed to determine the problems and encounters experienced by the Bachelor of Elementary Education Pre-service Teachers of ISPSC, Tagudin Campus. Specifically, it sought to

answer the following sub-problems: 1. What is the degree of seriousness on the problems and encounters met by the BEED Pre-service Teachers in their teaching internship with their: *cooperating teachers; students; co-pre-service teachers; administrators/principal/chairs of cooperating schools; preparation of instructional materials; and student teaching supervisor*. 2. What action plan can be proposed to be implemented in their teaching internship? 3. What is the level of validity of the action plan to be developed?

Scope and Limitations of the Study - The study focused on the problems and encounters met by the BEED Pre-service Teachers during the conduct of their Teaching Internship course. The participants were the students enrolled in the degree Bachelor of Elementary Education at Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Tagudin Campus during the academic year 2023–2024 were total enumeration comprising of thirty-one (31) female interns and seven (7) male interns.

2. Methodology

The study used a descriptive-quantitative method, specifically phenomenological research, which is concerned with the study of experience from individual's perspective (Lester, 1999). In the same manner, Creswell (2013) described phenomenology as an approach that focuses on the common meanings of the experiences of a particular group. It also allows the researchers to arrive at a description of the nature of certain phenomenon. This approach was used in the study, as its main concerns is to determine the experiences of the teaching interns in their teaching internship. The study used thematic analysis in the teaching interns' responses to identify patterns in data such as commonalities or contrast (Smith, 2011). Documentary analysis was used to examine teaching interns' reflections. It was used as a form of qualitative research approach in which documents were interpreted by the researcher. (Bowen, 2009).

The instrument used in this study was a modified survey questionnaire. This survey questionnaire consisted of items that dealt with the following problems: a.) problems met by the pre-service teachers with their cooperating teachers, b.) problems met by the pre-service teachers with students' c.) personal problems met by the pre-service teachers, d.) problems met by pre-service teachers with administrators/principal/chairs of cooperating schools, e.) problems met by the pre-service teachers with fellow pre-service teachers, f.) problems met by the pre-service teachers regarding preparation of instructional materials, g.) problems met by pre-service teachers with their student teaching supervisor. Some pre-surveyed problems were enumerated, and the participants were asked to check as many items as applicable. The participants were given the opportunity to add some problems which had not been included in the list.

3. Results and Discussions

The Problems and Encounters Met by the Pre-service Teachers

Table 1.1

Degree of Seriousness on the Problems met by the Pre-service Teachers with their Cooperating Teachers.

Indicators	Mean	DER
Cooperating teachers do not hold regular class observations.	2.66	U
Inability of cooperating teachers do not hold regular class observations.	2.50	D
Cooperating teachers do not accept use of varied teaching methods.	2.16	D
Cooperating teachers do not hold on to post conference/feedback as often as possible.	2.11	D
Cooperating teachers do not offer suggestions towards the betterment of teaching-learning process.	1.82	D
Cooperating teacher is often absent.	1.66	SD
Cooperating teacher is often late.	1.68	SD
Poor relationship with cooperating teacher.	1.84	SD
Sub-mean	2.05	D

Legend: SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Table 1.1 revealed that the degree of seriousness on the problem met by the pre-service teachers with their cooperating teachers categorized as "Disagree" which is indicated by 2.05 sub-mean. The highest indicator

“Cooperating teachers do not hold regular class observations” attained a mean value of 2.66 classified as “Undecided”. While the lowest indicator “Cooperating teacher is often absent” obtain a mean value of 1.66 indicated as “Strongly Disagree”.

Table 1.2

Degree of Seriousness on the Problems met by Pre-service Teachers with their Students.

Indicators	Mean	DER
Tardiness of students/pupils.	3.13	U
Absenteeism of students/pupils.	3.08	U
Noisy and talkative students/pupils.	3.92	A
Students do not actively participate in class discussions.	2.87	U
Disrespectful students.	2.97	U
Students who try to court their pre-service teachers.	1.95	D
Students are slow learners.	2.92	U
Sub-mean	2.98	U

Legend: SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Table 1.2 showed that the degree of Seriousness on the problem met by the pre-service teachers with students is undecided with the evidenced by 2.98 sub-mean. The highest indicator was "Noisy and talkative students /pupils with a mean value of 3.92 classified as Agree. On the other hands, the lowest indicators were "students who try to court their pre-service teachers" with a mean rating of 1.95 indicating disagree. This finding implies the difficulties of student's teachers encounter in managing the classrooms.

Table 1.3

Degree of Seriousness on the Personal Problems met by Pre-service Teachers.

Indicators	Mean	DER
Inadequate learning foundation on basic education principles.	2.79	U
Difficulty in expressing oneself in the English language.	3.18	U
Difficulty in instilling discipline among student when the cooperating teacher/mentor is not around.	3.24	U
Lack of confidence to face an audience.	2.84	U
Lacks money for preparation of instructional materials.	3.58	A
Sub-mean	3.12	U

Legend: SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Table 1.3 revealed the degree of seriousness on personal problem met by the pre-service teachers is undecided indicated by 3.12 sub-mean. The highest indicator was "lacks money for preparation of instructional materials" with a mean value of 3.58 indicates that pre-service teachers perceive a significant level of seriousness regarding the issue of lacking funds for instructional materials. This score suggests that most pre-service teachers consider this problem to be a notable challenge in their professional development and classroom effectiveness. While the lowest with a mean score of 2.79, pre-service teachers view "inadequate learning foundations on basic principles" as a less critical concern compared to the lack of financial resources for materials. This lower score suggests that while this issue is recognized, however it is not perceived as acutely problematic as other challenges faced in their professional development.

Table 1.4

Degree of problems met by pre-service teachers with administrators/principals/chairs of cooperating schools

Indicators	Mean	DER
Administrators give many requirements.	2.45	U
Administrators are very strict.	2.53	D
Unapproachable administrators.	2.34	D
Administrators who do not give them feeling of belongingness.	2.32	D
Administrators asking for too many donations.	1.95	D
Sub-mean	2.32	D

Legend: SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Table 1.4 showed the degree of seriousness on the problems met by student's teachers with administrators/principals/chair of cooperating schools; that the pre-service teachers, on average, do not perceive

administrators as being excessively strict is disagree indicated by 2.32 sub-mean. The mean value is 2.53 being closer to "Disagree" suggests that while there might be some perception of strictness, it is not considered a major issue overall. This implies a moderate level of perceived strictness in administrative practices. The lowest mean (1.95) pertains to administrators asking for too many donations, indicating that pre-service teachers generally do not perceive administrators as overly demanding in terms of soliciting donations. The lower mean score indicates that the issue of excessive donation requests is not a significant concern among pre-service teachers, suggesting that this is less of a problem in their experience.

Table 1.5

Degree of seriousness on the problems met by pre-service teachers with fellow pre-service teachers

Indicators	Mean	DER
Unfriendly fellow pre-service teachers.	2.08	D
Pre-service teachers using things without permission from fellow student teacher.	2.13	D
Adjustment problems with fellow pre-service teachers.	2.55	D
Uncooperative fellow pre-service teachers.	2.26	D
Fellow pre-service teachers who tell a lot of stories which are not true.	2.29	D
Fellow pre-service teachers who do not like to share their ideas or extend help to colleagues.	2.13	D
Sub-mean	2.24	D

Legend: SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Table 1.5 showed that all indicators prove that degree of seriousness on the problems met by the pre-service teachers with fellow pre-service teachers is undecided evidenced by 2.24 sub-mean value. The highest indicator was "not having much time for preparation of instructional materials" with a mean rating of 2.55 indicates disagree. While the lowest indicators with a mean value of 2.08 was "unfriendly fellow pre-service teachers" described as undecided.

Table 1.6

Degree of problems met by pre-service teachers regarding preparation of instructional materials

Indicators	Mean	DER
Too many teaching devices needed for the lesson.	3.08	U
Not having much time for preparation of instructional materials.	3.18	U
Not enough money to purchase materials for use as teaching devices.	3.58	U
Lacks enough skill in preparing teaching devices.	2.68	U
Lacks skill in using prepared teaching devices.	2.66	U
Teaching devices learned in the university cannot be applied because of limited equipment in the school like LCD projector.	2.79	U
No available alternative teaching device in the community.	2.55	U
Sub-mean	2.93	U

Legend: SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Table 1.6 manifested that the problem met by the pre-service teachers regarding preparation of instructional materials is "Undecided" which is indicated by 2.93 sub-mean. However, the highest indicator was "Not enough money to purchase materials for use as teaching devices with a mean value of 3.58 categorized as "Undecided" while the lowest indicator is "No available alternative teaching devices in the community" with a 2.55 mean value described as undecided which suggests that pre-service teachers may lack clarity regarding the accessibility of supplementary resources beyond traditional instructional materials.

Table 1.7

Degree of Seriousness on the Problems met by Pre-service Teachers with their Student Teaching Supervisor.

Indicators	Mean	DER
Too many requirements to accomplish.	2.92	U
Keep on calling for a meeting, which disrupts concentration in teaching.	2.45	D
Too many deadlines to meet.	2.63	U
Inconsistencies in giving instructions which confuse pre-service teachers/mentees.	2.84	U
Sub-mean	2.71	U

Legend: SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Table 1.7 showed that the degree of seriousness of personal problems met by the pre-service teachers with their student teaching supervisor is recognized as "Undecided," as indicated by the 2.71 sub-mean. The highest indicator was "too many requirements to accomplish," with a mean value of 2.92 indicating "Undecided". While the lowest with a mean score of 2.45, which is categorized as "Disagree," pre-service teachers view "Keep on calling for a meeting, which disrupts concentration in teaching," as a less critical concern compared to many requirements to be accomplished.

Table 1.8

Summary of the Degree of Seriousness of Problems met by the Pre-service Teachers.

Indicators	Mean	DER
Problems met by pre-service teachers with their cooperating teachers.	2.05	D
Problems met by pre-service teachers with students.	2.98	U
Personal problems met by the pre-service teachers.	3.12	U
Problems met by pre-service teachers with administrators/principal/chairs of cooperating schools.	2.32	D
Problems met by the pre-service teachers with fellow pre-service teachers.	2.24	D
Problems met by the pre-service teachers regarding preparation of instructional materials.	2.93	U
Problems met by pre-service teachers with their student teaching supervisor.	2.71	U
<i>Over-all Mean</i>	2.62	U

Legend: SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U= Undecided, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Overall, Table 1.8 summarizes the severity of challenges encountered by pre-service teachers during their teaching experiences, based on self-reported data. Notable findings include pre-service teachers reported fewer issues with cooperating teachers (Mean: 2.05), suggesting positive relationships. Challenges with students (Mean: 2.98) and personal issues (Mean: 3.12) were significant, impacting teaching effectiveness. Moderate concerns were noted with administrators (Mean: 2.32) and fellow pre-service teachers (Mean: 2.24). Instructional material preparation was notably challenging (Mean: 2.93). Supervisory issues were significant (Mean: 2.71), pointing to areas for improvement in mentorship. The overall mean score of 2.62 indicates a substantial level of seriousness across all areas. Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving the student teaching experience and supporting the growth of future educators. The challenges faced by pre-service teachers are multifaceted and can significantly affect their teaching experiences. These challenges include issues with cooperating teachers, student relations, personal problems, administrative relations, peer relations, instructional preparation, and supervision.

Pre-service teachers generally reported fewer issues with cooperating teachers and administrators, suggesting that they feel supported by these key figures in their teaching experience. However, they expressed uncertainty in dealing with students, personal issues, and instructional preparation. This indicates that they may feel unprepared or lack confidence in these areas, which could affect their teaching effectiveness and stress levels.

Validity of the Developed Action Plan

Table 2 showed the validity of the developed action plan where the indicators usefulness and appropriateness got the highest sub-mean, which is evidenced by 4.75, both indicators are "Very highly valid" (VHV).

Table 2

Level of Validity of the Developed Action Plan

Indicators	Mean	DER
<i>Adequacy</i>		
The Action Plan addresses current challenges faced by student interns.	4.67	VHV
The Action Plan proposes appropriate solutions tailored to the specific issues faced by student interns.	4.67	VHV
The material includes adequate advice, tips, and information to guide student interns in overcoming their challenges effectively.	4.67	VHV
<i>Sub-mean</i>	4.67	VHV
<i>Coherence</i>		
The content of the Action Plan is logically organized and structured.	4.33	VHV
The cohesive devices and evidence of coherence in the Action Plan alone are not enough.	4.33	VHV
The language and terminology used in the Action Plan are consistent and coherent.	4.67	VHV
The Action Plan is coherent and easy to follow.	4.67	VHV

<i>Sub-mean</i>	4.50	VHV
<i>Appropriateness</i>		
Information presented in the Action Plan is factually correct, up to date, and free from errors.	5.00	VHV
It maintains consistency in addressing the problems faced by student interns and provides coherent solutions.	4.67	VHV
It ensures that the content of the Action Plan does not violate any laws and regulations.	4.67	VHV
The Action Plan ensures relevance and engagement.	4.67	VHV
<i>Sub-mean</i>	4.75	VHV
<i>Usefulness</i>		
The Action Plan provides valuable information or insights related to address the different problems met by student interns.	5.00	VHV
The Action Plan offers practical tips, strategies, or actionable steps that can be applied by the College Program.	4.67	VHV
The solutions proposed in the Action Plan are adaptable to different levels of experience among student interns.	4.67	VHV
The actionable steps are outlined in the Action Plan that student interns can readily implement to overcome their challenges.	4.67	VHV
<i>Sub-mean</i>	4.75	VHV
<i>Over-all Mean</i>	4.67	VHV

Legend: VHV- Very highly Valid

The over-all mean of 4.67 suggests that the action plan is perceived as highly useful by those teachers who evaluated it. This simply implies also, that the action plan likely addresses important concerns and provides effective solutions and strategies. Relative to the results, the proposed actions in the action plan align well with the objectives of the plan, and stakeholders believed they will lead to desirable outcomes. Furthermore, in the indicator appropriateness, it indicates that actions outlined in the plan are seen as fitting or suitable for the context which they will be implemented. Moreover, the indicator coherence got the lowest rate indicated by 4.50 sub-mean. While still relatively high, the slightly lower mean for coherence compared from the two indicators the usefulness and appropriateness that got the highest rates means that there are some areas where plan could be more logically organized and connected. The coherence in the action plan simply refers to the clarity and logical flow of the plan.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: 1. The research findings indicate that pre-service teachers have positive relationships with cooperating teachers but faced significant challenges in various areas. These challenges impact teaching effectiveness and highlight the need for improvement in mentorship and support systems; 2. The developed action plan designed to help address the challenges faced by elementary pre-service teachers in different areas in the study. The action plan would empower elementary pre-service teachers to overcome these challenges and excel in their teaching practice; and 3. The developed action plan is very highly valid and perceived as highly useful. Indicating that it supports the effectiveness and relevance of the action plan in addressing the identified challenges and difficulties met by the student interns. In the light of the conclusions, the following recommendations were offered: 1. It is suggested that supervisors and administrators should investigate the effectiveness of mentorship and support systems in improving the pre-service teachers' teaching experience; 2. The study could explore any potential factors that may influence the success of the action plan. This will help refine and improve the action plan for future implementation and provide evidence-based recommendations for other educational institutions and programs; 3. Conducting a follow-up study is suggested, wherein researchers could assess the practicality and effectiveness of the action plan in real teaching contexts and measure its impact on pre-service teachers' professional development and teaching practice; and 4. Future researchers could enhance the scope of their study by including other programs within the College of Teacher Education. This would contribute to gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the various challenges and difficulties experienced by pre-service teachers across different programs.

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