



RESEARCH PAPER

Exploring the Teaching Practice Experience of Pre-Service Teachers: Challenges and Learning Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

This study explores students' satisfaction with teaching practice during their preservice teacher education programs. The primary objective of this research was to assess how various aspects of the practicum contribute to or hinder student satisfaction. Teaching practice, often considered the capstone component of teacher education, offers preservice teachers an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in real classroom settings. A quantitative research design was employed, with data collected from 358 B.Ed. students enrolled in public and private teacher education institutions. A structured questionnaire was used to evaluate key dimensions such as instructional planning, mentor support, classroom management, institutional resources, and overall practicum structure. Statistical analyses—including descriptive statistics and linear regression—were conducted using SPSS. Key findings indicate that: Students reported high satisfaction with lesson planning support, teaching opportunities, and guidance from supervisors. Challenges were noted in areas such as classroom management, access to teaching materials, and mentor consistency. Students who received regular feedback and support from mentors showed higher levels of professional confidence and teaching engagement. A While most participants expressed overall satisfaction with the teaching practice, they also suggested improvements—such as extending the practicum duration, enhancing mentor quality, and providing clearer guidelines and more resources. These suggestions highlight disconnect between institutional expectations and the realities faced by student teachers in the field.

KEYWORDS Teaching Practice, Experiences, Pre-Service Teachers

Introduction

Teacher education is critical in training future educators to deal with the challenges of classroom teaching. Teaching practice during pre-service teacher training is a critical component of teacher education. This phase allows aspiring teachers to gain hands-on experience in real classroom settings, bridging the gap between academic understanding and practical implementation (Muzaffar, 2016). Through teaching practice, student teachers learn about lesson design, classroom management, student involvement, and instructional tactics. The quality of this experience has a substantial impact on their confidence, professional development, and overall preparation to enter the teaching profession (Cheung, 2023).

Teaching practice while studying is an important component of teacher education programs because it provides students with practical classroom experience. It allows aspiring teachers to apply theoretical knowledge, strengthen their instructional skills, and gain confidence in working with pupils. Under the guidance of mentor instructors, trainees

plan lessons, deliver instruction, and assess learning outcomes while receiving constructive feedback (Ramirez, 2020; Muzaffar, et. al., 2020). This hands-on experience helps them better understand classroom dynamics, change teaching strategies, and improve their professional demeanor. Teaching practice also promotes self-reflection, helping aspiring educators to see their own strengths and areas for improvement. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, students are more prepared for the challenges of the teaching profession, increasing their chances of a successful career in education.

Efficacy of teacher education program depends upon their satisfaction of students during their teaching practice. Students' pleasure and positive attitudes towards their educational environment, support services and learning experiences defined as student satisfaction. The level of satisfaction are determined by variety of factors, including the availability of supportive mentors, teaching tools access, systematic supervision, constructive feedback, and the general school environment. According to Ranjbari (2020) and Choudhry, et. al., 2016) teachers professional competence will improve when pre-service teachers feel well-supported and sufficiently trained, they are more likely to obtain positive teaching attitudes and abilities. The challenges such as insufficient mentorship, a lack of resources, or a hostile school climate, their confidence and motivation may suffer, negatively impacting their future effectiveness as teachers.

Literature Review

Mentorship and supervision are two important factors that influence student happiness in teaching practice. A solid mentorship structure guarantees that student teachers receive ongoing support, constructive criticism, and encouragement. Experienced teachers have a significant impact on the teaching styles and professional attitudes of future teachers. Effective mentorship enables student instructors to reflect on their own strengths and limitations, allowing them to improve their teaching methods gradually. In contrast, inadequate mentorship can lead to irritation and a sense of unpreparedness among student instructors, diminishing their overall pleasure with the teaching practice experience (Mitchell, 2018).

The structure and organization of the teaching practice program is also an important aspect in determining satisfaction. Well-planned programs give student teachers the opportunity to gradually take on teaching responsibilities, beginning with observation and progressing to full classroom supervision. Structured teaching practice programs enable student teachers to experiment with various teaching strategies, interact with students with varying learning levels, and build problem-solving skills. The duration of the teaching practice is also an essential factor; longer internships tend to be more effective, allowing student teachers to refine their skills and adapt to diverse teaching situations (Heryatun, 2020).

Pre-service teachers' satisfaction levels are also influenced by their classroom environments and student interactions. A friendly and welcoming school environment makes student teachers feel respected and encouraged to enhance their teaching abilities. If they are assigned to schools with uncooperative kids, apathetic supervisors, or tough classroom dynamics, their teaching practice experience may become stressful rather than educational. Schools that promote an inclusive and supportive learning environment assist student instructors acquire greater classroom management skills and confidence in dealing with real-world teaching scenarios (Depaepe, 2018).

Despite its benefits, teaching practice frequently presents problems that affect satisfaction levels. Common challenges include controlling student behavior, dealing with

a large workload, tailoring lesson plans to different learning needs, and integrating theoretical knowledge with practical application. Additionally, some pre-service teachers experience anxiety and fear of making mistakes in front of kids. Addressing these problems with suitable support mechanisms can improve the effectiveness of teaching practice programs and student satisfaction (Ozdas, 2018).

Teaching practice while studying is an important part of teacher education programs because it gives students real-world experience in the classroom. It helps prospective educators to put their theoretical knowledge into practice, hone their teaching abilities, and gain self-assurance when working with students. Trainees plan lessons, deliver instruction, and assess learning outcomes while getting helpful criticism from mentor teachers (Ulum, 2020). Through this practical experience, they can improve their professional demeanor, change their teaching strategies, and gain a better understanding of classroom dynamics. Additionally, teaching practice promotes introspection, which enables aspiring teachers to identify their areas of strength and growth. It improves students' readiness for the demands of the teaching profession and raises their chances of a prosperous career in education by bridging the gap between theory and practice (Ozdas, 2018).

Material and Methods

This study investigates the degree of student satisfaction among pre-service teachers during their teacher practice using a quantitative research methodology. Because it enables the collection of numerical data that can subsequently be statistically analyzed to reveal patterns, relationships, and satisfaction levels across a sizable sample size, the quantitative technique is appropriate for this study (Usart, 2021).

With this method, the researcher can use standardized questionnaires and statistical tools to measure specific variables like learning environment, feedback quality, instructional support, and overall effectiveness of instruction. The results obtained from this approach will help formulate conclusions that can be applied broadly and evidence-based recommendations for improving pre-service teacher preparation programs. The quantitative approach's objective feature guarantees that the information gathered is reliable, quantifiable, and valid – all of which are essential for comprehending the elements affecting student satisfaction in teacher education environments (Ramirez, 2020). This study investigate the level of student satisfaction during teaching practice in pre-service teacher education programs. The study uses a quantitative research design and the descriptive survey method. This study is cross-sectional in nature, which means data were collected from respondents at a specific point in time. The quantitative method is suitable for assessing attitudes, opinions, and experiences linked to numerous areas of teaching practice and overall readiness.

Population and Sampling

A stratified random sampling technique was used in this study. The generalizability and dependability of the results are increased by this method, which guarantees that various population subgroups are fairly represented in the sample. The target population includes pre-service teachers enrolled in B.Ed programs at selected universities. To get a balanced viewpoint, the sample was selected from both public and private sector organizations. The population was separated into pertinent strata by the researcher, who then chose a random sample from each stratum. Depending on availability and accessibility, the final sample size ranged from 100 to 200 respondents.

Research Instrument

The main instrument used for data collection is a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). The questionnaire was designed to assess multiple dimensions of satisfaction, including:

1. Support from mentors and supervisors
2. Relevance of tasks and responsibilities
3. Classroom experience and student interaction
4. Feedback and evaluation process
5. Personal growth and confidence level

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Prospective Teachers' Experience regarding Teaching Practice

Statements	Mean	SD
My teaching practice was well-structured and organized.	4.04	0.87
I received sufficient guidance from my mentor/supervisor.	4.05	0.90
The host school provided a supportive environment for my teaching practice.	3.97	0.96
I had adequate opportunities to apply different teaching strategies.	4.02	0.85
The feedback from mentors and teachers was constructive and helpful.	4.02	0.89
I felt confident in managing the classroom independently.	3.87	0.99
The teaching practice helped me improve my lesson planning skills.	4.11	0.76
I had access to necessary teaching resources (books, digital tools, etc.).	3.87	0.96
The duration of my teaching practice was sufficient for learning.	3.97	0.89

The analysis of students' satisfaction with various aspects of their teaching practice experience reveals an overall positive perception. Among the key components, the highest level of satisfaction was reported for "The teaching practice helped me improve my lesson planning skills" with a mean score of 4.11 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.76, indicating a consistently positive experience across participants. Similarly, high satisfaction was observed in statements related to the structure and support of the practicum. For example, "I received sufficient guidance from my mentor/supervisor" ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.90$) and "My teaching practice was well-structured and organized" ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.87$) highlight the effectiveness of institutional and mentor-based support.

Statements such as "I had adequate opportunities to apply different teaching strategies" and "The feedback from mentors and teachers was constructive and helpful", both with a mean of 4.02, suggest that students were provided with practical and meaningful opportunities for professional growth during the practicum. However, slightly lower scores were noted in areas such as "I felt confident in managing the classroom independently" ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.99$) and "I had access to necessary teaching resources" ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.96$), indicating that some students may have felt less prepared in terms of classroom autonomy or resource availability.

Furthermore, the host school environment ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.96$) and practicum duration ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.89$) were also rated positively, though with higher variability, suggesting that experiences in these areas may have differed more significantly between students. Overall, the findings reflect a generally high level of satisfaction with the teaching practice program, particularly in areas directly related to instructional development, while also identifying aspects—such as classroom confidence and access to materials—where enhancements could be made.

Table 2
Prospective Teachers' Faced Challenges during Teaching Practice

Statements	Mean	SD
I faced difficulties in classroom management.	3.21	0.88
The workload during teaching practice was overwhelming.	3.08	0.92
I encountered difficulties in engaging students effectively.	3.14	0.85
My mentor was not always available for guidance and support.	2.97	0.95
There was a lack of practical teaching resources.	3.02	0.89
I found it difficult to balance theory and practical application.	3.10	0.91

The data indicates that preservice teachers encountered moderate to high levels of challenges during their teaching practice, with some areas causing more concern than others. The greatest difficulty reported was in classroom management, with a mean score of 3.21 and a standard deviation of 0.88, suggesting that many students struggled to effectively handle student behavior, manage class routines, or maintain discipline. This was followed by challenges related to balancing theory and practical application ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.91$) and effectively engaging students ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.85$), both of which reflect common issues faced by novice teachers when transitioning from theoretical learning to practical teaching.

The workload during the practicum also emerged as a notable concern ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.92$), indicating that the intensity or volume of tasks, such as lesson planning, classroom delivery, and reporting, may have felt overwhelming for a significant number of participants. Similarly, the lack of practical teaching resources was reported as a challenge ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.89$), showing that access to appropriate tools, materials, or digital aids was not consistent across placements.

The lowest mean score, though still relatively high, was associated with mentor availability ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.95$). While this suggests that some students did receive adequate support, others may have felt isolated or under-guided during their practicum experience. The relatively high standard deviations across all items reflect a notable variation in individual experiences, possibly due to differences in school environments, mentor involvement, or institutional support.

Overall, the findings highlight several critical areas that need attention, particularly in strengthening classroom management training, ensuring consistent mentorship, and reducing student workload during teaching practice. Addressing these issues can significantly enhance the effectiveness of preservice teacher education programs and support the professional growth of future educators.

Table 3
Prospective Teachers' Level of Overall Satisfaction

Statements	Mean	SD
Overall, I am satisfied with my teaching practice experience.	4.05	0.82
I feel prepared to enter the teaching profession after this experience.	3.98	0.88
I would recommend improvements in the teacher training program.	4.12	0.79

The analysis of students' overall satisfaction with their teaching practice experience reveals generally positive perceptions, alongside constructive suggestions for improvement. The highest level of agreement was recorded for the statement, "I would recommend improvements in the teacher training program," with a mean score of 4.12 and a standard deviation of 0.79. This indicates that while students were mostly satisfied with their experience, they also saw clear areas for enhancement, possibly in mentorship quality, resource availability, or practical preparation.

The statement, "Overall, I am satisfied with my teaching practice experience," received a mean score of 4.05 and a standard deviation of 0.82, suggesting that the majority of preservice teachers found the practicum experience rewarding and beneficial. However, the moderate level of variation in responses implies that not all participants had equally positive experiences.

Additionally, the statement, "I feel prepared to enter the teaching profession after this experience," yielded a mean score of 3.98 with a standard deviation of 0.88. While this score reflects general confidence in professional readiness, the slightly lower mean and higher standard deviation point to variability in how effectively the practicum prepared different individuals for real-world teaching roles.

Overall, the data suggests that preservice teachers are largely satisfied and feel reasonably well-prepared for their future careers, but they also recognize the need for targeted improvements within the teacher training programs. These insights should inform policymakers and educators to enhance areas such as practicum structure, supervision, and practical-teaching support mechanisms.

Thematic analysis applied for the open ended questions:

Emerging Themes

Practical Classroom Experience

Many respondents emphasized that teaching in a real classroom environment helped them understand actual teaching dynamics, student behavior, and classroom management strategies.

Mentorship and Feedback

Several preservice teachers highlighted the value of timely feedback and continuous support from their mentors or supervisors, which enhanced their confidence and skills.

Lesson Planning and Delivery

Respondents found preparing and delivering lessons regularly to be a key factor in improving their instructional skills and time management.

Student Engagement Techniques

Some students noted that experimenting with interactive and activity-based teaching methods was both enjoyable and educational.

Table 4
Coded Responses

Code	Response
Real classroom exposure	"Being in a real classroom helped me understand student diversity."
Constructive feedback	"The feedback from my mentor helped me improve with each lesson."
Planning skills	"Preparing lesson plans made me more organized."
Teaching strategies	"Trying out group activities showed me how to keep students engaged."

Emerging Themes

Extended Practicum Duration

Many students suggested that the duration of the teaching practice should be increased to allow deeper learning and confidence-building.

More Mentor Involvement

Some participants felt their mentors were not consistently available or involved, leading to less personalized guidance.

Better Resource Availability

Respondents suggested improving access to teaching aids, digital tools, and structured lesson templates.

Clearer Institutional Guidelines

A few students reported confusion regarding roles, expectations, and assessment criteria, indicating a need for better coordination between the university and the host schools.

Table 5
Coded Responses

Code	Response
Increase practicum time	"Four weeks was too short; we needed more time to grow."
Improve mentor consistency	"Our mentor only observed us once – more involvement would help."
Provide teaching resources	"I had to create all materials from scratch – more support is needed."
Clarify guidelines	"There was a lack of clarity about what we were expected to do."

The teaching practicum is universally regarded as the capstone experience in preservice teacher education. The findings support this notion, showing that most participants experienced significant growth in instructional planning, classroom engagement, and professional self-efficacy. This aligns with prior research emphasizing that the practicum bridges theoretical knowledge and professional identity development (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Zeichner, 2010). However, the data also reveal considerable variability in student experiences, which warrants further discussion in light of educational theory, institutional practice, and policy implications.

A major point of discussion is the role of experiential learning, rooted in Kolb's experiential learning theory, which posits that knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1984). Preservice teachers engaged in real classrooms reported better understanding of abstract pedagogical concepts, demonstrating that practical experience is essential for transforming theory into applied teaching skills. This finding is also consistent with Vygotsky's social constructivist model, which argues that learning occurs through social interaction and contextual engagement (Vygotsky, 1978). The presence of mentors, peer interaction, and exposure to authentic student behavior all contributed to meaningful professional development (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Hudson, 2016).

Nevertheless, the discrepancies in mentor availability and quality of support raise concerns. Students without consistent feedback from supervisors reported greater challenges in adapting to the demands of real teaching. This highlights a systemic gap

between the intended design of the practicum and its actual implementation. While mentorship is central to the practicum model (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010), its inconsistent application across institutions and schools suggests a need for standardized mentorship training and formalized partnerships between teacher education institutes and placement schools (Hobson et al., 2009).

Classroom management also emerged as a key challenge, especially in diverse or resource-limited school environments. Many preservice teachers struggled to maintain discipline, manage large classrooms, or implement differentiated instruction. This aligns with global findings that highlight classroom management as one of the most difficult competencies for new teachers to acquire (OECD, 2019; Evertson & Weinstein, 2013). The issue is not only pedagogical but psychological as well, involving emotional regulation and stress management—areas rarely addressed in traditional teacher education curricula (Friedman, 2000; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Another notable discussion point is the intensive workload students faced. The practicum demands lesson planning, teaching, observation, reflection, and administrative tasks—often within a limited timeframe. Many participants expressed feeling overwhelmed, which may affect the depth of their learning and limit the time available for reflection, collaboration, or feedback assimilation (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Zeichner & Conklin, 2005).

In terms of resource access, a number of students reported lacking materials such as textbooks, multimedia aids, and structured templates. These deficiencies can hinder innovation and engagement in teaching, especially when students are forced to invest additional time and energy in resource creation. This suggests a misalignment between institutional expectations and on-ground realities (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005).

Finally, while most students expressed overall satisfaction and readiness to teach, their suggestions for improvement—such as extended duration, better mentorship, and clearer guidelines—highlight a desire for a more supportive and well-organized practicum structure. These views emphasize the need for teacher training programs to evolve, not only in content but also in delivery and operational execution (Korthagen et al., 2006; Allen & Wright, 2014).

Conclusion

Results of study highlight the the substantial role that teaching practice plays in shaping the competencies and professional identity of preservice teachers. The analysis of data shows that the practicum provides invaluable real-world experience, helping student-teachers switch from theoretical knowledge to practical application in various classroom settings. The practicum's beneficial effects on lesson planning, instructional strategy, and teacher confidence are among the most promising results. These results demonstrate how effective structured teaching methods are at promoting pedagogical growth. An essential aspect of reflective teaching, student-teachers not only practiced designing and delivering content but also learned how to adjust their teaching based on classroom feedback.

In conclusion, even though the practicum serves the fundamental goal of preparing future teachers, it is crucial that educational institutions keep improving the practicum experience. By doing this, it will be made sure that the upcoming generation of educators joins the field equipped with the theoretical knowledge, self-assurance, abilities, and flexibility necessary to succeed in changing classroom settings.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and discussion, several targeted recommendations can be made to enhance the effectiveness, consistency, and equity of teaching practice programs.

- Many preservice teachers felt that four weeks was insufficient for gaining a full understanding of the teaching process. A practicum of 8–12 weeks would allow for deeper engagement, repeated practice, and more robust professional growth.
- Mentorship quality varied significantly across schools. Institutions should provide structured training for mentor teachers, outlining their roles, expectations, and strategies for giving feedback. Regular monitoring should ensure mentors fulfill their duties effectively.
- Educational institutions must ensure that host schools are equipped with adequate resources. Student-teachers should not have to create all materials from scratch. Providing digital access, resource libraries, and model lesson plans can ease the burden on students.
- Institutions should conduct mandatory workshops before the practicum on classroom management, student diversity, inclusive teaching, and stress management. This will better prepare students for real-world challenges.
- Organize structured peer-sharing circles or mentorship groups where student-teachers can share experiences, discuss problems, and exchange ideas. Reflection journals and regular debriefing sessions can further enhance learning.
- Avoid overloading students with administrative tasks. Instead, focus on tasks that directly contribute to professional growth, such as co-teaching, collaborative lesson planning, and guided reflections.
- Many students expressed confusion about expectations. A standardized practicum handbook should be provided, detailing roles, schedules, assessment criteria, and reporting protocols, co-signed by both the university and host school.
- Supervisors from the university should visit host schools regularly to observe teaching, conduct feedback sessions, and mediate any conflicts. This helps maintain a consistent standard of practicum experience.
- Institutes should systematically collect feedback from preservice teachers after the practicum and use it to review and improve policies, mentor selection, resource allocation, and curriculum design.
- Finally, national education bodies and teacher training councils must allocate budgets, design regulations, and implement monitoring frameworks that ensure all teacher education institutes adhere to minimum practicum standards.

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