

Practices and Challenges of the Internship Students in Physical Education

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the practices and challenges of the internship students at Ningxia University in China under the Department of Physical Education. The target participants of the study were 300 intern students. All intern students of physical education provided their views about the different practices and challenges they experience under teaching job content and clerical job content by answering the survey questionnaire which was a researcher-made instrument. This study utilized a quantitative descriptive correlational research design where descriptive and inferential tools were used. In the survey, the result showed that there is a significant difference in the experienced practices and challenges of student interns when it is grouped according to profile specifically under the teaching job content. It was preparation, planning, and instructional materials that were challenging and the internship students are more likely to experience hardship focusing on teaching-related activities rather than clerical activities that have minimal to no relationship to teaching physical education. This only implies that to lessen the challenges in acquiring knowledge in teaching physical education, the school must focus and provide more time for the students to handle classroom management together with students instead of doing clerical jobs in different government offices in China.

Key Words: challenges, internship, physical education, practices and teaching

INTRODUCTION

Physical Education has been part of the life of each human being in this world as it promotes fitness and wellness for the people. It is also part of the school curriculum as the general subjects that a student needs to take to be active and have a better understanding of how important to live a life that is free from any disease and with continuous mobility. That is why schools in every country offer students who want to be Physical Education teachers to spearhead the objectives and goals of Physical education.

Physical education (PE) is a major constituent of the education system, contributing not only to physical development but also to the overall well-being of students (Liu Bo,2020). With the advent of the 21st century, the demand for quality physical education has increased, leading to a profound transformation in the teaching and learning approaches associated with his field.

The importance of physical education, while often overlooked by more traditional academic subjects, is indeed critical. Physical education contributes to all aspects of student development, including physical, social, and psychological aspects (Zhai, W,2018). The physical benefits are perhaps the most obvious – strength, coordination, and overall health – but the social and psychological benefits are equally important.

Participation in physical activity improves social skills, teamwork, and self-esteem. In addition, it provides an outlet for stress and promotes mental health. However, the value of physical education extends beyond the walls of the school. It contributes to lifelong development and physical literacy, as explained by Zhai, W (2018). From early childhood to adulthood, physical education plays an important role in keeping individuals active, healthy, and involved in their communities. It not only instills the habit of regular physical activity but also equips individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to maintain this habit throughout their lives. This is why valuing the importance of teaching Physical Education through teaching internship is so important.

“Teaching practice is one of the important ways to test the qualities, skills, and theoretical knowledge learned by students majoring in education.” (Problems and Countermeasures in the Practice of Physical Education Majors from the Perspective of Interns-Li Jie, 2022, p. 11)

In addition, in the process of teaching practice, students’ quality, skills, and theoretical knowledge have been further improved, combined with and adapted to the actual teaching environment, enhancing their practical teaching ability, cultivating and training their ability to analyze their problems, solve problems through practice, and combine theory with practice, and combining theory with teaching. (Hu Shanlan, 2022) It enables students to have basic practical knowledge and educational abilities in their future educational careers, thereby shortening the adaptation period for educational positions, laying a good foundation for students to enter the job market in the future, and increasing the probability of future employment. (Liu Bo, 2020)

In China, particularly in bigger universities like Ningxia University that offers Physical Education Majors have their practice teaching internship. The said internship is being offered for fourth-year college students who have one remaining semester before graduating. The said students who will need to undergo practice teaching have two directions under the internship program. The first one is to directly be under a school to teach and assist Physical Education teachers for a certain amount of time and the second one is to be under a government agency or department regardless of its nature and do clerical work like typing jobs, answering calls and emails, entertaining clients and many more.

The researcher involved in the process of allocating internships to undergraduate physical education majors in Chinese colleges and universities found that although the allocation of internship sites was as fair as possible, the random allocation resulted in some students going to internships that did not match their majors, which posed a challenge to their professional competence. Some students chose to “get by” because they could not adapt well to the internship environment, while others tried to adapt, but with poor results. Meanwhile, students’ satisfaction with internships varied from being an opportunity to acquire new skills to being a disaster to being under-appreciated by the university. The researcher plans to further study the causes of these phenomena and propose improvement programs to contribute to the reform and improvement of physical education in Chinese universities.

METHODOLOGY

Subsection

In this study, “descriptive analysis” and “correlation analysis” of quantitative research will be used. “Descriptive analysis is mainly used to describe, present, or summarize the data characteristics of this study, which include: frequency, percentage, and standard deviation. The correlation analysis method” is mainly used to test and calculate the relationship and difference between two variable factor groups, in this analysis method, the correlation and significance between the factors are shown through Sig value or through Pearson value, which includes: Pearson value analysis, independent samples t-test, and ANOVA (Chen M,

Zhu Ligang. 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result showed that 300 students respondents show that the majority of them are in the range of 21-22 years old with a frequency of 172 or 57% of the population under respondents. For the gender profile, 154 or 51% are male while 146 or 49% are female. Finally, for the type of internship profile, 184 or 61% are clerical jobs while 116 or 39% are education jobs.

In terms of classroom management, the dominant mean of 2.69 agreed that they are very good at ensuring that students are focused on physical activities while the lowest mean of 2.54 still agreed that they were very good at controlling and resolving problematic aspects of student behavior during physical activities. While on the pedagogy, the highest mean of 2.55 agreed that they are very good at adapting teaching methods to the individual differences of the students while the lowest mean of 2.48 still agreed that they were very good at stimulating students' interest and enthusiasm for physical activity. On the part of instructional materials, the highest mean (2.48) agreed that they are highly skilled in creating and using innovative instructional materials that include multimedia and interactive elements while the lowest mean of 2.42 still agreed on the fact they are very good at selecting and using materials that are appropriate for teaching physical education and usage of instructional materials to enhance student engagement and understanding of physical activity during practicum.

In the level of challenges in the internship of students for teaching job contents, planning has the dominant mean with 2.56 while the second dominant is under the delivery with 2.51 mean, and the third dominant came from preparation both earned the mean of 2.49 under the cohesive teaching and instructional materials. On the other hand, the lowest mean of 2.44 were found under planning and delivery as well.

It was also found that in the level of challenges in the internship of students under the clerical job content, the most dominant has a mean of 2.48 falls under answering phone calls and emails while the registry and storage handling both received a 2.47 mean.

The assessment of significant difference between the demographic profile and the level of challenges of internship students in terms of teaching job content also shows that all the computed p-values have a level of significance higher than 0.05 which leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis except for the planning and preparation factor when grouped to the age profile. While on the clerical job content, it was shown that all the computed p-values have a level of significance higher than 0.05 which leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis except for the registry factor when grouped to the age profile.

On the significant relationship between the level of practice and level of challenges of internship students in terms of teaching job content, it was found that all the factors have a low to moderate correlation which indicates that it has an importance in becoming a teacher. In the clerical job content, all the computed R-value shows a low positive correlation for all the factors as shown in the table below:

Table 1. The significant relationship between the level of practice and level of challenges of internship students in terms of teaching job content

Teaching Job Content				
Level of Practice Factors	r-value	p-value	Remarks	Decision
<i>Planning</i>				
Classroom Management	0.407	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
Pedagogy	0.481	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis

Instructional Materials	0.466	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
<i>Preparation</i>				
Classroom Management	0.498	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
Pedagogy	0.471	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
Instructional Materials	0.509	0.00001	Moderate positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
<i>Delivery</i>				
Classroom Management	0.520	0.00001	Moderate positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
Pedagogy	0.478	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
Instructional Materials	0.501	0.00001	Moderate positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis

Table 2. The significant relationship between the level of practice and level of challenges of internship students in terms of clerical job content

Clerical Job content				
Level of Practice Factors	r-value	p-value	Remarks	Decision
<i>Storage and handling</i>				
Classroom Management	0.515	0.00001	Moderate positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
Pedagogy	0.504	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
Instructional Materials	0.486	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
<i>Registry</i>				
Classroom Management	0.479	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
Pedagogy	0.437	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
Instructional Materials	0.387	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
<i>Answer phone calls and e-mails</i>				
Classroom Management	0.443	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
Pedagogy	0.499	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis
Instructional Materials	0.478	0.00001	Low positive correlation	Reject the null hypothesis

The results showed that the hypothesis for the teaching job content and clerical job content both rejected the null hypothesis. This only shows that the program for the internship activities of Physical Education Majors under Ningxia University for fourth-year students is not suitable for their preparation in becoming a teacher. Doing clerical work under different government agencies as part of the practice teaching is not a teaching job that needs direct interaction with the students and provides good classroom management as expected from the students.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study, in the classroom management dimension, sub-variables such as focus, adaptation, and creativity were the most influential results among the level of practice of internship undergraduate students. While in the challenges under teaching job content, it was also difficult to prepare in advance for anticipated instructional challenges and integration of classroom activities, teaching methods, and instructional materials into a cohesive teaching experience as shown in the findings. On the other hand, the clerical job content also shows the difficulty in maintaining professional and friendly language and attitudes to communicate with others with the use of phone or email on behalf of the school or department.

However, the difficulty is not that hard compared to the teaching job content when it comes to preparation and planning.

Furthermore, the planning and preparation of instructional materials and pedagogy received the rejected hypothesis that only shows that the students are facing a big challenge when it comes to teaching content. Bot four sub-variables are the most significant duties of a teacher in the field of teaching job content.

As shown in the result, all the factors have a low to moderate correlation which indicates that it has an importance in becoming a teacher. Indeed, the correlation was justified to the extent that it covers all the practice factors about teaching job content.

Finally, the low positive correlation is supported by detailed research methods and results, as it is inferred that the way college students' intern may affect their employment opportunities and career development. This is because internships can provide practical work experience, help students understand the work environment and requirements in their field, and establish professional networks. Providing internships that will focus solely on the expected career that the Physical Education majors will do is more suitable than giving them activities that are not related to their future jobs. This only resulted in having all "difficulties" in different sub-variables and dimensions regarding the level of practice for teaching job content and clerical job content. All of these may improve students' employment opportunities if given time to recalibrate.

RECOMMENDATION

This study proposes that interns should continue to strengthen their teaching abilities during educational internships, actively learn teaching skills from experienced teachers, and maintain good interpersonal relationships with guidance teachers, internship schoolteachers, and internship school students. Since it is a teaching career, the focus should be more on the teaching job content.

It is also ideal for the teachers to provide sufficient time for the interns to focus on the preparation of instructional materials and pedagogy of the students rather than taking all their time in a simultaneous internship of being a teacher and clerk.

It is recommended that university administrators reprogram their curriculum for Physical education interns to focus more on preparing their students for the teaching job content rather than the clerical ones. If the administrators are expecting to produce graduates who are excellent in teaching and classroom management, their curriculum must also focus on strengthening the teaching capability of their students, especially the interns.

In addition, the researchers are encouraging the Department of Physical Education of Ningxia University and another university in China that has the same pattern of activities being offered to their practicum students to enhance their program for Physical Education Teachers Internship Curriculum focusing on the following:

Phase 1: All about the classroom and the children/students

Phase 2: A collaborative way of teaching

Phase 3: Preparation for Lead teaching or Demonstration Teaching

Phase 4: Lead Teaching or Demonstration Teaching

Phase 5: Phasing out

Lastly, a parallel study is also essential to further investigate the different challenges of interns during the send-off to different training centers and might focus on the different subject majors.

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