



# Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of Pre-Service Teachers in One Private School in Quezon Province

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Pre service teacher play a dual role in teaching practice, both teacher and student. In the process of teaching practice, their experiences as novice teacher is often different from in-service teacher. This study aimed to determine the challenges faced by pre service teacher during their internship, as well as the coping mechanism they used to navigate the challenges.

Employing the phenomenological design to focus on the essence of the pre service teacher experiences during their internship. Through purposive sampling, 15 participants that being a pre service teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Secondary Education in one Private College in Quezon Province were chosen. The result reveal that pre service teachers came across with a number of challenges, especially the lesson planning, managing classroom dynamics, and reconciling academic obligations with the practical demands of their internship.

On the contrary, to cope to those issues asking for help from teacher, friends, and family member, positive thinking, efficient time management and using internet like YouTube and google helped these future teachers to defeat the challenges. The findings of this study may then serve as guide evidence-based policies and initiatives aimed at helping to produce outstanding teacher

Keywords: teaching internship, challenges, Coping mechanisms

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching internship is very well known as a practice to enhance Pre-service teacher skills and expertise. Practice teaching serves as a culminating experience and a means of authentic experiential learning to better prepare aspiring teachers for real teaching. The research focuses on the challenges and coping mechanisms of pre-service teachers during their teaching internships. This implies examining the challenges student-teachers encounter during their practical teaching experiences and coping mechanism they employ to overcome these challenges.

Universal journal of educational research (2021) Pre-service teacher education is a key factor in quality education. In the Philippines, the pre-service preparation of teachers for the primary and secondary education sectors is a very important functions and responsibility that has been assigned to Highest Education Institutions (HEIs). All efforts to improve the quality of education are dependent on the service of teachers who are properly prepared to undertake the various important roles and functions of teachers. As such, it is of utmost important that the highest standards are set in defining the objectives components and processes of the pre-service teacher education curriculum.

Pre-Service teachers play a dual role in teaching practice, both teachers and students. In the process of teaching practice, their emotional experience as novice teacher is often different from in-service teachers. Pre-Service teachers experienced various positive and negative emotions in their interactions with advisors, students, preservice peers, and other school staff. This research shows that the practice situation or environment evoke different emotional experienced in pre-service teachers, positive emotions bring happiness and self-satisfactory, and negative emotions lead to powerlessness, helplessness, and lack of security.





Internship programs for future teachers in Quezon Province are encountering multifaceted challenges. These mainly involve not having enough resources, issues with the quality of mentorship, and practical challenges. Interns often struggle with lesson planning due to limited experience, time management issues because of heavy workloads, and a lack of essential resources like laptops and reliable internet connectivity, which significantly affects their lesson preparation. Additionally, pre-service teachers face financial burdens and mobility challenges because of the distance to cooperating schools. Addressing these interconnected challenges is crucial for enhancing the internship experience and ensuring that future teachers in Quezon Province are well-prepared and adequately supported to meet the demands of the teaching profession.

This study aimed to determine the challenges faced by pre-service teachers during their internships, as well as the coping mechanisms they used to navigate these challenges. This is to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which they developed the skills and competencies necessary for teaching, and identify strategies for supporting their growth and development. Additionally, the findings of the study informed seminar and training program to support pre-service teachers' professional growth and development during internships.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

This statement of the problem explored and discussed the common challenges encountered by pre-service teachers and coping mechanisms employ to navigate these challenges in the real classroom setting as they navigated their professional experiences, enhanced their understanding, and indicated the potential solution to support their growth and success.

- 1. How do the challenges of Pre-service Teachers in teaching Internship can be described?
- 2. How do the coping mechanisms of Pre-service Teachers in Teaching Internship can be described?

# **Conceptual Framework**

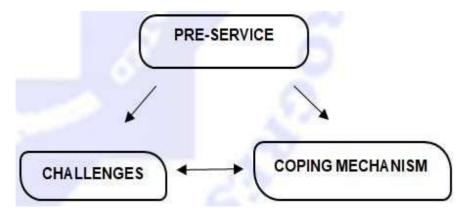


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

In this study, the researcher's conceptual framework showed the transition of the pre-service teachers as they navigated challenges, developed coping mechanisms, and return to their role with enhanced skills and confidence. This conceptual framework illustrates the transformative journey of pre-service teachers as they transition to real-world classroom practice. It captures the dynamic interplay between the challenges they encountered, the coping mechanisms they developed, and the professional growth from their experiences. This framework recognized that pre-service teachers faced a range of instructional, emotional, and contextual challenges during their practicum. These challenges served as scaffolding for growth, prompting the development of adaptive coping strategies such as reflective practice, peer collaboration, mentorship, and the integration of educational technologies.

Through the application of these coping mechanisms, pre-service teachers refined their instructional approaches, build resilience, and enhanced their confidence. This process not only strengthens their teaching competencies but also contributes to improved student learning outcomes and classroom engagement. This underscores the importance of recognizing the challenges of pre-service teachers faced and equipped them with practical coping





mechanisms. By addressing the challenges they faced and fostered effective coping mechanisms, teacher education programs can better prepare future educators for the complexities of the classroom, ultimately promoting professional readiness and long-term success.

### **Scope and Limitations**

Exploration of the scope involved the various aspects of the Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of Pre-service Teachers in Teaching Internships. The study did not cover the other private or public schools within the area or other places. The study was carried out within a specified time frame. The time frame identified for the study was specifically during the academic year 2024-2025. This limited the depth of analysis. The limitation of this study included a small sample size specifically ten (15) pre-service teachers from one private college in Quezon Province. The selection of the participants for this study was carried out following specific criteria. The participants involved pre-service teachers that have an experience and the willingness to share their insights. Many potential participants were considered. Their demanding schedules and the duties of teachings such as lesson planning and classroom management often left them unable to engage. On the other hand, the selected participants met the criteria. They also demonstrated the availability and motivation to contribute meaningfully to the research. This highlighted their interest in reflecting on their challenges and professional growth despite the constraints faced by their peers.

The results may not have been generalized to the experienced of other pre-service teachers in different educational settings. The findings were reliant on self-report data, which might have introduced biases such as social desirability bias and recall bias, thus impacted the truthfulness of the participants' reports on their challenges and the ways to overcome them. In addition, the study has captured the challenges of the pre-service teachers during a short period of time, which is most likely to be their first year of teaching in real classroom setting, but without observing how the teachers' challenges and the ways to overcome them have changed with time. Moreover, the study could have been limited to a very small number of the observant issues, therefore missing other relevant issues that might have affected the teachers' behavior too, for example, professional development or relationships with the students.

The last possibility was the researcher's potential biases and the qualitative nature of the study may have limited the generalizability of the findings to other institution, or to a broader population of pre-service teachers. This research employed a phenomenological approach, utilized interviews as the primary method of data collection. It was important to note that this approach may have introduced subjectivity and may have been influenced by personal biases.

#### **Definitions of Terms**

Terms here are conceptually and operationally defined for better understanding of the readers.

Challenges - In this study, challenges are defined as the challenges pre-service teachers encounter during their internship, such as lesson planning and classroom management. The challenges that necessitate individuals to utilize personal and social resources to surmount them. (Giddings 2023) proposed that challenges in life balance pertain to regulating meaningful activity levels according to individual needs, with an imbalance indicating difficulty in attaining desired activities and satisfaction.

Coping mechanisms - Mechanism refers to a method or process, and coping means dealing with challenges. Coping mechanisms refer to the specific strategies pre-service teachers use to manage stress and overcome challenges during their teaching internship. Psychological strategy or adaptation that a person relies on to manage stress. (Algorani & Gupta, 2021) Defined coping mechanism as a cognitive and behavioral approaches that we use to manage internal and external stressors.

**Internship** - Internship refers to the structured teaching experience in a private school in Quezon Province where pre-service teachers apply their knowledge and skills. A professional learning experience that provides students with relevant, hands-on work in their field of study. An internship allows students to explore and build their careers while also learning new skills. It offers the opportunity to bring new ideas and develop talent and





potentially build a pipeline for future full-time employees.

Pre-service Teachers - It refers to the students who are preparing to become teachers through a teacher education program (Division Memorandum No.160, s.2022). It is a student teacher from Northern Quezon College, Inc. participating in the teaching internship program.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

The phenomenology design was the one which the researchers used. A phenomenological study is one of the types of qualitative research methodology which is focusing on the essence of a certain phenomenon. The aim is to investigate and understand the lived experiences of people from their points of view. This method seeks to uncover the essence of human experiences, perceptions, and meanings that are related to a particular situation or event. "Finlay (2020)" Researchers who are doing phenomenological studies are using in-depth interviews, observations, and other types of data collection to understand how participants were making sense of their experiences.

The study investigates various challenges and coping strategies for pre-service teachers in the course of their professional development. The purpose of the study is to identify and analyze various challenges that pre-service teachers face, such as adapting to the educational setting, developing teaching skills, working with diverse student populations, and balancing personal and professional responsibilities. Using interviews and observation data, the phenomenological approach helps researchers understand the ways in which pre-service teachers cope with these challenges. The phenomenological approach facilitates a thorough understanding of the experiences of pre-service teachers, and the crucial insights gained through this research can be helpful in developing appropriate teaching practices and support systems for pre-service teachers. The phenomenological approach does not presuppose any prior theories or interpretations, which ensures that the findings are based on the lived experiences of the pre-service teachers.

Research design in focus on phenomena is structured to give a complete perspective on the challenges and coping mechanism of pre-service teachers. The overall comprehension is essential for the improvement of teacher education programs and helping out the upcoming teachers. A phenomenological approach was used to identify the challenges and coping challenges of the pre-service students in the private college. The challenges were adapting to learning, learning pedagogical skills, managing diverse students, being informed of current events and balancing between their assignment and personal life.

#### Research Locale

The study took place at one private college in Quezon Province, Philippines, which provided a college education consisting of four (5) programs: Bachelor of Secondary Education, Bachelor of Elementary Education, Bachelor of Science in Criminology, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Senior High School Department. The Bachelor of Secondary Education program's core disciplines included social studies, English, Math, and Filipino.

The researchers of this study selected pre-service instructors from all programs based on their academic records. The pre-service teachers were identified as the participants, and they collected the challenges and coping mechanisms they encountered. This led the investigator to select one private institution as the study's site, where the target pre-service instructors were chosen.

Internship programs for future teachers in Quezon Province are facing several interconnected challenges. These mainly involve not having enough resources, issues with the quality of mentorship, and practical challenges. The study pointed out that interns struggle with lesson planning because they lack experience, have trouble managing their time due to a large workload, and don't have enough resources like laptops or a good internet connection, which directly affects how well they can prepare their lessons. Pre-service teachers face additional financial burden and mobility issues due to the distance to cooperating schools. Tackling these issues is crucial for





making internships better. It's about making sure future teachers in Quezon Province are ready and have the support they need to handle the real challenges of being a teacher.

# **Research Participants**

Participants were chosen using purposive sampling, a method where individuals are selected based on their specific traits or experiences that are relevant to the research questions. This approach is effective for gaining detailed insights from people with first-hand knowledge of the topic being studied. In this research, purposive sampling helped to find pre-service teachers who could offer important perspectives on the challenges and strategies they use during their teaching internships at a specific private college in Quezon Province.

The participants were selected using purposive sampling, it is a type of non-probability sampling technique in which units are chosen because they have traits that the sample requires. The following criteria were used to choose participants: (a) being a pre-service teacher enrolled in the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) major in Filipino, English, Math, and Social Studies; (b) a pre-service teacher enrolled in the Bachelor of Elementary Education; and (c) willing to participate in the study. In total, the research includes 15 participants who met these criteria.

#### Research Instrument

This part discussed the data-gathering tool used by the researcher to gather data from the participants who purposely used for this study. The researcher used semi-structured as an interview guide for the data gathering process to get qualitative data to determine the challenges and coping mechanisms of pre-service teachers in teaching internships. The researcher used the semi-structured interview as its default data-gathering tool. According to DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019), semi-structured in-depth interview commonly used in qualitative research and the most frequent qualitative data source in health services research. This method typically involved a dialogue between the researcher and participant, guided by a flexible interview protocol and supplemented by follow-up questions, probes, and comments.

The method allowed the researcher to collect open-ended data, get valid information from the participant's perspective through one-on-one interviews, explore participant thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about a particular topic, and delve deeply into personal and sometimes sensitive issues.

The interview process used a flexible set of questions to understand the experiences of the pre-service teachers during their internships. It started with a broad question about their journey as student teachers, then moved to specific questions about the challenges they faced, like planning lessons, managing time, and getting resources. They were asked to share specific times when they felt stressed or exhausted and what the biggest challenges were. The interview also looked at how they dealt with these challenges, including what strategies, support, and resources they used. More questions were asked to get them to explain their answers in detail. The final questions asked what they learned from their experiences that would help them teach better in the future and what advice they had for new student teachers.

#### **Data Gathering Procedures**

Before starting data collecting, the researchers first seek ethical concerns and appropriate authorization from the Bachelor of Secondary Education head supervisor. Approved, data was gathered using a semi-structured interview guided by a research objective created. The researcher contacted participants chosen by deliberate sampling the method of choosing subjects for a more in-depth investigation depending on particular study-related criteria that agreed to take part. The interviews were conducted in person, over the phone, or via video conference, depending on the participants' availability and preference, and were planned to last 30-60 minutes. The interviews were recorded with the participants' permission.

Following each semi-structured interview, recorded data was transcribed verbatim and analyzed qualitatively to identify patterns, themes and insights relevant to the research objectives. The validity of data was achieved via member-checking and maintaining an audit trail of the research process. The results were reported in detail,





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which included direct quotes, summaries and interpretations as well as the discussion of how the results related to the research objectives.

The collected data was the underpinning of the possible implications of the study. Informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw served as the ethical considerations, at the same time, they were observed.

#### **Data Analysis**

Pre-service teachers' qualitative data gathered during semi-structured interviews was evaluated using thematic analysis. Verbatim transcribing of the interviews was followed by an inductive coding system. The first codes were created by carefully reading the content and spotting trends and subjects that kept coming back. Frequent comparison and iterative coding helped these codes be grouped into more general themes. Themes were refined and assigned based on their applicability to the goals of the research and data comprehensiveness. The results provided insightful analysis of the experiences and coping strategies used by pre-service teachers overcoming the challenges they encountered.

Thematic analysis was the best way to analyze the data because it allowed a flexible and detailed look into the real experiences of the student teachers. Since the study wanted to understand the challenges and coping strategies within an actual classroom, thematic analysis gave a systematic way to find repeating patterns and themes straight from the interview notes. Also, this method fit with the phenomenological research design, which focuses on understanding the core of an experience through the eyes of the participants. This let the researchers uncover the deeper meanings and experiences related to the teaching internship. Using thematic analysis ultimately gave a detailed and nuanced understanding of the student teachers' journeys, which helps in creating better strategies to improve teacher education programs, as shown in the study's importance.

#### **Specialist Informant**

This study was validated by an expert, a qualitative research professional. To maintain anonymity, the informant will be referred to as Expert Informant. The Expert Informant, a Principal I at Magsikap Integrated School, holds a Masteral degree in Education Management from Northern Quezon College Incorporated (NQCI) and a Masteral degree in Social Studies from Laguna State Polytechnic University. She has also pursued doctoral studies in Educational Leadership and Management, completing 18 units. Her role as an informant is crucial due to her extensive experience and qualifications in education, providing valuable insights into the challenges and coping mechanisms of pre-service teachers. Her expertise helps to ensure the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Pre-service teachers have diverse experienced throughout their teaching internships, including a range of challenges and coping mechanism. Common challenges include creating and managing lesson plans, struggling with time management, and feeling stressed due to heavy workloads. Along with these challenges, many preservice teachers also struggle to manage a variety of student behaviors, filled up their own knowledge gaps, and adjust to new teaching contexts.

Pre-service teachers use a variety of coping mechanisms to address these issues. One of the main coping mechanisms is to ask for help from friends, family, and cooperating teachers. They emphasize the significance of prioritizing tasks, managing time effectively, and keeping a positive outlook. Pre-service teachers also make use of readily available resources for lesson planning and instructional support, including laptops, internet access, and online learning environments.

The findings also highlight the significance of personal qualities such as patience, resilience, and a willingness to learn from mistakes. Pre-service teachers find that reflecting on their experiences and accepting feedback from mentors and peers contribute significantly to their professional growth. Support systems, including cooperating teachers, fellow interns, and friends, play a crucial role in helping them navigate the stresses and demands of





their internships. Institutions can better support pre-service teachers by fostering collaborative environments and ensuring access to necessary resources and guidance.

# **CONCLUSION**

The study on the challenges and coping mechanisms of pre-service teachers during their teaching internship at One Private School has brought to light a diverse terrain, which is characterized with not only the large obstacles but also the adaptive strategies that the educators applied in their first encounter with the teaching profession. The preservice teachers came across with a number of challenges, especially the lesson planning, managing classroom dynamics, and reconciling academic obligations with the practical demands of their internship. These challenges were often accompanied by tension, exhaustion, and self-doubt as they were juggling their duties both as students and as educators.

To cope with those issues, the pre-service teachers turned to different ways of coping to help them out in the maze of their internship. Asking for help from teachers, friends, and family members was a very important move since it made the resources for them to draw on in terms of emotional and practical support. Positive thinking, efficient time management, and using the internet like YouTube and Google were all very important factors that helped these future teachers to defeat the challenges and also to improve their teaching abilities. The situations these teachers went through emphasize even more the need for thorough preparation for pre-service teachers alongside the necessary support. The practical part of teacher education, lesson planning, classroom management, and giving stress relief to the students, should be the top priority of the curriculum.

The building of resilience and nurturing professional development also require designing the atmosphere, which makes it possible for pre-service teachers to share their experiences and seek advice from each other. To sum up, dealing with the challenges of pre-service teachers by employing proactive and empathetic means of support does not only facilitate personal and professional development but also raises the level of education of future generations. Educational institutions by putting forward the challenges of going from student to teacher position and providing targeted resources will be able to support the emergence of an enthusiastic, competent, and strong teaching workforce ready to have a positive impact on the lives of their students.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations aim to foster a more resilient, well-prepared, and supported teaching workforce, ultimately benefiting the quality of education.

#### **Pre-Service Teachers**

It is highly recommended to actively participate in mentorship programs and well-organized professional development activities. By doing so, they can greatly improve their teaching abilities and gain self-assurance. Creating connections with fellow teachers and getting emotional and social support from the school community can assist new teachers in handling their responsibilities and alleviating stress. A strong passion for teaching and an internal drive will support their personal development and have a beneficial influence on their students.

# **Teacher Educators**

Teacher educators face challenges like adapting to new educational technologies, curriculum changes, and managing diverse student needs, leading to stress and burnout. Coping mechanisms include seeking peer support, prioritizing well-being, practicing mindfulness, and engaging in self-directed learning. Recommendations include institutions providing more professional development, administrators offering greater support, and implementing workload management systems.

#### **School Administration**

Educational institutions are advised to implement key coping mechanisms to enhance the experience and professional growth of pre-service teachers by offering organized professional development programs designed





to address challenges faced by new educators, including workshops and seminars focused on teaching methods, classroom management, and technology tools. Research on pre-service teachers' challenges and coping mechanisms during their teaching internship in One Private College revealed obstacles in lesson planning, classroom management, and balancing responsibilities, leading to tension and self-doubt. To navigate these issues, pre-service teachers used coping strategies such as seeking assistance from cooperating teachers, friends, and family, along with time management, positive thinking, and online resources. This experience highlights the need for comprehensive preparation and support systems within teacher education programs, emphasizing practical instruction and stress management. Fostering resilience and professional development through collaborative support can enhance pre-service teachers' growth, benefiting the overall quality of education, and targeted resources can help develop a confident teaching workforce.

# **Educational Policymakers**

They should utilize the findings of this research to guide evidence-based policies and initiatives aimed at helping to produce outstanding teachers, thereby improving the standard of education. This includes creating supportive learning environments that advance the professional growth and welfare of pre-service teachers, strengthening teacher retention, and improving student outcomes. It is essential to offer organized professional development programs specifically designed for the challenges faced by new educators, including workshops and seminars that cover efficient teaching methods, classroom management techniques, and opportunities for continued learning. Workshops that focus on using technology tools such as Google Docs and Classroom can also empower pre-service teachers to enhance their lesson planning and presentation skills, ultimately fostering more engaging learning environments for their students.

#### **Future Researchers**

The challenges and coping mechanism that pre-service teachers deal with during their internships at private colleges are clarified by this study. Despite this, there remain areas for further investigation that upcoming researchers may consider. One such gap is the narrow focus of the research conducted at a private college in Quezon Province. It is suggested that research be carried out in a wider context, incorporating various types of institutions (both public and private) as well as diverse regions to enhance the generalizability of the results.

Furthermore, it is essential to investigate how social demographic factors such as socioeconomic status and cultural background influence the experiences of pre-service teachers. Furthermore, employing a mixed-methods strategy that integrates qualitative data (such as interviews) and quantitative data (like surveys) can significantly enhance our comprehension of the issues. Additionally, examining intervention programs that assist pre-service teachers in managing the challenges of internships and their potential impact on performance and well-being is crucial.

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