

Evaluating Teacher Internship Program in a Teacher Education Institution: A Proposed Mentorship Program

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100900105>

Received: 14 September 2026; Accepted: 19 September 2026; Published: 01 October 2026

ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the teacher internship program of a teacher education institution by examining the self-reported teaching competencies, teaching confidence, and challenges encountered by graduating teacher interns. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational-comparative research design, the study involved 119 graduating BEEd and BSEd teacher interns who participated approximately one month before graduation. Data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire measuring teaching competencies, challenges encountered, confidence and preparedness, and recommendations for internship program improvement. Descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, independent-samples t-test, and one-way analysis of variance were used to analyze the data. Findings showed that the interns reported a very high level of teaching competencies ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.72$) and very high teaching confidence ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.75$), while challenges encountered were reported at a moderate level ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.25$). A statistically significant positive association was found between self-reported teaching competencies and teaching confidence ($r = .606$, $p < .001$). No statistically significant differences were found in teaching competencies or teaching confidence when respondents were grouped according to age. The findings also showed a statistically significant difference in teaching competencies by sex, while teaching confidence did not significantly differ by sex. Neither teaching competencies nor teaching confidence significantly differed according to academic program. Overall, the findings indicate that graduating teacher interns reported high levels of teaching competencies and confidence while experiencing moderate internship-related challenges. Based on these findings, a structured mentorship program is proposed to provide systematic guidance, feedback, and support during the teacher internship experience.

Keywords: teacher internship, teaching competencies, teaching confidence, internship challenges, teacher education, mentorship program

Keywords: Teacher Internship Program, Teaching Skills, Teaching Confidence, Internship Challenges, Pre-Service Teachers, Teacher Education, Classroom Management, Mentorship Program, Professional Readiness

INTRODUCTION

Teacher quality remains a crucial factor in improving student learning outcomes across different educational systems. One way to strengthen this is by ensuring that future teachers receive meaningful and well-structured preparation during their training years. Among the most important components of teacher preparation is the internship or practice teaching phase, which allows pre-service teachers to experience real classroom situations and apply what they have learned from theory into practice.

In many countries such as Singapore, Australia, and Finland, internship programs are carefully designed and closely supervised. These programs have been shown to significantly improve teaching skills, teaching confidence, and readiness among future teachers (Caspersen & Raaen, 2021; OECD, 2021). Similarly, international organizations like UNESCO (2021) emphasize the importance of strong partnerships between schools and universities, as well as structured mentoring systems that guide teacher candidates throughout their practicum experience. Malhoit and Wake (2021) further highlight that mentoring and reflective practice are essential in developing adaptive and effective teachers.

In the Philippine context, this emphasis on experiential learning is reflected in CHED Memorandum Order No. 104, series of 2017, which identifies internship as a key component of teacher education. Through this program, pre-service teachers are given opportunities to engage in actual teaching under the supervision of cooperating teachers and field supervisors.

However, despite these policies, several studies have pointed out inconsistencies in how internship programs are implemented. Issues such as limited mentoring, insufficient feedback, and weak connections between theory and practice continue to be observed (Almerino et al., 2020; Dizon & Tolentino, 2022). In addition, most existing studies tend to focus only on either skills or challenges, rather than examining both in relation to teacher readiness and professional growth (Panti, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic also brought additional challenges to teacher education. Many institutions shifted to online or hybrid internship formats, which raised concerns about the adequacy of these experiences in preparing future teachers. Studies revealed that virtual internships often lacked opportunities for classroom management and direct interaction, leading to feelings of unpreparedness among pre-service teachers (Maher et al., 2021; Reyes & Santiago, 2022).

At the local level, particularly in Cebu and the Central Visayas region, similar concerns have been noted. Pre-service teachers commonly experience difficulties in lesson planning, classroom management, and addressing diverse learners (Montebon & Cagasan, 2021; Donguines et al., 2021). These challenges are often linked to inconsistent mentoring and limited support during the internship period. Furthermore, studies have shown that although pre-service teachers generally possess adequate theoretical knowledge, many experience difficulties translating this knowledge into effective classroom practice and adapting to the complexities of authentic teaching environments (Ellis et al., 2020; Li et al., 2023). Another concern is the need to strengthen supervision, monitoring, and coordination between teacher education institutions (TEIs) and cooperating schools. Abas (2016), in examining the experiences of pre-service teachers during off-campus observation in Philippine secondary schools, identified supervision and monitoring, supervisory planning, role clarification, and coordination among TEIs and cooperating schools as areas requiring improvement. The findings highlight the importance of clearly defined roles and stronger institutional partnerships in supporting pre-service teachers during their field experiences. These concerns suggest the need for more structured and context-based approaches to improve internship implementation. As a teacher and Student Internship Program of the Philippines (SIPP) coordinator in the College of Teacher Education, the researcher has directly observed these challenges. This experience provides a deeper understanding of both the strengths and areas that need improvement in the current internship program.

This study is therefore conducted to examine how internship programs contribute to the development of teaching skills and teaching confidence among pre-service teachers. It also aims to identify the challenges encountered during internship and to determine how these experiences influence teacher readiness. Ultimately, the study seeks to propose a structured mentorship program that can enhance the overall internship experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The present study is anchored on the national framework governing teacher education practicum in the Philippines, particularly CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 104, series of 2017, entitled Policies and Guidelines for Practicum of Students in Teacher Education. As shown in Figure 1 (Theoretical Framework of the Study), the framework illustrates how the policy foundation and the supporting theories collectively explain the development of teaching competencies, teaching confidence, and professional growth among teacher interns. Specifically, CHED Memorandum Order No. 104, series of 2017 serves as the policy foundation, while Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, and Toker Gökçe's Professional Socialization Theory provide the theoretical lenses that explain the internship experiences of pre-service teachers.

This policy mandates that all teacher education institutions provide student interns with structured practicum experiences that develop their teaching skills, professional readiness, and classroom teaching confidence. Under this memorandum, teacher internship is conceptualized not merely as a requirement for graduation but as a crucial experiential platform where pedagogical theories are translated into authentic teaching practice.

In accordance with this policy, the internship program is expected to provide interns with opportunities for actual teaching under the supervision of cooperating teachers and college-based mentors, fostering the development of instructional competence, professional attitudes, and reflective practice. This policy foundation informs the need for evaluating the internship program's effectiveness and for designing enhanced support mechanisms—such as a structured mentorship program—to ensure that the intended outcomes of teacher preparation are achieved (CHED, 2017).

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), developed by David A. Kolb (1984), serves as one of the theoretical foundations of this study. The theory explains that learning is a continuous process in which knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Rather than viewing learning as the passive acquisition of information, Kolb emphasized that meaningful learning occurs when individuals actively engage in experiences, reflect on those experiences, develop new concepts based on their reflections, and apply these concepts in future situations. This cyclical process enables learners to continually improve their knowledge, skills, and professional competence.

According to Kolb (1984), experiential learning consists of four interconnected stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Concrete experience involves direct participation in authentic activities or situations. Reflective observation occurs when learners critically examine and evaluate their experiences to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. During abstract conceptualization, learners develop new ideas, principles, or strategies based on their reflections and integrate theoretical knowledge with practical experience. Finally, active experimentation enables learners to apply these newly developed strategies in subsequent situations, allowing them to refine their skills through continuous practice. The completion of these four stages forms a continuous learning cycle that promotes professional growth and lifelong learning.

The theory is particularly relevant to teacher education because teaching is a profession best learned through authentic classroom experiences. Internship programs provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to apply the pedagogical knowledge acquired in their teacher education courses within actual classroom settings. As teacher interns plan lessons, facilitate instruction, manage classrooms, assess student learning, and interact with learners, they gain concrete teaching experiences that become the foundation for professional learning. Through reflection on mentor feedback, classroom observations, and personal teaching experiences, interns evaluate their instructional practices and identify strategies for improvement. These reflections enable them to develop new instructional approaches that can be implemented in succeeding teaching sessions, thereby completing Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984).

The application of Experiential Learning Theory extends beyond the acquisition of teaching skills. Continuous engagement in authentic teaching experiences enhances teacher interns' confidence, problem-solving abilities, decision-making skills, adaptability, and professional identity. By repeatedly experiencing, reflecting, conceptualizing, and applying improved teaching practices, interns gradually become more competent and self-assured educators. Recent studies have likewise affirmed that experiential learning strengthens professional competence by enabling learners to connect theoretical knowledge with practical application, thereby improving instructional effectiveness and professional readiness (Mechouat, 2024).

In the context of the present study, Experiential Learning Theory provides a suitable framework for understanding how internship experiences contribute to the development of teacher interns' teaching competencies and teaching confidence. Through authentic classroom experiences, teacher interns are given opportunities to plan and deliver lessons, manage diverse learners, assess student performance, and reflect on their instructional practices. These experiences enable them to continuously refine their pedagogical knowledge and teaching strategies while strengthening their confidence in performing their professional responsibilities, consistent with Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984). Moreover, the theory explains how repeated cycles of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application promote continuous professional growth and facilitate the development of effective teaching practices (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). Consequently, Experiential Learning Theory supports the assumption that meaningful internship experiences foster the development of competent, confident, and professionally prepared future educators (Mechouat, 2024).

Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory centers on an individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments. In the realm of teacher preparation, self-efficacy influences how pre-service teachers approach challenges, persist in the face of difficulties, and recover from setbacks. Internship experiences that provide mastery experiences, social modeling, and constructive feedback can enhance self-efficacy, leading to increased teaching confidence and a greater sense of preparedness for professional teaching roles (Lazarides & Warner, 2020).

Empirical studies support the significance of self-efficacy in teacher education. For instance, a study conducted in rural China found that student teaching internship programs had a significant impact on the self-efficacy of pre-service teachers, enhancing their personal skills, general teaching skills, and personal qualities. Similarly, research by Gorospe (2022) revealed that teaching anxiety among pre-service teachers significantly relates to their teaching self-efficacy, with classroom management being a significant predictor. These findings underscore the importance of internship programs in building the teaching confidence and professional readiness of pre-service teachers.

This study is also supported by Professional Socialization Theory explores how individuals internalize the values, norms, and expected behaviors of a professional community. Through internships, pre-service teachers are immersed in the culture of the teaching profession, learning not only instructional strategies but also the ethical standards, communication styles, and collaborative practices that define effective educators. This socialization process is critical for developing a professional identity and aligning personal beliefs with the expectations of the teaching community. New teachers participate in the community of educators, and they learn how to be a member through the socialization process. They learn new skills, such as how to teach, and internalize new values, such as believing there will be cooperation among colleagues. They learn regulations and organizational contexts, while they develop a style of teaching. As a consequence, they construct a professional identity by internalizing values and norms of the profession and redefining it. This sometimes happens regardless of the school in their professional socialization process. Despite the many challenges inherent in the profession, new teachers are expected to be socialized while performing their duties. Thus, new teachers try to develop an identity and survive in the job through interaction and communication with other teachers. (Toker Gökçe, 2020).

The relevance of Professional Socialization Theory to this study is evident in the way internship programs facilitate the transition of pre-service teachers into professional roles. By engaging in real-world teaching experiences, they adopt the language, behaviors, and attitudes characteristic of the teaching profession. This process fosters a sense of belonging and commitment to the educational community, which is essential for their long-term success and retention in the profession.

By integrating these theories, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how internship programs influence the development of teaching skills, teaching confidence, and professional identity among pre-service teachers. This theoretical framework will guide the analysis of internship experiences and inform recommendations for enhancing teacher preparation programs. This study therefore examines graduating teacher interns' self-reported teaching competencies, teaching confidence, and internship-related challenges and examines the association between competencies and confidence. It also examines whether these outcomes differ according to age, sex, and academic program. The findings serve as a basis for proposing a structured mentorship program.

Objectives of The Study

This study aimed to evaluate the teacher internship program implemented in the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) programs at a private Teacher Education Institution in Cebu. Specifically, the study examined (a) the respondents' profile in terms of age, sex, and academic program; (b) their self-reported teaching competencies, teaching confidence, and internship-related challenges; (c) the association between teaching competencies and confidence; and (d) differences in these outcomes according to age, sex, and academic program. The findings were used as a basis for developing a structured mentorship program.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational-comparative research design to examine the teacher internship experience of graduating Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) teacher interns at a private Teacher Education Institution in Cebu. The descriptive component determined the levels of the participants' self-reported teaching competencies, teaching confidence, and challenges encountered during internship. The correlational component examined the relationship between self-reported teaching competencies and teaching confidence, while the comparative component determined whether significant differences existed in teaching competencies and teaching confidence when participants were grouped according to age, sex, and academic program.

The study was non-experimental, as no variables were manipulated and no intervention was administered. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between teaching competencies and teaching confidence. An independent-samples *t*-test was used to compare two independent groups, while one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences among more than two groups. The findings were interpreted in terms of statistical associations and group differences and were not used to establish causal effects of the internship program.

The study involved 160 teacher interns from the BEEd and BSEd programs of the institution. Eligible participants were graduating BEEd and BSEd teacher interns who were completing their internship requirements at the time of data collection and who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. All 160 members of the identified population were invited to participate in the study. Total population sampling was appropriate because the entire identified population of 160 graduating teacher interns was accessible and invited to participate, allowing the study to obtain data from all eligible members rather than selecting only a sample. Data gathering was conducted approximately one month before graduation, while the participants were still completing their teacher education program and internship requirements. The participants were treated as graduating teacher interns rather than recent graduates.

Of the 160 members of the population, 30 participated in the pilot testing of the research instrument and were excluded from the final study dataset. This resulted in 130 participants eligible for the actual study. Of these, 119 provided usable responses and were included in the final analysis, representing a 91.54% usable-response rate among those eligible for the actual study. The remaining 11 were not included because usable responses were not available. The final analytic sample, therefore consisted of 119 graduating teacher interns.

The study utilized a researcher-made 50-item questionnaire designed to assess the teacher interns' self-reported teaching competencies, challenges encountered during internship, confidence and preparedness, and recommendations for program improvement. The questionnaire contained a demographic portion and four substantive sections: Teaching Competencies Developed (Items 1–15), Challenges Encountered (Items 16–28), Confidence and Preparedness (Items 29–40), and Recommendations and Program Improvement (Items 41–50). Responses to the substantive items were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Prior to administration, the questionnaire underwent content validation by three qualified validators: Ma. Fe Liomin B. Vallecera, MST Math, University of Cebu–Banilad Statistician; Bernadette U. Bigcas, RGC, RPm, LPT, Assistant Professor IV, Cebu Normal University; and Maritess T. Kho, LPT, MAT (English), Assistant Professor and Program Research Coordinator, College of Teacher Education, University of Cebu–Banilad Campus. The validators reviewed the instrument for relevance, clarity, appropriateness, alignment with the research objectives, and adequacy of content coverage. Necessary revisions and refinements were incorporated based on their recommendations to improve the clarity, coherence, and validity of the questionnaire.

The revised questionnaire was pilot-tested with 30 participants who were excluded from the final study sample. Cronbach's alpha was computed for each substantive section to assess internal consistency. The Teaching Competencies Developed scale (15 items) obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .957; the Challenges Encountered scale (13 items) obtained .953; the Confidence and Preparedness scale (12 items) obtained .960; and the Recommendations and Program Improvement section (10 items) obtained .909. The overall 50-item instrument

yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .953. These results indicate high internal consistency among the items within each section and across the overall instrument. The Recommendations and Program Improvement section was used primarily to obtain descriptive input for program development rather than as a single psychological construct. Corrected item-total correlations were also examined during the pilot analysis. Most items demonstrated acceptable to strong item-total relationships. Item 25 had the lowest corrected item-total correlation (.220); however, it was retained because of its substantive relevance to interns' emotional and psychological experiences during internship, and its deletion resulted in only a minimal increase in the overall alpha (.954).

Data gathering was conducted approximately one month before the participants' graduation while they were still completing their teacher education and internship requirements. Prior to data collection, the necessary institutional and ethical procedures were completed. The researcher administered the validated questionnaire to the eligible participants and collected the accomplished instruments for data processing and analysis. Participation in the study was voluntary, and the participants were informed of the purpose of the research and the use of their responses for research purposes. Confidentiality of the responses was maintained throughout the data-handling and analysis process. The researcher's role as a teacher and Student Internship Program coordinator was disclosed as part of the research process, and participation was not treated as a requirement for academic completion.

The collected data were organized and analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. Frequency and percentage were used to summarize the participants' demographic characteristics. Mean and standard deviation were used to describe the levels of self-reported teaching competencies, teaching confidence, and challenges encountered during internship.

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between teaching competencies and teaching confidence. An independent-samples t -test was used to examine differences between two independent groups, particularly according to sex, while one-way ANOVA was used to examine differences among age groups and academic programs where applicable. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 0.05 level. The inferential results were interpreted as associations or differences among groups and not as evidence that participation in the internship program caused changes in teaching competencies or confidence. This interpretation was consistent with the study's nonexperimental descriptive-correlational-comparative design.

The study was conducted in accordance with institutional research ethics requirements and applicable principles of informed consent, voluntariness, confidentiality, data privacy, and protection of participants. The research protocol was submitted to the appropriate institutional research ethics body for review and approval/exemption prior to data collection. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, the use of the information collected, and their rights as research participants. Informed consent was obtained before participation.

Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed that they could decline to participate or withdraw from the study without academic or other institutional consequences. Participation was not treated as a requirement for completing the internship or as a basis for academic evaluation.

To protect confidentiality, identifying information was not included in the reporting of the findings. Responses were treated confidentially and were reported only in aggregate form. The collected data were stored securely and were accessible only to the researcher and authorized research personnel. Electronic files were kept in a password-protected storage location, while any printed research materials were kept in a secure location. Data were retained and disposed of in accordance with institutional research and data-privacy requirements.

Because the researcher also served as a teacher and SIPP coordinator within the College of Teacher Education, potential power or role-related concerns were recognized. To minimize the possibility of undue influence, participation was clearly communicated as voluntary, and students were informed that their decision to participate or not participate would not affect their grades, internship evaluation, academic standing, or access to institutional services. The researcher also clarified that individual responses would not be used for academic assessment or evaluation of the participants.

These safeguards were implemented to help ensure that participation was based on informed and voluntary choice and that the researcher's institutional role did not influence participants' decisions or the treatment of their responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the demographic profile of the intern-respondents in terms of age and sex and academic profile. These variables are essential in describing the background characteristics of the graduating teacher interns and in determining whether demographic factors influence teaching skills and teaching confidence levels during internship.

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents According to Age

Age Group	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
19–21	15	12.61
22–24	93	78.15
25–27	8	6.72
28–30	0	0.00
31 and above	3	2.52
Total	119	100.00

Age. Table 2 presents the distribution of the 119 graduating teacher interns according to age. The majority of the respondents were 22–24 years old, comprising 93 respondents or 78.15% of the total. This was followed by those aged 19–21 years, with 15 respondents or 12.61%. Eight respondents or 6.72% were aged 25–27 years, while three respondents or 2.52% were 31 years old and above. No respondent belonged to the 28–30 age group.

The predominance of respondents in the 22–24 age group indicates that the study primarily reflects the experiences of graduating teacher interns within this age range. This is relevant because the internship or practicum represents an important stage in initial teacher education in which preservice teachers develop teaching-related knowledge, skills, professional identity, and self-efficacy through authentic classroom experiences. Recent research has found significant relationships between teaching internship experiences and preservice teachers' self-efficacy and professional identity (Cai et al., 2022). Similarly, Cheung et al. (2023), using data from 1,367 preservice teachers, reported that participation in a student-teaching internship was associated with the development of personal skills, general teaching skills, and personal qualities.

Implication. The concentration of respondents within the 22–24 age group suggests that the proposed mentorship program should be responsive to the needs of graduating interns who are transitioning from teacher education coursework to actual classroom practice. However, chronological age should not be assumed to determine teaching competence or confidence. Rather, recent evidence emphasizes the importance of authentic teaching experiences, feedback, reflection, mentoring, and opportunities for mastery in the development of preservice teachers' self-efficacy. For example, Michos et al. (2024) found that reflection and collaboration with mentors during teaching internships can support the development of teacher self-efficacy, while Rushby et al. (2025) reported that reflection and feedback contributed to changes in preservice teachers' teaching self-efficacy.

Accordingly, the proposed mentorship program may provide a common core of support for all graduating interns, while allowing mentoring activities, feedback, and assistance to be adjusted according to individual needs and areas of difficulty rather than age alone. This is also consistent with evidence that mentoring and individualized support can contribute to preservice and beginning teachers' self-efficacy. The implication is particularly relevant to the present study because the respondents were graduating interns who were completing their internship

requirements at the time of data collection. The age distribution therefore provides important descriptive context, but it should not be interpreted as evidence that one age group possesses greater teaching competence or confidence than another.

Table 3 Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	11	9.24
Female	108	90.76
Total	119	100.00

This reflects the continuing trend of female dominance in the teaching profession, particularly in teacher education programs. Similar patterns have been reported in recent studies, which note that female dominance in teacher education may influence mentoring dynamics, classroom interaction styles, and professional expectations (Manigbas et al., 2024). The predominance of female interns underscores the importance of providing inclusive and equitable mentoring practices that address the diverse learning and professional needs of all preservice teachers. Teacher education institutions should ensure that mentoring experiences support both male and female interns in developing teaching competencies and professional confidence (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2021; Ellis et al., 2020).

Academic Program. As reflected in Table 4, the majority of the respondents are enrolled in the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) program, comprising 73.11 percent, while 26.89 percent belong to the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) program. This indicates a higher representation of BEEd graduating teacher interns in the teacher internship program.

Table 4 Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Academic Program

Academic Program	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
BEEd	86	72.27
BSEd	33	27.73
Total	119	100.00

The predominance of BEEd graduating teacher interns is consistent with national and institutional enrollment trends, where elementary education programs typically attract more students due to broader employment opportunities and earlier entry into the teaching profession (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2021; OECD, 2021). Teacher education remains one of the largest disciplines in Philippine higher education, with Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) and Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) comprising the largest teacher education programs nationwide (Sinsay-Villanueva et al., 2025).

The predominance of BEEd interns implies that internship programs must be sufficiently scalable to ensure consistent mentoring quality despite larger cohorts. At the same time, the comparable participation of BSEd interns highlights the need for mentorship structures that address both general pedagogical skills and subject-specific instructional demands, emphasizing that internship quality plays a critical role in professional readiness regardless of academic program (Darling-Hammond, 2020).

Level Of Self-Reported Teaching Competencies During Internship

This section presents the level of self-reported teaching competencies of the graduating teacher interns during their internship. Teaching competencies in this study refer to the respondents' self-reported perceptions of their

ability to plan instruction, manage classrooms, employ appropriate teaching strategies, assess student learning, and practice professional behavior in the internship setting.

Teaching Competencies. The data in Table 5 indicate that the respondents reported a very high level of teaching competencies, with an overall mean of 4.53 (SD = 0.72).

Table 5 Level of Teaching Competencies of the graduating teacher interns during Internship

Teaching Skills Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Instructional Planning	4.53	0.72	Very High
Classroom Management	4.55	0.70	Very High
Teaching Strategies	4.49	0.75	Very High
Assessment of Learning	4.51	0.71	Very High
Professional Behavior	4.55	0.70	Very High
Overall Mean	4.53	0.72	Very High

As presented in Table 5, the respondents reported a very high level of teaching competencies during their internship, as reflected by an overall mean of 4.53 (SD = 0.72). All five teaching competency indicators were rated at a very high level. These findings indicate that the interns perceived themselves as highly capable of performing essential teaching tasks related to instructional planning, classroom management, teaching strategies, assessment of learning, and professional behavior in the internship setting.

Among the indicators, Classroom Management and Professional Behavior obtained the highest mean score ($M = 4.55$; $SD = 0.70$), indicating that the interns reported high levels of confidence in classroom management and professional behavior control, ethical conduct, responsibility, collaboration, and professionalism in dealing with learners, mentors, and school personnel. This finding underscores the effectiveness of the teacher education program of the College of Teacher Education at a private Teacher Education Institution in Cebu in instilling professional values and work ethics among pre-service teachers.

Similarly, Instructional Planning ($M = 4.53$; $SD = 0.72$), Assessment of Learning ($M = 4.51$; $SD = 0.71$), and Teaching Strategies ($M = 4.49$; $SD = 0.75$) were all rated at a very high level. These results suggest that the interns were able to design structured lesson plans, implement varied instructional approaches, and utilize appropriate assessment methods suited to learners' needs.

Although still interpreted as very high, Teaching Strategies obtained the lowest mean among the indicators ($M = 4.49$), indicating that some interns may have encountered minimal challenges in selecting or adapting instructional approaches to diverse learning contexts.

Overall, the findings suggest that the teacher education curriculum and internship experiences provided substantial preparation for classroom responsibilities. This finding is consistent with Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), which posits that learning is enhanced through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. During the internship, the interns applied pedagogical concepts in authentic classroom settings, reflected on their teaching experiences, and continuously refined their instructional practices. This experiential learning process likely contributed to the very high level of teaching competencies demonstrated by the respondents and effectively prepared them for actual classroom responsibilities. This interpretation is further supported by Santos and De Guzman (2021), who emphasized that well-structured internship programs play a crucial role in developing pedagogical competence, professional readiness, and reflective teaching practices among pre-service teachers. Furthermore, strengthening mentorship support through a structured program may further enhance teaching effectiveness and sustain competency

development among future internship cohorts, as emphasized by Mechouat (2024).

Teaching Confidence Levels Of The Graduating Teacher Interns During Internship

This section presents the level of teaching confidence exhibited by the graduating teacher interns during their internship. Teaching confidence refers to the interns' self-belief in their ability to manage classroom situations, deliver lessons effectively, communicate with learners and colleagues, and handle teaching responsibilities independently. Teaching confidence is a critical factor in successful teaching practice, as it influences instructional decision-making, classroom management, and overall teaching effectiveness (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Teaching Confidence Levels. Table 6 presents the level of teaching confidence demonstrated by the graduating teacher interns during their internship. As shown in Table 6, the respondents exhibited a high level of teaching confidence, with an overall mean of 4.27.

Table 6 Level of Teaching Confidence Exhibited by the Graduating Teacher Interns During Internship

Teaching Confidence Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Classroom Management Confidence	4.14	0.81	High
Instructional Readiness	4.29	0.73	Very High
Professional Collaboration	4.41	0.69	Very High
Assessment Use Confidence	4.27	0.77	Very High
Adaptability and Ethical Practice	4.30	0.70	Very High
Overall Mean	4.27	0.75	Very High

As presented in Table 6, the graduating teacher interns exhibited a very high level of teaching confidence during their internship, as reflected by an overall mean of 4.27 (SD = 0.75). Four out of the five teaching confidence indicators were rated at a very high level, suggesting that the interns were highly confident in performing essential teaching tasks in real classroom environments.

Among the indicators, Professional Collaboration obtained the highest mean score ($M = 4.41$; $SD = 0.69$), indicating that the interns felt confident in working collaboratively with colleagues, school administrators, and other stakeholders within the school community. This was followed by Instructional Readiness ($M = 4.29$; $SD = 0.73$), Adaptability and Ethical Practice ($M = 4.30$; $SD = 0.70$), and Assessment Use Confidence ($M = 4.27$; $SD = 0.77$), all interpreted as very high. These findings indicate that the interns reported high levels of confidence in adapting to different classroom settings, using assessment tools, and making ethical teaching decisions during their internship. However, because these data were based on self-reported perceptions, the findings describe the interns' reported confidence in these areas rather than demonstrating that the internship experience directly enhanced these abilities.

Although still rated very high, Classroom Management Confidence obtained the lowest mean among the indicators ($M = 4.14$; $SD = 0.81$). This suggests that, among the confidence domains assessed, classroom management was the area in which respondents reported relatively lower confidence. The finding may indicate that some interns perceived greater difficulty or uncertainty when independently managing classroom situations.

Overall, the findings indicate that the pre-service teachers reported high levels of self-confidence and professional preparedness during their internship, reflecting their perceptions of their readiness to undertake teaching responsibilities. This finding supports Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1997), which explains that individuals develop stronger beliefs in their capabilities through mastery experiences, social persuasion, and

successful task performance. The interns' exposure to authentic classroom teaching and constructive feedback from cooperating teachers and college supervisors likely strengthened their confidence in performing professional teaching responsibilities. This supports studies emphasizing that authentic teaching exposure and guided practice strengthen teacher self-efficacy and instructional competence (Gordon et al., 2023). The very high level of self-reported teaching confidence reflects the interns' perceptions of their preparedness to undertake teaching responsibilities within the context of their teacher education and internship experiences. However, the relatively lower rating in classroom management confidence indicates a need for enhanced mentoring support focused on independent classroom handling and decision-making skills.

Challenges Encountered During Internship

This section presents the common challenges encountered by the graduating teacher interns during their internship. Challenges refer to the difficulties experienced by interns in managing instructional tasks, classroom demands, workload, and professional adjustment within the school environment. Identifying these challenges is essential in understanding areas where interns require additional support and in formulating responsive mentorship and intervention programs.

Challenges Encountered. Table 7 presents the level of challenges encountered by the graduating teacher interns during their internship. As reflected in Table 7, the respondents experienced challenges at a moderate level, with an overall mean of 3.34.

Table 7 Level of Challenges Encountered by the Graduating Teacher Interns During Internship

Challenges Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Classroom and Student Management	3.71	1.05	High
Teaching and Preparation	3.19	1.22	Moderate
Support and Adjustment	3.13	1.37	Moderate
Workload and Emotional Factors	3.42	1.19	High
Overall Mean	3.34	1.25	Moderate

As presented in Table 7, the graduating teacher interns encountered a moderate level of challenges during their internship, as reflected by an overall mean of 3.34 (SD = 1.25). This indicates that while the interns experienced certain difficulties, these were generally manageable and part of the normal learning process in real classroom settings.

Among the indicators, Classroom and Student Management obtained a high rating ($M = 3.71$; $SD = 1.05$), indicating that interns experienced notable challenges in maintaining discipline, managing student behavior, and ensuring active classroom engagement. This finding supports reports from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2021), which emphasize that classroom management remains one of the most challenging aspects for beginning teachers due to the dynamic and unpredictable nature of classroom environments.

Similarly, Workload and Emotional Factors ($M = 3.42$; $SD = 1.19$) were also rated high, suggesting that interns experienced pressure related to responsibilities, emotional demands, and workload during their teaching practice. This aligns with findings from the World Bank (2021), which highlight that early teaching experiences often involve increased stress levels due to workload and adjustment demands.

On the other hand, Teaching and Preparation ($M = 3.19$; $SD = 1.22$) and Support and Adjustment ($M = 3.13$; $SD = 1.37$) were both rated as moderate. This suggests that while interns encountered some challenges in lesson planning, instructional delivery, and adapting to the school environment, these were less pronounced. The

moderate rating for support and adjustment also indicates variability in mentoring and institutional support, which is consistent with the UNESCO (2022), emphasizing the importance of structured guidance and supportive school environments in enhancing teacher readiness.

Overall, the findings reveal that although pre-service teachers demonstrated a high level of teaching confidence, they still encountered moderate challenges, particularly in classroom management and workload-related demands. This suggests that real classroom exposure presents complexities that extend beyond theoretical preparation. The moderate level of challenges encountered by the interns may also be explained by Toker Gökçe's (2015) Professional Socialization Theory, which emphasizes that pre-service teachers gradually develop professional identity while adapting to the expectations, culture, and realities of the teaching profession. Encountering classroom management difficulties, workload, and adjustment issues represents a normal part of the professional socialization process as interns transition from student to teacher. Therefore, strengthening internship programs through enhanced mentoring, practical classroom management training, and workload support mechanisms is essential in better preparing future educators for the realities of the teaching profession.

Relationship Between Teaching Skills And Teaching Confidence Levels

This section presents the relationship between teaching skills and teaching confidence levels of the graduating teacher interns during their internship. Establishing this relationship is important in determining whether higher levels of teaching competence are associated with greater teaching confidence in performing teaching tasks. Understanding this relationship provides empirical support for strengthening internship and mentoring components in teacher education programs.

Relationship Between Teaching Skills and Teaching Confidence Levels.

Table 8 presents the results of the test of relationship between teaching skills and teaching confidence levels of the graduating teacher interns during their internship.

Table 8 Relationship Between Teaching Skills and Teaching Confidence Levels

Variables	Pearson Correlation Value	P-Value	Decision	Interpretation
Teaching skills and Teaching Confidence levels	0.606	$p < .001$.	Reject H_0	statistically significant positive association

($\alpha = 0.05$)

Legend:

r	Verbal Interpretation
0.00±0.20	slight Correlation
±0.21 ± 0.40	low correlation
±0.41 ± 0.60	moderate correlation
±0.61 ± 0.80	high correlation
±0.81 ± 1.00	very high correlation

As presented in Table 8, the results indicate a statistically significant positive association between self-reported teaching competencies and teaching confidence among the graduating teacher interns ($r = 0.606$, $p < .001$). This indicates that respondents who reported higher levels of teaching competencies also tended to report higher

levels of teaching confidence. Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a statistically significant association between the two variables.

The positive correlation suggests that the respondents' perceptions of their teaching competencies were associated with their perceptions of teaching confidence. Specifically, respondents who reported higher levels of competence in instructional planning, classroom management, teaching strategies, assessment of learning, and professional behavior also tended to report higher confidence in handling teaching responsibilities. However, because the study employed a descriptive-correlational design and relied on self-reported data, the finding should not be interpreted as evidence that teaching competencies directly increased or caused higher teaching confidence.

This finding may be interpreted in relation to Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1997), which emphasizes the role of individuals' beliefs about their capabilities in influencing their engagement and performance in tasks. The observed association between self-reported teaching competencies and teaching confidence is broadly consistent with this perspective. However, the present findings do not empirically establish or validate the theory, nor do they determine the direction of the relationship between the two variables.

The finding nevertheless highlights the importance of providing teacher interns with opportunities for guided practice, structured feedback, reflection, and supportive supervision. These components may provide appropriate contexts for interns to develop their teaching competencies and reflect on their capabilities during internship. Accordingly, the proposed mentorship program incorporates structured guidance, competency-focused activities, feedback, and reflective practice to support the professional development of teacher interns.

Differences In Teaching Skills And Teaching Confidence Levels When Grouped According To Profile Variables

This section presents the differences in teaching skills and teaching confidence levels of the graduating teacher interns during their internship when grouped according to age, sex, and academic program. Examining these differences is important in determining whether demographic and academic characteristics significantly influence interns' professional readiness, thereby informing targeted interventions and mentorship strategies in teacher education.

Differences According to Age. Table 9 presents the test of difference in teaching skills and teaching confidence levels when respondents are grouped according to age.

Table 9 Differences in Teaching Skills and Teaching Confidence Levels According to Age

Age Group	n	Teaching Competencies M	SD	Teaching Confidence M	SD
19–21	15	4.36	1.02	4.40	0.42
22–24	93	4.56	0.56	4.27	0.60
25–27	8	4.53	0.42	4.41	0.50
28–30	0	—	—	—	—
31 and above	3	4.04	0.14	3.47	0.54
F-value		1.080		2.361	
df		3, 115		3, 115	
p-value		.360		.075	

η^2		.027		.058	
Decision		Not Significant		Not Significant	
Interpretation		No significant difference		No significant difference	

Table 9 shows that there were no statistically significant differences in teaching competencies across the age groups, $F(3, 115) = 1.080, p = .360, \eta^2 = .027$. Similarly, the differences in teaching confidence across age groups were not statistically significant, $F(3, 115) = 2.361, p = .075, \eta^2 = .058$. Since both p-values exceeded the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis of no significant difference across age groups was retained for both teaching competencies and teaching confidence. The eta-squared values indicate that age group accounted for a relatively small proportion of the variance in teaching competencies and confidence.

These findings suggest that age group, within the characteristics of the present sample, was not a statistically significant differentiating factor in the interns' self-reported teaching competencies or confidence. Thus, differences in age alone may not warrant substantially different expectations regarding interns' teaching competencies or confidence. Instead, the proposed mentorship program may provide a common core of support for all interns while allowing individualized assistance based on identified needs, internship experiences, and areas of difficulty. This approach is consistent with the study's emphasis on structured mentorship and recognizes that teacher development may be shaped by multiple experiential and contextual factors rather than age alone. From a theoretical perspective, the absence of significant age-group differences can be understood within the study's theoretical framework, which emphasizes the roles of experience, reflection, personal factors, and environmental influences in teacher learning and confidence. However, the present findings do not provide empirical evidence to validate or confirm the theoretical propositions. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory emphasizes learning through experience and reflection rather than chronological age alone (Kolb, 1984). Similarly, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors in the development of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Thus, the present findings may be viewed as consistent with a broader understanding of teacher development in which internship experiences, opportunities for practice, feedback, and contextual support may be more directly relevant to developing competencies and confidence than age category alone. However, the present descriptive-comparative findings do not provide evidence to empirically validate these theories.

Differences According to Sex. Table 10 presents the test of difference in teaching skills and teaching confidence levels when respondents are grouped according to sex.

Table 10 Differences in Teaching Skill and Teaching Confidence Levels According to Sex

Variables	Male M (SD)	Female M (SD)	t	df	p	95% CI of Mean Difference	Cohen's d	Decision	Interpretation
Teaching Competencies	4.89 (0.20)	4.48 (0.64)	2.081	117	.040	[0.020, 0.793]	0.659	Reject H_0	Significant
Teaching Confidence	4.58 (0.40)	4.24 (0.59)	1.883	117	.062	[-0.018, 0.703]	0.596	Do not reject H_0	Not Significant

($\alpha = 0.05$)

As presented in Table 10, a statistically significant difference was found in self-reported teaching competencies when respondents were grouped according to sex, $t(117) = 2.081, p = .040$. This indicates that the male and female respondents differed significantly in their reported levels of teaching competencies. The descriptive results show that male respondents reported a higher mean level of teaching competencies ($M = 4.89, SD = 0.20$) than female respondents ($M = 4.48, SD = 0.64$). Given the unequal group sizes, however, this finding should be interpreted with caution and should not be taken to indicate that sex itself caused the observed difference.

In contrast, no statistically significant difference was observed in self-reported teaching confidence when respondents were grouped according to sex, $t(117) = 1.883$, $p = .062$. Although male respondents reported a higher mean confidence level ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 0.40$) than female respondents ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 0.59$), the difference did not reach statistical significance at the .05 level. Thus, the findings do not provide sufficient evidence of a statistically significant difference in teaching confidence between the two sex groups.

The findings may be considered in relation to Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1997), which emphasizes the role of experiences, feedback, and environmental factors in the development of efficacy beliefs. The absence of a statistically significant difference in self-reported teaching confidence by sex may be viewed as broadly consistent with a perspective in which confidence is shaped by multiple experiential and contextual factors. However, the present study did not examine the specific factors that may account for differences in confidence or teaching competencies, and the findings should not be interpreted as empirical confirmation of the theory.

The significant difference observed in self-reported teaching competencies suggests the need for teacher education programs to ensure that mentoring, feedback, practice opportunities, and other forms of instructional support are provided equitably to all interns. Rather than attributing the difference to sex alone, future studies may examine the specific experiences or contextual factors that could be associated with variations in reported teaching competencies.

Table 11 Differences in Self-Reported Teaching Competencies and Teaching Confidence According to Academic Program

As displayed in Table 11, no statistically significant difference was found in self-reported teaching competencies when respondents were grouped according to academic program, $t(117) = 0.882$, $p = .380$. BEEd interns reported a mean score of 4.55 ($SD = 0.58$), while BSEd interns reported a mean score of 4.44 ($SD = 0.73$).

Variables	BEEd M (SD)	BSEd M (SD)	<i>t</i> -value	df	<i>p</i> - value	95% CI	Cohen's <i>d</i>	Decision	Interpretation
Teaching Competencies	4.55 (0.58)	4.44 (0.73)	0.882	117	.380	[-0.141, 0.367]	0.181	Do not reject H_0	Not Significant
Teaching Confidence	4.26 (0.62)	4.30 (0.49)	-0.355	117	.723	[-0.279, 0.194]	-0.073	Do not reject H_0	Not Significant

The effect size was small (Cohen's $d = 0.181$). This finding indicates that the two academic program groups did not differ significantly in their self-reported teaching competencies within the present sample.

Similarly, no statistically significant difference was observed in self-reported teaching confidence when respondents were grouped according to academic program, $t(117) = -0.355$, $p = .723$. BEEd interns reported a mean confidence score of 4.26 ($SD = 0.62$), while BSEd interns reported a slightly higher mean of 4.30 ($SD = 0.49$). The effect size was negligible (Cohen's $d = -0.073$), indicating a very small standardized difference between the two groups.

The absence of statistically significant differences in both self-reported teaching competencies and teaching confidence may be considered in relation to Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1997) and Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984). Both perspectives emphasize the importance of learning experiences, practice, reflection, feedback, and opportunities to apply knowledge in developing professional capabilities. However, the present findings do not empirically confirm these theories. Rather, they indicate that academic program was not a statistically significant differentiating variable for self-reported teaching competencies or teaching confidence in this particular sample.

The findings suggest that the BEEd and BSEd interns in the present study reported broadly comparable levels of teaching competencies and confidence. This similarity may be considered in the context of their shared teacher

preparation and internship experiences. However, the results should not be interpreted to mean that academic program has no influence on teacher development. Other factors, including the quality of internship experiences, mentoring, feedback, prior teaching experiences, and individual learning needs, may also be relevant to the development of teaching competencies and confidence.

The findings also have implications for the proposed mentorship program. Since no statistically significant differences were found according to academic program, a common core of mentoring support may be appropriate for both BEEd and BSEd interns, while allowing additional support to be adjusted according to individual needs, teaching experiences, and identified areas of difficulty. Such an approach recognizes that teacher development involves multiple experiential and contextual factors rather than academic program alone.

Overall, the results indicate that academic program was not significantly associated with differences in the interns' self-reported teaching competencies or teaching confidence. The small effect sizes observed for both outcomes further indicate that the differences between BEEd and BSEd groups were limited in magnitude within the present sample. These findings therefore support the use of a structured mentorship framework that provides equitable opportunities for guided practice, feedback, reflection, and professional support across teacher education programs.

Proposed Mentorship Program

Mentorship for Excellence: A Structured Internship Support Program for Teacher Interns Program Rationale

The findings of the study provide a basis for strengthening the support provided to teacher interns during their internship experience. The respondents reported very high self-reported teaching competencies ($M = 4.53$, $SD = 0.72$) and very high self-reported teaching confidence ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.75$), while challenges encountered during internship were reported at a moderate level ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.25$).

A statistically significant positive association was found between self-reported teaching competencies and teaching confidence ($r = .606$, $p < .001$). Although this correlational finding does not establish causation, it provides a basis for incorporating guided practice, structured feedback, reflection, and competency-focused mentoring into the proposed program.

The findings also showed no statistically significant differences in teaching competencies or teaching confidence according to age and no statistically significant differences according to academic program. Thus, the proposed program provides a common core of mentoring support for all teacher interns, with individualized assistance based on their internship experiences, feedback, and identified areas for improvement. A statistically significant difference was observed in self-reported teaching competencies according to sex, whereas teaching confidence did not significantly differ according to sex. Given the unequal distribution of respondents by sex, this finding is interpreted cautiously and is not used to prescribe different mentoring requirements for male and female interns.

The proposed Mentorship for Excellence program therefore focuses on structured mentoring, competency development, challenge management, reflective practice, monitoring, and professional collaboration. The program is intended as an institutional support framework that can be implemented and subsequently evaluated for feasibility and effectiveness.

Program Goal

The Mentorship for Excellence program aims to provide structured guidance and professional support to teacher interns as they develop teaching competencies, confidence, reflective practice, and professional readiness during their internship.

Program Objectives

The program aims to:

1. strengthen teaching competencies in instructional planning, teaching strategies, classroom management, assessment, and professional behavior;
2. provide regular mentoring, classroom observation, and constructive feedback;
3. support interns in managing classroom, workload, adjustment, and learner-related challenges;
4. provide opportunities for reflection and application of feedback;
5. promote collaboration among interns, mentors, cooperating teachers, and faculty supervisors; and
6. establish a systematic mechanism for monitoring and supporting interns' progress throughout the internship.

Implementation Framework

Component	Key Activities	Timeframe	Responsible Persons	Expected Output
1. Program Entry and Orientation	Program orientation, mentor assignment, goal setting, identification of individual learning needs	Week 1	Program Coordinator, Internship Supervisors, Mentors	Interns understand program expectations and establish development goals
2. Structured Mentorship	Weekly one-on-one mentoring, biweekly group mentoring, classroom observation, post-observation conferences, individual action plans	Weeks 2–15	Assigned Mentors, Internship Supervisors	Regular guidance and individualized feedback
3. Competency Enhancement	Workshops on instructional planning, teaching strategies, classroom management, assessment, technology integration, and professional ethics; microteaching and simulations	Weeks 3, 6, 9, 12	Faculty Mentors, Workshop Facilitators	Development and Support of Teaching-Related Competencies
4. Teaching Confidence Development	Guided teaching demonstrations, peer teaching, communication activities, constructive feedback, and recognition of progress	Throughout internship	Mentors, Program Coordinator	Opportunities to practice teaching and reflect on confidence
5. Challenge Management and Support	Workload and time-management sessions, classroom-management cases, learner-diversity discussions, mentor consultation, peer-support activities	Weeks 4, 7, 10, 13; ongoing consultation	Mentors, Supervisors, Program Coordinator	Strategies for addressing internship-related challenges
6. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Feedback	Classroom observations, structured feedback tools, midterm and final evaluations, self-assessment, progress reports	Weeks 5, 10, 15	Program Coordinator, Mentors, Supervisors	Documented progress and identified areas for further support



7. Reflective Practice and Portfolio	Weekly reflection journals, mentor reflection conferences, teaching portfolio, end-of-semester reflection	Weeks 2–16	Interns, Mentors	Documentation of learning, reflection, and professional growth
8. Professional Engagement and Peer Collaboration	Peer mentoring, collaborative lesson planning, professional learning activities, culmination and recognition activities	Weeks 8, 14–16	Program Coordinator, Faculty Mentors	Collaboration, professional engagement, and leadership development

Mentoring Cycle

The program follows a continuous cycle:

Orientation → Goal Setting → Mentoring → Practice → Observation → Feedback → Reflection → Action Planning → Follow-up. This cycle allows feedback from classroom experiences to inform subsequent mentoring activities and individual improvement plans.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Implementation of the program may be monitored through mentoring logs, classroom observation and feedback forms, reflection journals, professional portfolios, mentor feedback, and midterm and final evaluations. Program evaluation should examine the extent to which the proposed activities are implemented as planned and identify areas for improvement. Because the present study used a descriptive-correlational-comparative design, the effectiveness of the proposed program should be established through future program evaluation rather than inferred from the present findings.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings provide a basis for interpreting the teacher internship experience through Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984), Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997), and Professional Socialization Theory. From an experiential learning perspective, the internship provides opportunities for teacher interns to engage in authentic teaching experiences, reflection, and application of pedagogical knowledge. The high levels of self-reported teaching competencies observed in the study may be understood within this experiential context. Similarly, the positive association between self-reported teaching competencies and teaching confidence is consistent with Bandura's view of the relationship between experiences, perceived capability, and self-efficacy.

However, these findings should be regarded as theoretically consistent rather than as empirical confirmation of the theories, given the descriptive-correlational-comparative design of the study.

The moderate level of internship-related challenges may likewise be understood in relation to Professional Socialization Theory, as teacher interns navigate classroom responsibilities, professional expectations, and the realities of the school environment. Rather than treating these challenges as evidence of professional growth, they point to areas in which interns may require timely guidance, feedback, and support.

Taken together, the findings highlight the importance of moving beyond internship completion toward a structured and sustained support system for teacher interns. Mentoring, reflective practice, regular feedback, competency-focused activities, and assistance in managing internship-related challenges can provide organized mechanisms for supporting interns throughout their professional preparation. In response, the study proposes Mentorship for Excellence: A Structured Internship Support Program for Teacher Interns as a research-informed framework for strengthening these support mechanisms.

The proposed program is consistent with the broader objectives of teacher internship and professional preparation reflected in CHED Memorandum Order No. 104, series of 2017. However, the present study does

not establish that the internship program caused the reported levels of competence or confidence, nor does it directly measure demonstrated teaching performance. The proposed mentorship program should therefore be considered a practice-oriented response to the findings, whose effectiveness should be examined through future longitudinal or intervention-based research.

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