



Experiential Learning Through the Eyes of Teacher-Dreamers: A Phenomenology

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Abstract

Teaching internship provides pre-service teachers with opportunities to experience the realities of the teaching profession beyond theoretical preparation. This study aimed to explore the lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of pre-service teachers during their teaching internship and how these experiences shape their professional identity, perceptions of teaching, and career intentions. This qualitative study employed a phenomenological approach involving fifteen fourth-year Bachelor of Elementary Education pre-service teachers from a non-sectarian institution. Participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion using a semi-structured interview guide and analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings unearthed how pre-service teachers experienced complex classroom realities, including diverse learner behaviors, the gap between theory and practice, multiple subject demands, and independent classroom management. They also encountered challenges involving institutional expectations, limited instructional resources, and emotional and instructional pressures. To cope, participants practiced emotional regulation, sought support from peers and mentors, adapted their teaching strategies, and engaged in reflective practice. Overall, teaching internship fostered professional growth and strengthened commitment to teaching among some participants, while prompting others to reassess their readiness and future career intentions.

Introduction

Teaching internship is an important component of teacher education because it allows pre-service teachers to apply theoretical knowledge in authentic classroom settings while developing pedagogical skills and responding to actual teaching demands. Li et al. (2026) found that internship and mentorship significantly contributed to pre-service teachers' preparedness, confidence, teaching skills, and professional identity. Similarly, Alex et al. (2026) identified agency, feedback engagement, capability development, and professional identity as important aspects of professional growth during internship.

For BEEd pre-service teachers, teaching internship can be particularly demanding because they work with diverse learners and teach across multiple subject areas. These demands may include classroom management, lesson planning, instructional delivery, adjustment to school environments, emotional strain, and limited resources. Mendez (2025) examined challenges and coping strategies among BEEd graduates during internship, including adjustment to teaching roles, emotional demands, professional relationships, and resource constraints. Eticano and Lovitos (2026) likewise highlighted the importance of support, reflection, and adaptation in managing practicum challenges.

Despite these contributions, opportunities remain to deepen understanding of the teaching internship experiences of pre-service teachers. Li et al. (2026) examined the relationship between teaching internship and professional identity and suggested the use of interviews and observations to obtain more in-depth accounts of internship experiences. Alex et al. (2026) relied on mentor evaluation reports and identified the need to incorporate student teachers' voices, direct observation, longitudinal evidence, and additional institutional contexts. Zhu et al. (2020) examined transformative learning during practicum and highlighted the multidimensional nature of teaching practice, including cognitive, emotional, dispositional, agentic, and behavioral dimensions. Building on these studies, the present research centers the voices of BEEd pre-service teachers and brings together their lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms within a single phenomenological inquiry. This provides a context-specific understanding of how pre-service teachers experience and navigate the realities of teaching internship.

This study therefore sought to explore the lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of BEEd pre-service teachers during teaching internship. The findings may provide useful insights for strengthening internship preparation, mentoring, and support for future elementary teachers. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of pre-service teachers during their teaching internship?
2. What challenges do pre-service teachers encounter during their teaching internship?
3. What coping mechanisms do pre-service teachers use to navigate their teaching internship?

Literature Review

Teaching internships provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in authentic classroom settings. Through actual teaching experiences, PSTs encounter situations that require instructional decision-making and reflection. Tiainen and Lutovac (2024) found that peer mentoring and joint reflection during practicum helped pre-service teachers develop practical teaching knowledge. These findings are consistent with Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which conceptualizes learning as a process involving concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). Thus, teaching internship serves not only as a setting for practicing teaching skills but also as an experiential process through which pre-service teachers develop practical knowledge.

Teaching internship can also influence how pre-service teachers understand themselves as developing professionals. Triyoga et al. (2024) found that practicum experiences contributed to the development of pre-service teachers' professional identities and influenced how they viewed themselves as future teachers. Emotional experiences are likewise an important part of practicum. Orlova and Kamenická (2024) found that pre-service EFL teachers experienced varying emotions, including anxiety, before and during practicum. In the Philippine context, Pineda et al. (2024) similarly reported that pre-service teachers' emotional experiences during their internship, as well as their relationships with cooperating teachers and learners, were associated with their confidence and teaching experiences. These findings support the present study's observation that interactions within the school environment and emotional experiences during internship contribute to pre-service teachers' developing understanding of the teaching profession.

Despite its developmental value, teaching internship exposes PSTs to challenges that may differ from those encountered in university-based preparation. Bansiong (2021) reported apprehension related to pupil control, classroom management, adapting to learners' needs, motivation, teaching strategies, and lesson planning. These challenges illustrate the difficulty of translating theoretical preparation into effective classroom practice. Rubio et al. (2025)

likewise identified lesson planning, classroom dynamics, and balancing academic obligations as challenges experienced by pre-service teachers (Escosar & Caloc, 2024). Comia et al. (2024) further documented difficulties involving adjustment to the school environment, teaching responsibilities, and academic, institutional, and personal demands.

To manage internship-related demands, pre-service teachers draw on personal resources and interpersonal support. Gomez et al. (2025) found that Filipino pre-service teachers demonstrated resilience through personal coping mechanisms and support from mentors and peers while navigating academic and professional difficulties. These findings suggest that coping involves both individual agency and social support. Reflection may further help PSTs examine their experiences and adjust their teaching practices. However, limited research examines how pre-service teachers perceive the effectiveness of their coping strategies across the different challenges encountered throughout the internship.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design. According to Creswell and Poth (2024), phenomenological research describes the common meaning of the lived experiences of several individuals regarding a particular phenomenon. This design was appropriate for the present study because it sought to understand and describe the lived experiences of pre-service teachers during their teaching internship, including the challenges they encountered, the ways they coped with these challenges, and how these experiences shaped their professional development.

The study was further informed by Giorgi's (2012) phenomenological perspective, which emphasizes the description and interpretation of participants' lived experiences and the meanings they attribute to those experiences. Thus, Creswell and Poth (2024) provided the broader methodological framework for the phenomenological research design, while Giorgi (2012) informed the study's focus on participants' descriptions and meanings of their lived experiences.

Research Participants

The participants of this study consisted of fifteen (15) fourth-year pre-service teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) program at a private, non-sectarian academic institution who met the following inclusion criteria: (1) they were officially enrolled during the second semester of Academic Year 2025–2026; (2) they were engaged in or had recently completed their teaching internship; and (3) they were willing to voluntarily share their experiences. Those who had not yet begun their teaching internship or were unwilling to participate were excluded from the study. Of the fifteen (15) participants, eight (8) participated in individual in-depth interviews (IDIs), while seven (7) participated in a focus group discussion (FGD). The IDIs provided opportunities for participants to share their individual experiences in greater depth, while the FGD allowed participants to discuss and reflect on their experiences collectively.

Purposive sampling was initially used to select participants who met the inclusion criteria, followed by snowball sampling to identify other eligible pre-service teachers through participant referrals. Recruitment began after approval from the Dean of the College of Teacher Education. Before participation, each participant received an Informed Consent Form (ICF) outlining the study's purpose, procedures, confidentiality measures, voluntary participation, and right to withdraw without penalty. Participants were assured that their responses would be used solely for research purposes, kept confidential, and accessed only by the researcher. Personal identities were protected using pseudonyms, and participation was free from coercion or pressure. Informed consent was obtained before conducting the individual interviews and focus group discussion.

Data Collection

The interview guides used were subjected to expert validation before the data collection process. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs).

Each IDI lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes and was conducted at a mutually convenient time and location within the campus. With participants' consent, all sessions were audio-recorded to ensure accurate documentation.

The focus group discussion consisted of seven (7) participants and lasted approximately 90 minutes. The session focused on shared experiences, collective perspectives, and insights related to the study. Ground rules were established to ensure respectful interaction, equal participation, and confidentiality.

All audio recordings from the IDIs and FGD were transcribed verbatim. To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, participants were given the opportunity to review their transcripts through member checking. Any corrections or clarifications were incorporated into the final transcripts.

Confidentiality was maintained by assigning pseudonyms to participants and securely storing all data. Access to the data was limited to the researchers, and participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Data Analysis

The researchers analyzed the data using the Six-Phase Framework of Braun and Clarke (2006) for thematic analysis. This framework provided a systematic process for identifying, organizing, and interpreting patterns in the lived experiences of BEEd pre-service teachers during their teaching internship. The first phase, familiarization with the data, involved repeatedly reviewing the transcribed individual in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussion (FGD) to develop a thorough understanding of the participants' narratives.

The second phase, generating initial codes, involved identifying and labeling meaningful statements relevant to the research questions. The third phase, searching for themes, involved grouping related codes to identify patterns and broader ideas emerging from the data. The fourth phase, reviewing themes, involved assessing their coherence, consistency, and alignment with the data and research objectives. Overlapping or unsupported themes were refined or reorganized.

The fifth phase, defining and naming themes, involved examining and refining the identified core ideas. These were submitted to the data analyst for review to ensure that the themes accurately represented the data. Appropriate labels were then assigned to clearly capture the meaning and scope of each theme. The sixth phase, interpreting and reporting, involved analyzing the finalized themes in relation to the research questions and presenting relevant participant excerpts to support the findings.

To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the analysis, the researchers continuously compared the emerging themes with the original transcripts and participant responses. Themes were revised when necessary to ensure that they remained grounded in the data and accurately reflected the participants' lived experiences. This process helped minimize misinterpretation and maintain consistency between the raw data and the final findings.

Overall, the six-phase process enabled the researchers to systematically identify and interpret significant patterns in the participants' narratives. Through familiarization, coding, theme development, review, and interpretation, the researchers developed a coherent thematic representation of the lived experiences of BEEd pre-service teachers during their teaching internship (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the qualitative analysis of the participants' responses to the research questions. The findings are organized according to the emerging themes and core ideas identified through thematic analysis. Each theme is discussed using relevant participant accounts and supported by related literature to provide a deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms during their teaching internship.

Profile of the Participants

Table 1 presents the participants' profiles based on age, sex, and assigned study group. Participants selected their own nicknames for comfort and self-identification, which the researchers used as the basis for assigning pseudonyms to organize and track their responses during data analysis and presentation.

Table 1. Profile of Participants

Participant Number	Code Name	Program	Age	Sex	Study Group
1	Alberto	BEEd	21	Male	IDI_1
2	Twinkle	BEEd	21	Female	IDI_2
3	Shiny	BEEd	21	Female	IDI_3
4	Yin	BEEd	21	Female	IDI_4
5	Mea	BEEd	21	Female	IDI_5
6	Tam	BEEd	22	Female	IDI_6
7	Shaina	BEEd	21	Female	IDI_7
8	Ji	BEEd	21	Female	IDI_8
9	Shiela	BEEd	24	Female	FGD_P1
10	Vance	BEEd	21	Male	FGD_P2
11	Bea	BEEd	23	Female	FGD_P3
12	Jean	BEEd	22	Female	FGD_P4
13	Jai	BEEd	21	Female	FGD_P5
14	Joyce	BEEd	21	Female	FGD_P6
15	Ang	BEEd	21	Female	FGD_P7

Table 1 presents the profile of the 15 participants. All were BEEd pre-service teachers aged 21 to 24 years, comprising 13 females and 2 males. Eight participated in in-depth interviews, while seven joined the focus group discussion. Pseudonyms were used to maintain confidentiality.

Teaching Internship Lived Experiences of Pre-Service Teachers

Table 2 presents the lived experiences of BEEd pre-service teachers as they transitioned from theoretical learning to real classroom practice. Actual teaching demands, emotional interactions with learners, and adaptation to school environments shaped their lived experiences. There were three themes that emerged from the core ideas drawn from the participants' statements. The following themes were *reality-based professional growth*, *affective teaching engagement*, and *school adaptation dynamics*.

Table 2. Teaching Internship Lived Experiences of Pre-Service Teachers

Themes	Core Ideas
Reality-Based Professional Growth	encountering real classroom dynamics and unpredictable student behaviors
	recognizing the gap between theoretical preparation and actual teaching practice
	managing classroom responsibilities independently in real instructional settings
	developing professional competence through real teaching exposure
	gaining practical insight into the realities of the teaching profession
Affective Teaching Engagement	receiving genuine, honest, and spontaneous responses from elementary students
	experiencing joyful and memorable classroom interactions with learners

Themes	Core Ideas
	developing patience, empathy, and care while guiding students
	strengthening emotional bonds through positive student–teacher relationships
	receiving motivation from students’ engagement and responsiveness
School Adaptation Dynamics	working within supportive school environments that ease teaching internship adjustment
	adapting to school culture, institutional expectations, and classroom routines
	recognizing the influence of school facilities, safety, and resources on teaching practice

Teaching internship exposed participants to the difference between simulated and actual classroom practice. Shaina stated, *“In the field, students are highly unpredictable, both in their behavior and in how the lesson unfolds”* (IDI_7). This required participants to manage classrooms independently and make immediate instructional decisions based on learners’ needs. Manicio and Baetiong (2023) similarly found that practicum experiences helped pre-service teachers develop practical knowledge through exposure to real teaching situations, while Choi and Park (2022) noted that actual classroom experiences can reshape their perceptions of teaching and professional identity (Caloc et al., 2025). Thus, the internship served as a transition from theoretical preparation to situated professional practice.

Participants also experienced moments that strengthened their motivation and emotional connection to teaching. One participant shared, *“In moments like that, you truly feel what it means to be a teacher”* (FGD_P2), while Tam noted, *“Seeing that they have grasped what I taught makes all the effort feel worthwhile”* (IDI_6). These experiences provided a sense of accomplishment and reinforced the value of their teaching efforts. Pineda et al. (2024) similarly found that meaningful learner interactions support pre-service teachers’ professional development and positive perceptions of teaching. Thus, the internship developed not only instructional competence but also an emotional connection and comfort to the teaching profession (Comawas & Caloc, 2025).

Participants’ professional adjustment was also influenced by the school environment. Supportive relationships and a positive atmosphere helped them feel more confident in managing classroom and school responsibilities. Twinkle stated, *“If your environment is good and everyone is treated fairly, it really helps build confidence”* (IDI_2). Wilson and Huynh (2020) similarly found that supportive mentor–mentee relationships were associated with pre-service teachers’ confidence, coping, and professional agency during school placement (Imperial et al., 2025; Pagsac et al., 2025). These findings suggest that successful adjustment depended not only on participants’ individual efforts but also on the support and conditions provided by the school environment.

Teaching Internship Challenges of Pre-Service Teachers

Table 3 presents the challenges encountered by pre-service teachers during their teaching internship. Five themes emerged from the core ideas drawn from participants’ statements. The following themes were *pedagogical struggles, general curriculum hurdles, multi-subject teaching demands, emotional exhaustion, and resource constraints*.

Table 3. Teaching Internship Challenges of Pre-Service Teachers

Themes	Core Ideas
Pedagogical Struggles	managing energetic, noisy, and hyperactive students with short attention spans
	handling disruptive or inattentive student behaviors during lessons
	addressing tantrums, emotional outbursts, and unpredictable behavior
	managing inclusive classrooms with students who have learning differences or disabilities
	maintaining authority while remaining approachable and patient
General Curriculum Hurdles	translating lesson plans and theoretical knowledge into effective instruction
	handling subjects with complex or foundational concepts like mathematics

Themes	Core Ideas
	adjusting explanations when students struggle to understand lessons
	adapting teaching strategies when students fail to respond to instruction
Multi-Subject Teaching Demands	teaching several subjects within a limited instructional schedule
	preparing multiple lesson plans and instructional materials in one day
	adjusting teaching approaches across different subject areas
	balancing varied student comprehension levels in different subjects
Emotional Exhaustion	feeling overwhelmed when classroom management becomes difficult
	experiencing anxiety or nervousness during lesson delivery
	questioning personal teaching ability when lessons do not succeed
	managing fatigue caused by workload, responsibilities, and limited rest
Resource Constraints	experiencing temporary loss of confidence after difficult classroom situations
	managing financial pressures related to transportation, meals, and teaching materials
	working with limited instructional material and classroom equipment
	balancing teaching internship with other academic or work responsibilities

Classroom management emerged as a major challenge, particularly in sustaining learners' attention and addressing disruptive behavior. Ji stated, *"Since young children have a short attention span, this often results in a disorganized or noisy classroom"* (IDI_8). Another participant shared, *"One student suddenly stood up and climbed the window, while another kept jumping. No matter how much I tried to discipline them, they would not listen"* (FGD_P2). These experiences show the difficulty of maintaining an orderly classroom while delivering instruction. Eticano and Lovitos (2026) similarly identified classroom management as a significant challenge among pre-service teachers during practicum. Thus, participants had to continuously adjust their approaches to learners' behaviors and needs.

Participants also experienced difficulties in completing lesson plans within limited teaching periods and adapting instruction to actual classroom conditions. Yin explained, *"Within forty-five minutes, you are expected to complete what is stated in your lesson plan, but it is often not achievable"* (IDI_4). As a result, participants had to adjust their explanations, strategies, and pacing when planned activities could not be completed. Vale and Barcillano (2023) similarly reported high anxiety among practice teachers related to lesson preparation and other teaching-related demands. They also identified time management as one of the strategies used by practice teachers to cope with the challenges encountered during their teaching experience.

Teaching multiple subjects further increased participants' preparation demands. Alberto shared, *"You feel bombarded and cannot fully focus on teaching because most of your time is spent preparing materials"* (IDI_1). Preparing lessons and materials across different subject areas required considerable time and effort. Comia et al. (2024) similarly reported challenges involving lesson planning, teaching responsibilities, and adaptation to different teaching environments (Duran & Caloc, 2025). Thus, multi-subject teaching added to the workload and required greater flexibility from participants.

The combination of teaching, institutional, and personal responsibilities also contributed to stress and fatigue. One participant stated, *"There are times when there are too many tasks from the institution, the CT, and personal responsibilities, plus many subjects"* (IDI_5). Cerna and Abueva (2024) similarly identified classroom management, time management, inadequate preparedness, and financial difficulties among Filipino pre-service teachers during practicum. Participants also experienced financial constraints related to instructional materials and transportation. Alberto shared, *"It was already difficult, but it became even harder during my FS because of many expenses, from instructional materials to transportation going to work and school"* (IDI_1). Comia et al. (2024) likewise reported personal expenses as a difficulty during field-study experiences. These findings indicate that teaching internship demands extended beyond instruction and required participants to manage academic, institutional, personal, and financial responsibilities simultaneously.

Teaching Internship Coping Mechanisms of Pre-Service Teachers

Shown in Table 4 are the coping mechanisms employed by pre-service teachers during their teaching internship. Five themes emerged from the core ideas drawn from the participants' statements. The following themes were *self-regulation strategies*, *support-seeking networks*, *adaptive teaching strategies*, *motivational reinforcement*, and *reflective professional growth*.

Table 4. Teaching Internship Coping Mechanisms of Pre-Service Teachers

Themes	Core Ideas
Self-Regulation Strategies	prioritizing tasks and scheduling responsibilities to manage workload
	managing stress and personal well-being
	taking short breaks to regain emotional composure during stressful situations
	practicing positive self-talk and self-affirmation
Support-Seeking Networks	seeking guidance from cooperating teachers when difficulties arise
	relying on peers and family members for emotional and practical support
	turning to faith or spirituality for motivation and strength
	consulting online resources or educational tools for instructional support
	applying instructional materials, visual aids, and videos to support student understanding
Adaptive Teaching Strategies	integrating games and interactive activities to maintain classroom engagement
	using reward systems to motivate participation and positive behavior
	breaking lessons into smaller and clearer instructional steps
	celebrating small classroom successes and positive student responses
Motivational Reinforcement	drawing emotional drive from students' participation and learning progress
	celebrating small classroom successes and positive student responses
	receiving encouragement from feedback given by mentors or observers
	maintaining enthusiasm to influence students positively
Reflective Professional Growth	viewing teaching internship as preparation for long-term teaching
	developing resilience through repeated teaching experiences

The teaching internship became a significant period of professional reflection, with participants reassessing their perceptions of teaching based on their actual classroom experiences. For some, positive experiences with learners transformed their initial perceptions and strengthened their desire to pursue teaching. Mea shared, *"At first, education was not really my first choice, but because of practicum, I learned to love teaching and I learned to love the children. If given the opportunity, I will continue"* (IDI_5). Similarly, Vance stated, *"I became more motivated to become a teacher because I started imagining myself teaching children, especially Grade 3. I am looking forward to having my own advisory class"* (FGD_P2). These experiences suggest that meaningful interactions with learners and successful teaching experiences contributed to participants' developing commitment to the teaching profession. Triyoga et al. (2024) likewise found that international teaching practicum experiences influenced pre-service teachers' developing teacher identities and their perceptions of themselves as future teachers. Thus, actual classroom exposure provided participants with opportunities to reconsider their initial views of teaching and develop a stronger sense of commitment to the profession.

Supportive classroom experiences also contributed to participants' confidence and future career intentions. Twinkle shared, *"Even with stress and anxiety, I learned to become more resilient and to keep going. Instead of being discouraged, it became a challenge that I needed to overcome, and because of the students, I eventually learned to love teaching"* (IDI_2). Alberto likewise reflected, *"The experience is really difficult, but along the way, you begin to see yourself teaching in the future because this is the field you chose. It becomes part of your growth as a professional"* (IDI_1). These reflections indicate that coping with difficulties and learning from actual teaching experiences helped participants develop greater confidence and professional commitment. Choi and Park (2022) similarly reported that practicum experiences influenced pre-service teachers' professional identities and motivation, particularly as they

encountered the realities of teaching. The findings therefore suggest that professional growth during internship involved not only acquiring teaching skills but also developing greater confidence in one's capacity to assume the role of a teacher.

However, the demanding nature of the internship also caused participants to question their readiness to continue in the profession. One participant expressed, *"You even end up asking yourself if it is all worth it and if you can still manage"* (IDI_5). Rather than demonstrating a definite decision to leave teaching, this response reflects uncertainty and career reassessment resulting from the pressures of practicum. Orlova and Kamenická (2024) similarly described practicum as an emotionally demanding period in which pre-service teachers experienced anxiety and changing emotional responses as they encountered the realities of teaching. This suggests that professional reflection during internship was not exclusively positive; participants also had to confront doubts about their readiness and ability to sustain the demands of the teaching profession.

Conclusion

The study concludes that teaching internship became a meaningful stage in the participants' development as future educators. For the first research question, participants gained a deeper and more realistic understanding of teaching through direct engagement with the responsibilities and relationships involved in classroom practice. These experiences, particularly their interactions with learners and moments of successful teaching, fostered a stronger appreciation and, for some, a growing love for the profession. For the second research question, participants learned to navigate the demands of internship by adjusting to situations, seeking support, and reflecting on their experiences. These responses allowed them to move beyond simply encountering difficulties toward finding ways to manage and learn from them. Finally, for the third research question, the internship became a point of reflection on their professional future. While positive experiences strengthened some participants' commitment to teaching, the realities they encountered also led others to reconsider their readiness and career direction. Overall, teaching internship provided a space where participants not only applied what they had learned but also developed a more informed view of teaching and their place within the profession.

Recommendations

School administrators and educational managers are encouraged to provide practical pre-internship workshops on classroom management, lesson planning and instructional delivery. They may also prepare an internship handbook containing clear procedures, schedules, responsibilities, and contact persons for concerns. In addition, regular consultation sessions may be established where interns can raise concerns regarding workload, facilities, and other internship requirements. Schools may also provide shared instructional materials or resource centers to address difficulties with limited teaching resources.

Similarly, cooperating teachers are encouraged to conduct brief pre-lesson consultations, classroom observations, and post-lesson feedback sessions. They may demonstrate classroom management techniques and effective instructional practices before gradually assigning greater teaching responsibilities to interns. Moreover, when difficulties arise, cooperating teachers may provide specific suggestions and opportunities for interns to apply revised strategies. Regular check-ins may also provide interns with an accessible avenue for seeking guidance.

Meanwhile, pre-service teachers are encouraged to use practical systems for managing internship demands, such as weekly teaching plans, subject schedules, and task prioritization. Furthermore, they may prepare alternative activities and instructional strategies for unexpected classroom situations and keep brief reflection notes after teaching sessions. When recurring difficulties arise, they may promptly consult cooperating teachers and peers to identify appropriate responses.

Finally, future researchers may examine practical interventions that can improve teaching internship experiences, including classroom management workshops, structured mentoring sessions, reflection activities, and instructional resource support. Additionally, longitudinal studies across different institutions may examine how these interventions and internship conditions relate to pre-service teachers' professional development and subsequent career decisions.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the study involved only fifteen (15) pre-service teachers from a single private, non-sectarian academic institution. Therefore, the findings may not be transferable to pre-service teachers in other institutions, programs, or educational contexts. Second, the study relied on participants' self-reported experiences, which may have been influenced by memory, personal interpretation, or the extent to which participants were willing to disclose their experiences.

Third, the use of a focus group discussion (FGD) may have influenced the openness and depth of some participants' responses. Although the FGD provided opportunities for participants to exchange and reflect on their internship experiences, the presence of peers may have led some participants to moderate, withhold, or adjust their responses because of concerns about judgment, disagreement, or the sensitivity of particular experiences. As a result, some perspectives may not have been fully expressed during the group discussion. This limitation was partly addressed through individual in-depth interviews (IDIs), which provided a more private setting for participants to discuss their experiences.

Fourth, the study focused on a specific teaching internship period and did not follow participants longitudinally. Thus, the findings reflect participants' experiences and perceptions during the period covered by the study and do not establish how these experiences or their career intentions may have developed over time. The study also did not include comparisons across multiple institutions or internship settings, which could have provided a broader understanding of how contextual differences shape pre-service teachers' experiences.

Despite these limitations, the study provides meaningful insights into the experiences, challenges, coping strategies, and professional reflections of BEEd pre-service teachers during their teaching internship.

Author Contributions

This paper was led by Agner, who contributed throughout the research and manuscript development. Dr. Louie Jay R. Caloc handled the data analysis, refinement of results, and formatting, while Dr. Mary Cris I. Bongabong reviewed the manuscript and provided guidance.

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Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Disclosure Statement

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aspects of the writing process, the authors thoroughly reviewed and validated all AI-assisted outputs. The authors retain full responsibility for the content, accuracy, and integrity of this work, in accordance with the guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

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