



# Perception of Student Teachers Towards School Internship Programme in Teacher Education

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**Abstract:** *The study examines student teachers' perceptions of the school internship programme in teacher education in West Bengal. Using a descriptive survey method, data were collected from 387 B.Ed. student teachers using a self-developed 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire. Findings reveal that the internship significantly enhanced teaching competence, classroom management, instructional planning, and professional confidence. Respondents reported strong institutional support, effective supervision, and meaningful interaction with students. The programme also fostered professional responsibility and practical readiness for teaching roles. However, challenges were observed in some student teachers' parent-teacher communication skills. The study concludes that the internship programme effectively bridges theory and practice in teacher education while highlighting the need for structured communication training, reflective practice, and strengthened institutional-school collaboration to enhance professional preparation.*

**Key Words:** *School internship programme, student teachers' perception, teaching competence, professional development, teacher education, West Bengal.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

The school internship programme occupies a central position in teacher education, serving as the bridge between theoretical preparation and practical classroom experience. Through systematic engagement with real school settings, student teachers gain opportunities to apply pedagogical theories, develop teaching competencies, and understand the multifaceted roles and responsibilities of teachers. In contemporary teacher education, the internship programme is widely recognised as a crucial component for fostering professional skills, reflective practices, and professional identity among prospective teachers.

The perception of student teachers towards the school internship programme plays a significant role in determining the effectiveness of this experiential learning process. Positive perceptions often lead to greater engagement, confidence, and professional growth, whereas negative experiences may hinder the development of teaching competence and motivation. Factors such as the quality of mentoring, institutional support, school climate, availability of teaching-learning resources, and feedback mechanisms substantially influence student teachers' perceptions of their internship experiences. Understanding these perceptions is therefore essential for evaluating the strengths and limitations of existing internship practices.

In recent years, educational reforms and regulatory frameworks in teacher education have emphasised extended and structured internship programmes to enhance the quality of teacher preparation. However, variations in implementation across teacher education institutions and schools often affect student teachers' learning outcomes. Exploring student teachers' perceptions provides valuable insights into how internship programmes are executed at the ground level and how they contribute to professional readiness. School-based internship, often referred to as a "practicum," constitutes a pivotal component of initial teacher education globally and has been increasingly prioritised in Indian educational policy and curriculum frameworks in recent decades (National Council for Teacher Education [NCTE], 2009). In the Indian context, structured internship experiences have been strongly emphasised by the National Council for Teacher Education to improve the quality of teacher preparation. Therefore, examining student teachers' perceptions of the school internship programme is essential for strengthening teacher education practices and ensuring meaningful professional preparation.



## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW:**

School internship programmes constitute a core component of teacher education, providing student teachers with authentic opportunities to integrate theoretical knowledge with classroom practice. Previous studies indicate that student teachers generally perceive school internships as a vital professional learning experience that enhances pedagogical skills, classroom management, and professional confidence (Darling-Hammond, 2014). Research has shown that internships help bridge the gap between theory and practice by exposing student teachers to real school contexts, learner diversity, and institutional culture (Zeichner, 2010).

Several empirical studies report positive perceptions of student teachers toward internship programmes, highlighting their role in developing teaching competence, reflective practice, and professional identity (Korthagen, 2017). However, challenges such as inadequate mentoring, limited supervision, heavy workload, and insufficient duration of internships have also been documented (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003). These constraints often affect the overall effectiveness of the programme and the satisfaction of student teachers.

Moreover, the quality of mentoring and institutional support has been identified as a significant factor influencing student teachers' perceptions of school internships (Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). Overall, existing studies underscore that while student teachers largely value school internship programmes, systematic improvements are essential to maximize their professional benefits.

### **Rationale for the study in West Bengal:**

West Bengal, with a large and diverse school system and a substantial network of teacher education institutions (TEIs), offers a fertile setting to examine the nature and outcomes of school internship programmes. Historically, concerns about the dominance of theory over practice in teacher education have been raised at the national level and echoed in state-level debates about the quality of internship placements, supervision, and school-college collaboration (NCFTE, 2009). Empirical investigations conducted in West Bengal indicate variation in intern experiences: while many student teachers report gains in confidence, classroom management and pedagogical skills, other studies point to challenges such as inadequate mentoring, logistic constraints, limited involvement in whole-school activities, and the uneven quality of feedback. Given the centrality of internships to professional formation and the evidence of both strengths and gaps in local practice, this study aims to provide an in-depth introduction and justification for systematic research into internship experiences of B.Ed. student teachers in West Bengal.

## **3. OBJECTIVES:**

The study has the following objectives:

- To study the perception of student teachers regarding the Development of Teaching Competence and Pedagogical Skills.
- To study the perception of student teachers regarding the Promotion of Professional Growth and Self-Confidence Building.
- To study the perception of student teachers regarding the Institutional Support, Interaction, and Practical School Experience.

## **4. METHODOLOGY:**

A descriptive survey method was used to examine student teachers' perceptions of the school internship programme.

### **Population:**

The study population comprised all student teachers associated with the B.Ed. program in West Bengal.

### **Sample:**

The study utilised a random sampling technique. The sample consists of 387 respondents selected from different B.Ed. colleges of various districts of West Bengal.

### **Tool:**

For the present study, a self-developed 5-point Likert-type questionnaire was used to collect data from student teachers to determine their perceptions of the B.Ed. Internship Programme.

**Data Collection:** After the completion of the internship programme for the 2022-2024 batch, data were collected from the final-semester B.Ed. student teachers.

**Statistical Technique:** The sample data were analysed using simple descriptive statistics.



**5. DISCUSSION:**

**Objective 1: To study the perception of student teachers regarding the Development of Teaching Competence and Pedagogical Skills.**

Table no 1: Item-wise tabular representations of objective 1

Items no.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	255 (65.89%)	102 (26.36%)	24 (6.20%)	6 (1.55%)	0 (0.00%)	387(100 %)
2	229 (59.17%)	132 (34.11%)	23 (5.94%)	1 (0.26%)	2 (0.52%)	387(100 %)
3	215 (55.56%)	139 (35.92%)	27 (6.98%)	5 (1.29%)	1 (0.26%)	387(100 %)
4	162 (41.86%)	173 (44.70%)	37 (9.56%)	4 (1.03%)	11 (2.84%)	387(100 %)

1. I have designed and developed the teaching materials myself.

The data show that 65.89% strongly agreed and 26.36% agreed that they designed and developed teaching materials independently. Only 6.20% were undecided, and 1.55% disagreed, with no respondents strongly disagreeing. This indicates a high level of autonomy among student teachers in preparing instructional materials. Designing and developing teaching materials is an essential professional skill, reflecting creativity, pedagogical understanding, and ownership of the teaching process. The findings suggest that the internship successfully encouraged students to actively plan and structure learning experiences.

2. Practice teaching helped to improve my classroom management skills

The survey results show that 59.17% strongly agreed and 34.11% agreed that practice teaching improved their classroom management skills. Only a very small proportion were undecided (5.94%) or disagreed (0.26% disagree, 0.52% strongly disagree). This suggests that hands-on teaching experiences enabled student teachers to observe, implement, and refine strategies for organizing classroom behaviour, maintaining discipline, and managing learning activities effectively, thus preparing them for the dynamic environment of real classrooms.

3. Supervision of teaching practices helped me in developing and improving my teaching skills

A combined 91.48% of respondents (55.56% strongly agreed and 35.92% agreed) acknowledged that supervision during teaching practice contributed positively to the development and improvement of their teaching skills. With only 6.98% undecided and 1.55% in disagreement, the findings indicate that constructive feedback and guidance from supervisors were instrumental in helping student teachers identify areas for improvement, adopt effective instructional strategies, and enhance their pedagogical competencies.

4. I can design and develop question paper for evaluating the students.

A substantial majority (41.86% strongly agreed, 44.70% agreed) felt competent in designing and developing question papers. 9.56% were undecided, and very few disagreed. These results imply that through guided practice and supervision, student teachers gained the skills required for assessing learning outcomes, demonstrating their ability to apply pedagogical knowledge in planning appropriate evaluation tools.

**Objective 2: To study the perception of student teachers regarding the Promotion of Professional Growth and Self-Confidence Building.**

Table no 2: Item-wise tabular representations of objective 2

Items no.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
5	223 (57.62%)	120 (31.01%)	25 (6.46%)	15 (3.88%)	4 (1.03%)	387(100 %)
6	272 (70.28%)	88 (22.74%)	16 (4.13%)	10 (2.58%)	1 (0.26%)	387(100 %)
7	173 (44.70%)	149 (38.50%)	57 (14.73%)	2 (0.52%)	6 (1.55%)	387(100 %)
8	120 (31.01%)	131 (33.85%)	56 (14.47%)	55 (14.21%)	25 (6.46%)	387(100 %)

5. During the internship I have learnt to take the responsibilities of a permanent teacher

A majority of respondents, 57.62% strongly agreed and 31.01% agreed, reported that they learned to assume responsibilities similar to those of a permanent teacher. 6.46% were undecided, while 3.88% disagreed and 1.03% strongly disagreed. This indicates that the internship provided practical exposure to professional teaching duties, enabling student teachers to develop accountability, leadership, and decision-making skills. The findings highlight the internship's role in bridging the gap between theoretical training and real-world teaching responsibilities.

6. Practice teaching helped me to gain confidence in teaching



The data indicate that 70.28% of the respondents strongly agreed and 22.74% agreed that practice teaching significantly contributed to their confidence in teaching. Only a small fraction, 4.13% were undecided, while 2.58% disagreed and 0.26% strongly disagreed. These findings suggest that engaging in actual teaching sessions provided the student teachers with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in a real classroom, which in turn enhanced their self-efficacy and assurance in performing teaching tasks independently. The overwhelming agreement highlights practice teaching as a critical factor in professional preparation.

7. I shall be confident enough to attend and conduct morning assembly in future

The majority of respondents (44.70% strongly agreed, 38.50% agreed) felt confident in attending and conducting morning assemblies in the future. 14.73% were undecided, and only a very small proportion expressed disagreement. This reflects that the internship provided opportunities to engage in school routines beyond classroom teaching, allowing student teachers to develop organizational and leadership skills necessary for performing administrative or school-wide responsibilities confidently.

8. I could communicate with the parents regarding the performance of the students.

Responses were more varied on this item: 31.01% strongly agreed and 33.85% agreed that they could communicate with parents effectively, while 14.47% were undecided, and 20.67% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This indicates that while a moderate number of student teachers felt capable of parental communication, a notable proportion still faced challenges in discussing student performance, suggesting a potential area for improvement in developing interpersonal and professional communication skills.

**Objective 3: To study the perception of student teachers regarding the Institutional Support, Interaction, and Practical School Experience.**

Table no 3: Item-wise tabular representations of objective 3

Items no.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
9	84 (21.71%)	83 (21.45%)	17 (4.39%)	128 (33.07%)	75 (19.38%)	387(100 %)
10	136 (35.14%)	195 (50.39%)	29 (7.49%)	18 (4.65%)	9 (2.33%)	387(100 %)
11	162 (41.86%)	168 (43.41%)	45 (11.63%)	8 (2.07%)	4 (1.03%)	387(100 %)
12	124 (32.04%)	196 (50.65%)	48 (12.40%)	13 (3.36%)	6 (1.55%)	387(100 %)

9. The distance from home to the internship school is too far.

The data indicates that 21.71% of respondents strongly agreed and 21.45% agreed that the distance from their homes to the internship school was considerable. In contrast, a larger proportion, 33.07% disagreed and 19.38% strongly disagreed, while 4.39% remained undecided. These results suggest that although a notable number of student teachers perceived travel distance as a challenge, the majority did not find it a significant obstacle. This implies that logistical factors, such as commuting distance, were not a major barrier to participation in the internship program for most respondents, and the program’s structure likely accommodated such challenges effectively.

10. I got help from the teachers of the government internship school in all aspects.

The survey shows that a substantial majority of student teachers, 35.14% strongly agreed and 50.39% agreed, received help from the teachers of the internship school in all aspects. Only 7.49% were undecided, and a minimal proportion, 4.65% disagreed and 2.33% strongly disagreed, indicated limited support. This demonstrates that the internship school provided a supportive environment, where collaboration and assistance from experienced teachers facilitated learning, skill acquisition, and adjustment to the practical demands of teaching. Such guidance likely enhanced the effectiveness of the internship experience.

11. My interaction with students at school during the internship was sufficient.

According to the responses, 41.86% strongly agreed and 43.41% agreed that their interaction with students was sufficient. 11.63% remained undecided, while only 2.07% disagreed and 1.03% strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that most student teachers had ample opportunities to engage with students, fostering meaningful teaching experiences, communication skills, and classroom rapport. Adequate interaction with learners is critical for understanding student needs and improving teaching effectiveness, and the data suggests this objective was largely achieved.

12. I am satisfied with the role of the supervisor in enhancing my teaching skills.

Most respondents (32.04% strongly agreed, 50.65% agreed) expressed satisfaction with their supervisors’ contributions toward enhancing their teaching skills. 12.40% were undecided, while 4.91% disagreed to some extent. This indicates



that supervisory support was generally effective in facilitating skill development, providing guidance, constructive feedback, and practical strategies that strengthened the teaching competencies of student teachers.

## **6. FINDINGS:**

### **Objective 1:**

1. The findings indicate a high level of autonomy among student teachers in preparing instructional materials. Designing and developing teaching resources is an essential professional skill, reflecting creativity, pedagogical understanding, and ownership of the teaching process.

2. The findings revealed that 59.17% strongly agreed and 34.11% agreed that the majority of student teachers improved their classroom management skills through practice teaching.

The findings indicate that constructive feedback and guidance from supervisors were instrumental in helping student teachers identify areas for improvement, adopt effective instructional strategies, and enhance their pedagogical competencies.

3. These results imply that through guided practice and supervision, student teachers gained the skills required for assessing learning outcomes, demonstrating their ability to apply pedagogical knowledge in planning appropriate evaluation tools.

### **Objective 2:**

1 This indicates that the internship provided practical exposure to professional teaching duties, enabling student teachers to develop accountability, leadership, and decision-making skills.

These findings suggest that engaging in actual teaching sessions provided the student teachers with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in a real classroom, which in turn enhanced their self-efficacy and assurance in performing teaching tasks independently.

Respondents (44.70% strongly agreed, 38.50% agreed) felt confident in attending and conducting morning assemblies in the future.

This indicates that while a moderate number of student teachers felt capable of parental communication, a notable proportion still faced challenges in discussing student performance.

### **Objective 3:**

These results suggest that although a notable number of student teachers perceived travel distance as a challenge, the majority did not find it a significant obstacle

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## **7. CONCLUSION:**

The present study investigated student teachers' perceptions of the school internship programme and its contribution to professional preparation. The findings clearly establish that the internship serves as a critical component of teacher education by facilitating the development of pedagogical competence, professional confidence, and practical teaching readiness. Student teachers demonstrated significant improvement in instructional planning, classroom management, assessment practices, and professional responsibility through real classroom engagement.

Supportive institutional environments and effective supervision were found to play a crucial role in enhancing teaching competence and professional growth. Interaction with school teachers and students provided meaningful experiential learning opportunities that strengthened professional awareness and preparedness. Although certain challenges remain, particularly in parent-teacher communication, the overall perception of the internship programme was highly positive. The study reaffirms that the school internship programme is an essential bridge between theory and practice in teacher education. Strengthening reflective practice, structured guidance, and professional communication training can further enhance programme effectiveness. Continuous collaboration between teacher education institutions and schools, guided by the standards of the National Council for Teacher Education, is vital for quality teacher preparation.



In conclusion, the school internship programme plays a transformative role in preparing competent, confident, and professionally responsible teachers. The findings provide valuable insights for improving internship design and implementation in teacher education institutions, including Assam University and similar contexts across India.

### **8. RECOMMENDATION:**

Teacher education institutions should strengthen training in parent–teacher communication through structured practice. Internship programmes need systematic reflective activities and feedback mechanisms. A pre-internship orientation to classroom management and assessment is essential. Logistical support for interns facing travel challenges should be ensured. Stronger institutional–school collaboration can improve mentoring quality. Additionally, integrating leadership, administrative exposure, and assessment literacy will enhance the comprehensive professional readiness of student teachers.

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