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"Exploring Gender Differences in the Experiences of B.Ed. Students during School Internship"

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ABSTRACT :

The present study explores gender-based differences in the experiences and perceptions of B.Ed. student-teachers regarding their school internship program. The internship is a vital component of teacher education, aiming to bridge the gap between theory and practice by immersing student-teachers in real classroom environments. This study focuses on key areas such as mentorship quality, classroom engagement, administrative responsibilities, and overall satisfaction. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from a random sample of 100 B.Ed. students (50 male and 50 female) from the Jaipur region through a self-structured and validated questionnaire. An independent two-tailed t-test was conducted to examine statistical differences in opinions between male and female respondents. The results revealed no significant gender-based difference, indicating that both groups had broadly similar internship experiences. The findings suggest that the internship program was implemented in an inclusive and gender-equitable manner, providing balanced opportunities for professional development. This study contributes to enhancing teacher education practices by promoting fairness, inclusivity, and quality in pre-service teacher training programs.

Keywords: B.Ed. students; school internship; gender comparison; teacher education; student-teacher perception.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of teacher education plays a decisive role in shaping the future of school education. Within the framework of teacher preparation programs, the school internship is recognised as a vital component that enables prospective teachers to bridge the gap between theoretical instruction and real-world classroom practice. As prescribed by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), the internship is a compulsory and integral part of the two-year B.Ed. curriculum, designed to provide experiential learning opportunities in actual school environments (NCTE, 2014). This structured exposure to school-based teaching not only develops instructional skills but also fosters a professional identity among pre-service teachers.

Internships provide an environment where student-teachers engage in authentic teaching-learning processes, such as lesson planning, subject teaching, managing classroom behaviour, evaluating students, maintaining records, organising co-curricular activities, and interacting with parents and the wider school community. These engagements help in shaping reflective practitioners capable of meeting the diverse demands of modern classrooms (Korthagen, 2010). The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) emphasises an internship as a period of intense and sustained engagement with schools that goes beyond mere observation and includes actual teaching and participation in school life (NCTE, 2009).

Furthermore, research affirms that school internships are essential for translating pedagogical theories into effective classroom practices. According to Zeichner (2010), field experiences like internships serve as critical contexts where pre-service teachers make sense of their coursework by applying educational theories to real-life teaching situations. Darling-Hammond (2006) adds that well-structured internships under experienced mentors significantly contribute to the professional growth, confidence, and preparedness of future teachers.

Despite its recognised importance, the quality and consistency of internship experiences can differ significantly based on factors such as the mentorship provided, school environment, institutional support, and the preparedness of student-teachers (Clarke, Triggs, & Nielsen, 2014). Studies have highlighted challenges faced by interns, including inadequate guidance from mentors, mismatches between theoretical input and school realities, lack of coordination between teacher education institutions and schools, and excessive workloads (Srivastava, 2016; Sharma & Pathania, 2020). On the other hand, successful internship experiences have been found to enhance self-efficacy, communication skills, classroom management capabilities, and reflective thinking among student-teachers (Bhargava, 2009; Ghosh, 2021).

Evaluating the opinions and experiences of B.Ed. students regarding their internship is crucial to understanding the actual effectiveness of this component in teacher education programs. Their feedback can reveal both strengths and shortcomings in the design and implementation of the internship process and provide evidence-based inputs for reforming pre-service teacher education.

In this context, the present study aims to analyse perceptions, experiences, and challenges encountered by male and female student teachers during their school internships. The study seeks to examine the effectiveness of the internship program in fostering professional competencies, the extent of institutional and mentor support received, and the overall level of satisfaction among B.Ed. interns, with particular attention to gender-based variations. By capturing and comparing the lived experiences and reflections of both male and female student-teachers, the study endeavours to offer more details

about the differential impact of the school internship program. It further aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on teacher education reform and strengthen the practice-oriented components of pre-service teacher preparation in the Indian context.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recent studies have highlighted gender-based differences in B.Ed. internship experiences, revealing that male and female student-teachers often perceive mentorship, classroom engagement, and institutional support differently.

TABLE: 01

S. No.	Researcher(s)	Year	Title / Focus	Sample & Region	Key Findings	Implications
1	Sharma, P. & Pathania, A.	2021	Socio-Cultural Influences on Internship Experience	150 B.Ed. interns, Himachal Pradesh	Traditional expectations limited female autonomy in the classroom	Calls for inclusive, gender-equitable internship environments
2	Ghosh, S.	2021	Reflective Practices in B.Ed. Internship	80 B.Ed. students, West Bengal	Female interns demonstrated stronger emotional intelligence and reflection	Encourages reflection-based training strategies
3	Saxena, R. & Mishra, L.	2021	Feedback and Reflection in Internship	100 B.Ed. students, Uttar Pradesh	Females maintained reflective journals more consistently	Reflection tasks may need gender-sensitive formats
4	Singh, A. & Pathak, R.	2020	Perceptions of B.Ed. Students on School Internship	200 B.Ed. students, Madhya Pradesh	Female interns felt more supported; male interns faced administrative difficulties	Highlights gaps in mentoring and support systems by gender
5	Dutta, P. & Roy, T.	2020	Professional Growth During Internship	60 interns, Assam	Male interns improved classroom control; females excelled in communication	Gender-specific strengths should be used to design training
6	Raj, M. & Patel, K.	2019	Challenges Faced by B.Ed. Interns	90 students, Gujarat	Female interns struggled with classroom discipline; males with documentation	Reinforces need for balanced task allocation and training
7	Mehta, R. & Verma, P.	2019	Mentorship Effectiveness in B.Ed. Training	85 students, Delhi NCR	Females rated mentoring more positively due to emotional support	Highlights importance of empathetic mentorship practices
8	Kaushik, M. & Kaur, R.	2018	Satisfaction with School Internship	100 B.Ed. students, Punjab	Female interns valued student engagement more; males preferred structured lessons	Recognizes gender-based differences in teaching preferences
9	Agrawal, S.	2017	Institutional Support in B.Ed. Internship	110 student-teachers, Madhya Pradesh	Female interns reported higher mentor and school support	Advocates for equal institutional backing for all interns
10	Srivastava, R.	2016	Effectiveness of Internship in Teacher Education	100 B.Ed. students, Uttar Pradesh	Female students were more responsive to mentor feedback; males struggled with co-curricular roles	Suggests differentiated mentoring support for both genders
11	Joshi, V.	2015	Skill Development Through Internship	75 B.Ed. students, Maharashtra	Female interns developed better interpersonal and communication skills	Emphasizes communication training for male interns
12	Clarke, A., Triggs, V., & Nielsen, W.	2014	Mentoring Role in Teacher Education	Literature review (International)	Female interns benefited more from collaborative mentorship	Mentorship programs must be gender-inclusive and adaptive
13	National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)	2014	Norms and Standards for B.Ed. Program	National Curriculum (India)	Internship mandated as core; need for effective support mechanisms	Framework supports structured, inclusive internship practices
14	Zeichner, K.	2010	Identity and Field Experience in Teacher Training	Theoretical framework (Global context)	Gender norms influence the construction of teacher identity	Gender awareness should be integrated into internship supervision
15	Bhargava, A.	2009	Teaching Practice for B.Ed. Students	120 B.Ed. students, Rajasthan	Female interns showed more preparedness and better classroom	Indicates the need for gender-sensitive internship

S. No.	Researcher(s)	Year	Title / Focus	Sample & Region	Key Findings	Implications
					engagement	planning

OBJECTIVE

- To study the opinion of B.Ed. Students regarding their experience of school internship programme.
- To study the opinion of male and female B.Ed. Students concerning the experience of school internship programme.

METHODOLOGY

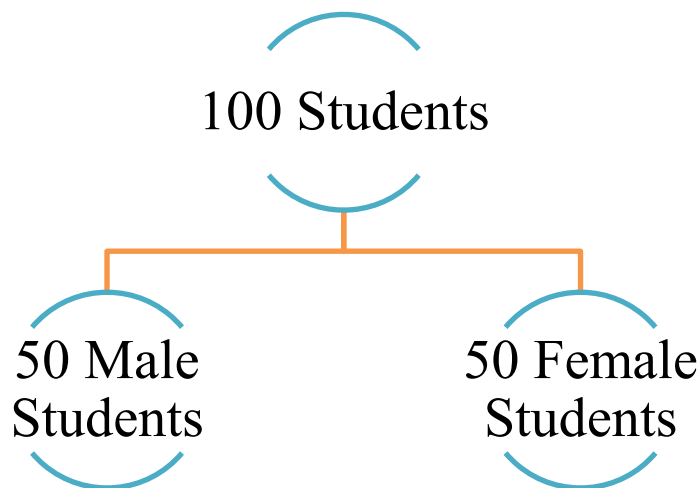
This study employed a descriptive survey research design to examine gender-based differences in the internship experiences of B.Ed. students. Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire covering areas such as classroom engagement, mentorship, challenges faced, and overall satisfaction. Demographic details like gender, age, and school location were also recorded. A pilot test was conducted to ensure the reliability of the tool. The final data were analysed using appropriate statistical techniques to compare the responses of male and female student-teachers.

• VARIABLE

In this study, the dependent variable is the *opinion of B.Ed. students*, and the independent variable is the *school internship program*. The study explores how various aspects of the internship influence students' perceptions and experiences.

• POPULATION & SAMPLE

In the present study, the **target population** consisted of B.Ed. students from the Jaipur region. A **sample of 100 B.Ed. students** was selected using the **random sampling method**, ensuring equal gender representation. The sample comprised **50 male** and **50 female** student-teachers, allowing for a comparative analysis of their opinions and experiences regarding the school internship program.



HYPOTHESIS

H₁: There is no significant difference between the opinions of male and female B.Ed. students regarding the internship program.

Table: 02

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-ratio	Significance level	Result
Male B.Ed. Students	50	88.26	6.153	0.51	0.05	Hypothesis is Accepted
Female B.Ed. Students	50	88.88	6.036			

Degree of Freedom = $[N_1 + N_2] - 2$

= $[50 + 50] - 2$

= 98

Significance Level of 0.05 = 1.9845

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

To examine whether there is a significant difference in the opinions of male and female B.Ed. students regarding the internship program, an independent two-tailed t-test was conducted. The null hypothesis stated: *There is no significant difference between the opinions of male and female B.Ed. students regarding the internship program*. The sample consisted of 50 male and 50 female B.Ed. students. The mean score of male students was 88.26 with a standard deviation of 6.153, while female students had a mean score of 88.88 with a standard deviation of 6.036. The calculated t-value

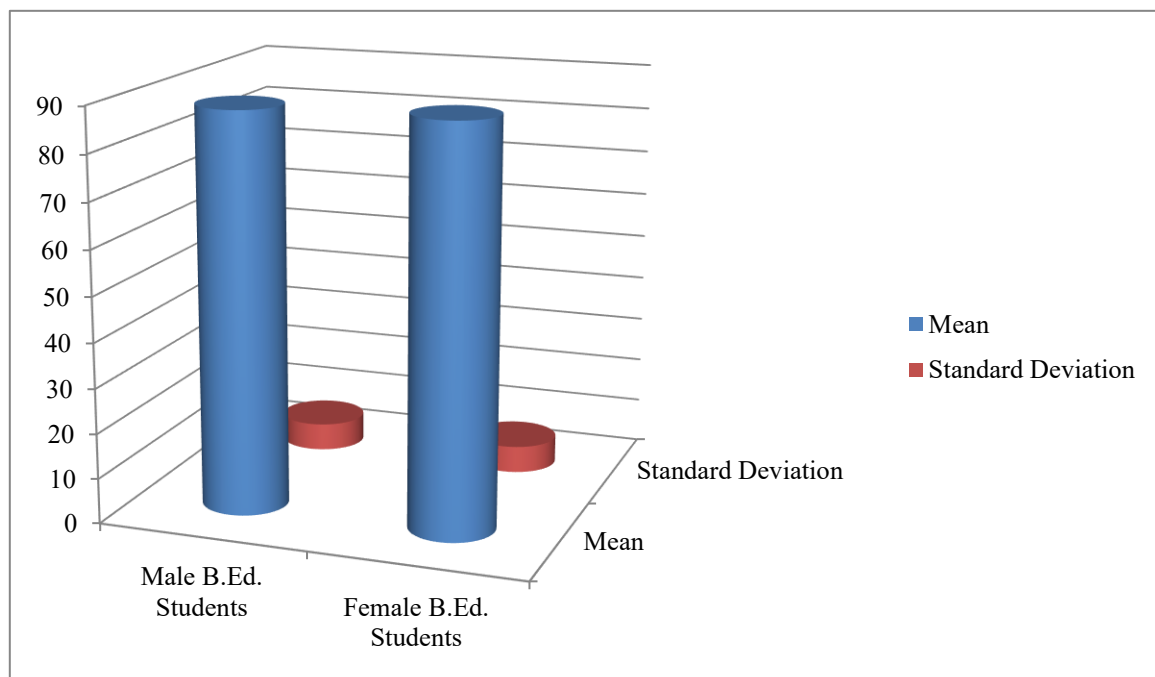
was 0.51. At the 0.05 level of significance and with 98 degrees of freedom, the critical t-value is 1.9845. Since the calculated t-value (0.51) is less than the critical value (1.9845), the result is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between the opinions of male and female B.Ed. students regarding the internship program.

DISCUSSION

The results indicate that both male and female B.Ed. students share similar opinions about the internship program. Although the average score of female students is slightly higher than that of male students, the difference is too small to be considered statistically meaningful. This suggests that gender does not play a significant role in shaping students' views about the internship experience. A possible reason for this similarity is that both male and female students were likely given equal opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences during the internship. They may have participated in the same teaching practices, school activities, and administrative duties, which led to similar perceptions. The acceptance of the null hypothesis shows that the internship program was implemented in a balanced and inclusive manner for all students. Overall, this is a positive outcome, as it reflects fairness and equality in teacher education, ensuring that all students benefit equally from the program regardless of gender.

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION:

Fig. 01



EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- The study confirms that male and female B.Ed. students perceive the internship experience similarly, indicating that the program is implemented in a gender-inclusive and equitable manner.
- Teacher education institutions should continue promoting equal opportunities for all student-teachers in teaching practice, administrative tasks, and co-curricular activities.
- The results support the development of gender-sensitive mentoring practices, ensuring that mentor teachers are trained to guide all interns effectively regardless of gender.
- The study highlights the need for standardised internship guidelines to maintain consistency across different schools and ensure fair task distribution.
- Findings encourage institutions to implement regular feedback and reflection mechanisms to monitor student-teacher experiences and make timely improvements.
- Educational policymakers may use this evidence to support reforms that prioritise equity and inclusivity in teacher education, as advocated by NEP 2020.
- The results stress the importance of designing teacher education programs that are free from gender bias and focused on professional competency development for all.
- This study reinforces the role of school internships as transformative, inclusive experiences that prepare student-teachers for diverse real-world classrooms.

CONCLUSION

The results of the present study reveal that male and female B.Ed. students perceive their school internship experience in largely similar ways. Despite minor variations in average scores, the statistical analysis confirms that gender does not significantly influence students' opinions regarding the effectiveness or quality of the internship program. This outcome suggests that the internship was implemented in a balanced and inclusive manner, offering equal opportunities and responsibilities to all student-teachers. The equitable experience across gender lines reflects positively on the structure and delivery of the internship component in B.Ed. programs. These findings emphasise the importance of maintaining gender-neutral environments in teacher training institutions and supporting the broader goals of inclusive and equitable education, as envisioned by contemporary teacher education reforms.

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