

Research article

Teaching Practices in Ecuador: Analysis of University Curricula

Prácticas docentes en Ecuador: Análisis de los planes de estudio de las universidades

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Abstract

Introduction: Pre-service internships are essential in teacher training, linking theory with practice and exposing students to real-world contexts. They are universally incorporated in education degrees to shape future educators' thinking, perceptions, and actions.

Methodology: This study analyzes K-12 teacher education curricula in 25 Ecuadorian universities to understand the dynamics of mandatory internships. Using a descriptive approach, it examines the integration of internships in public, co-financed, and self-financed universities, focusing on the semesters when internships are assigned and their workload distribution. **Results:** All 25 universities incorporate pre-teaching internships, although implementation varies. Internships consistently aim for students to gain knowledge, skills, and professional aptitudes, values, and attitudes, significantly impacting their future performance and personal lives. **Discussion:** Internships are concentrated in the latter half of degree programs, ensuring students apply theoretical knowledge and skills acquired in earlier semesters, preparing them for professional roles. **Conclusions:** Pre-service internships are a

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strategic component of teacher training in Ecuadorian universities. They provide essential experiential learning opportunities, bridging the gap between theory and practice, and fostering competent, well-rounded educators ready for the teaching profession.

Keywords: Pre-service internships; Teacher training; Real-world contexts; Education curricula; Experiential learning; Professional development; Knowledge transfer; Teacher.

Resumen

Introducción: Las prácticas pre-profesionales son cruciales en la formación docente, conectan la teoría con la práctica y exponen a los estudiantes a contextos reales. Estas prácticas se incluyen universalmente en los programas de educación para moldear el pensamiento, las percepciones y las acciones de los futuros educadores. **Metodología:** Este estudio analiza los planes de estudio de formación docente de K-12 en 25 universidades ecuatorianas para entender la dinámica de las prácticas obligatorias. Utiliza un enfoque descriptivo para examinar la integración de las prácticas en universidades públicas, cofinanciadas y autofinanciadas, enfocándose en los semestres asignados y la distribución de la carga laboral. **Resultados:** Todas las 25 universidades incluyen prácticas pre-docentes, aunque la implementación varía. El objetivo es que los estudiantes adquieran conocimientos, habilidades, aptitudes, valores y actitudes profesionales, impactando significativamente en su desempeño futuro y vida personal. **Discusión:** Las prácticas se concentran en la segunda mitad de los programas de grado para aplicar conocimientos teóricos y habilidades adquiridas en semestres anteriores, preparándolos para roles profesionales. **Conclusiones:** Las prácticas pre-profesionales son estratégicas en la formación docente en las universidades ecuatorianas, ofrecen oportunidades esenciales de aprendizaje experiencial, conectan la teoría y práctica, y fomentan educadores competentes e integrales para las demandas docentes.

Palabras clave: Prácticas pre-profesionales; Formación docente; Contextos reales; Planes de estudio; Aprendizaje experiencial; Desarrollo profesional; Transferencia de conocimiento; Preparación docente.

1. Introduction

Pre-service internships are one of the key pillars of professional learning and teacher's future performance. It constitutes one of the main elements in teacher training and an irreplaceable space for the construction of learning in real contexts (Saiz & Susinos, 2017).

Through the practices prior to the service, the student body has the opportunity to confront their previous learning experiences with those oriented from the academy, which generates, not only a rupture of previous paradigms, but also opens new possibilities for being, doing and live teacher. Hence, as the student assumes the pre-service practice as a learning space, the possibility of reflecting and improving the ways of learning and teaching increases (Contreras, 2000).

Another important aspect that pre-service internships offer is the possibility of re-thinking the life project of students, since facing the particularities of the educational context allows them to confirm their decision to be tolerant, critical, transparent and very curious teachers (Freire, 2011), and in this way respond coherently to social needs and technological advances that have now become essential when it comes to revitalizing and innovating educational processes.

It is then based on the principle that learning implies going through more complex stages and problem solving, a process by which the causes and categories of the previous state are structurally devalued later (Lobos, 2019). So, it is precisely the practices prior to the service

that allow validating and experiencing these stages through processes organized in a spiral, sequential and pertinent way, hence, they become the central axis of professional training and especially in the educational field.

Pre-service internships at the university curriculum are aimed at developing the necessary competencies to articulate theory with practice and bring students closer to real scenarios. For it is not only necessary to know the content, but also how it is taught and in what place and context it is taught (Vaillant & Marcelo, 2015), under this premise, all universities that offer education careers incorporate this subject in their training proposals since the impact it generates in the future professional performance is key, especially when modelling their ways of thinking, perceiving and acting as teachers (García-Cabrero et al., 2008). In this context, research conducted in Colombia by Castro et al. (2023) mentions that pedagogical practices respond to the particular characteristics of students and the context. The strategies used in this study, for example, not only contributed to children's learning, but to that of families: the school expanded to homes.

At this point it is important to point out that teacher training is a decisive element in the quality of education, hence the pre-service practice is included in initial teacher training as a means to apply the knowledge, skills and values acquired in the university degree, it is in this space where the learning process, student-teacher interaction is not only observed but also studied; student-student; managers-teachers-students to raise awareness of the duties and responsibilities that being a teacher implies (Mena et al., 2019).

It is evident, then, that practical training through internships brings students closer to real contexts and highlights the importance of practicums as a way of link theory with practice. Additionally, internships facilitate student's exposure to academic institutions, future employers, other professionals in the field and job placement opportunities (Ruiz et al., 2004). Also, pre-service internships seek to address the deficient scientific and methodological training of teachers that causes insecurity and lack of confidence when designing, executing and evaluating classroom management (Escobar et al., 2013).

However, this exposure cannot be a priori, it requires rigorously planned processes "so that it means and provides new inputs and training opportunities for trainee students. Any other possible purpose or benefit must be subordinated to this general principle" (Zabalza, 2004). Hence, it is not a question of introducing pre-service practices in a certain period or subject, but of integrating it in a significant way and with the purpose of establishing a training itinerary where the educational context is included with the security of close accompaniment. to their activity and constant feedback aimed at continuous improvement.

This last statement requires national agreements and commitments regarding teacher training, hence the need to generate training processes so that the student has a "real approach to the different socio-educational problems, to favor the achievement of the necessary skills that must be put in action during the exercise of their profession" (Sesma et al., 2014) but accompanied by the tutors of the practical service.

Now, although there is no consensus on its denomination as pointed out by Zabalza (2011), the term that prevails to recognize this period, especially in Latin America, is "práctica pre-profesional", which constitutes a training space where students have the opportunity to relate their knowledge to professional practice, practice skills, acquire and apply professional skills in practice, reflect on their own activities and thus also on their profession (Hevia & González, 2012).

Pre-professional practice implies learning to teach is a process that begins with the initial training of the teacher and continues throughout the professional practice (Domínguez et al., 2020), because the experiences lived in this formative period mark the meaning and meaning to their future teaching practice; For this reason, they not only respond to a training requirement but also become a bridge between theory and practice, the educational phase and entry into the labor market (De la Vega & Arakaki, 2011).

Now, the goal of studying the role of internships is clear: the importance of analyzing students first contact with reality, integration of theory and practice, and training in real contexts. In this framework of ideas and given the importance of this topic for teacher training, its incorporation in teacher education programs is non-negotiable, since, the relationship between theory and practice is a constant problem in the construction of professional teaching knowledge (Montero, 2018).

However, today, the purpose and essence of pre-professional internships has been distorted, leaving students who aspire to become professionals with no choice but to accept any conditions imposed by educational institutions, even if these conditions they go against their legitimate training aspirations (Ceroni, 2007), since Ecuadorian legislation requires the completion of internships as a requirement to obtain the professional title, an aspect with which it coincides, but it is contradictory when a significant space for training is not prepared teacher training. In fact, the Ecuadorian Academic Regime Regulations Art 54. establishes that all university careers should have certain number of hours destined to pre-service internships (Consejo de Educación Superior del Ecuador, 2020).

The purpose of this article is to analyses internships and practical training within the teaching profession. Internships are understood as the place where students can face real problems of their profession, get involved in complex scenarios, confront their beliefs and reflect on the practice (Pérez, 2013). Although, there's no a consensus when the internships must begin, it is obvious it's a necessity since they are part of the educational cycle and must be designed to provide students with new inputs and educational opportunities (Zabalza, 2004).

Under this premise, each Higher Education Institution (HEI) defines the beginning of the teaching internship in its curricula. The national authorities regulating higher education assigned the hours for each internship component. At higher education level, bachelor degrees should have a minimum of 240 hours and a maximum of 480 hours (Consejo de Educación Superior del Ecuador, 2020). Here it is important to mention that, prior to this requirement, a total of 800 hours was required based on the generic curriculum that was promoted by the Higher Education Council in 2015 for teachers training programs.

However, by 2020, HEIs were allowed to redesign their curricula and many of them decided to lower the number of pre-service internships; while, others kept the original guidelines, because training cannot consist only of passing subjects as they are raised in educational institutions. It is necessary to integrate experiential knowledge, practicums and internships (Tejada, 2005). In this regard, it is important to clarify that from a theoretical perspective it is clear that time is not a determinant for the success of practicums and internships, but rather the teaching situations that are developed in them.

Regarding teaching situations, these imply not only facing them in the context of teaching practice but also "reflecting, seeking information, reasoning and using strategies (V. Medina & Pérez, 2021) based on problem dialogue to solve problems. This conception implies that the

student assumes his leading role in the construction of his learning and in this way pedagogical improvements are achieved as well as promoting the professional collective debate (Imbernón, 2005).

Pre-service internships in Ecuador are divided into two components, work simulation practicums and community service practicums, which together may not exceed 10% of a teacher training program (Consejo de Educación Superior, 2022). From this point of view, two components are identified. For the first component it's necessary to carry out diagnostics and insertion processes as a key activities of teacher training programs, since it links the knowledge acquired at the university with the practice.

For the second component, establishing a link with society is considered a must, where the competencies acquired during their training are put into play (Raposo et al., 2011). Article 40 of the Ecuadorian Academic Regime (Reglamento de Régimen Académico) states that the linkage with society refers to the planning, execution and dissemination of activities that ensure the effective participation in society and the social responsibility of the institutions of the Higher Education System. Hence the need for teaching practice to follow a sequence in curricular projects in such a way as to generate meaningful teaching situations that contribute directly to the construction of teaching knowledge. In this context, the present study seeks to identify the integration of pre-service internships in the curricula of the K-12 training in public, co-financed and private universities in Ecuador.

Moreover, it is essential to recognize the role of mentors in pre-service internships. Mentors provide critical guidance, support, and feedback, helping students navigate the challenges of real-world teaching environments. Their experience and insights are invaluable for fostering the professional growth and confidence of future teachers. Effective mentoring relationships can significantly enhance the quality of the internship experience, ensuring that students are well-prepared to enter the teaching profession.

Furthermore, integrating reflective practices into pre-service internships is crucial. Encouraging students to reflect on their experiences, both successes and challenges, promotes deeper learning and professional development. Reflective practices enable students to critically analyze their teaching methods, identify areas for improvement, and develop strategies for continuous growth. This reflective approach not only benefits the individual student but also contributes to the broader educational community by fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation in teaching practices.

2. Methods

The objective of this research paper is to systematize the distribution of pre-service internships of 25 Ecuadorian universities that offer K-12 programs in Ecuador. This study focused on 25 universities because there is no information available for the other six universities that provide teacher education programs.

This is a non-experimental study in which data was collected from a systematic review of the curricula of 25 universities to evaluate the situation of pre-service internships in HEIs in Ecuador. A systematic review was chosen because it allows for a critical analysis to identify similarities and differences in terms of the content of academic programs (Guirao-Goris, 2015).

The design of this study is descriptive in nature and cross-sectional, as it describes the offer of pre-service internships in the K-12 teaching career of public, co-financed, and self-financed universities (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza Torres, 2018). For the systematization of data,

the official website of the Higher Education Council (2020) and university websites were reviewed. These sources provided information on the names of universities, the duration, the location, the number of hours, the validity, and the curriculum, among other aspects. Once the information was systematized, universities were classified into three groups: public, co-financed, and private universities. This classification allowed for a structured analysis and the generation of the results presented below.

This methodological approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the distribution and structure of pre-service internships across various types of higher education institutions in Ecuador. By critically analyzing these data, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into the effectiveness and implementation of teacher training programs, ultimately supporting the improvement of educational practices and policies within the country.

3. Results

As already mentioned, pre-service internships are one of the pillars of any teacher training program. They are a determining factor in the construction of professional teaching knowledge as well as a factor to facilitate the transfer between theory and practice. Hence, all the 25 universities researched incorporate pre-service intern-ships in their curricula to a greater or lesser degree, however this is a constant variable.

The following figures represent the results of this analyses:

Figure 1.

Sample of the distribution of hours per semester for pre-service practicums at self-financed universities (2020)



Note. Figure 1 shows the distribution of hours for pre-service practicums at self-financed universities (2020), highlighting a significant increase from the fourth semester and a peak of 300 hours in the seventh semester.

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 1 shows the tendencies of the self-financed universities that offer the K-12 teaching education program (Universidad de Otavalo, Universidad de Indoamérica, Universidad Metropolitana, Universidad del Pacífico Escuela de Negocios and Universidad Tecnológica de Israel) with respect to the start and distribution of hours for pre-service internship. In this regard, it was determined that 40% of the institutions start some sort of practicum in the first semester, 20% in the third semester and 40% in the sixth semester. This characteristic shows that each university incorporates the pre-service internships according to its pedagogical approach. In addition, it can be assured that it fulfils the function of connecting the theory with the “real” world and allows the development of competencies from the need to solve of

problems (Tejada, 2006). Also, it gives students the opportunity to understand, master, and continually improve (A. Medina & Domínguez, 2006).

Another aspect to observe from the results shown in Figure 1 is that there is a com-mon factor among universities, and that is, regardless of the semester and hours assigned to internships the final goal is to ensure that the student not only acquires knowledge and skills but also devote energy to developing skills, values and attitudes that will later be reflected in the workplace and in personal life (De la Vega & Arakaki, 2011). In addition, the pre-service internship, is considered as formative, unique and invaluable time to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies that teachers use in their daily work (Rosselló et al., 2018).

Finally, it is observed that between the third, fourth and fifth semesters, the hours of pre-service internship increase very significantly especially in 40% of universities. At this stage, the student moves from diagnosis to classroom insertion and is provided with formative, unique and invaluable time to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies that teachers use in their daily work (Sesma et al., 2014). It is important to note that in 40% of universities internships are kept only in two semesters and that in 20% they are only present in one semester. Also, only 40% of HEIs maintain pre-service internship throughout all degrees. However, as previously stated, the significance of the teaching practice depends on the experiences that are presented to the student learning is effective if it has a professional reference, if it is related to solving real problems (Tejada & Ruiz, 2013).

Figure 2.

Distribution of hours and semesters for pre-service practicums at co-financed universities



Note. Figure 2 shows the distribution of hours for pre-service practicums at co-financed universities (2020), highlighting increases beginning in the fourth semester and peaking at 240 hours in the seventh semester.

Source: Own elaboration.

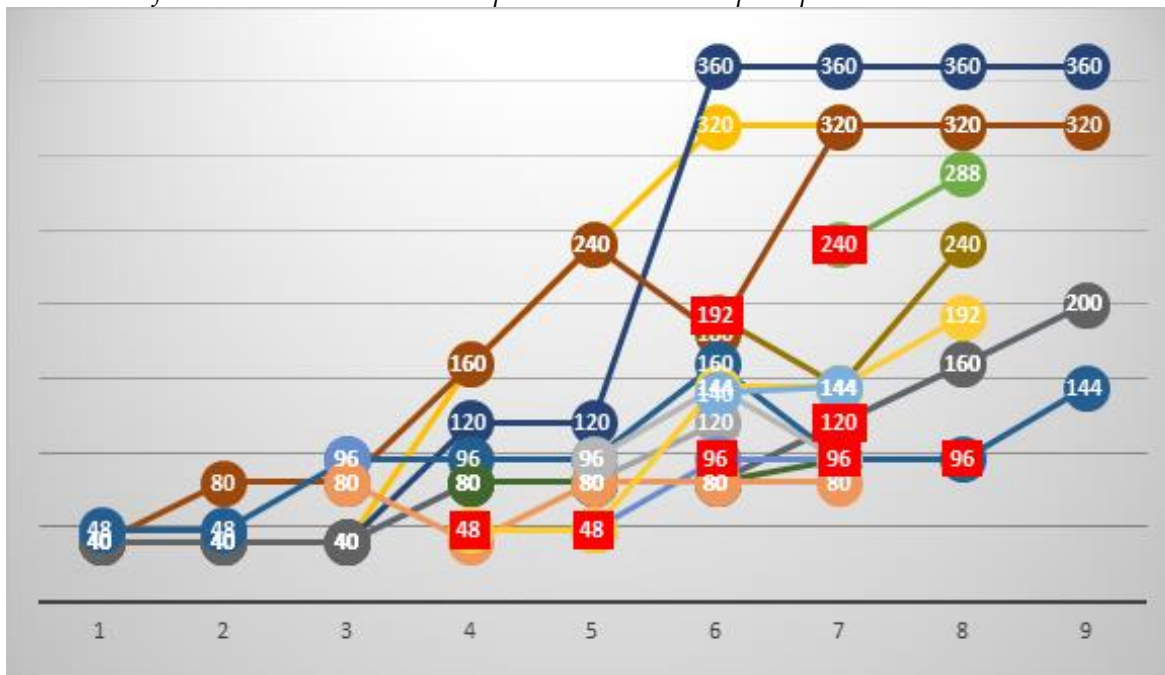
Figure 2 shows the trends of the five co-financed universities that offer K-12 programs with respect to the integration of pre-service internship in their programs (Universidad Politécnica Salesiana, Universidad del Azuay, Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador, Universidad Iberoamericana del Ecuador). In this case, 20% of these HEIs start in the second semester, another 20% in the third semester, 40% in the fourth semester, and 20% in the seventh semester. In this regard, it should be noted that pre-service internships are an important part of the training program for future specialists. It is not something that is added as a marginal and secondary paragraph or simply as a suggestion or optional (Zabalza, 2004).

The tendency of 80% of universities is to focus the greatest number of training hours in the fourth and fifth semesters, in which the students access educational institutions in order to apply all the knowledge and skills acquired in various subjects (Liesa & Vived, 2010). During the seventh semester, 40% of universities tend to increase the number of hours of pre-service internship. From this, it can be deduced that the intention is for the student to be linked to a professional future scenario where the skills developed during the university career are applied (Raposo-Rivas et al., 2020). Finally, homogeneity can be observed in the distribution of pre-service internships among the co-funded universities, which would provide a great opportunity to carry out joint research projects and collaborations.

Furthermore, the consistency in the distribution patterns suggests a shared understanding among these institutions about the critical periods for practical training. This alignment not only facilitates a more standardized approach to teacher preparation but also enhances the potential for collaborative efforts, such as joint research initiatives and shared best practices. Such collaborations can lead to a more robust educational framework, benefiting both the institutions and the broader educational community by fostering innovation and continuous improvement in pre-service teacher training programs.

Figure 3

Distribution of hours and semesters where pre-service internships at public universities



Note. Figure 3 shows the distribution of hours for pre-service practicums at public, co-financed, and self-financed universities (2020), highlighting a significant increase starting from the fourth semester and peaking at 360 hours in the sixth semester.

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 3 shows the tendencies of the 15 public universities that offer the K-12 programs to incorporate pre-service internships in their teacher training programs (Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo, Universidad Nacional de Educación, Universidad Estatal de Milagro, Universidad de Cuenca, Universidad Central del Ecuador, Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manabí, Universidad de las Fuerzas Armadas, Universidad de Guayaquil, Universidad Técnica del Norte, Universidad Técnica Estatal de Quevedo, Universidad Estatal Península de

Santa Elena, Universidad Nacional de Loja, Universidad Técnica de Babahoyo, Universidad Técnica de Machala and Universidad Técnica de Ambato). 100% of the curricula analysed include pre-service internship in their trainings because it allows it brings together the extensive theoretical knowledge that we acquire and allows us to test or confirm it in real situations or contexts (Raposo, 2011); therefore, integrating pre-service internship implies incorporating internships effectively into the Training Plans and assigning it a relevant function within it (Zabalza, 2004).

Sixty percent of public universities start their practice period in the first semester, 6.6% in the third semester, 19.8% in the fourth semester, 13.2% in the fifth and sixth semesters respectively, 6.6% in the seventh semester and 6.6% in the eighth semester. This implies that the incorporation of pre-service internship in the curriculum allows recognizes that, in addition to the theoretical aspects of scientific and technical knowledge, basic university training must include access to professional reality and all its advantages and disadvantages (Ventura, 2005), which is precisely fulfilled when the student contrasts theory with practice.

It is important to point out that 40% of the universities that offer a bachelor's degree in education in Ecuador offer practicums during the entire career and only 60% of them in three or four semesters. This aspect allows us to deduce that internships are considered as a during a period of the study process, that is, as part of the study plan of the students of this career or specialty. Therefore, the integration of their study plans is one of the main conditions that determine their effectiveness (Zabalza, 2004). It is important to point out that the integration of the practicum throughout the education career does not guarantee the effectiveness of the practicum; for in-stance, practical experiences for the construction of teaching knowledge must be ensured.

This does not mean teaching the necessary skills for the development of a specific job, but rather strengthening the necessary skills for personal and professional development with a clear objective of development and evaluation (Ruiz et al., 2004). Finally, it should be noted that the highest concentration of the number of internship hours across institutions are allocated in the sixth semester. In one hand, there is a trend to allocate internships (in terms of the number of hours) in the fourth and fifth semesters; and seventh and eighth semesters. For Tejada, (2006) to be competent it is necessary to use several resources, so it is very important in the process of practice not only to confront the student with real scenarios but also to train them to transfer their knowledge.

4. Discussion

The findings from this study underscore the critical role of pre-service internships in teacher training, demonstrating significant variability in how different types of universities implement these programs. This section delves into the implications of these results, situating them within the broader landscape of educational research and practice.

The variability in the initiation and distribution of internship hours across self-financed universities highlights the diverse pedagogical approaches employed. While 40% of these institutions begin internships in the first semester, another 40% start in the sixth semester, and 20% in the third semester. This distribution suggests a tailored approach to integrating practical experience, aligning with individual institutional philosophies. Despite these differences, a common objective across these universities is the holistic development of students, emphasizing not only knowledge and skills but also professional values and

attitudes. This aligns with previous research, which emphasizes the importance of experiential learning in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application (Kolb, 1984).

In co-financed universities, the concentration of internship hours in the fourth and fifth semesters, with a notable increase in the seventh semester, reflects a strategic approach to professional preparation. This structure allows students to apply foundational knowledge and skills in real-world settings, supporting the development of practical competencies essential for future teaching roles. The uniformity in internship distribution among co-financed universities suggests potential for collaborative initiatives that could enhance the quality and impact of teacher training programs. This finding is consistent with the theory of situated learning, which posits that learning is most effective when contextualized within authentic activities (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Public universities show a trend of starting internships early (60% in the first semester), indicating an emphasis on early practical exposure. However, only 40% of these institutions maintain internships throughout the entire degree program. This raises questions about the continuity and progression of practical experience, which is crucial for sustained professional growth. The concentration of hours in the sixth semester suggests a critical juncture where students transition from theoretical learning to practical application, aligning with the concept of scaffolded learning experiences that gradually build student competency (Bruner, 1978). This approach ensures that by the time students reach advanced stages of their programs, they are well-prepared to handle the complexities of real-world teaching environments.

The consistency of this approach across different university types highlights the widespread recognition of the importance of early and continuous practical experience in teacher training. However, the study also reveals gaps and inconsistencies that could be addressed to improve the effectiveness of these internships. For instance, the lack of continuous internships in 60% of public universities may hinder the development of a seamless integration of theory and practice, which is essential for the formation of effective teaching professionals.

Despite these insights, the study has limitations that must be considered. The descriptive nature of the research limits the ability to draw causal inferences about the impact of different internship structures on student outcomes. Additionally, the study does not account for variations in the quality of internship experiences, which can significantly influence the effectiveness of these programs. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to track the long-term impact of pre-service internships on teaching performance and student outcomes. Moreover, qualitative studies could provide deeper insights into the lived experiences of student teachers, shedding light on how different internship models influence their professional development. Such studies could explore factors such as the mentoring quality, the variety of teaching environments, and the specific challenges faced during internships.

This study contributes to the understanding of how pre-service internships are structured across various types of universities in Ecuador. The findings highlight the importance of strategic design in internship programs to maximize the transfer of knowledge and skills in real contexts. By offering meaningful and contextual experiences, these internships play a crucial role in preparing competent, well-rounded educators. They ensure that future teachers are not only theoretically knowledgeable but also practically adept, capable of navigating the dynamic challenges of modern classrooms.

Future research should aim to address the identified limitations and explore new questions arising from this study, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of teacher training programs. Investigating the specific elements that contribute to high-quality internship experiences could provide actionable insights for policymakers and educators. Furthermore, exploring the impact of technological advancements on internship programs, such as the integration of virtual teaching simulations, could offer innovative solutions to some of the existing challenges. By continuously refining and adapting pre-service internship programs, educational institutions can better prepare future teachers to meet the evolving demands of the educational landscape.

5. Conclusions

Pre-service internships provide an invaluable opportunity to transfer theory to practice, as offered by Ecuadorian universities under the Ecuadorian Academic Regulation (2022). Although there is no consensus on the beginning or end of practicums, a minimum and maximum number of internships are considered crucial for students' professional development. Education is not just about accepting departments as educational institutions but about actively creating them (Tejada, 2005). These internships enable students to apply the knowledge they have acquired in real-world settings, thus facilitating a deeper and more practical understanding of teaching.

Pre-service internships facilitate academic exchange programs based on the experiences generated by these internships. It is necessary to create a basic itinerary, regardless of the pedagogical approach each university develops, to facilitate student mobility. These agreements require planning oriented towards constructing practical knowledge for problem-solving, promoting collaboration and joint learning among different institutions.

Although pre-service internships are an important part of the training program for future specialists, they should not be added as a marginal or secondary component or simply as a suggestion. They are the backbone of teacher training; therefore, the effectiveness of constructing teaching knowledge depends on the experiences generated during this period (Zabalza, 2004). This approach ensures that students acquire not only theoretical knowledge but also essential practical skills for their professional development.

These internships are not solely about acquiring theoretical knowledge and practical skills but also play a crucial role in shaping professional dispositions and ethical frameworks vital for effective teaching. This holistic approach ensures that future educators are not only competent but also principled and reflective practitioners, capable of adapting to various educational situations and acting with integrity.

Starting internships in the initial semesters allows students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings from the beginning of their training. This early exposure helps in building confidence and practical problem-solving skills, making the transition to professional roles smoother and more effective. Early practice also enables students to identify and overcome practical challenges earlier in their training, enhancing their preparedness and adaptability in their future teaching careers.

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