Internship Supervision Training: Perception and Experiences of Supervisors in Tertiary Institutions in Ghana

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The study focused on the perception and experiences of internship supervisors in tertiary institutions, specifically, University of Education, Winneba (UEW), regarding internship supervision training they served as participants. Using a descriptive quantitative survey, a sample of 179 out of 315 faculty members were conveniently sampled for the study. The perception and experiences of respondents were measured using an adapted scale developed by De Vellis (2012). The data collected were analyzed descriptively and inferentially. The study revealed that internship supervisors had positive perception and experiences about internship supervision training. However, their perception and experiences were not influenced by their gender. Therefore, it was concluded that internship supervisors had positive perception and experiences about the need for internship supervision training. It was recommended that tertiary institutions in Ghana, specifically, UEW which is mandated to provide schools with quality professional teachers, make internship supervision training a core component of selecting supervisors to assess interns during internship so that the best and most qualified faculty member can be used for this vital activity.

Keywords: internship, training, supervision, perception, experience

INTRODUCTION

Internship has become an integral part of professional careers in the 21st century. Internship has been practised in several occupations, including the teaching profession. By definition, an internship, according to Stewart, Owens, O'Higgins, and Hewitt (2021), is a period of practical training carried out by students within an institution or organization. It is also observed as a period of transition from student to practitioner when the intern is expected to gain the competencies of his/her profession, which includes a sense of professional identity and responsibility (Sheehan, 2010). According to Fiori and Pearce (2009), an internship is a work-related learning experience that provides students with the chance to gain necessary knowledge and skills in a career-related area that may or may not be directly related to their academic study. In this sense, any organization or company can offer an internship and come from any industry or economic sector. An internship can provide many benefits to an organization which include but not limited to exposure to career fields of interest without making a permanent commitment (Stewart, Owens, O'Higgins, & Hewitt, 2021). The variation of life stages from a student to a professional in the teaching profession is not always effortless. Students have to face many obstacles when they enter into professional life. They have to adjust themselves according to the professional environment by implementing their conceptual knowledge in the new world of work (Anjum, 2020).

By integrating conceptual knowledge and training through academic internship programs, students can better implement their concepts at the workplace (Tynjälä, 2008). According to Gault, Leach, and Duey (2010), academic internships are a bridge to link theory and practice by taking part in supervised and scheduled work. These internship programs improve students' skills and polish their professional growth and experience. Today, educational institutions, students and business recruiters are well aware of the importance of internship programs (Callanan & Benzing, 2004). Internship programs are the opportunities for educational institutes to upgrade the students' enrollment and prepare their curriculum (Eyler, 1993). For students, internships are the experience of practical work, exposure and the time to demonstrate their skills through the knowledge accrued during the studies. (Posey, Carlisle, & Smellie, 1988).

For students to reap the actual benefits of an internship and be assessed for success or otherwise accordingly, internship supervisors need quality supervision. When it is associated with this traditional view, a supervisor is seen as a specialist in the area who provides immediate supervision of the intern during the allocated period of internship and who reports to the intern trainer or instructor about the intern's performance (Hoppin & Goodman, 2014). Supervision is critical to the practicum and internship experience in that it provides professional-in-training with a suitable environment to process professional experiences (Studer & Diambra, 2010). Bernard and Goodyear (2014) add to the on-going discussion by defining supervision as "an intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior colleague or colleagues who typically (but not always) are members of that same profession" (p. 9).

The extant literature available posit that the numerous studies conduct in internship supervision were largely situated and focused on how to provide adequate supervision, what and who to include in the supervision training curriculum (Dekruyf & Pehrsson, 2011; Studer & Oberman, 2006). Interestingly, there is limited literature on how supervisors should be trained, their needs, perceptions and experiences to address best practices for effective and efficient internship supervision. From the on-going discussion, it is undoubtedly clear that supervision training for internship supervisors is critical to the success or failure of interns of the teaching profession. Burns, Jacobs, and Yendol-Hoppey (2016b) posited that teacher supervision as "the enactment of multiple tasks and practices aimed at supporting pre-service teachers' learning in practical contexts" (p. 420). Through quality supervision training, teacher supervisors become effective and efficient for internship supervision (McCormack, Baecher, & Cuenca, 2019). According to Bates, Drits, and Ramirez (2011), Gimbert and Nolan (2003) and Lee (2011), adequate teacher supervision is seen as essential in advancing teacher candidate development.

Despite the critical nature of supervision as an interface between learning theory and classroom practice, supervisors are typically ad-hoc hires who assume their roles as supervisors with little or no preparation. Beck and Kosnik (2002) and Zeichner (2005) attribute this to an implicit belief that providing observation feedback to candidates can be accomplished by anyone with teaching experience and requires no specialized training. Thus, prior experience as a teacher will simply transfer to mentoring novice pre-service teachers. This belief contributes to institutions generally dedicating few resources to assist supervisors' professional development as teacher educators. Notwithstanding, Levine (2011) notes that the field of teacher education knows surprisingly little about how supervisors are trained, supported, or provided with ongoing professional learning.

Nonetheless, supervisors in tertiary institutions such as University of Education, Winneba are expected to support pre-service teachers' development, maintain harmonious relations with school personnel, recommend courses of action, and serve as diplomats from the sending university. In the United States of America, Jacobs, Hogarty and Burns (2017) explored this multi-faceted role placed on supervisors. They confirmed across a diverse range of public and private schools of education that, despite the critical nature of supervisors in supporting pre-service teachers and establishing solid partnerships between institutions and schools, supervisors tend to be less supported by their sending institutions in terms of training. In situations where training may be provided, it is noted that ssupervisor's may be barely briefed on the supervision processes in terms of observation assessment rubric to be utilized in the field, have little understanding of the operations of the program they serve, or rarely meet with program staff (Baum, Powers-Costello, VanScoy, Miller & James, 2011; Grossman, Hammerness, McDonald & Ronfeldt, 2008).

It is important to note that internship supervisor training is very relevant for many reasons. For example, in a study conducted by Patel (2015), it was reported that internship supervisor training is essential because the needs and expectations sometimes fail to align with the needs and expectations of the supervisor. In other words, the interns and the supervisors are not always on the same page regarding the interns expectation of the supervisor. In remedying this, internship supervisor training is used to align the needs and expectations of both the intern and the supervisor to prevent misunderstandings. In addition, the intern and supervisor relationship are a critical part of whether or not the intern views the internship opportunity as successful or not. Therefore, it is equally important for supervisors to build a strong relationship with their interns, transforming it into a better internship experience for everyone (California Board of Behavioural Sciences, 2014; Patel, 2015).

Perception and Experiences of Internship Supervision Training of Supervisors

The quality of teacher education is a significant concern of all educational goals (Apolot, Komakech, Kamanyire, & Otaala, 2018). Supervision of classroom instruction and continuous support to interns are some of the most effective ways to improve and sustain the quality of teaching and learning (Naz, Awan, & Nasreen, 2009). In Ghana, teacher training institutions regard teaching internship supervision as a critical role in quality assurance and service delivery. Therefore, teaching internship supervision signifies a shared vision of what teaching and learning can and should be (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2004; Beach & Reinhartz (2000), hence it should be developed collaboratively by competent internship supervisors, teachers, and other members of the school community. In addition, Henry and Beasley (as cited in Thobega, 2008) recognized the relevance of supervision of student interns during student teaching as this may be the only form of individualized instruction the student teachers may experience during their training.

Nonetheless, the process by which most student interns are supervised and evaluated is inefficient, ineffective, and is poorly used (Marshall, 2005). According to Otaala, Maani, and Bakaira (2013) and Komakech (2015), despite the heavy investment in teacher training programs by universities and teacher education institutions, the quality of teacher graduates is still wanting due to several factors, including preparation or training procedures for internship supervisors. Such a situation may not be different from what is done in a good of number higher institutions in Ghana, which is mandated to train and supply teachers to public and private schools (Adu-Yeboah & Kwaah, 2018; Haruna, Agyemang, & Osei, 2020). For example, in University of Education, Winneba, supervisors are required to take part in pre-internship seminars where interns are adequately prepared before embarking on internship. Similarly, all supervisors further required to go through an intensive internship supervision training prior to internship supervision.

The quality of the internship supervision workshops, seminars and training are all geared towards the achievement of quality, effective and efficient supervision by supervisors as well as equip interns with the skills, knowledge and realties needed in the real world of work. According to Owusu and Brown (2014), there is currently a quality agenda running among teacher training institutions worldwide and within higher education in particular. It is a prominent and mainstream activity that seeks to ensure accountability in how institutions go about their daily work with regards to teacher training. It is perceived that this quality agenda can only be achieved through effective, efficient and purpose-driven training aimed at equipping and developing the skills and knowledge of internship supervisors to be abreast with contemporary issues regarding teacher training.

Notwithstanding these current quality agenda, Al-Kiyumi and Hammad (2019) argued that internship supervisors are aware of the new reforms and their implications for the need for more collaborative and democratic supervisory practices. However, their actual supervision practice reflected a more traditional approach that was mainly based on classroom observation. Atari, Issan, and Jum'a (2005) found that most Omani supervisors encountered problems associated with their changing roles and practices due to inadequate preparation for the proposed changes. In another study, it was found that supervisors were very optimistic about introducing a training workshop for supervisors (Meegan, Dunning, Belton, & Woods, 2013). Meegan, Dunning, Belton, and Woods (2013) argued that their finding was not unexpected because, internationally, as best practice, many teacher training institutions provide workshops and training to members prior to teaching practice. Al-Kiyumi and Hammad (2020), in a study among internship

supervisors in Oman, with a focus on perceptions of internship supervisors about their preparation for educational change, the study found that internship supervisors had negative perception and experience about preparatory training because they indicated that the level of preparation they had received did not meet their expectations.

Regarding frequency of internship supervision training and workshops, there were concerns about the amount of training provided as it was perceived by many participants (especially novice supervisors) as insufficient compared to their training needs under the reforms (Al-Kiyumi & Hammad, 2020). In the 21st Century, gender has been one of the factors that is often considered when perception and experiences regarding training, workshops, and professional development in most educational institutions in Ghana. This is always done to ascertain understanding and usability of what is learnt and or experienced by males and females. For example, a study on perception about internship training workshops for supervisors found that females had better positive perception and experience after being taken through the various rudiments of their training and as such, females had fewer challenging job experiences than males after going through internship supervision (De Pater, Van Vianen, Fischer, & Van Ginkel, 2009). In a similar context, a study was conducted by Ferreras-Garcia, Sales-Zaguirre, and Serradell-López (2021) concerning perceptions about internship supervisors' competencies after going through internship supervision training. The study found that gender was a factor that appears to be positively influenced by specific competencies, where females perceived and experienced internship supervision better than males.

Relatedly, for more than half a decade in the University of Education, Winneba Ghana, internship supervisors barely received full and purpose-driven preparatory training before embarking on the supervision journey. It is assumed that the skills, knowledge and experiences accrued by these supervisors over the years can be relied on and used during internship supervision. However, this assumption appears to cause supervisors' inadequacy of current internship supervision knowledge and practices. Although relevant literature stresses the crucial role instructional supervisors play in realizing educational change (Kamindo, 2008; Palandra, 2010; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007), evidence suggests that supervisors may not be well prepared for their changing roles. For example, Daresh and Playko (2001) asserted that internship supervisors seldom receive training to perform their roles. They pointed out that "the major concept of current supervisory behaviour lies in its undue emphasis on reactive performance rather than through careful, logical planning and preparation" (p. 25).

Aside from this, the institution (UEW), in its drive to improve upon the student-teacher ratio, recently employed the services of new faculty members, who are automatically rolled on to supervise interns in their various departments and units without supervision training and or supervision mentorship. As an astute teacher training institution in Ghana, internship training in UEW has recently been made mandatory for both experienced and inexperienced faculty members, and a year of mentorship is needed for new faculty members to appreciate contemporary supervisory practices before embarking on internship supervision. This is necessitated by the need to increase institutional memory on internship supervision and upgrade the skills and competencies of internship supervisors for quality educational products through supervisor training or workshop. According to Meegan, Dunning, Belton, and Woods (2013) and World Bank (2013), to date, the majority of teaching practice has focused on the impact on, and experiences of, student teachers and cooperating teachers, with fewer studies examining the role and experiences of tertiary internship supervisors.

Nevertheless, it is not quite clear to what extent these trainings, seminars and workshops by tertiary institutions, specifically, UEW have been effective in preparing internship supervisors for their supervisory roles over the years. Therefore, to ascertain the impact of these training, seminars and workshops on internship supervisors in UEW calls for deep-dive research on the perceptions and experiences of internship supervisors. Furthermore, the researcher's observation over the years and extant literature shows that such internship supervisors training has not been frequently organised in most tertiary institutions in Ghana, specifically, in UEW (Adu-Yeboah & Kwaah, 2018; Annan, 2020; Haruna, Agyemang, & Osei, 2020; Mensah, Esia-Donkoh, & Quansah, 2016; Yelkpieri & Namale, 2016). From the on-going discussion, there is clear evidence to justify that effective, efficient and purpose-driven internship workshops, training or seminars for internship supervisors is a sine qua non to effective internship supervision in the training of

teachers in tertiary institutions in Ghana. Therefore, the researcher deemed it appropriate to ascertain internship supervisors' perceptions and experiences regarding supervisory training they received in January 2022. Based on the preceding arguments, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the perception and experiences held by internship supervisors about internship supervision after going through training?
2. What differences exist in perception and experiences of supervisors after going through internship supervision training according to their gender?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The choice of this design was empirically informed based on the use of tables, graphical, and numerical methods for summarizing the information presented by the data. The study was descriptive because the research aimed to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends and categories among respondents' opinions and numerically describe them (Nardi, 2018).

Participants

Participants for the study were invited to attend a one-day intensive internship supervisory training. They were drawn from all the Departments in the University of Education, Winneba who train teachers. Three hundred and fifteen (315) participants with over a year experience in internship supervision were invited for the workshop. Out of a total 315 participants, 179 fully completed all sections of the questionnaire and was subsequently used for the analysis. The gender of the respondents included males (n=130, 72.6%), females (n=49, 27.4%), and non-binary (n=0, 0.0%). The lecturers were ranked as follows: assistant lecturer (n=36, 20.1%), lecturer (n=75, 41.9%), senior lecturer (n=61, 34.1%), associate professor (n=7, 3.9%), and full professor (n=0, 0.0%). The supervisory experience of the lecturers spans between 1 to 30 years, where categories such as 1-5 (n=73, 40.8%), 6-10 (n=55, 30.7%), 11-15 (n=32, 17.9%), 16-20 (n=8, 4.5%), 21-25 (n=7, 3.9%), and 26-30 (n=4, 2.2%) were presented.

Measures

The five-point Likert-type Training Quality Scale developed by De Vellis (2012) was adopted to collect data for the study. The scale had 19-items distributed among four dimensions; Principal Supervisor Initiative (5-items, α=.67), Job-Embedded (7-items, α=.81), Active/Engaging (3-items, α=.69), and Overall Assessment (4-items, α=.82). The scale was pilot tested because its geographical and situational contextual development, description and usage were not the same as the context of the current study.

Procedures

The data were collected at the end of a training workshop organized for internship supervisors. At the end of each section of the workshop, participants were supplied with a questionnaire to complete. In addition, ethical protocols such as informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and freedom to withdraw from the study were considered.

Analysis

The data gathered were screened, sorted and coded serially for incompleteness. Descriptive and inferential statistical assumptions were performed and satisfied before the analysis was run. Specifically, means, standard deviations and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were used, and the results presented numerally.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One: What Are the Perception and Experiences Held by Internship Supervisors About Internship Supervision After Going Through Training?

The question sought to address the opinions held by internship supervisors concerning internship supervision training they experienced. The question was answered using 19-items. Table 1 presents the results.

TABLE 1
PERCEPTION OF SUPERVISORS ABOUT INTERNSHIP SUPERVISION TRAINING

Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
The training specifically enhanced my capacity to develop instructional leadership for supervision.	4.25	.65	Agreed
The training helped build a learning community with my colleague internship supervisors	4.26	.59	Agreed
The training provided opportunities to share specific practices with other supervisors.	4.37	3.07	Agreed
Through the training, I was geared towards implementing supervisory initiatives and programmes.	4.19	.68	Agreed
The training helped me understand institutional procedures for supervision.	4.61	3.04	Agreed
The training provided opportunities for me to receive feedback on my supervisory practice.	4.01	.74	Agreed
The training addressed real challenges I face in my role as a supervisor.	3.97	.77	Agreed
The training gave me opportunities to plan my work as a supervisor.	4.16	.75	Agreed
The training was based on problems of supervisory practice I face in my role as a supervisor.	3.86	.92	Agreed
The training provided opportunities for self-assessment of my skills as a supervisor.	4.32	.67	Agreed
The training provided me with actionable tools, protocols, and/or learning resources that I can use in my work as a supervisor.	4.06	.81	Agreed
The training provided me with tools to set goals for my own development as a supervisor.	4.04	.80	Agreed
The training was engaging	4.11	.75	Agreed
The training was interactive	4.13	.76	Agreed
The training allowed me to model practices I learned as a supervisor.	3.96	.74	Agreed
The training taught me new knowledge or skills I did not have as a supervisor.	3.88	.90	Agreed
The training stimulated my interest as a supervisor.	4.14	.78	Agreed
The training was part of a sustained, systematic programme for my development as a supervisor.	4.12	.71	Agreed
The training facilitated my overall leadership as a supervisor.	4.20	.72	Agreed
Mean of Means	**4.14**	**0.99**	**Agreed**

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 1 shows results on the perceptions held by internship supervisors and experiences concerning internship training quality. For instance, respondents agreed that their training enhanced their capacity to develop instructional leadership for supervision (M=4.25, SD=.65) as well as helping them build a learning community with their colleague internship supervisors (M=4.26, SD=.59). Again, respondents agreed that the training they had provided them opportunities to share specific practices with other supervisors

(M=4.37, SD=3.07**).** A good number of them agreed that through the training, they had been exposed to modern techniques in implementing supervisory initiatives and programmes (M=4.19, SD=.68).

Furthermore, the respondents agreed that the training they had helped them understand institutional procedures for supervision (M=4.61, SD=3.04) while also agreeing that the training provided them opportunities to receive feedback on their supervisory practice (M=4.01, SD=.74). Finally, respondents agreed that the training they had provided opportunities to self-assess their skills as supervisors (M=4.32, SD=.67) while also agreeing that the training facilitated their overall leadership as supervisors (M=4.20, SD=.72). Generally, the current study established that supervisors had a positive perception about internship supervision training and positive experience about internship supervision training (M=4.14, SD=0.99). The findings of the current study support findings of a host of earlier studies for example; In one study, it was found that supervisors were very optimistic about the introduction of a training workshop for supervisors (Meegan, Dunning, Belton, & Woods, 2013). However, in another study, Al-Kiyumi and Hammad (2020) found that internship supervisors had a negative perception and experience about preparatory training. This was attributed to the fact that the level of preparation they received did not meet their expectations.

Research Question Two: What Differences Exist in Perception and Experiences of Internship Supervisors After Going Through Internship Supervision Training According to Their Gender?

The focus of this research question was to determine if differences existed in the perceptions and experiences of internship supervision training based on the gender of respondents. Before performing the analysis and interpreting the results, all statistical assumptions such as adequacy of sample size, normality, and deletion of outliers were met. As a result, each case has the required minimum sample size of at least 20 cases for all the independent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), and no substantial outliers were identified. With gender as the independent variable (IV) while components of internship training quality (DV) such as principal supervisor initiative (PSI), job-embedded (JE), active/engaging (AE), and overall assessment (OA) as the dependent variables, the results are shown in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

TABLE 2
BOX'S TEST OF EQUALITY OF COVARIANCE MATRICES

Box's M	21.405
F	2.070
df1	10
df2	39230.578
Sig.	.023

Source: Field Data (2022)

TABLE 3
LEVENE'S TEST OF EQUALITY OF ERROR VARIANCES

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Principal Supervisor Initiative	Based on Mean	.219	1	177	.640
	Based on Median	.133	1	177	.716
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.133	1	153.83	.716
	Based on trimmed mean	.137	1	177	.712
Job-Embedded	Based on Mean	.420	1	177	.518
	Based on Median	.446	1	177	.505
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.446	1	173.43	.505
	Based on trimmed mean	.441	1	177	.508

Active/Engaging	Based on Mean	.018	1	177	.895
	Based on Median	.000	1	177	.986
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.000	1	175.52	.986
	Based on trimmed mean	.001	1	177	.978
Overall Assessment	Based on Mean	.041	1	177	.839
	Based on Median	.036	1	177	.849
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.036	1	173.18	.849
	Based on trimmed mean	.034	1	177	.853

Source: Field Data (2022)

TABLE 4
MULTIVARIATE TESTS

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.983	2490.739	4.000	174.000	.000	.983
	Wilks' Lambda	.017	2490.739	4.000	174.000	.000	.983
	Hotelling's Trace	57.258	2490.739	4.000	174.000	.000	.983
	Roy's Largest Root	57.258	2490.739	4.000	174.000	.000	.983
Gender	Pillai's Trace	.033	1.467	4.000	174.000	.214	.033
	Wilks' Lambda	.967	1.467	4.000	174.000	.214	.033
	Hotelling's Trace	.034	1.467	4.000	174.000	.214	.033
	Roy's Largest Root	.034	1.467	4.000	174.000	.214	.033

Source: Field Data (2022)

For satisfying the assumption of the equality of variance for the four DVs, Levene's test results were examined, and none of the cases produced sig. values less than .05 as indicated in Table 3. In checking for differences, the multivariate results were examined. It was found that no differences existed in perception and experiences in internship supervision training they received, as indicated in Table 4. This means that there was no statistically significant difference between males and females on perception and experiences regarding internship supervision training they received, F (4, 174) =1.47, p>.214, Pillai's Trace=.033; partial eta squared=.033. By implication, male and female internship supervisors possessed similar perception as they experienced internship supervision training. The findings of the current study disconfirmed several findings of other studies. For example, in their study about perception about internship training workshops for supervisors, it was found that females had better positive perception and experience (De Pater, Van Vianen, Fischer, & Van Ginkel, 2009), Ferreras-Garcia, Sales-Zaguirre, and Serradell-López (2021) study also found that gender was a factor that appears to be positively influenced by certain competencies, as female respondents perceived and experienced internship supervision better than male respondents.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study have shown that regular, intensive and purpose-driven internship supervision training, workshop and seminar is undeniably an integral part of effective and efficient teacher training programme but it is minimally and occasionally followed and practised by a good number tertiary institutions in Ghana, specifically, University of Education, Winneba. Peculiar to this study, it is concluded that internship supervisors in UEW were very positive about internship supervision training, and therefore anticipated a purpose-driven and intensive supervision training to be regularly organised. Nonetheless, there were no gender differences in the perception held by the internship supervisors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, it is essential to note that interns can be observed well when internship supervisors are well-equipped with the required knowledge and skills through adequate training at the right time. Therefore, it is recommended that tertiary institutions in Ghana, specifically, UEW which is mandated to train and supply schools with quality professionally trained teachers, make internship supervision training a core component of selecting supervisors so that the best and most qualified faculty member can be used for this vital activity. Again, it is recommended that the Institute for Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development mandated to organise and superintend over internship activities in UEW, should make internship supervision workshop a purpose-driven one rather than a mere activity and a requirement for internship supervisors.

LIMITATIONS

The study was limited to University of Education lecturers who attended a one-week internship supervision workshop. The study excluded newly appointed lecturers who are yet to be mentored for internship supervision and non-teaching staff of the University were also excluded. A wider coverage of participants might have given a broader picture of the issue under investigation. Further, since the study was concentrated in only one teacher education institution (UEW) findings could not be generalized.

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