

## **Students' perception of conditions for self-efficacy during their internship programme. A case study of the University of Education, Winneba College for Distance And e-Learning**

**George Bondzie**

University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

### **Abstract**

*This article examines the conditions (time and supervision) in achieving self-efficacy among distance education students on internship programme in the University of Education, Winneba. The purpose of this study was to find out if the conditions of time and supervision were adequately met for distance education students on internship programme in the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) to accomplish self-efficacy. The descriptive survey design was used in conducting the study. Data was collected by means of Google Docs; questionnaires were administered via students' WhatsApp platforms. A sample of 1,087 final year distance education students was derived for the study through the availability sampling technique. The study concluded that the condition of time allocation for OCTPs to enable UEWDESTIs to achieve self-efficacy were not adequately met in the sense that they had little time to learn more relevant teaching skills, practicalise teaching theories, participate in every activity, and practice all teaching activities learnt. In essence, UEWDESTIs would need more time to practice and develop the teaching skills necessary to become more competent teachers.*

**Keywords:** Internship, student-teacher intern, self-efficacy, time and supervision

### **Introduction**

One of the major aims for which the University of Education, Winneba was established is to provide teachers with professional competence for all levels of education (Act 672, Ghana). To accomplish this aim, the University incorporated student internship courses into its undergraduate programmes of study to enable student-teachers to receive hands-on teaching experience. The major philosophy behind this idea is to ensure unimpeded transition from the

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world of academia to the working environment. Lajara, Abayan, Lianza, Pagliawan, and Aguirre (2017) asserted that internship is critical in education because it shapes learners and “enhances their full potentials in order for them to become able members of the society who are productive and responsive to the needs and demands of the society” (p. 155).

Parveen and Nida (2012) pointed out that internship provides student-teachers a practical opportunity to develop true understanding of the teaching profession and future expectations of working conditions in the profession. It continued that the major purpose of internship programme is to develop and strengthen students' skills and to prepare them for the profession. Lubbers, Bourland-Davis, and Rawlins (2008) posited that internship has taken on an increasingly important role in education over the past decade because it presents students with many advantages, ranging from gaining experience and obtaining career-related direction to networking with other students from various institutions. Interestingly, the enactment of the University of Education, Winneba Act 672 on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2004, upgraded the status of the then University College of Education of Winneba to the status of a full University. Act 672 mandates the University to provide “teachers with professional competence for teaching in pre-tertiary institutions such as preschool, basic, senior secondary school and non-formal education institutions” (p. 3). So, the designers of the UEW undergraduate programmes integrated the student-teacher internship course into its undergraduate programmes so that the graduates of the University shall be complete, ever ready, productive and responsive to the needs of society.

Based on the forgoing, the university adopted the dual mode approach to fulfill its mandate of delivering education to the Ghanaian people. Muyinda (2012) described the dual mode university as those “universities which offer programmes of study either as distance or internal learning programmes or both” (p.34). This means that the curriculum for programmes being offered in both modes are the same. According to Bondzie and Pajibo (2020), the distance education programmes being run in the University of Education, Winneba apply the dual mode approach. The Institute for Distance and e-Learning (IDeL), now the College for Distance and e-learning (CODeL) of UEW is the centralized Institute – Headquarters – where all the instructional designs and administrative activities originate. Also, the learning mode is through self-study materials, that is, distribution of printed interactive course modules to students.

The University of Education, Winneba currently has 13 faculties which offer undergraduate diploma and degree programmes cum Master's and Doctors of Philosophy degrees. All undergraduate final year students are required to take Internship as a core course

during their period of study. The objective of the student-teacher internship (or teaching practice) in UEW is “to evaluate student teaching” (p.1), and not only to help student-teacher develop appropriate teaching skills (Student Internship Handbook, 2018). Similarly, the Student Internship Programme (SIP) is described as an “intensive school-based student teaching-learning experience” aimed at providing structured, supervised, and clinical experience. The SIP not only involves “practicing teaching” but also includes experiencing good practices with the students in a variety of ways...” (UEW Student Internship Handbook, 2018). Additionally, it offers student- teacher professionalism through knowledge acquisition and development of a good teaching philosophy.

### **Internship and UEW Distance Education**

Generally, student internships programmes are unpaid positions providing students with practical experience enabling them to develop effective teaching and learning styles and good classroom management practices. Hendrikse (2013) asserted that the student-teacher intern is afforded the opportunity to develop skills and gain experience in the practical application of his/her theoretical course work. Annan, Doe, Ahiale, and Anyamadu (2016) argued that the prime object of students’ industrial attachment programmes is to expose them to relevant industrial skills in an attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice. This means that a student-teacher intern, after going through internship programme and graduation, should be able to put into practice theories learnt at school. It also implies that the student internship programme should present students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a professional setting while still in school. In effect, internship provides a platform for student-teacher interns to show evidence of acquisition of knowledge through practice.

As indicated, the College for Distance and e-Learning of the University of Education, Winneba is responsible for the running of distance education programmes. The College runs 16 undergraduate and four postgraduate programmes, and as part of the requirements for completion and graduation, all final year students are required to take internship courses: On-Campus Teaching Practice (OCTP), and Off-Campus Teaching Practice (OfCTP). However, for postgraduate programmes, it is only the Postgraduate Diploma in Education students who require OCTP and OfCTP. It is important to mention that the weight of OCTP is three credit hours whilst the OfCTP is weighted at six credit hours. The OCTP provides opportunity for UEWDESTIs to practice teaching on campus during OCTP lessons. With this, each UEWDESTI is given an opportunity to teach – practice teaching – the class and be supervised by the tutor(s). Also, the College for Distance and e-Learning tutorial timetable required that

the UEWDESTIs hold OCTP lessons eight times in a semester, and on average spend three hours of practice teaching. In effect, in a semester, UEWDESTIs do an average of 24 hours of on-campus teaching practice.

For the Off-Campus Teaching Practice, UEWDESTIs are provided with an OfCTP Assessment Form and are required to do teaching practice in a well recognised public or private school in Ghana, be supervised by trained mentors (headteachers and/or circuit supervisors) and be graded accordingly using the OfCTP Assessment Form. It is understood that the UEWDESTIs do 60 minutes of Off-Campus Teaching Practice – 1-hour lesson twice in a semester (Personal Communication, 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2020). In furtherance of that, internship students do their teaching practice in a well-recognized public or private school in Ghana, and are supervised by trained mentors (headteachers and/or circuit supervisors) and graded accordingly using the OfCTP Assessment Form. Again, over 90% percent of UEWDESTs pursuing degree programmes in basic and early childhood education have an education background. Table 1 presents information on internship (teaching practice) situations in three public universities in Ghana where education programmes are mostly run.

**Table 1: Public Universities and Internship in Ghana**

S/N	University	Internship Duration	Average Hours Per Week	Credit Earned
1	University of Ghana	14 weeks	8-10	3 -12
2.	University of Cape Coast	4 Months	8 - 10	3 – 12
3.	University of Education, Winneba	4 Months	8 - 10	3 – 9



Notwithstanding, Bukaliya's (2012) argument may be true for the UEW in that "the mode of delivery in open and distance learning institutions places the prospective student intern in a difficult position as he/she has to balance between the requirements of his/her full-time employment and the new role as an intern" (p. 119). It is against this backdrop that the study was carried out to ascertain whether time, resources, mentoring and supervision schedules on internship programme are adequate to achieve student self-efficacy and good professional development.

### **Conceptual Framework of the Study**

This study drew its theoretical sense and direction from the model of *self-efficacy* in relation to *time* and *supervision*. These factors are empirically essential in building professionalism among student teachers. It is worth noting that *time* in its sense means the length of period allocated

to the student-teacher intern to spend on his or her internship course. At the University of Education, Winneba, student-teacher interns are allocated one semester – four months – for the internship course (UEW Student Internship Handbook, 2018). The 4-month period for student internship is the normal (minimum) period for all public Universities in Ghana. Krysher, Robinson and Edwards (2015) believed that activity versus productivity should be considered when allocating time for students' internship course. In other words, the period spent on an activity should equally correspond with a measurable result – *productivity*. The question is whether UEWDESTIs are spending the required time to be more productive. *Self-efficacy* as defined by Schunk (1985) as “a personal judgment of performance capabilities in a given domain of activity” (p. 208). Again, self-efficacy can influence choice of activities. Students who have a low sense of efficacy for acquiring cognitive skills may attempt to avoid certain tasks, whereas those who judge themselves more efficacious would participate more eagerly. Lively (1994) cited Bandura (1977) in that a person's perception of self-efficacy, that is, his/her efficacy expectation, is the key factor in determining whether that person will engage in a certain behavior.

The core question asked in this study is what kind of relationship exists between time and self-efficacy for the UEWDESTIs. Indeed, studies have shown a correlation between time spent on an activity and self-efficacy. Krysher, Robinson, and Edwards (2015) asserted that self-efficacy may be affected by the amount of time a student-teacher spends engaged in activities during the student teaching internship. Certainly, self-efficacy is a construct in the professional preparation of student-teacher. Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998) argued that higher self-efficacy during the student teaching internship increases the intern's overall performance. The argument is that a student-teacher intern's ability to achieve a reasonable level of self-efficacy on an activity depends largely on the amount of time spent on the said activity. Again, self-efficacy is a requirement for developing a professional teacher. Thus, the question is whether the distance education students of the University of Education, Winneba obtain adequate teaching duration to achieve self-efficacy during internship.

Furthermore, Herdiawan (2018) submitted that *supervision* should be seen as the crucial way to develop the performance of teachers with respect to the teaching and learning process. It has also become an instrument to assist teachers to develop “an appropriate teaching model, content, and also instructions” (p. 30). This implies that improved teacher performance hinges on adequate supervision. Cames (2007) defined supervision as all the efforts designated to school officials directed toward providing leadership to teachers and other educational workers

in the improvement of instruction. He explained that this involves the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, the selection and revision of education objectives, materials of instruction, and methods of teaching, and the evaluation of instruction (Cames, 2007, as cited in Herdiawan, 2018).

The literature on supervision indicates that any solution that enables the teacher to teach students effectively is called *clinical supervision*. According to Greene (1992), the original approach to clinical supervision is rooted in the works of Cogen and Goldhammer. The category, clinical supervision, has been simply described by Herdiawan (2018) as focused planning, observation, and receiving feedback. *Clinical supervision* is defined as the actual process in which the supervisor systematically observes, analyzes, and evaluates the teacher's performance. The question then is whether the distance education students of the University of Education, Winneba are well supervised during internship to enable them to achieve self-efficacy.

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to Du-Babcock (2016), internship is a process of integrating classroom education with practical experience to enable student teachers to develop their professional knowledge and skills. Nunan (1990) also classified clinical supervision as an ongoing process of teacher development that is based on direct observation of classroom teaching performance. Notwithstanding, these brilliant philosophies may not be evident in the distance mode of education due to its settings. In other words, the concepts may be challenging to implement with the distance mode of delivering education. Therefore, this study aims to solicit information on the conditions for self-efficacy among distance education students on internship programme at the University of Education, Winneba. The study seeks to ascertain whether distance education student-teacher interns can achieve *self-efficacy vis-à-vis* the *time* allocation for internship in their distance learning. The study also determines if the UEW distance education student-teacher interns are adequately supervised to enable them to achieve self-efficacy in their professional development.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to look at the perceptions on the conditions for self-efficacy among distance education students on internship programme in the University of Education, Winneba.

## **Objectives of the Study**

Specifically, the objectives of the study were to examine whether UEWDESTIs

- a) had adequate time for On and Off-Campus Teaching Practice (OCTPs) to enable them achieve self-efficacy; and
- b) were adequately supervised during On and Off-Campus Teaching Practice (OCTPs) to enable them achieve self-efficacy.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. Was the time allocated for OCTPs adequate to enable UEWDESTIs to achieve self-efficacy?
- ii. Were the UEWDESTIs adequately supervised during OCTPs to enable them to achieve self-efficacy?

## **Methodology and Design**

In examining conditions for self-efficacy among UEWDESTIs on internship, the descriptive survey design was deployed in conducting the study. The rationale was to elicit data on the conditions – time allocation and supervision - for self-efficacy among UEWDESTIs. Best and Kalm (1998) explained that descriptive survey design involves studying events or situations long after they have occurred thus preventing variable manipulation. In this case, the subjects examined were distance education student-teacher interns who undertook internship and had completed the course. Thus, there was no avenue for variable manipulation. Also, Wellington (2000) made a case that descriptive survey is a method of research whereby the phenomena under study are looked into in a particular moment and described precisely. Consequently, in this study, information was obtained on OCTPs regarding time, self-efficacy and supervision, and described accordingly, using the survey method. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) opined that descriptive research studies are designed to obtain information concerning the current status of phenomena. Indeed, the design was appropriate in the sense that it surveyed UEWDESTIs' experiences on internship, focusing on a phenomenon (internship) which had long taken place, and duly describing the findings.

## Data Collection Procedure

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) argued that descriptive survey design employs the use of questionnaires and interviews in sampling views on a phenomenon by selecting unbiased samples to respond to the questionnaires and interviews. As it were, the data for this study was collected through the use of Google Docs. Google Docs was used to prepare and distribute structured interview questionnaires via the WhatsApp platform of all final year education students who took internship as a course. Intrinsically, this mode of questionnaire administration encapsulated the deployment of probability sampling method, specifically, availability sampling technique. This means that all final year education students who were available on their respective WhatsApp platforms at the time of the administration of the questionnaire, i.e. 10<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2020, had the chance to respond to the questionnaire.

## Population and Sample

The population for the study was all 9,196 of the final year students who enroll in education related programmes. These final year distance education students, as required for graduation, did internship, and therefore, constituted the accessible population for the study. Table 2, presents the number of respondents (percentage) plus actual number of final year education students who took internship as a course. In all, 1,087, or 12% final year distance education students responded to the questionnaire.

## Validity and Reliability

According to Anastasi (1969), the choice of validation mechanism primarily depends on the purpose of the test instrument. Additionally, Heale and Twycross (2015) argued that construct validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument (or tool) measures the intended construct. Considering the main function of the instrument developed in this study, the researcher used construct validity as the most suitable approach for establishing the validity.

**Table 2: Programmes, number of respondents and number of students**

Programme	No of Respondents	Percentage %	Number of Students
Post-Graduate Diploma in Education	95	8	1,193
1-Year Diploma in Education	68	9	756
3-Year Diploma in Basic Education,	252	15	1,669
3-Year Diploma in Early Childhood Education	44	13	378
4-Year Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood	137	14	971
4-Year Bachelor of Education in Basic Education	491	12	4,229
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,087</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9,196</b>

Source: Field Data, 2020



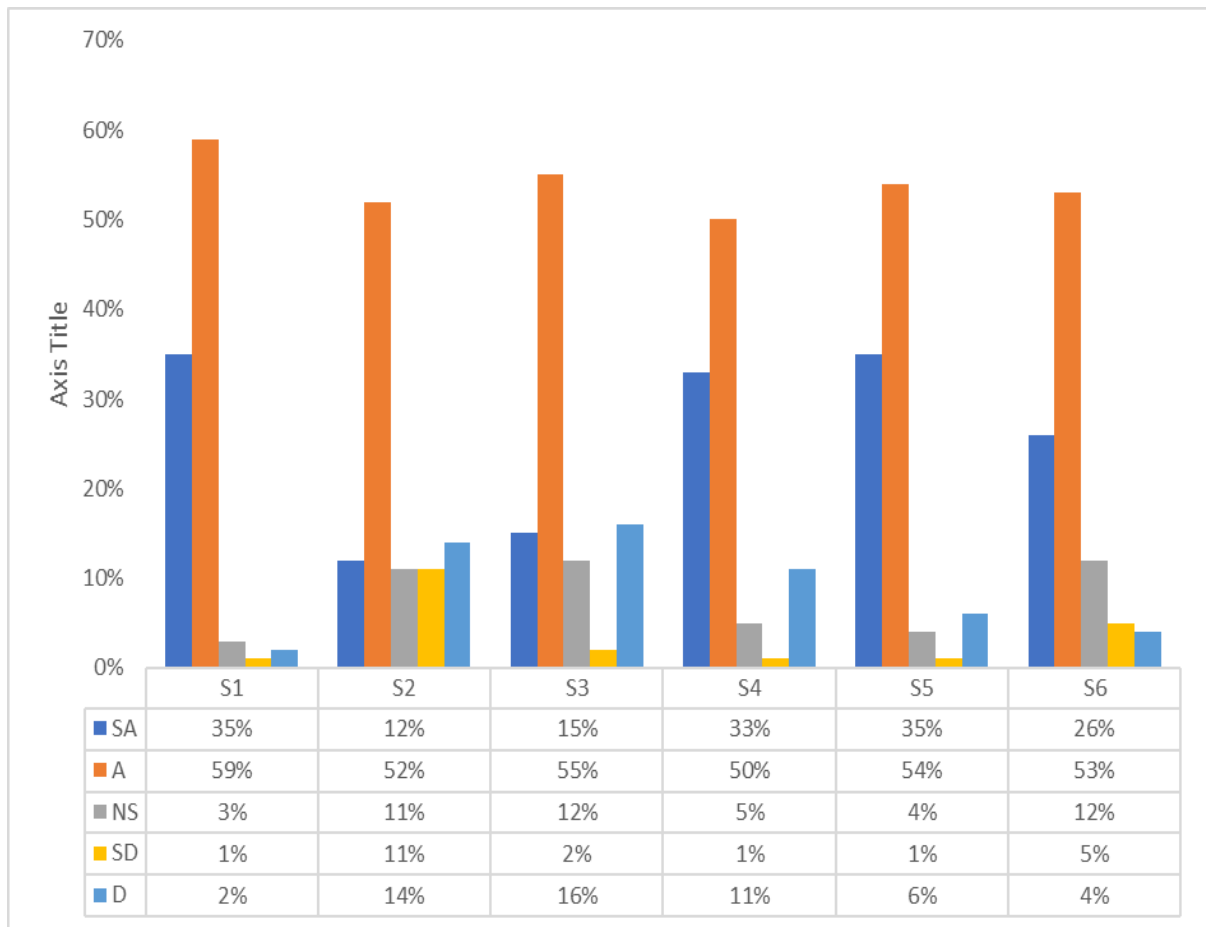
Construct validity of a measure is directly concerned with the theoretical relationship of a variable with other variables. The questionnaires were read through by senior colleagues within the department to detect possible lack of clarity in the phrasing of the questions and to enhance the comprehensibility of the items. Few ambiguities were detected and corrected before administering the questionnaire. All the items were constructed using simple language to avoid any ambiguity that might arise. This was to ensure that all respondents understood all items in the questionnaire. The same questionnaire was administered to the study centres after two weeks. This test-retest procedure was aimed at ensuring the reliability of the instrument.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected was analysed using Google Docs. Simple percentages were used showing the statistical description of the various responses. Again, data was analysed in relation to the theoretical framework of the study. This meant the responses were juxtaposed in relation to the dictates of the theoretical frameworks.

### **Findings and Discussions**

The findings of this study are presented on bar charts Figures 1 and 2. Responses for research question 1 have been presented in Figure 1 whilst that of research question 2 are in Figure 2. Discussion of the findings follows the presentation of the findings. As indicated, Figure 1 illustrates the responses for research question 1, which solicited information from UEWDESTIs on whether they had adequate time for OCTPs to enable them achieve self-efficacy. Also, Figure 2 shows responses for research question 2, which requested information from UEWDESTIs on whether they had adequate supervision during OCTPs.



**Figure 1:**

**Keys**

**S1**=I can say that through OCTPs I can practicalise teaching theories learnt at school.

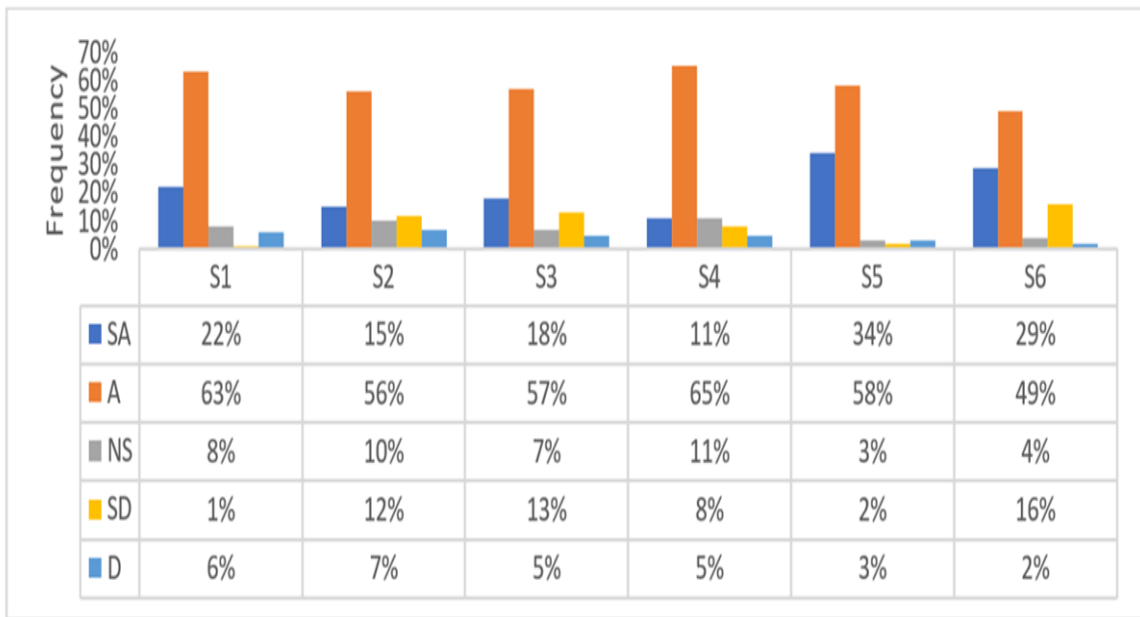
**S2**=I can say that time spent on OCTPs was adequate thus I participated in all teaching activities.

**S3**=I can say that time spent on OCTPs was adequate thus I practiced all teaching activities.

**S4**=I am confident that I would be a more competent teacher if more time was spent on OCTPs.

**S5**=If more time was allocated for OCTPs I could have practiced more and developed more teaching skills.

**S6**=I can say that the allocated time for OCTPs was NOT enough and could have learned more teaching skills if more time was allocated.



**Figure 2: Supervision and Self-efficacy**

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree UN= Not Sure D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

## KEYS

**S1**=OCTPs supervision was adequate because developing appropriate teaching model and content has become easy.

**S2**=OCTPs supervision was adequate because my teaching skills and or instructions has become more professional.

**S3**=OCTPs Supervision was adequate because it has stimulated my professional growth and development as a teacher.

**S4**=OCTPs supervision was adequate because I am able to select and revise education objectives aptly.

**S5**=OCTPs supervision was adequate because I am be able to choose right materials of instruction, and methods of teaching and evaluate my instruction.

**S6**=During OCTPs supervision, the supervisor observed, analyzed, and evaluated my performance systematically.

The data obtained for research question 1 point out that 64% of the respondents – UEWDESTIs – believed that time allocation for the OCTPs was adequate in the sense that it

enabled them to learn more relevant teaching skills whilst approximately 25% thought otherwise. Also, 11% of the respondents were unsure about the adequacy of time allocation for OCTPs. Likewise, 94%, 64% and 70% of the respondents believed that time spent on OCTPs was adequate as it enabled them to practicalise teaching theories learnt, participate in all activities within the time provided, and practice all teaching activities respectively. However, about 6%, 36% and 30% of the respondents did not believe this to be the case. The findings seem to be in line with Hendrikse's (2013) assertion that during internship, the student-teacher intern is afforded the opportunity to develop skills and gain experience in the practical application of his/her theoretical course work. Primarily, these results illustrate that the objective for which the internship course was mounted in the UEW undergraduate programme is being achieved in the sense that the UEW Student Internship Programme not only involves "practicing teaching", it also includes experiencing good practices with the students in a variety of ways..." (UEW Student Internship Handbook, 2018). Notwithstanding, 83% of the respondents believed that they would be more competent teachers if more time were spent on OCTPs. Also, 89% as well as 79% of the respondents thought that they would have practiced, developed and learned more teaching skills if more time were allocated for OCTPs. In effect, they thought that the time spent on OCTPs was inadequate for them to be more competent teachers. This finding defies Krysher, Robinson and Edwards' (2015) assertion that activity versus productivity should be considered when allocating time for students' internship course.

Furthermore, time spent by UEWDESTIs on an activity (OCTPs) might not equally correspond with a measurable result – *productivity* (more competent teachers) in this case. Self-efficacy, defined by Schunk (1985) as "a personal judgment of performance capabilities in a given domain of activity" (p. 208), is being measured here. Thus, the results from the study indicate that self-efficacy levels of the UEWDESTIs might not necessarily be adequate, and that more time is needed for them to develop, practice and enhance their teaching skills to become competent teachers. This is in line with the view expressed by Krysher et al., (2015) that *self-efficacy* may be affected by the amount of *time* a student-teacher spends engaged in activities during the student teaching internship. Additionally, the findings show that self-efficacy levels of the UEWDESTIs might be low because, as Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy, (1998) believed, higher *self-efficacy* during the student teaching internship increases the interns' overall performance. To sum up, the ability of UEWDESTIs to achieve a reasonable *self-efficacy* - becoming more competent teachers - was hampered by the amount of *time* spent

(inadequate) on the activity (OCTPs). Largely, UEWDESTIs needed more time to develop adequate competencies in teaching.

With regards to supervision, 85%, 71% and 75% of the respondents thought that OCTPs supervision was adequate as developing appropriate teaching models and content became easier, teaching skills and instructions became more professional, and this in turn stimulated their professional growth and development as teachers respectively. This implies that 6%, 19% and 18% of the UEWDESTIs thought otherwise whilst 8%, 10% and 7% were respectively unsure. This finding affirms Herdiawan's (2018) position that supervision has become an instrument to assist teachers to develop "an appropriate teaching model, content, and also instructions". It means that OCTPs supervision assisted UEWDESTIs to develop *appropriate teaching models, content, and instructions*. Moreover, 76%, and 92% of the respondents held the belief that OCTPs supervision was adequate because supervisors were able to select and revise education objectives aptly, choose right materials of instruction and methods of teaching as well as evaluate instruction. These findings appear to suggest that UEWDESTIs OCTPs supervision encapsulated the assertion made by Cames (2007) that

all efforts of designated school officials directed toward providing leadership to teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction; it involves the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, the selection and revision of education objectives, materials of instruction, and methods of teaching and the evaluation of instruction (as cited in Herdiawan, 2018).

This means that UEW distance education managers are making strides in ensuring that UEWDESTIs improve on instruction, stimulate professional growth, and develop as teachers. Equally, UEWDESTIs can select and revise education objectives, choose the right materials of instruction and methods of teaching as a result of OCTPs supervision. Also, 88% of the respondents believed that during OCTPs supervision, observation, analysis, and evaluation of performance were done systematically. These findings agree with the objective of the student-teacher internship programme in UEW (teaching practice), that is, "to evaluate student teaching" (Student Internship Handbook, 2018). It is also in line with Herdiawan's (2018) argument that supervision is a crucial way of developing the performance of teachers with respect to the teaching and learning process. This fits well in the definition of clinical supervision which involves a process where the supervisor observes, analyzes, and evaluates the teacher's performance systematically. Hence, the findings clearly answer research question 2 in that UEWDESTIs do have adequate supervision during OCTPs supervision.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the discussions of the findings, the following conclusions were reached. The UEWDESTIs believed that the condition of time allocation for OCTPs to enable UEWDESTIs to achieve self-efficacy was not adequately met. They had little time to learn more relevant teaching skills, practicalise teaching theories, participate in every activity, and practice all teaching activities learnt. Thus, UEWDESTIs need more time to practice and develop additional teaching skills to become more competent teachers.

The question can be addressed whether UEWDESTIs experience fit with the assertion made by Lajara, Abayan, Lianza, Pagliawan, and Aguirre (2017) that internship shapes learners and “enhances their full potentials in order for them to become able members of the society who are productive and responsive to the needs and demands of the society” (p. 155). Will UEWDESTIs be able members of society who are productive and responsive to the needs and demands of society? This study shows that OCTPs supervision was adequate in the sense that it enabled UEWDESTIs to select and revise education objectives aptly and choose right materials of instruction and methods of teaching. Students were also diligently supervised. Altogether, the adequacy of OCTPs time allocation and supervision for UEWDESTIs does not necessarily translate into UEWDESTIs becoming more competent teachers. Effectively, the question that came out of the study to be answered was what UEW distance education managers can do to ensure that OCTPs time allocation and OCTPs supervision commensurate with result.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and the conclusions reached, the following are recommended:

1. To increase self-efficacy levels of the UEWDESTIs, the management of the College for Distance and e-Learning (CODEL) of the University of Education, Winneba should ensure that UEWDESTIs fully use the entire four months earmarked for the Off-Campus Teaching Practice.
2. Purely qualitative research should be done in the same area of research to enable management of the College for Distance and e-Learning to obtain more detailed information on the distance education student internship course for decision making and implementation. Equally, it is recommended that a tracer study be done to determine how able UEWDESTIs are as well as how productive and responsive they are to the needs of the society they live in after successful completion of school.

3. Effort should be made by the UEW distance education managers to ensure that OCTP's time allocation and OCTP's supervision are commensurate with measurable result.

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