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ASSESSMENT OF THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF TEACHING PRACTICE ON STUDENT-TEACHERS IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (TECHNCAL), OMOKU, RIVERS STATE

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Abstract

This study was undertaken to assess the perceived impacts of teaching practice on student-teachers in Nigerian federal colleges of education. The design of the study was descriptive survey. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population consisted of two hundred and seventy-one (271) students of 2021/2022 final year National Certificate in Education (NCE) students from Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku. A sample of 150 final year students made up of 75 male and 75 female was selected through simple random and stratified sampling technique. The instrument for the study was titled 'Perceived Impacts of Teaching Practice on Student-Teachers Questionnaire (PITPSTQ)' was used to collect date. The instrument was face and content validated by three (3) experts from Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Imo State. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, 40 copies of the questionnaire were administered to 40 student-teachers from Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri, Imo State. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha to find the internal consistency of the instrument. The internal consistency estimates for the instrument was 0.86. In getting the instruments across to the respondents, the researchers employed the face to face method. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses. The result revealed an overwhelming agreement by student-teachers that almost all the items are the benefits of teaching practice. Thus, leading to the conclusion that, student- teachers derived great benefits from participating in the teaching practice exercise. Based on this, it was recommended amongst others that proper orientation of studentteachers should be carried out using efficient means of communication like; seminars, workshops, conferences and discussion to increase student-teachers' interest and participation.

Key Words: Assessment, Impact, student-teachers, teaching practice

Introduction

Any nation serious about its development and willing to make adequate preparation for its future generation will take into consideration, the development of teachers' training. World- wide, teachers' education have been based on the needs of the nation. Where teachers' education is not adequately cared for, the students and indeed the whole nation will be the worst for it. Fafunwa in Hassan and Olugbuyi (2017) confirms that teacher education should be basically related to every phase of development in Nigeria for wherever one turns, be it economic, political or social spheres of activities, one is faced with the over-reoccurring problem of trained manpower needs but no adequate training can take place without competent teachers to handle the programme. Therefore, teaching being a noble profession can be left in the hands of qualified personnel as the future of the generation unborn will be left in the hands of these trained teachers. In Nigeria, teacher education program exists in consonance with the various levels of education that is, Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), Bachelor's of Education(B.Ed.) and

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Post-graduate Degree in Education (PGDE) for Colleges of Education and Universities. Education is an essential ingredient in every professional preparation to the practical exposure of the professionals to situations where they can translate theoretical knowledge into practical skill exhibition and demonstration (Nwagwu & Ojogwu, 2011). The need for education for the overall development of a nation cannot be sidelined. It is widely alleged that education is essential to development for continual liberation of man both at the rural and urban centers. Education is usually planned according to the individual and societal needs and is the most veritable instrument for change in any society. Teaching knowledge, including knowledge of content and pedagogy, has significant contribution to how a teacher discharges his responsibility (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Therefore, the quality of education provided in any society and the nature of the change affected by that education are both dependent on the quality of teachers and the effectiveness of their teachings in schools.

Akpomi in Andabai, (2013) stressed that, the Government of Nigeria in her aim to achieve their philosophy of education set up an implementation committee for the National Policy on Education in 2013. Realizing that the importance of teaching practice and internship in teaching education cannot be over emphasised, the committee recommends:

- i. That, methods of training teachers be rationalised, so that they reflect the nation's education philosophy, policies and structure.
- ii. That massive training of untrained primary school teachers should be done by the method of on job training.
- iii. The selection and training of a lead teacher, who will provide personal instruction to teachers and trainees and supervise them well.

Mann in Andabai, (2013) stressed that, the impact of teaching practice on trainee teachers in tertiary institution has been of interest to researchers, government, teachers and parent. Similarly Obagah (2019) defines teaching practice as the performance of the kinds of activities that results to learning. Koko (2014) remarked that, teaching practice in most educational institution is the expected terminal behaviour of a student teacher who is going through professional course in education. An essential ingredient in every professional preparation is the practical exposure of the prospective professionals to situations where they can translate theoretical knowledge into practical skill exhibition and demonstration (Nwagwu & Ojogwu, 2011). Teaching practice is an integral component of teacher education programme. It is a period of professional socialization during which trainee teachers learn the rudiments of teaching through active involvement in the practice of real life teaching, so as to enhance their sustainability in the teaching profession. Teaching practice has been associated with such terms like field studies, infield experience, school base experience or internship (Taneja in Asiyai, 2016). During teaching practice, student teachers are sent to schools to observe teaching from cooperating school teachers and practice teaching so that they can acquire teaching skills, learns teaching strategies and effective classroom management techniques. It is a skill development exercise, a kind of clinical therapy designed to diagnose and remediate professional teachers' competence and deficiencies (Ogunbameru & Uwameiye, 2012). According to DeVille (2010), practical teaching affords students teachers the opportunity to reflect not just on matters associated with their professional growth, but on who they are and what they would become in the future. Practical teaching brings student teachers into a programme of cooperative and interactive guidance by experienced teachers (Young & Edwards, 2006). It is the time when student teachers face teaching in real life situation and evaluate their teaching as they socialise with their mentors, other teachers, their lecturers and future pupils/students. Teaching practice affords student teachers the opportunity to apply the pedagogy knowledge gained in lecture rooms to real classroom situations (Mudzielwana & Maphosa, 2014). Teaching practice expose student - teachers to the realities of effective teaching and help them to try out methods of teaching and gain practical classroom experience under expert supervision. Theoretically, this study is hinged on social constructivism theory propounded by Vygotsky

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(1962). This theory claims that the personal construction of knowledge always occur in social contexts, since learning activities are socially and contextually bound. The social constructivism perspective in learning sees learning as an active process of constructing meanings and transforming understandings during interaction with the environment. Learners should play an active role in constructing knowledge as learning is collaborative and learners learn from mentors and one another. Student teachers therefore need to plan and present lessons and manage disruptive behavior and administrative tasks during teaching practice. When planning and presenting lessons, students are led to apply knowledge in diverse and authentic contexts to explain ideas, interpret text and construct arguments based on evidence. They continually need to articulate their knowledge and understanding and consult various resources. Students should also work collaboratively and support one another in task-oriented dialogue. Supporters of the socio constructivists approach emphasise that mentors make their own thinking processes explicit to students and encourage them to do the same through dialogue, drawings and writing. Mentors employ a variety of assessment strategies although self-assessment is also encouraged. In terms of benefits of teaching practice, Andabai (2013) found that teaching practice impacted immensely on student teachers of Niger Delta University as they were able to try out ideas and theory in practice, plan, prepare and present lessons, understand the principles of child development and growth broaden their knowledge of subject matter and use of instructional materials.

Empirically, the study conducted in Egerton University investigating the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Students' Perception of The Role of Practicing Schools and University Supervisors During Teaching Practice, by Wachanga et al., (2001) indicated that student teachers valued the assistance and advice given during assessment by the supervisors and the schools. The study of Hassan and Olugbuyi (2017) indicated that prospective teachers have low perception on the benefit derived from teaching practice. This indeed is a great minus which implies that there are challenges faced by these students which may have covered up the expected benefits. Hence, students only see it as pre-requites for graduation and not the benefits attached. The major challenges student teachers faced according to the finding of Koross (2016) was that student teachers were given more lessons, student teachers were not fully involved in all school activities and were not allowed to have access to certain information. Andabai (2013) in his study found that teaching practice was very beneficial because, it provides an opportunity for the trainee teachers to teach and increase their professional competence. The result showed that student-teachers benefited greatly in participating in teaching practice because they were able to build proper confidence and competence in lesson preparation and developed skills and attitude of a teacher during the exercise. It was also revealed that teaching practice help trainee teachers to learn how to keep records of assignment and also participate in school activities.

Through teaching practice, student teachers can learn and improve in their knowledge of the subject matter, knowledge of pedagogy, curriculum knowledge, and knowledge of classroom management, knowledge of innovative instructional strategies and pedagogical content knowledge for better professional practice. Hence, this study assessed The Perceived Impacts of Teaching Practice on Student-Teachers in Federal Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Problem of the Study

Despite the benefits attached to teaching practice, there are still challenges facing the prospective teachers on teaching practice, the more the challenges, the more those challenges tend to cover the benefits that prospective teachers are expected to derive from teaching practice. Different works consulted focused more on the activities of the school, internal supervisor and external supervisors in relation to teaching practice and not much was found on the perceived impacts of teaching practice on student-teachers. The study therefore assessed the perceived

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impacts of teaching practice on student-teachers in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State, Nigerian.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to assess the Perceived Impact of Teaching Practice on Student-Teachers in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State, Nigerian. Specifically, the study sought to:

- 1. Ascertain the perceived impacts of teaching practice on student-teachers in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State.
- 2. Ascertain the perceived challenges faced by prospective teachers on teaching practice?

Research Questions

In light of the above, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1. What are the perceived impacts of teaching practice programme on student-teachers in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State?
- 2. What are the challenges faced by student- teachers on teaching practice programme in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses below were tested at p<0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There are no significant impacts of teaching practice programme on male and female student- teachers in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State.

 \mathbf{H}_{02} : The challenges faced by male and female student- teachers on teaching practice programme in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State do not differ significantly.

Methodology

The design of the study was descriptive survey. According to Ezechukwu et al., (2020) descriptive survey design is used to gather different types of information for the purpose of describing and interpreting on-going processes, belief and prevailing practices. It involves analysis and measurement. The study was carried out in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State. The population consisted of two hundred and seventyone (271) students of 2021/2022 final year National Certificate in Education (NCE) students from Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku. A sample of 150 final year students made up of 75 male students and 75 female was selected through simple random and stratified sampling technique. The instrument for the study titled 'Perceived Impacts of Teaching Practice on Student-Teachers Questionnaire (PITPSTQ)' was used to collect information. PITPSTQ was made up of three sections namely: Section A: demographic variables of respondents eliciting information pertaining to their gender, status and school location, section B: contained twenty items of questions on benefits of teaching practice as perceived by student-teachers, while Section C: consisted of twelve items on challenges student-teachers face in their place of training. The instrument was structured on four-point likert-type of response scale ranging from Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2 to Strongly Disagree = 1, was used to analyse research questions for positive statements while the reverse is the case for negative statements. In taking decisions, a mean value of 2.50 - 4.00 was accepted and 2.49-0.49 was rejected. When an item was accepted or rejected, it implies that the respondents agreed or disagreed with the idea in the item as the true situation in respect of perceived impacts of teaching practice on student-teacher sand vice versa. The instrument

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was face and content validated by three (3) experts from Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Imo State. They were requested to examine the instrument to ensure that the content and language of the instrument relate to the purpose of the study and research questions. After critical scrutiny of the items of the instrument, their comments and corrections were helpful in the final development of the instrument. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, 40 copies of the questionnaire administered to 40 student-teachers from Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri, Imo State were used for the trial testing. The subjects used in the pilot studies were outside the study area and therefore were not included in the study. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha to find the internal consistency of the instrument. The internal consistency estimates for the instrument was 0.86. The values were judged high enough to give the confidence about the reliability of the instruments. In getting the instruments across to the respondents, the researchers employed the face to face method. The researchers and two research assistants that were trained and briefed visited the sampled schools and administered instruments to students and teachers in the schools. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions.

Results

Research Question One

What are the perceived impacts of teaching practice programme on student-teachers in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State?

Table 1: Student-teachers responses on their perceived benefits of teaching practice programme.

Table	Table 1: Student-teachers responses on their perceived benefits of teaching practice programme.								
S/N	Item Statement	\overline{x}	Std	Remark					
1.	Teaching practice has made me to decide whether or not to	3.25	0.75	Agree					
	take on teaching as a profession.								
2.	Teaching practice helped to broaden my knowledge of how	3.24	0.76	Agree					
	to apply teaching and learning principles during instruction								
	in classroom situation.								
3.	Teaching practice has helped me improve my	3.48	0.52	Agree					
	communication skills.								
4.	Through daily writing of lesson plan and notes, and writing	3.02	0.98	Agree					
	on the white boards during teaching practice my writing								
	skills has improved.								
5.	Teaching practice has exposed me to the rudiments of	3.33	0.67	Agree					
	teaching.								
6.	By observing my mentor teach during teaching practice,	3.27	0.85	Agree					
_	my knowledge of teaching methods has improved.								
7.	It offered me the opportunity to try out ideas and theories	3.26	0.74	Agree					
	in a practical classroom situation.								
8.	I had the opportunity of communicating and interacting	2.76	1.24	Agree					
	closely and sympathetically with students/pupils.			~.					
9.	Teaching practice made student-teachers to master	2.26	1.74	Disagree					
4.0	professional skills.	2 - 0	0.70						
10.	Teaching practice has exposed me to the problems and	3.50	0.50	Agree					
	prospects of the teaching progression.								

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S/N	Item Statement	\overline{x}	Std	Remark
11	Teaching practice helped me in understanding the principles of child development and growth	2.24	1.75	Disagree
12.	Teaching practice has helps me to perfectly use instructional materials when teaching.	3.24	0.76	Agree
13.	I had adequate control of classroom without assistance.	3.52	0.48	Agree
14.	Teaching practice has made me to observe the different features of school curriculum at work and how each contributes to learning.	3.73	0.27	Agree
15.	Teaching practice has helped me to be familiar with school records and the complex set of rules and regulations.	3.26	0.74	Agree
16.	Teaching practice helped me to pass teaching requirement to qualify as a teacher.	3.48	0.52	Agree
17.	Teaching practice has helped me to acquire those valuable personality attribute associated with outstanding teachers.	3.73	0.27	Agree
18.	I see teaching practice as a vital factor in preparing student- teachers for future teaching assignment.	3.70	0.30	Agree
19.	I developed my own way of working effectively with pupils and colleagues.	3.27	0.85	Agree
20.	Teaching practice made me to gain general experience in academic profession.	3.52	0.48	Agree
	Sum of Cluster Mean	65.06	15.17	
	Mean of Items' Means	3.25	0.76	

The results on table 1 showed the perceived impacts of teaching practice programme on student-teachers in federal college of education (technical), Omoku, Rivers State. The result indicated that items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 were rated as agree based on the criterion mean of 2.50 while items 9 and 11 were rated as disagree, since the mean scores were below the criterion mean of 2.50. The cluster mean was 65.06 while mean of item means was 3.25. This indicates an overwhelming agreement by student-teachers that almost all the items are benefits of teaching practice except items 9 and 11. Hence, the conclusion that, student-teachers derive great benefits from participating in teaching practice exercise.

Research Question Two

What are the challenges faced by student- teachers on teaching practice programme in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State?

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Table 2: Student-teachers' responses on challenges they face during teaching practice programme.

S/N	Item Statement	\overline{x}	Std	Remark
1.	Student-teachers are not given allowances	3.40	0.60	Agree
2.	Permanent teachers are not friendly	4.00	0.01	Agree
3.	In some schools, teaching staff hoard professional advice from student-teachers.	2.77	1.23	Agree
4.	Student-teachers face accommodation problems in places they are posted.	3.27	0.73	Agree
5.	Some schools lack instructional materials for effective teaching.	3.24	0.76	Agree
6.	Student-teachers in some cases are not given subjects in their area of study to teach and so could not perform.	2.77	1.12	Agree
7.	Some student-teachers encounter some that misbehave.	4.00	0.01	Agree
8.	School students do not respect student-teachers.	4.00	0.01	Agree
9.	Student-teachers do not enjoy the type of cordial relationship and respect that exist between students and members of school staff.	2.80	1.20	Agree
10.	Teaching practice has not given student-teachers the opportunity to relate their studies to their future careers.	2.77	0.23	Agree
11.	Lack of resource materials in schools.	3.27	0.73	Agree
12.	Inadequate time allocated for teaching practice programme.	3.28	0.72	Agree
	Sum of Cluster Mean	39.57	7.35	
	Mean of Items' Means	3.29	0.61	

The results on table 2 showed the challenges faced by student- teachers on teaching practice programme in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State. The result indicated that all the items were above the cut-off point of 2.5. The cluster mean was 39.57 while mean of item means was 3.29. This indicated an overwhelming agreement that student-teachers on teaching practice programme encounter a lot challenges.

Hypotheses

Table 3: t- test statistics of mean response of student-teachers in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State

Sources of variation	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	t-cal	t.crit	Sig	Decision
Male student-teachers	75	3.25	0.76	1.40				
Female student-teachers	75	3.05	0.77	148	0.045	1.96	0.05	Accept

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Table 3 displayed that there are no significant impacts of teaching practice programme on male and female student-teachers in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State.

Using the degree of freedom of 148, it was indicated in the table that the t-calculated value of 0.045 is less than the t-tabulated value of 1.96, which led to the decision of accepting the null hypothesis. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant impacts of teaching practice programme on male and female student-teachers is hereby retained. This could have been so because the same learning opportunities were given to student-teachers while in school and on teaching practice.

Table 4: t- test statistics of mean response of challenges faced by student- teachers on teaching practice programme in federal college of education (technical), Omoku, Rivers State

Sources of variation	N	\bar{x}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Sig	Decision
Male student-teachers	75	3.29	0.61					
Female student-teachers	75	3.34	0.67	148	-0.135	1.96	0.05	Accept

Table 4 revealed that using the degree of freedom of 148 at 0.05 level of significance, it was indicated in the table that the t-calculated value of -0.135 is less than the t-tabulated value of 1.96, which led to the decision of accepting the null hypothesis. The conclusion is that, the challenges faced by male and female student- teachers on teaching practice programme in Federal college of education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers state do not differ significantly. This could have been so due to the fact all students receives same instruction from their schools and face the same challenges while on teaching practice.

Discussion of findings

The finding revealed an overwhelming agreement by student-teachers that almost all the items are the benefits of teaching practice. Thus, leading to the conclusion that, student- teachers derived great benefits from participating in the teaching practice exercise. This finding agrees with Mkhasibe (2014) who noted that teaching practice increases professional growth of student teachers. The finding of this study also lends credence with Ankerset al., cited in Adeleke, Adesina, Salami, and Adebayo (2011). In addition, the finding of this study concurs with Andabai (2013) whose finding indicates that teaching practice impacted positively on student teachers greatly since they were able to build confidence and competence in lesson preparation and developed skills and attitudes of a teacher. The study of Hassan and Olugbuyi (2017) which indicated that prospective teachers have low perception on the benefit derived from teaching practice is not in line with this study. This indeed negates the findings of this work which implies that there are challenges faced by these students which may have impeded on the discovered benefits. The challenges faced by student- teachers on teaching practice programme in Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku, Rivers State do not differ significantly. The challenges were seen as financial, professional, instructional, administrative, social etc. The result of the investigation indicated an overwhelming agreement student-teachers on teaching practice programme faced a lot of challenges. Therefore, this analysis indicated that, student-teachers face challenges in their place of training. The finding of Koross (2016) stated that student teachers were given more lessons to teach other than the prescribed load. Further to this the student teachers are not fully involved in all school activities as well as not being allowed to have access to certain information, which is in line with this study.

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Conclusion

Teaching practice has been found to be very beneficial in the course of this research work because, it provides an opportunity for the student-teachers to teach and increase their professional competence. The result showed that student teachers benefited greatly in participating in teaching practice because they were able to build proper confidence and competence in lesson preparation and developed skills and attitude of a teacher during the exercise. It was also revealed that teaching practice helps student teachers to learn how to keep records of assignment, participate in other school activities, communicating, interacting closely and sympathize with students/pupils, perfect use instructional materials, adequate control of classroom without assistance, familiar with school records and the complex set of rules and regulations.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

- 1. Government should provide finance in form of stipend for student teachers engaged in teaching practice programme.
- 2. Student-teachers can be motivated by cooperating schools to further boost the morale of the students upon completion of their teaching practice.
- 3. Student-teachers should improvise instructional materials for effective teaching.
- 4. Accommodation also should not only be seen as students' challenges, the school can provide accommodation where available or at least encourage the hosting community to let the room at a cheaper rate.

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