Challenges Encountered by Agricultural Science Student Teachers During Teaching Practice in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *Teaching practice is a vital aspect of teacher training programme which is usually undergone by students with varied experiences and challenges. The study examined teaching practice experience of agricultural science student teachers in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ilorin and Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin in 2018. The study adopted a survey research design. The population for this study was all the 400 level Agricultural Science student teachers of University of Ilorin and NCE III students of Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. Sixty students comprising of thirty students each from both, the University and the College of Education who were in the penultimate years of graduation made the sample for the study. Six research questions were raised to guide the study. Based on the findings of this study, some of the problems militating against agricultural education student teachers during teaching practice include pedagogical problems, cooperating school related issues, learners related problems, personal problems and institution based problems. Based on the findings, the study recommended frequent trainings and seminars for the stake-holders of teaching practice, budgeting of enough time for teaching practice exercise, provision of relevant instructional materials in schools and provision of stipends as incentive to agricultural science student teachers after the teaching practice exercise.*

Key words: Teaching practice, cooperating schools, student teachers, cooperating teachers, agricultural science student teachers

Introduction

The Federal Government of Nigeria stated the purpose of teacher education in the National Policy on Education to be able to produce highly effective teachers for all levels of Nigeria educational system. Teachers must be exposed to both theoretical and practical aspects of teaching for them to be able to teach effectively. Teaching is very vital to the society.

Teaching is the practice by which a teacher makes use of various knowledge domains which include knowledge of learners, knowledge of subject matter and knowledge of methodology to assist learner to learn (National Policy on Education - FRN, 2013).
Teaching is said to be a complex problem-solving activity that involves generating meaningful and relevant knowledge, values and skills between at least two people, the teacher and the learner. Teaching revolves around teachers, learners, subject matter, instructional objectives and delivery method. The teaching process takes place in all fields of human learning which include; science, fine art, humanities, vocational and educational technology. Effective teaching could be done by those who have undergone training in teaching and internalized effective teaching practices. Generally, such training involves learning basic principles in classroom situations and undergoing specific period of teaching practice exercises in actual classroom teaching and engaging in other school activities. Besides, teaching student teachers are sometimes obliged to engage in administrative and management activities.

Teaching practice is a period that a student teacher spends in teaching at a school as part of his or her training. It is an integral part of teacher education which constitutes a practical phase of its own kind. Stones and Morris, (1977) explain that teaching practice has three major process of practicing teaching skills and exposure to practicing a variety of other non-teaching roles or responsibilities. Teaching practice sessions enable the 'teachers to be' to undergo a range of experiences that they might have otherwise only studied through related teaching theories and pedagogical models. Anyone undergoing such student teachers' exercises is regarded as student teacher who Adelowokan and Makinde, (2011) describe as a college, university or graduate student who is teaching under the supervision of a certified teacher in order to qualify for a degree, diploma or certificate in an education programme.

Arguably, the most important component of a teacher education programme in Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) is the student teaching field experiences. Researchers have argued that the student teaching 'experience' plays a significant role in the formation of attitudes and perceptions of pre-service teachers regarding their roles and responsibilities as future practitioners (Harlin, Edwards & Briers, 2002). Teaching Practice (TP) is an important component of becoming an effective teacher. It grants student teachers experiences in actual teaching and learning environments (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2003; Marais & Meier, 2004; Perry, 2004).

Teaching practice affords the student teachers the avenue to experiment the act of teaching before entering into the actual teaching profession. Teaching practice is seen as the hub of preparation processes in the teaching profession; it forms the link between the period of studentship and bonafide membership of the teaching profession. As a result, teaching practice creates a mixture of anticipation, anxiety, excitement and apprehension in the student teachers as they commence the exercise (Mani- on *et al*., 2003; Perry, 2004).

During the teaching practice exercises, the student teacher is expected to fulfill all the responsibilities of a teacher which, according to Perry (2004), is exciting but also challenging. Perry further pointed out that, on the one hand, student teachers should experience the excitement of being a part of a real classroom setting, getting to know learners, planning and organizing classroom tasks and activities. On the other hand, student teachers could have doubts about their ability to cope with the exercise because of their concerns about their strengths to manage unfamiliar situations, controlling and managing learners or establishing a working relationship with their mentors or supervisors. TP may generate mixed feelings that contribute to the making of an effective or ineffective student teacher.

The value of teaching practice lies in providing the teacher-trainees the initial exposure to the realities of teaching through a broad range of activities. Successful participation in TP is a compulsory requirement for the completion of any certificate, diploma or degree in Teacher Education Programme in Nigeria. The basic assumption is that since most of the teacher-trainees have never taught formally before TP attempts, it is rational to include TP in their professional training programmes so as to provide them with unique experiences and opportunities to learn by doing and being.

In Nigeria, teaching practice exercise is usually done by student in teacher training institutions which are Colleges of Education which awards Nigeria Certificates in Education (NCE) and Faculty of Education in universities which awards Bachelors in Education (B.Ed.) in different subject areas.

The scheduling and timing of teaching practice exercise in teacher training institutions is done in such a way that students must have been exposed to all the pedagogical knowledge which they would need to practice as teachers. Before students are sent for teaching practice, they must have been taught the different methodologies of teaching as well as the principles and practice of class management. Apart from this, students should have been exposed to small scale teaching experience in the school, which is usually referred to as micro or peer teaching.

This is an arrangement which allows student to prepare for lessons and teach their colleagues in the presence of their teachers or supervisors. All these initial trainings are geared towards making the pre-service teachers conversant with what is obtainable in real classroom situations before they are sent out on teaching practice.

As good as all these preparations may be, student teachers are faced with a lot of challenges, prospects and experiences which they may never have been taught during their college/university studies. These experiences present themselves in diverse forms to student teachers. These could be challenges or opportunities relating with students, school head teachers, cooperating teachers, or even their own colleagues. Sometimes it could be in form of lack or over confidence in lesson preparation and delivery. It could be even be personality issues which strain or enhance relationships with other co-workers or students.

In some cases, student teachers record varied experiences with their supervisors. All these occurrence/situations present potent experience which could create a lasting impression on the life of the student- teachers throughout their teaching career or other aspect of life. Hence, the need to investigate and document these teaching practice experiences with the intention of using them to improve upon future teaching practice exercises.

In some schools where teachers are lacking, student teachers are often used as permanent teachers to do all sorts of works. This would also create a sort of experience which the student teachers may or may not enjoy. This study is considered necessary due to the peculiar case of agricultural science teacher. An agricultural science teacher is peculiar because, the practical aspect of their course which requires them to take students to the farm to acquire some agricultural skills in farming could generate both positive and most often negative experiences from the students, fellow teachers or school principals. An agricultural student teacher may experience, support, cooperation as well as opposition or rejection from students, parents, fellow teachers or school heads. Furthermore, in a school where school farm and other agricultural instructional resources are lacking, an agricultural student teacher may go through hard experience sourcing or improvising for these resources.

Agricultural science student teachers are expected to have a deep understanding in curriculum development, learning styles, technical areas, teaching methods and techniques.

Joerger (2002) categorizes professional teaching competencies needed for success and survival as classroom management, leadership and Students Agricultural Education (SAE) development, technical agriculture, and program design and maintenance. These are the competencies that agricultural education student teachers are expected to acquire during teaching practice.

(i) Thus, the different experiences, opportunities and challenges, that an agriculture student teacher go through during their teaching practice exercise are worth researching into so as to serve as a knowledge base for teacher educators in preparing aspiring student teachers as well as providing a content for orientation of student teachers. The inability to fully realize the objectives of teaching practice or the inability of student teachers to perform to expectation can be attributed to certain challenges or inadequacies of the programme. The challenges that face student teachers during teaching practice is what necessitates the need for the study and hence they constitute the problem of the study. The study had four objectives including to identify the pedagogical challenges that Agricultural Science students-teachers face during teaching practice sessions; to find out the challenges encountered by Agricultural Science student teachers when working with cooperating schools during teaching practice sessions; examine the challenges encountered by Agricultural Science student-teachers when working with learners during teaching practice sessions; to find out the student-teachers' personal challenges affecting Agricultural Science student- teachers during teaching practice sessions; and to examine the institutional related challenges that student-teachers encounter during teaching practice sessions and identify the strategies that can be used to improve undergraduate teaching practices for Agricultural Science students. In order to achieve the above objectives, the research questions that were answered in the course of the study include: What pedagogical challenges do Agricultural Science students-teachers face during teaching practice sessions? What are the challenges encountered by Agricultural Science student teachers when working with cooperating schools during teaching practice sessions? What are the challenges encountered by Agricultural Science student-teachers when–working with learners during teaching practice sessions? What are the student-teachers' personal challenges affecting Agricultural Science students during teaching practice sessions? What institutional related challenges do student teachers encounter during teaching practice sessions? and What strategies can be used to improve undergraduate teaching practices for Agricultural Science students?

Methodology

This study engaged a descriptive survey research design. The population for this study was all year 2018, 400 Agricultural Science Student Teachers at the University of Ilorin and Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, Kwara State. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to obtain 60 Agricultural science students who had completed their teaching practice exercise at the two institutions A well structured questionnaire that consisted of two sections was used to obtain relevant information from the respondents. Section A of the questionnaire dealt with students' demographic information; which included respondents' age and gender while section B dealt with the challenges encountered by agricultural science student-teachers during their teaching practice sessions. A 4 points Likert scale response option of; strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), and Disagree (D) was adopted for the questionnaire.

The instruments were validated for face and content validity by three experts in Agriculture and Science Education in the Department of Science Education, University of Ilorin. Modifications were made based on the corrections and suggestions which were reflected in the final instrument used for this study. Data analysis was carried out with the use of Statistic Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 21. The research questions raised in the study were analyzed using percentages and means. All the data collected from the questionnaire were systematically presented and interpreted.

Research Results

The Pedagogical Challenges faced by Agricultural Science Students while on Teaching Practice

Table 1 shows the pedagogical problems faced by Agricultural Science Students during teaching practice.

Data revealed that unconducive classroom environments, teachers' difficulties in designing lesson plans, inability to break topics into teaching units, limited choice of appropriate teaching methods, and non availability of teaching aids and problem of choice of appropriate teaching aids were pedagogical problems facing Agricultural Science students on teaching practice. The mean value of 3.78, 3.65, 3.58, 3.58, 3.45 and 3.41 were derived and ranked respectively from first to sixth levels. This implied that pedagogical challenges are part of the problems facing Agricultural Science students during teaching practice sessions.

Table 1: Pedagogical Problems Faced by Agricultural Science Students - Teachers

S/N	Items	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Standard Deviation	Rank
1.	Non availability of teaching aids	3.45	0.76	5th
2.	Limited choice of appropriate teaching methods	3.58	0.49	4th
3.	Unconducive classroom environment	3.78	0.52	1st
4.	Teachers' difficulties in designing lesson plans	3.65	0.66	2nd
5.	Inability to break topics into teaching units	3.58	0.62	3rd
6.	Problem of choice of appropriate teaching aids	3.41	0.62	6th

Source: Field Survey, 2018. **Mean ≥2.5 = Agreed, Mean < 2.5 = Disagreed*

Cooperating School related Challenges encountered by Agricultural Science student teachers during teaching practice

Table 2 shows the cooperating school related problems faced by Agricultural Science student-teachers during teaching practice. It was shown that inadequate time allocation, absence of school farms, overcrowded classrooms, old farm tools and equipment, underequipped laboratories and unsupportive attitudes of some cooperating teachers in charge of student teachers and lack of instructional materials in the cooperating school constituted teaching practice school related problems facing Agricultural Science students on teaching practice and was ranked from 1st to 6th in accordance with mean values of 3.46, 3.36, 3.35, 3.35, 3.25, 3.20 and 3.03 respectively. This implies that the cooperating schools create some challenges for Agricultural Science students' teachers on teaching practice.

Table 2: School Teaching Practice Related Problems Faced by Agricultural Science Students-Teachers during Teaching Practice

S/N	Items	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Rank
1.	Unsupportive attitude of cooperating teacher in charge of student teachers	3.20	6th
2.	Inadequate time allocation	3.46	1st
3.	Underequipped laboratories	3.25	5th
4.	Overcrowded classroom	3.35	3rd
5.	Absence of farm problem for practical	3.36	2nd
6.	Lack of instructional materials in the school	3.03	7th

7. Old farm tools and equipment	3.35	3rd
8. Rejection of pre-service teachers by some co-operating school	2.60	8th

Source: Field Survey, 2018. **Mean ≥ 2.5 = Agreed, Mean < 2.5 = Disagreed*

Learners related challenges faced by Agricultural Science Students teachers during teaching practice

Table 3 shows that learners at cooperating schools posed some challenges to Agricultural Science student during teaching practice exercises. Data revealed that learners' unwillingness to learn (3.65), indiscipline among some of the learners (3.33), underrating student-teachers' teaching capacity (3.31), lack of seriousness among students (3.26) and lack of respect for the student-teachers (3.18) were learners' related challenges encountered by Agricultural Science Student during teaching practice. The questionnaire targeting this item was composed of items was ranked from Ist to 5th accordingly. This implies that Agricultural Science learners for the 2018 cohorts at the selected institutions posed some challenges to Agricultural Science students during teaching practice.

Table 3: Learners Related Problems Faced by Agricultural Science Students on Teaching Practice

S/N	Items	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Standard Deviation	Rank
1.	Lack of respect for the student teachers	3.18	0.85	5th
2.	Underrating student- teachers' teaching capacity	3.31	0.85	3rd
3.	Indiscipline among some of the learners	3.33	0.75	2nd
4.	Learners' unwillingness to learn	3.65	0.63	1st
5.	Lack of seriousness among students	3.26	0.71	4th

Source: Field Survey, 2018. **Mean ≥2.5 = Agreed, Mean< 2.5 =Disagreed*

Student-teachers personal problems affecting Agricultural Science students during teaching practice

Table 4 shows student-teachers' personal problems confronting Agricultural Science Student during teaching practice. Field results showed that lack of understanding of some subject content among the student-teachers, long distance to primary place of the teaching assignment, student teachers' shyness before students and financial constraints during the teaching practice exercise were some of the student-teachers' personal challenges facing Agricultural Science student on teaching practice. Item of the questionnaire was ranked respectively from 1st to 4th in accordance with the mean value of 3.48, 3.46, 3.43 and 3.17 respectively. This implies that student teachers' personal problems constituted challenges encountered by Agricultural Science student-teachers during teaching practice.

Table 4: Student teachers personal problems affecting Agricultural Science students on teaching practice

S/N	Items	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Rank
1.	Long distance to primary place of assignment	3.46	2nd
2.	Lack of understanding of some subject content by student teachers	3.48	1st
3.	There are financial constraints during the teaching practice exercise	3.17	4th
4.	Student- teacher lack of confidence in facing students in class room	3.43	3rd

Source: Field Survey, 2018. **Mean ≥2.5 = Agreed, Mean< 2.5 =Disagreed*

Student teacher's institutional related challenges affecting Agricultural Science students during teaching practice

Table 5 shows student teachers' institutional related challenges confronting Agricultural Science student-teachers on teaching practice. Information from the field showed that inadequate orientation before teaching practice, academic strike, short duration of teaching practice exercise, insufficient peer teaching experience and problem of interruption between the co-operating school calendar and the University or College of Education calendar are student teachers institutional problems affecting Agricultural Science students on teaching practice and was ranked from 1st to 5th items respectively with a mean value of 3.33, 3.31, 3.30, 3.18 and 3.17 respectively. This implies that factors related to student teachers institution constituted challenges to Agricultural Science students during teaching practice.

Table 5: Student Teachers Institutional Related Problems Affecting Agricultural Science Students on Teaching Practice

S/N	Items	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Rank
1.	Insufficient peer teaching experience	3.18	4th
2.	Academic strike	3.31	2nd
3.	The problem of interruption between the co-operating school calendar and the institutional calendar	3.17	5th
4.	Duration of teaching practice exercise is short	3.30	3rd
5.	Inadequate orientation on teaching practice	3.33	1st

Source: Field Survey, 2018. **Mean ≥2.5 = Agreed, Mean< 2.5 =Disagreed*

Strategies for improving undergraduate teaching practice

Table 6 shows some strategies for improving agricultural education undergraduates' teaching practices. Based on the analysis of data, the Nigerian government should encourage both private and public schools to accept pre –service student teachers for their teaching practice exercise ($\bar{X}$ = 3.77); frequent training and seminars should be offered to teachers to

improve their professional practices ($\bar{X}$ = 3.67); enough time should be provided for the teaching practice exercise ($\bar{X}$ = 3.47); and the government should pay the teachers as at when due in order to solve the problem of unpredicted calendar ($\bar{X}$ = 3.47), instructional materials should be provided at schools where TP is conducted ($\bar{X}$ = 3.33). Generally, the agricultural science students have positive views about solutions to be proffered to improve the quality of teaching practice as revealed in the average mean of their responses which stood at 3.54, and greater than the benchmark of 2.50.

Table 6: Strategies for Improving Undergraduate Teaching Practice

S/N	Items	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Rank
1.	Instructional materials should be provided at the schools where TP is conducted	3.33	5th
2.	The government should pay the teachers as at when due in order to solve the problem of unpredictable calendar	3.47	3rd
3.	Frequent training and seminars should be offered to teachers to enhance professional practices	3.67	2nd
4.	Enough time should be provided for the teaching practice exercise	3.47	3rd
5.	Government should encourage both private and public schools to accept pre-service teachers' student- teachers for their teaching practice exercise	3.77	1st

Discussion of the Findings

Findings from the study revealed that pedagogical challenges were part of the problems faced by Agricultural Science student-teachers during teaching practice. It was found that unconducive classroom environments, difficulty in designing lesson plans, inability to break topics into teaching units, choice of appropriate teaching methods, non-availability of teaching aids and problems of choices of appropriate teaching aids were pedagogical problems facing Agricultural Science students during teaching practices. The pedagogical challenges highlighted by the respondents have been a general problem affecting beginning teachers in their early years in teaching profession. Beginning teachers often find lesson planning to be difficult. This difficulty often stems from the inability of the teachers to delineate appropriate contents that should be adequate for a single period of lesson. Also, the beginning teachers often find it difficult to break the array of contents they have been taught at higher institutions into understandable units for the secondary school learners as well as think up of the appropriate methods to deliver the lesson to be understood by the learners. Fritz and Miller (2003) found that first- and second-year agricultural education teachers experienced challenges with classroom instruction. This condition, imply that pedagogical challenges were common problems confronting early career teachers (novice).

The cooperating schools also created some challenges for the Agricultural Science students' teachers during teaching practice. It was found that inadequate time allocation, absence of school farm, overcrowded classroom, old farm tools and equipment, underequipped laboratories and unsupportive attitude of some cooperating teachers in charge of student teachers and lack of instructional materials in the cooperating school constitutes teaching practice school related problems facing Agricultural Science student-teachers on teaching practice. These institutional problems are more prominent in public schools and some upcoming private schools.

These problems usually arise from lack of funds to acquire the needed facilities for effective teaching and learning in the school. In most cases these schools are not adequately funded by the government. Therefore, the classes and laboratories (where they are even available) are overstretched and most times permanent teachers compete for space or time to deliver their lessons. Therefore, when student-teachers are posted to such schools, they are treated as second class teachers who can only have space and time to teach their lessons when the permanent teachers have fully taken their turn. This is similar to the study conducted by Kabugi's (2013) at Kakuyuni Division, Kangundo District, Machakos County in Kenya on the challenges to teaching and learning of agriculture in secondary schools where he also found inadequate resources for teaching and learning Agriculture in schools as one of the institutional-based challenges facing the teaching and learning of agriculture. This implies that the problem of inadequate resources or facilities in the teaching of agriculture is not only peculiar to the study area but to most underdeveloped nations.

Msangya, Mkoma and Yihuan (2016) recorded similar experiences showing that teaching practice students in Tanzania are faced with the problem of negative attitude among in-service teachers in local schools. This shows that inadequate teaching resources are peculiar issue that characterizes teaching practice in schools, hence the need for pre-service teachers to be competent in the act of improvisation.

Moreover, the learners posed challenges to the Agricultural Science student-teachers during teaching practice. It was revealed that unwillingness of students to learn, indiscipline, underrating student-teachers, lack of seriousness and respect among students constituted learners related problems encountered by Agricultural Science student-teachers on teaching practice. Secondary school student being in their adolescents' stage often constitute some challenge to the practice of teaching by student-teachers.

Some secondary school learners often regard the students-teachers as inferior to their permanent teachers thereby exhibiting some in disciplinary

acts during teaching. Some even intentionally challenge the intellectual capacity of the student teachers to test if they are competent enough to teach them or not. While some learners are naturally trouble makers / extrovert. All these categories of learners often stressed the patience or confidence of the student-teachers thereby posing a constraint to the smooth running of their teaching practice exercise. Msangya, Mkoma and Yihuan (2016) affirmed this situation by stating that even secondary school students were considered a challenge to student-teachers during teaching practice in Tanzania. Fritz and Miller (2003) observed that novice teachers faced challenges with classroom management, student discipline and safety. Mundt and Connors (1999) reported that the main challenges faced by novice teachers were classroom management and student discipline. Hence, the issue of student indiscipline is assuming a worldwide phenomenon and will always constitute a serious challenge to novice and pre-service teachers.

Furthermore, student-teacher's personal problems were part of the challenges affecting Agricultural Science student-teachers on teaching practice. Findings revealed that lack of understanding of some subject content among student teachers, long distance to places of primary assignment, student teachers shyness before students and financial constraints during the teaching practice exercise were student-teachers personal problems affecting Agricultural Science students during teaching practice. Since there can be no perfect situation or perfect individual, the personal problems of student- teachers most often at times result into major challenges inhibiting the smooth running of teaching practice for the student teachers. Some student-teachers are naturally below average in their performance, while some that are even brilliant may be shy when facing large group of students. Both factors may result into fear or stage fright in the course performing their teaching practice exercise in addition, financial challenges or distance from place of teaching practice may result into perpetual lateness of student teachers to school. This may bring the student teacher at logger-heads with the school principal thereby affecting the relationship between such student-teacher and the school management. Msangya, Mkoma and Yihuan (2016) observed similar experience that teaching practice students in Tanzania faced lack of financial and materials support while Mundt (cited in Fritz and Miller, 2003) remarked that pre-service teachers being faced with teaching challenges could lead to a lack of self-confidence, confusion, frustration, and isolation among student teachers. Further findings from respondents also reveals that inadequate orientation before teaching practice, academic strike, and insufficient peer teaching

experience and problem of interruption between the co-operating school calendar and the tertiary institutions calendar were institutional problems affecting Agricultural Science students-teachers during their teaching practice sessions.

The government lackadaisical attitude to the welfare of teachers at both pre-university and university levels in Nigeria has not only affected the performance of learners in Nigeria, but has succeeded in truncating the academic calendar of both secondary and tertiary institutions, thus affecting everyone that has anything to do with the academic sector of Nigeria. The incessant strike actions usually affect university calendar to the extent that students that were supposed to be mobilized for teaching practice were left unattended to until the secondary schools have closed for the session. Therefore, in other to make-up for the lost time in most cases, student-teachers are rushed through the teaching practice exercise thereby creating undue stress for the student teachers .Furthermore, some institutions in bid to maintain an uninterrupted academic calendar create less period for student to actually undertake peer teaching/micro teaching which the sole purpose is to help students to practice teaching among their peers to assist them in learning the act of teaching as well as gain confidence in teaching. Thus, students- teachers were sent on teaching practice exercise ill prepared for the exercise.

Similar findings were recorded by Msangya, Mkoma and Yihuan (2016) who observed that there was insufficient time for teaching practice and that students in Tanzania are faced with mismatch of TP with the secondary schools' calendars. It is worth noting that these challenges usually arise from inevitable strike actions that are sometimes embarked upon by higher institutions in Nigeria. Strike actions often disrupt scheduled teaching practice periods leading to shorter period for accomplishing TP targets that are set to meet intended learning outputs and outcomes for school-based students, student-teachers and institutional goals.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussions presented in preceding narrative of this study the following recommendations have been made: There is a need for strengthened collaboration between teacher training institutions (Universities and Colleges of Education) with cooperating schools before commencement of teaching practice exercises. Such collaboration will help to reduce critical challenges that limit attainment of teaching practice goals and outcomes in the study area. The duration of the teaching practice exercise in teacher training institutions should be increased to provide ample time for the practice of professional activities associated with teaching and learning of the trainees. While the teacher training institutions should endeavour to distribute student- teachers for teaching practice

exercise to cooperating schools early enough so that they can get involved in preparatory school activities before schools resume.

The Nigerian government should develop an enabling policy through National Policy on Education (NPE) for both private and public teacher training institutions to accept pre –service teachers for the teaching practice exercise. Also, teachers teaching in teachers' training institutions should be motivated through regular payment of salaries and allowances to reduce problem of interruption in school calendar as a result of industrial action by the teachers. In addition, stipends should be provided as incentive to agricultural science student teachers after the teaching practice exercise. Adequate instructional materials and relevant school resources should be provided in cooperating schools by the government or school proprietors to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning for student-teachers.

Conclusion

The study has affirmed that agricultural science student-teachers encountered a lot of challenges during their teaching practice exercises. These challenges emanated from various sources such as pedagogical issues, cooperating school, learners at cooperating school, the student-teachers themselves, teacher education institutions and other related factors. All these factors constituted a potential challenge to the successful acquisition of teaching skills by the agricultural science student-teachers. However, students have also suggested some measures which they think, if adopted, could serve to ameliorate the challenges encountered.

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