

Preparedness for and Commitment to Pre-service ‘Teaching Practice’ in Kwara State, Nigeria

Lawal Abdulmumin Abubakar *
University of Ilorin

Murtala Abdulyaqin Tukur
University of Ilorin

Omosidi Abdulrahman Sayuti
University of Ilorin

Ogbudinkpa Charity Ijioma
University of Ilorin

Abstract. Pre-service ‘teaching practice’ is an essential aspect of teacher-training which provides pedagogical knowledge and experience on how to go about the business of teaching. It should be conducted properly so as to prepare pre-service teacher trainees to service their mandate effectively. It is with this understanding that this study assessed the effectiveness with which it is conducted in tertiary institutions in Kwara State. Data was collected using two structured questionnaires and analysed using frequency counts and percentages. It was concluded that most of the students, teachers, supervisors and cooperating schools are highly prepared and committed to the teaching practice exercise while others are not.

Keywords: Teacher-training; Teaching practice; Reform.

1 Introduction

Teaching practice is a factual and practical teaching exercise done by in-training teachers which is aimed to afford them the opportunity of practical classroom activities. Lawal (2009) it is a planned educational programme designed to expose student-teachers to the practical aspect of teaching, which involves a systematic presentation of facts, classroom management, and utilization of instructional materials. Also, Kiggundu and Nakimuli (2009) observed that teaching practice is meant to provide for the authentic context within which student teachers are exposed to experiences of the complexities and richness of the reality of being a



East African School of Higher Education Studies &
Development, Makerere University

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* Corresponding author: dr.aalawal2018@gmail.com.

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teacher. This elaborately enables the trainee to bring into reality the learnt pedagogies, acquired knowledge and educational theories from the interaction with their lecturers. It pictures and prepares trainee for established challenges which they might encounter in schools and the various means of getting them off and dealing with different situations in school and specifically the classroom.

Specifically, teaching practice is undergone by undergraduate students in the field of education or educational related disciplines. It helps in the manifestation of different experiences in form of teaching, testing, examining, academics settings, & co-curricular activities. Nwanekezi, et al. (2011) it has three major connotations: the practicing of teaching skills and acquisition of the role of a teacher, the whole range of experience that students go through in school, and the practical aspects of courses as distinct from theoretical studies. Essentially, during the period of the exercise the student teacher is expected to plan holistically which will aid the actualization of educational goals. Good planning underpins flexibility and provides the teacher with structure and security (Pollard, 2006). The planning cut across identifying the behavioural objectives, organizing the content of the objectives, preparation of the needed lesson notes and instructional materials and preparation on class management etc. Furthermore the student teacher gets involved in the extracurricular activities vis-à-vis school assembly coordination, club activities and all other relevant activities as may be directed by the school administrators.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Some years back, many researches and researchers have explained the current status and challenges destructing effective conduct of teaching practice exercise within different locales and institutions in Nigeria. The causes of the challenges, probably be traced to student teachers, cooperating teachers, school of practice, the institutions that organize the teaching practice exercise, and as well as the supervisors. In consonance to this, different studies by different scholars have unveiled some problems confronting the teaching practice exercise.

Empirically, Haastrup, Hezekial, Adenike, and Ekundayo (2014) in their study titled "Teaching Practice Exercise for Education Students in Nigerian Universities: Challenges and the Way Forward". The findings of the study posited. that there are multi-faceted problems that face students on teaching practice exercise which include but are not limited to accommodation problem most especially when they are posted outside the university town, student-teachers are often being rejected in schools where they are posted, and inadequate instructional materials are not readily available in the schools. Also Ikitde and Ado (2015) indicate many problems including student teachers having a negative attitude towards teaching practice.

Jekayinfa et al. (2012) asserted that the quality of the exercise as being currently run is inadequate. Also, Azeem (2011) found out that 20% of the participants did not have their lessons being checked regularly by concerned supervisors while 80% were of the mind that their lessons were being checked regularly.

Today in Nigeria, there has been a loud cry among the educators about the falling standard in the conduct of teaching practice exercise which has given more concern than satisfaction. Many researchers as stated above have been able to centre on the student teachers only but left the aspect the supervisors' commitment, commitment of cooperative schools and level of preparation of the organizing institutions. Though this study is in line with previous studies of other scholars in terms of the subject matter but it differs on the basis of indicators, locale and population. Therefore, this research work set out to assess the conduct of teaching practice exercise in Kwara state tertiary institutions.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Generally, this study aims at assessing the conduct of teaching practice exercise in Kwara State tertiary institutions. Specifically, the research intends to:

1. Find out how adequately student teachers prepare for teaching practice in Kwara state tertiary institutions.
2. Examine the level of supervisors' commitment to the teaching practice exercise in Kwara state tertiary institutions.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions would be raised in the course of the study:

1. How adequately do student teachers prepare for teaching practice in Kwara state tertiary institutions?
2. What is the level of supervisors' commitment to the teaching practice exercise in Kwara state tertiary institutions?

2 Related Literature

2.1 Concept of Teaching and Teaching Practice

Teaching is a gracious and reputable profession in the world. It is a two-way activity that is as old as human existence. Teaching is multifaceted, polymorphic and a social activity that involves the conveyance of skills, knowledge, right attitudes to a person or group of people who are equally accessible for learning. It involves knowledge dissemination between individuals purposely for the achievement of learning and helps as regards logical veracity and capacity for self-judgments. Teaching is a conscious and deliberate activity that is performed by an experienced individual (teacher) whose intention is to bring about efficient and effective learning exercise.

The teaching as a process entails impacting in the learners what they need to know about a subject matter. Many early authors such as Olatunji (1996), Nwachi (1991), Reed, Bergemann, and Olson, (1998), and a host of others have set forth

series of definitions for teaching as a concept and these vary from hand to hand. Teachers are the backbone of any educational system which helps in the practicability of the prepared educational policy. Ryan & Couver (2007) opined that the entire purpose of teaching is to make positive changes (learning) in students. Aladejana (2006) is of the view that teaching is interpreted in its broadest sense to include academic guidance and intellectual motivation as well as classroom, laboratory and studio instruction. NTI (2007) defines teaching as many activities and processes by which human beings are assisted to learn what are regarded as useful and worthwhile as determined in the context of literacy or western type of education. Ozano (2013) views teaching as the systematic presentation of facts, ideas, skills and techniques to students. It involves the sharing of knowledge in the process of developing the individual. Ehindero (2006) sees teaching as a nomadic interactive human process involving complex decision making on different aspects of classroom interaction. He draws an analogy between teaching and marketing. The teacher, the student and the knowledge depict seller, buyer and product respectively. Furthermore, Oladosu (2004) sees teaching as an activity aimed at bringing about meaningful learning through a method that is morally and pedagogically acceptable. According to him, teaching involves a teacher, a learner, and content in form of knowledge, facts, information or skills to be imparted.

2.2 Elements for Conducting Effective Teaching Practice

Production Commission (2013) pointers of the effectiveness of programs generally focuses on measuring the changes in outcomes that reflect the objectives of the program and also it depends on some elements which influence the output. Outputs too might depend on other inputs and in addition to program inputs. These elements entail resources which include human, material, non-material and others. The availability of these, result into actualization of the predetermined goals and enormous acquisition of the benefit attached to the exercise. Also for teaching practice exercise, Margaret (2014) succinctly opined that the effectiveness of teaching practice must be approached from a systems perspective. If one component (e.g. supervision or duration) is weak, student-teachers may not acquire adequate competencies and this will affect the quality of the exercise. Also, many contemporary writers such as Alabi (2000), Lawal (2009), Fashiku (2009), Jekayinfa et al. (2012) and a host of others have explored into the conduct of the exercise and they have postulated recommendations and suggestions which serve as bases of the essential elements for the conductive of effective teaching practice exercise. Particularly, the following are the required human resources who are expected to exhibit adequate commitment towards the discharge of their respective responsibilities in order to conduct effective teaching practice exercise: the student teachers, the supervisors; and the cooperating schools; the organizing tertiary institutions through its delegate(s) or group of individuals called Teaching Practice

Committee usually headed by an individual called Teaching Practice Chairman or Teaching Practice Coordinator.

3 Methodology

The study followed a descriptive survey design. The population comprised all the teacher trainees and lecturers from tertiary institutions in Kwara state and the teachers from secondary schools within Kwara State. The targeted population includes final year teacher trainees, lecturers and the teaching practice committee from the University of Ilorin and Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin; and teachers from cooperating schools (i.e. secondary schools used for teaching practice by both institutions). The selection of institutions that encapsulated the targeted population was justified on the basis of years of existence, status of course accreditation and period when teaching practice had been carried out. A sample of 351 final year students was selected out of the 3689 students who took part in the teaching practice session of 2019 at the two teacher training institutions. Also, 189 (out of 350) lecturers that served as supervisors of the teacher trainees, and all the teaching practice committee members in each of the institutions were involved in the study. In addition, 127 schools from the 150 schools of practice which was common to both institutions. The sample of each categories of the respondents' population was arrived at using Krejcie and Morgan's Sample Size Estimation Table. A simple random selection techniques were used because they gave each *unit* the same chances of being selected. The researchers designed a questionnaire for each of the four categories of respondents. The questionnaire was titled "Assessment of the Conduct of Teaching Practice Exercise Questionnaire" (ACTPEQ). However, each of the four questionnaires contained different question items—corresponding to the kind of information that was required from each category of respondents. The data collected was analysed using frequency counts and percentages.

4 Results

4.1 Adequacy of Students' Preparedness for Teaching Practice

The findings on the teacher trainees' preparedness for teaching practice are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Student Teachers' Preparedness for Teaching Practice

Respondents	Items	Agree	Disagree
Supervisors	Student teachers always prepare for their lessons	161 (86.6%)	25 (13.4%)
	Student teachers are regular in their schools of practice	162 (87.1%)	24 (12.9%)
Cooperating Schools	Student teachers are always regular.	99 (77.9%)	28 (23.1%)
	Student teachers always prepare for their lesson.	109 (85.8)	18 (14.2%)
Tertiary Institutions	Student teachers are ready to uphold the terms and conditions stipulated by their institutions	20 (100%)	0 (0%)
	Student teachers attend orientation exercise before the commencement of the teaching practice exercise	16 (80%)	4 (20%)
	Student teachers show readiness for the teaching practice exercise	20 (100%)	

Table 1 shows the analysis of the respondents' perception on how adequately student teachers are prepared for teaching practice. A percentage of 86.8% of the sampled supervisors agreed with the statement. Furthermore, 81.9% of the sampled cooperating schools agreed with the statement. Also, 93.3% of the sampled Organizing Institution's (Teaching Practice Organizers) agreed with statements while the remaining 6.7% disagreed with the statements. Therefore, it was evident that the student teachers are highly prepared for the teaching practice exercise.

4.2 Supervisors' Commitment to the Teaching Practice Exercise

Table 2 shows the respondents' views on the commitment of the teacher trainees' supervisors to the teaching practice exercise.

Table 2: Perception of Supervisors' Commitment to Teaching Practice

Respondents	Items	Agree	Disagree
Student teachers	Supervisors ensure rightful usage of designated time.	300 (85.5%)	51 (14.5%)
	Supervisors ensure immediate feedback to student teachers.	296 (84.3%)	55 (15.7%)
	Supervisors always come for assessment during official school hours	311 (88.6%)	40 (11.4%)
	Supervisors create post-supervision interaction	249 (70.9%)	102 (29.1%)
Cooperating Schools	Supervisors provide necessary feedback to cooperating school/ teachers.	85 (66.9%)	42 (33.1%)
	Supervisors always accord the teacher and school the required respect.	107 (84.3)	20 (15.7%)
	Supervisors always adopt proper technique of supervision.	102 (80.3)	25 (19.7%)
	Supervisors always seek for teacher/school assistance in monitoring student teachers	93 (73.2%)	34 (26.8%)
Tertiary Institutions	Supervision is always carried as scheduled	16 (80%)	4 (20%)
	Teaching practice results are submitted promptly	16 (80%)	4 (20%)
	Supervisors adhere to the expected criteria.	20 (100%)	
	Supervisors are usually ready to take additional work relating to student teachers	12 (60%)	8 (40%)

Table 2 shows that majority (82.3%) of the teacher trainees agreed with the statements in question (on their supervisors' commitment). Furthermore, 76.2% of the cooperating schools agreed. Finally, 80% of the respondents from the tertiary institution's agreed with the statements. This suggests that the level of supervisors' commitment to the teaching practice exercise in Kwara state tertiary institutions is high.

5 Discussion and Conclusions

The finding on research question 1 revealed that the student teachers are highly prepared for the teaching practice exercise in Kwara state tertiary institutions. This finding confirmed the earlier finding that student teachers see teaching practice to be of immense benefit to them and relevant in preparing the trainee for the real professional work and as such, it results into high preparation in order to acquire the immense benefits therein.

Also, the finding on research question 2 revealed that the level of supervisors' commitment to the teaching practice exercise in Kwara state tertiary institutions is high. This finding confirmed the findings of Asiyai (2016) that doing the teaching the supervisors does their duties which include provision of enough feedback, discussion of the strength and weakness of their teaching with them and many others. Additionally, the finding of this study appears to be in contrast with the findings of Chikunda, (2005) that some supervisors are treachery by coming to find faults, allocate marks and leave without discussing with the student what was wrong and right with the lesson. The researcher concluded that such practices can result in student teachers not enjoying their internship and might have serious unintended outcomes.

The results of the study have shown that the respondents are committed to the teaching practice exercise. It is evident through effective and efficiency discharge of the activities. Specifically, the student teachers are adequately prepared and committed to the exercise through regular attendance at school of practice, relating well with cooperating teachers/schools, attending of orientation exercise for enlightenment purpose before the exercise, ensuring adequate abidance with the set rules and regulation and many others. The supervisors are highly committed to the exercise through rightful usage of designated time, creation of interaction between the supervisor and supervisees, according the teachers and school the required respect and also ready to take additional work on supervision and submission of teaching practice result is done at the right time and other expected activity.

In addition, the cooperating schools are highly committed to the teaching practice exercise. This is apparent through given the expected subject to student teachers to teach, provision and utilization of needed facilities, exposing student teachers to extracurricular activities and usually, welcoming attitude exhibited by the school administrators and teachers. Conclusively, the level of organizing institution preparation to the teaching practice exercise on the perception of student teachers but low from the perception of the cooperating schools. This is noticeable through exhibition of some actions which include provision of the needed materials, provision of mobilization allowance to supervisor, etc.

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