

CHALLENGES OF TEACHING PRACTICE EXERCISE AND THEIR IMPACTS ON STUDENT-TEACHERS' INTEREST IN TEACHING PROFESSION IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Despite the significance of Teaching Practice to Bachelor of Education students, it has been observed that students face some challenges during the exercise which may have negative effect on their attitudes and interest in teaching profession. Therefore, this study examined the challenges student-teachers face during teaching practice exercise and how these challenges affect their interest in teaching profession. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study, and the study adopted a descriptive research design. The population of the study was all 2022/2023 Bachelor of Education final year students in the College of Social and Management Sciences, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 50 students from each B.Ed programme in the college. The instrument for data collection was duly validated and its reliability was determined at 0.725. Simple percentage and chi-square were used to analyse the data. The findings showed that inadequate finance, teaching of many subjects, lack of cooperation between teachers and student-teacher were some of the challenges student-teachers face during teaching practice. It was recommended among others that possible challenges student-teachers may face during teaching practice exercise should be seriously emphasized to them during teaching practice orientation.

Key words: Teaching Practice, Student-teachers, Teaching Profession, Challenges of teaching Practice

Introduction

Teaching practice is an important component of becoming a teacher. It is a very important scheme which has been in existence since the introduction of education course in teacher training certificates (T. T. C.) and Nigeria Certificate in Education (N. C. E.). These programmes make teaching practice compulsory and no candidate is awarded certificate in Education without teaching practice. The importance of teaching practice in Teacher Education programme cannot be overemphasized, it is the most important element in the professional training of teachers across the world (Moses, 2019). It is the crucial periods of translating theory into practice.

Teaching Practice is to prospective teachers as housemanship is to young medical doctor.

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Teaching practice exposes pre-service teachers to the actual practice of teaching, it is the time the pre-service teachers make use of all they have been taught about Teacher education into practice. During the teaching practice exercise, pre-service teachers have the opportunity to try the art of teaching before they actually get into the real world of the teaching profession. It is during the teaching practice exercise that student- teachers have the opportunity to try the art of teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession. Teaching practice provides pre-service teachers with the chance to express their personal educational philosophies, theories and understanding, hence, teaching practice creates an opportunity for pre-service teachers to experiment and test their knowledge and skills in the profession of teaching and learning with an understanding of their personal educational philosophies and theories. (Abongdia, Adu & Funcha, 2015).

During the teaching practice exercise, observation is an important component and it needs to be carefully planned. Observations can be in various forms, including the student-teacher observing a mentor teacher also known as cooperating teacher, the mentor observing the student, the supervisor observing the student-teacher or the student observing another student. As part of their first year of teaching practice, student teachers are required to observe teachers during class teaching. The purpose and nature of observation differs according to who participates in the observation process. Student teachers are required to observe classroom interaction during the lesson presentations, teaching and learning activities, maintenance of discipline, questioning and assessment, classroom management and control, teaching and learning strategies, and creation of a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning. Student-teachers are then expected to implement and apply what they observed. The role of a school-based mentor is to guide, support and ensure that students gain the necessary expertise during teaching practice (Morrow 2007 cited in Abongdia, Adu & Funcha, 2015)

Despite the importance and significance of teaching practice to teaching profession, pre-service teachers usually face some challenges while on the exercise, no wonder Perry (2012) argues that teaching practice creates a mixture of anticipation, anxiety, excitement and apprehension in the pre-service teachers, with this, one can say that teaching practice is not a bed of roses for the preservice teachers because they experience challenges, which in a way can hamper their abilities to derive maximum benefit from the exercise, and this, if not well taken care of, may lead to students loss of interest in the teaching profession.

Kihwele, & Mtandi, (2020) and Abongdia, Adu & Funcha (2015) state that some of the challenges faced by pre-service teachers during teaching-practice are geographical distance, low and uneven levels of teacher expertise, lack of resources as well as a lack of discipline among a cross-section of learners and educators, difficulty in managing and controlling classroom and difficulty the student-teachers encounter in getting the school of their choices. If these challenges are not properly addressed, they may affect the pre-service teachers negatively, It may affect their general performances during teaching practice as well as their perception of the teaching profession.

Furthermore, Emesini, Ugwu, Mbah and Ikpozu (2019) admit that student-teachers are faced with different challenges and that the challenges leave ugly trend much to be desired in teaching practice exercise. Emesini, Ugwu, Mbah and Ikpozu (2019), Aldabbus, (2020) states further that during the hands-on-practice exercise, pre-service teachers encounter challenges like inadequate finance, manpower shortage for supervision, transport facilities for mobilization among others. Again, lecturer related problems are also there like supervisor not taking time to brief their supervisees or to do proper supervision in addition to having so many students to observe at a short-given time. lack of instructional materials, low mastery of the subject matter lack of good methodology, inability to control classroom during the teaching, over familiarity with the students, lack of accommodation and office facilities for the student-teachers, too much of works at time is given to the student- teachers, lack of cooperation from their practicing schools, attitude of the pupils towards the student teachers and difficulty on the part of student teacher to manage his class effectively etc.

Meanwhile, despite the challenges student-teachers are facing, Wambugu, Barmao and Ng'eno (2013) suggest that it is expected of them to take teaching practice seriously and learn maximally from it. It is expected that teachers dedicate a lot of their time and effort towards the development and reinforcement of themselves through their creative thinking. With this ability, many professional challenges will be resolved. Hence, create in them positive attitudes towards teaching and development of their administrative skills. This means that student-teachers should focus on their duties and not allow the challenges during teaching practice to affect their productivity while in training, but it has been observed that some student-teachers were moved by these challenges, and if care is not taken, the challenges faced, may cause the student-teachers to develop poor attitudes to teaching, hence, making them not to develop in interest in the teaching profession.

Meanwhile, it was observed that many scholars had written on teaching practice and the challenges student-teachers faced during the process. Abongdia, Adu and Foncha, (2015) wrote on pre-service teachers' challenges during teaching practice in university; Aldabbus, (2020) studied the challenges encountered by student teachers in practicing teaching; Emesini, Ugwu, Mbah, and Ikpozu. (2019) discussed the challenges student-teachers face during teaching practice in Nigerian universities using Ebonyi State University; Abakaliki and Ado (2018) studied the attitude of students towards teaching practice exercise in Nigerian university; IKihwele and Mtandi (2020) studied the impact of teaching practice on pre-service teachers' pedagogical competencies in Tanzania; while Moses(2019) looked at the challenges of teaching practice exercise among student teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria. From the available literature, no scholar had studied the challenges face by student-teachers during teaching practice vis-à-vis its impacts on the students' interest in the teaching profession, therefore, this study examined the impact of the challenges faced by student-teachers on their interest in teaching profession.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that student-teachers faced a lot of challenges during teaching practice exercise. Some of these challenges include financial constraint, lack of accommodation, lack of

cooperation between cooperating teachers and student-teachers, taking other subjects other than student-teacher's discipline, disrespect from students and pupils, burden and difficulties of classroom management and fear of supervision, lack of finance for up keep, rejection of studentteachers by some schools and overload of work by cooperating teacher.to lack of instructional materials, low mastery of the subject matter, lack of good methodology, inability to control classroom during the teaching, over familiarity with the students, lack of office facilities for the student-teachers, lack of cooperation from their practicing schools, negative attitude of the pupils and students towards them and difficulty on the part of student teacher to manage his class effectively. Naturally these challenges may affect the attitude of student-teachers to teaching profession, hence, causing them to lose interest in the profession. Therefore, the study examined the impacts of the challenges student-teachers face during teaching practice exercise and these challenges affect their interest in teaching profession.

Research Purposes

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges of teaching practices exercise and their effects on student-teachers' interest in teaching profession. The specific purposes of this study include the following:

1. To investigate the challenges faced by Tai Solarin University of Education studentteachers during teaching practice exercise
2. To find out the attitudes of Tai Solarin University of Education student-teachers towards the challenges faced during teaching practice exercise
3. To find out the impact of the challenges faced by Tai Solarin University of Education Student-teachers during teaching practice exercise on their interest in teaching profession

Research Questions

1. What are the challenges faced by Tai Solarin University of Education student-teachers during the teaching practice?
2. What are the attitudes of Tai Solarin University of Education student-teachers towards the challenges faced during teaching practice exercise?
3. What are the impacts of the challenges faced by Tai Solarin University of Education student-teachers during teaching practice exercise on their interest in the teaching profession?

Hypothesis

Ho₁. There is no significant impact of challenges faced by Tai Solarin University of Education student-teachers during teaching practice on their interest in teaching profession

Research Methods

The design for this study is descriptive research design. Descriptive survey provides the opinion of the respondents on challenges that student-teachers faced during teaching practice exercise and the effects these challenges had on their interest in teaching profession. Population of the study was all the 2022/2023 400 level students of Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun

State, Nigeria. The sample of the study consisted 250 B.Ed final year students of College of Social and Management Sciences, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun. 50 respondents were randomly selected from each B.Ed programme in the college. These programmes were: Social Studies Education, Political Science Education, Economics Education, Geography Education and Transport and Planning Management. The instrument used for this study was designed by the researchers and it was titled "Challenges of Teaching Practice and Student-Teachers' Interest in Teaching Profession"(CTPSTITP). This instrument consisted of two sections; Section A and B. Section A sought to obtain personal information about the respondents such as name of college, gender and age. While Section B contained 25 items of statements on the challenges of teaching and interest of student-teachers in teaching profession. The scale was placed on a four-point (4) Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The scale was subjected to both face and content validity in which errors and mistakes were corrected and suggestions were integrated in the scale. The reliability of the instrument was tested by administering twenty copies of the instrument to a set of respondents in Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology. The data was subjected to statistical analysis using Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient and 0.725 was obtained which revealed that the items had high reliability value.

Research Question 1: What are the challenges faced by student-teachers?

Table 1: Challenges faced by Student-Teachers during Teaching Practice

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SD
	TOTAL				
1	Student-teachers spend so much money on transport 250 during teaching practice exercise 100%	90 36%	100 40%	40 16%	20 8%
2	Student-teachers face accommodation problem from 250 The school they have been posted 100%	90 36%	100 40%	30 12%	30 12%
3	Lack of cooperation between the cooperating teachers 250 and student-teachers 100%	100 40%	90 36%	40 16%	20 10%
4	Some student-teachers are assigned to subjects 250 different from their course of study 100%	100 40%	100 40%	30 12%	20 8%
5	School pupils or students do not respect student-teachers 250	60 24%	100 40%	50 20%	40 16%
		100%			

6	Burden and difficulties of classroom management 250	70	80	50	50
		28%	32%	20%	20%
		100%			
7	Fear of supervision was not regularly and uniformly done 250	70	80	50	50
		28%	32%	20%	20%
		100%			
8	Some of the teaching practice students lack finance for 250	80	70	50	50
	personal upkeep	32%	28%	20%	20%
	100%				
9	Some schools reject student teachers, and it is 250	100	90	40	20

	difficult to get another school 100%	40%	36%	16%	10%
10	Student teachers are overloaded with work by the cooperating 250 teachers, by been assigned some of their duties 100%	100	90	40	20
		40%	36%	16%	8%

Table 1 reveals that many student-teachers agreed and strongly agreed that they faced a lot of challenges during teaching practice exercise. Such challenges are financial (36% and 40%), accommodation (36% and 40%), lack of cooperation between cooperating teachers and studentteachers (40% and 36%), taking other subjects other than student-teacher's discipline (40% and 40%), disrespect from students and pupils (24% and 40%), burden and difficulties of classroom management (28% and 32%), fear of supervision (28% and 32%), lack of finance for up keep (32% and & 28%), rejection of student-teachers by some school (40% and 36%) and overload of work by cooperating teacher (40% and 36%).

Question 2: What are the attitudes of student-teachers towards the challenges faced during teaching practice exercise?

Table 2: Attitudes of Students-teachers towards the challenges faced during Teaching Practice Exercise

S/N	Questions	SA	A	D	SD
	TOTAL				
(%)					
11	Teaching more than one subject in teaching practice exercise 250 really affect me 100%	100	90	40	20
		40%	36%	16%	8%
12	I did not enjoy the work load of teaching and mentoring 250	80	100	40	30
		32%	40%	16%	12%
		100%			
13	Challenges I faced during teaching practice, hinder me from 250 mastering professional skills in teaching 100%	100	80	30	40
		40%	32%	12%	16%
14	The pain I experience during teaching practice is unbearable 250	80	100	50	20
		32%	40%	20%	8%
		100%			

15	I am intimidated by the negative attitudes of students or pupils 250	40% 70	130	30	20
		28% 100%	52%	12%	8%
16	I have phobia for supervision. I see my supervisors as as wicked examiners 250	100	30	20	20
		100%	40%	12%	8%
17	I see writing of lesson note as burden and pain 250	70	150	20	10
		28% 100%	60%	8%	4%
18	I see creation or improvisation of instructional materials as 250 as a big problem	90	90	40	30
		36% 100%	36%	16%	16%
19	Challenge of accommodation did really move me 250	90	100	40	20
		36% 100%	40%	16%	8%
20	Transportation is a big challenge among student-teachers 250	100	100	40	10
		40% 100%	40%	16%	4%

Table 2 reveals that students-teachers have negative attitude towards the challenges they faced during teaching practice exercise. It is revealed that student-teachers were strongly agreed and agreed that they were bothered with the teaching of more than one subject (40% and 36%), work load of teaching and mentoring (32% and 40%), negative attitudes of students and pupils they teach (28% and 52%), attitudes of supervisors (40% and 40%), writing of lesson note (28% and 60%), improvisation of instructional materials, challenges of accommodation and challenge of transportation (40% and 40%).

Question 3: What are the impacts of the challenges faced by student-teachers during teaching practice exercise on their interest in the teaching profession?

Table 3: Impacts of the Challenges faced during Teaching Practice on Student-Teachers' Interest in Teaching

<u>S/N</u>	<u>Questions</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>
	<u>TOTAL</u>				

21	Poor time management skills might result in stress and 250 burnout, making student teachers see teaching less attractive 100%	40% 70	150	20	10
22	Without proper mentorship or guidance from their cooperating 250 teacher, student-teachers may feel isolated which can dampen 100% their interest in teaching	28% 90	60%	8%	4%
23	Standing to teach for ours and marking of test and examination 250 scripts may be burdensome, hence makes one to lose interest 100% in teaching profession	36% 90	36%	16%	16%
24	Student teachers struggles to establish control and create a 250 positive learning environment especially in a large class, hence 100% it may lead to frustration and make one loses interest in a teaching career	100	90	30	30
25	Challenges faced during teaching and learning process may be 250 cumbersome, hence cause student-teachers to have low in 100% in the teaching profession	36% 100	12%	12%	
		40%	36%	8%	16%

Table 3 reveals that the challenges student-teachers faced during teaching practice affected their interest in the teaching profession. The student-teachers revealed that the challenges they encountered during teaching practice were so overwhelming, hence they got discouraged from going into teaching profession (40% and 36%)

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis₀₁: There is no significant impact of the challenges faced during teaching practice and the interest of student-teachers in teaching profession.

Table 4: Teaching Practice and Interest of Student-Teachers in Teaching Profession

O	E	O-E	(O-E)²	$\Sigma(O-E)^2/E$
12	18.9	-6.9	47.61	2.52
32	14.4	17.6	309.76	21.51
10	4.5	5.5	30.25	6.75
36	16.2	19.8	392.4	24.2

40%

30	44	-14	196	4.45
48	26.4	21.6	466.5	1.77
10	5.5	4.5	20.25	3.68
22	12.1	9.9	98.10	8.1
X2 Calculated =			72.95	72.95

Degree of freedom = $(R-1)(C-1)$
 $(2-1)(4-1)$
 $1 \times 3 = 3$

Level of significant = 0.05

Therefore, table value of X2 = 7.815

Chi – square calculated = 72.95

Interpretation

Since chi-square calculated is greater than the chi-square table $X^2 \text{ cal } 72.95 > X^2 \text{ tab } 7.815$. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis H_0 and accept the alternate hypothesis H_1 which states that “There is significant relationship between problem faced by student teacher during teaching practices and its effects on their interest in teaching profession”

40%

Discussion of the Results

The result reveals that the challenges student-teachers face during teaching practice are financial constraint, lack of accommodation, lack of cooperation between cooperating teachers and student-teachers, taking other subjects other than student-teacher's discipline, disrespect from students and pupils, burden and difficulties of classroom management and fear of supervision, lack of finance for up keep, rejection of student-teachers by some schools and overload of work by cooperating teacher. These findings are in line with Abongdia, Adu and Foncha (2015) who affirmed that student-teachers faced challenges during teaching practice exercise and that some of the challenges were challenges of controlling the class and difficulties in selecting appropriate method of teaching. Also, Kihwele and Mtandi (2020) confirmed that inadequacy of single assessment, poor mentor-novice teacher relationship, and reduction in actual teaching time by frequent interruption were some of the challenges faced by student-teachers. Moreso, Ugwu, Mbah and Ikpozu (2019) in a research they carried out in Ebonyi found out that inadequate funds, poor road networks and supervision are some of the challenges student teachers face during teaching practice. Aldabbus (2020) also supports that lack of cooperation between the student -teachers and school principal and cooperative teachers, lack of confidence, lack of classroom management skills, little guidance, and support from the part of the supervisors.

The findings of this study also revealed that student-teachers have poor attitudes towards teaching practice exercise despite that it is a compulsory course they have to pass as teachers in training. It was revealed that these poor attitudes put up by student-teachers towards teaching practice exercise were caused based on the challenges they faced during the exercise. The results showed that the student teachers' perceptions towards teaching practice assessment were favorable. This finding corroborates the findings of Ikitde and Ado (2016) who state that studentteachers had negative attitude towards teaching practice. The result also indicated a significant difference in performance of student teachers' based on their attitude while a non-significant difference existed between male and female student teachers given their attitude. Moreso, the result is line with the result of Olatunde-Aiyedun (2021) who states that student-teachers had negative attitude towards teaching practice and that there is a significant difference in performance of student teachers' based on their attitude while a non-significant difference existed between male and female student teachers given their attitude. Meanwhile, finding is against the findings of Wambugu, Barmao, Ng'eno (2013), who found out that student-teachers in Egerton University had favourable attitudes towards teaching practice exercise. Their findings also indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in the student-teachers' perceptions of teaching practice exercise by area of specialization.

40%

Furthermore, the result of this study revealed that some student-teachers lost interest in teaching profession because of the challenges they face during teaching practice exercise. CareCheck (2024) supports this by attesting that teaching profession is a career that is highly demanding with constant pressure on the teachers to produce great results, hence it is not uncommon for teachers to experience stress and burnout. It has been discovered that constant stress and burnout may lead to low morale in the profession. Despite the challenges faced during teaching practice exercise, the fact remains that student-teachers must undergo the exercise as a compulsory course before graduating, the need to endure the challenges during the exercise. Losing interest in the teaching profession is not the solution to the challenges faced during teaching practice, but looking for means to overcome the challenges in order to enjoy the profession should be the paramount interest of the student-teachers. Career Guide (2022) is of the opinion that learning about the challenges one might encounter in a career and how to handle them are very important because they would help one to become a more successful member of the teaching staff. For teachers to be highly successful in their career, CareCheck (2024) advised that they should seek mentorship, plan ahead, engage students with enthusiasm, seek feedback from colleagues and students and have continuous learning.

Conclusion

The study investigated the impact of the challenges faced during teaching practice by 2022/2023 B.Ed final year students in the College of Social and Management Sciences, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State, Nigeria; and the impacts these challenges have on their interest in the teaching profession. The study revealed that there were many challenges faced by students-teachers during teaching practice. These were financial constraint, lack of accommodation, lack of cooperation between cooperating teachers and student-teachers, taking other subjects other than student-teacher's discipline, disrespect from students and pupils, burden and difficulties of classroom management and fear of supervision, lack of finance for up keep, rejection of student-teachers by some schools and overload of work by cooperating teacher. This study also revealed that student-teachers had poor attitude towards the challenges they face during teaching practice period. It was also revealed that many student-teachers lost interest in the teaching profession because of the challenges they faced during teaching practice exercise.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

1. Teaching Practice Board of Universities, during teaching practice orientation, should not only enlighten the B.Ed students preparing to go for teaching practice on the nitty gritty of the exercise, students are to be also enlightened

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- on the challenges they may face during the exercise, and how to overcome them.
2. Student-teachers should be determined to love the teaching profession, as many of them may eventually become teachers as they were trained to become teachers in school.
 3. Potential student-teachers should learn more about the challenges they may face during teaching practice, and also learn how to overcome them, they have no choice but to do teaching practice since it is a compulsory course for all pre-service teachers.
 4. Student-teachers are to seek mentorship, they should not feel too big to learn from all teachers, not only their cooperating teachers. This will help them to conquer all the challenges associated with pedagogy.
 5. Student-teachers are also advised to engage their students or pupils with enthusiasm and serve good role models for them.
 6. Student-teachers are to always develop themselves as they need continuous learning to be successful in the profession.

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