

Student Teachers' Attitude towards Teaching Practice

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Abstract:

The study was guided by three research questions and two hypotheses. The survey design was adopted for the study. A sample of 163 student teachers constituted the study. A questionnaire tagged Student Teachers Attitude Questionnaire (STAQ) was used to collect data on the attitude of student teachers while performance of student teachers were secondary data obtained from teaching practice coordinator of the Institute of Education. The data collected were analysed using weighted mean, mean and standard deviation, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test statistics. The result indicated that on the overall, student teachers 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. In view of this, it was recommended that the University of Uyo should ensure that all student teachers are properly groomed in all teaching and pedagogy courses before proceeding on teaching practice.

Keywords:

Teaching Practice, Student Teachers, Attitude

Introduction

Teaching being a dynamic profession requires an optimistic attitude and certain specific qualities from its practitioners. Teachers' skills and expertise depends on the attitude they possess for the career. The positive attitude helps teacher to develop an all-inclusive learners' friendly environment not just in the four walls of the classroom but in outdoor learning as well (Aiyedun, 2020). Teaching Practice (TP) is a situation where a student teacher is given the opportunity experience the actual teaching and learning through training from qualified and experienced teachers so as to prepare them for the real world teaching profession: Teaching practice assesses and measures the level of student's suitability for the teaching profession. The mix-feelings of students' teachers also arise as a result of the geographical distance, low and uneven level of teacher expertise, and nonpayment of any sort of allowance, desirable attitude or behaviour from supervising teachers in the school. Student teachers tend to have different attitude during and after teaching practice. They tend to respond either positively or negatively to the situation. Maliki (2013) opined that individual's attitudes toward their profession have an effect on their performance and it affects their competence and achievement. Attitude is an important attribute towards any profession. This is why Maliki (2013) stated that the belief someone has about any particular job determined the success of that person in the profession (Ikitde& Ado, 2015).

Teaching practice is recognised as important aspect of teacher education programme in teacher education institutions worldwide, including Nigeria, under increasing pressure to prepare their student teachers better for the actual world of teaching. The teaching practice,

therefore, provides an avenue by which this expectation may be addressed. Teaching practice offers student teachers the opportunity to learn the basic skills of teaching and put their hitherto acquired knowledge into actual practice (Jekayinfa, 2012; Orji, 2018). The exercise allows student teachers to familiar with educational ethics, and the rules and regulations guiding the practice of education as a professional career. Through the teaching practice exercise, student teachers interact with workload, classroom management, permanent teaching staff and non-teaching staff, school environment, administration and other students in the practice school.

The student teaching program at any higher institution is a well-structured programme designed to provide an opportunity to develop and evaluate aspiring teachers' competence in an actual classroom within school settings. Aglazor (2011) noted that field-based experiences such as study abroad and student teaching are intended to bridge theory and practice. The teaching practice exercise is the culminating point where university supervisor and external examiner determine the quality of teaching and learning of aspiring teacher.

Aspiring teachers are expected to pair with competent and knowledgeable teachers during six weeks or more than six weeks of teaching practice exercise. This will help them to assume the full range of duties of a teacher during this training period. Host teachers are equally vital to influence the aspiring teachers' professional growth and development (Aglazor, 2011). According to National Universities Commission (2017) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (2015), the following sets of objectives have been established for why teaching practice is a mandatory component of teacher training: to expose student-teachers to real life classroom experiences under the supervision of professional teachers; to provide the forum for student-teachers to translate educational theories and principles into practice; to enable student-teachers discover their own strengths and weaknesses in classroom teaching and provide opportunities to enable them address their weaknesses and enrich their strengths; to familiarize student-teachers with real school environment as their future work place; to provide student-teachers with an opportunity for further acquisition of professional skills, competencies, personal characteristics and experience for full-time teaching after graduation, to help student-teachers develop a positive attitude towards the teaching profession; to serve as a means of assessing the quality of training being provided by teacher training institutions (Oyedepi & Oke, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Teaching Practice (TP) is fundamental and an age long practice for success in any area of teacher education. It affords the student teachers the opportunity to plan, teach and evaluate, and practice the art of teaching. However, as old as it is and with the new trend in teaching, there are serious challenges affecting the effectiveness of TP exercise. One of which is that student teachers often seems to be mainly concerned and interested in the evaluation (grade) aspect. Hence, the tendency to put up a good performance in the presence of the supervisor, the display and usage of teaching material, chalkboard, diagrams and sketches. All in a bid to obtain good grades while the reverse is almost the case when they are not under supervision. The question now is "how ready (mentally) are they to put what they have learnt into practice when they finally go into full-time teaching"? The aftermath is that there will be unemployable teachers who will deform the students instead of informing them. It has, therefore, become imperative that the paper examined the place of teaching practice in Nigerian universities.

Notably, they lack good proficiency, subject mastery after graduation among others. This necessitated the research work into the attitude of student teachers towards teaching practice exercise in the university.

Purpose of the Study

The study is aimed at determining the attitude of student teachers towards teaching practice and how it affects their performance. The study specifically determined the following objectives:

1. Determine the attitude of student teachers towards the teaching practice exercise in the University of Uyo;
2. Find the difference between male and female student teachers performance given their attitude

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study the following research questions were raised.

1. What is the attitude of student teachers towards the teaching practice exercise in University of Abuja?
2. What difference exist between male and female student teachers' attitude in University of Abuja?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and will be tested at 0.05 level of significant:

Ho1. There is no significant difference in the attitude student teachers in University of Abuja.

Ho2. There is no significant difference between male and female student teachers attitude in University of Abuja.

Review of Related Literature

The Importance of Teaching Practice in Education

There is no doubt that education is an inevitable tool for sustainable development (Ekpo&Aiyedun, 2017) and a means for advancing the frontier of knowledge. In this manner, education is severally conceived and inculcated by people of varying ages, cultures, tribes and ages for sustainable development. The potency of education is more evident in its globalization trends imbued with instrumental values of nurturing productive citizens for sustainable development and democracy. For more than century, education has been recognized as a process of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes to the learners. The effectiveness of any educational system depends greatly on the educational attainment of teachers because no system of education can be qualitatively higher than the quality and commitment of its teachers (Oyedeji&Oke, 2020).

The policy states that teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development because no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). Teaching practice is of great importance in teacher education programme. It is a component of training leading to the award of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), Bachelor degree in Education (B. Sc. (Ed) or B.Ed.) and Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) in Nigeria (Oyedeji&Oke, 2020).

A meaningful teaching practice is expected to include microteaching and field teaching experiences (Amuda, 2017). This kind of experiences will help the teaching practice students to acquire knowledge and skill in coping with classroom situation after their graduation. As part of the package, teaching practice is allocated specific period of time during which student teachers are sometime posted to schools to teach and demonstrate in practical terms the knowledge and skills they had acquired during the third or fourth years of training while some universities usually require their students to choose the school of their choice.

These student teachers are required to submit their chosen schools with the address of the schools and time table to teaching practice coordinator for supervision. As soon as they are reported to teaching practice coordinator, they are expected to go back to their posted or chosen schools and teach based on their areas of specialization. Student teachers are expected to stay in their practice schools from official opening time to closing time within the six weeks. Although, Federal Colleges of Education in Nigeria usually do their teaching practice in 12 or 13 weeks but the system has now substitute to a complete term that is in the first semester of the 300 level of NCE programme (Amuda, 2017). Teaching practice is a compulsory course for all aspiring teachers registered in a teacher preparation programme in Nigeria. Teaching practice exercise is like housemanship in Medicine and Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) for engineers and Court Attachment for Lawyers (Nnenna and Olanrewaju, 2015).

Problems of Teaching Practice

Ekundayo, Alonge, Kolawole and Ekundayo (2014) submitted that there a lot of obstacles facing the aspiring teachers in the course of carrying out their official exercise and this seems to affect the attitude of the student teachers. The researchers added that those obstacles can be categorized into three, namely: practising school related problems; institutions related problems and student-teachers related problems where financial constraint appears as one of the student-teachers related problems. Ajani-Adeigbe, Abiodun-Oyebanji, Akinwumi and Akinyemi (2018) found no significant difference in financial challenges faced by student teachers during teaching practice exercise between student-teachers from the University of Ibadan and the Emmanuel Alayande College of Education.

The fact remains that teaching and learning effectiveness depend on quality and quantity teachers because there can be no meaningful socio-economic and political development in any country without teachers. Ajani-Adeigbe et al. (2018) revealed that student teachers are less effective in the area of comportment and interpersonal relationship in their respective teaching practice schools. It is on teachers' numbers, quality, commitment and dedication that determine the effectiveness of all educational level, development and growth. Even the educational planners may have the best educational policies and designs, the government may vote the largest sum of its revenue to education, but the ultimate realization of any set of aims for education depends on the teachers. Therefore, it is the teachers who will ultimately be responsible for translating policies into actions and principles into practices while interacting with their students in the classroom setting.

Attitude to Educational Profession

Flores (2017) defines attitude as one's predisposition, or one's tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, or situation. Attitude influences an individual's choice of action, and responses to challenges, incentives, and rewards (together

called stimuli). Four major components of attitude include:

1. Affective; This refers to emotions or feelings;
2. Cognitive: this involves beliefs or opinions held consciously;
3. Conative: This is inclination for action, and
4. Evaluative: Positive or negative response to stimuli.

Attitude forms a fundamental framework for students' meaningful way of thinking and their representations about climate change (Flores, 2017). Shah, Mahmood and Harrison (2013) further classified attitude to educational profession into four major areas, i.e. (a) attitude towards the profession; (b) nature of the profession; (c) professional career interests; and (d) scientific attitude. Positive attitude towards science motivates learners to study science and choose careers in science (Rosink, 2012). It is therefore important to see how this teaching profession affects student teachers' willingness to take an active role in teaching and learning. According to Soomro, Qaisrani and Uqaili (2011), student teachers' attitude towards teaching affects their students effectiveness in the classroom and the TP students' positive or negative attitude has an impact on their future careers.

Gender Effect of Student Teachers towards Teaching Practice

This also casts a fruitful effect on learning of the students. Attitude being a social construct is influenced by many factors like gender social strata, age, stream of education and previous experience of the job. What bearing the gender and stream of education has on the attitude of student teachers towards teaching profession to throw light on this a study was conducted using a readymade tool. Study of different categories like Non-tribal male and female science stream, nontribal male and female social science stream, Tribal male and female science stream, Tribal male and female social science stream was undertaken. In a sample of hundred students ninety six students responded. The mean scores were considered and t-value was calculated to find the difference in the attitude of different categories towards teaching profession (Bhargava & Pathy, 2014).

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of all teaching practice students for the 2020 contact session in the Institute of Education sent to fifty four secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The random sampling technique was used to select 20 schools. This gave a sample of 600 teaching practice student. An attitude questionnaire titled Students Teacher Attitude Questionnaire (STAQ) was developed and adopted for the study. It had two sections; Section A had items on demographic data of the respondents, while Section B comprises of 10 items. Section B was to illicit information on attitude of student teachers towards the teaching practice exercise. It was a four-point Likert type scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and strongly Disagree (SD). Six hundred (600) students were sampled. The research instrument used for data collection was a 30 structured questionnaire items rated on a 4-point Likert scale, with response options of Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); and Strongly Disagree (SD). Mean scores ranging from 1.00-1.75 were interpreted as "strongly disagree", 1.76-2.50 "disagree", 2.51-3.25 "agree", and 3.26-4.00 "strongly agree". The responses of the respondents were presented in simple statistical table and analyzed using Mean (\bar{x}), Standard Deviation and Variance while t-test was used to test the hypotheses, generated at 0.05 level of significance.

The collected data from the questionnaire and performance from the coordinator were analysed using weight mean, t-test; and the analysis of variance. Mean response of 2.5 and above were considered positive while below 2.5 were considered negation in the response of the STAQ.

Study Area

The Institute of Education organises it in compliance with the rules of the senate of the University and the National University Commission (NUC). For all first-degree students in the Institute of Education, the programme is in two phases of six weeks each which normally takes place after the second semester's examination of the students' second year and third year in the University. The Institute of Education begins the preparation by writing letter to secondary schools seeking their consent to send students about going to teaching practice. The feedback from the schools would enabled the Institute of Education properly allocate the number of students teachers per school. A coordinator assisted by other members of the Institute staff ensures that the teaching practice exercise is successful. Students teachers are expected take certain courses before going for teaching practice. These courses, such as educational technology, special methods and micro teaching as well as other related courses are organized in order to give perfection to the teaching assignment of the student teachers. Student teachers are given log book when proceeding to the school they are posted. This book is expected to be given to the supervisory teacher the student teacher is attached to work with, in order to assess him/her. The book is also given to the lecturers who are supervisors of the student teachers from the Institute of Education. Student teachers are supposed to be supervised at least twice (in each teaching practicing session). The principal of the school is later given the booklet to assess the student teachers. Finally, the Teaching Practice (TP) Coordinator and few support staffs check and ascertain if the student had been properly monitored. The lecturers supervising students are also given teaching practice evaluation form by the TP coordinator for assessing the students. The form requires personal information of each student teacher (name, registration number, programme/course, department, level of study), name of school of practice and date of supervision. The student teachers are expected to be evaluated according to lesson planning/notes, lesson delivery, management and assessment of learning, instructional materials and personal qualities. A period during and after teaching practice creates mix-feelings in the minds of the students teachers. Some have the feeling of nostalgia while others complain of the challenges they face having under gone the rigorous movement from where they are posted to the university campus for either registration, payment of fees, just to mention some.

Results

The data collected were analyzed based on the research questions and the hypotheses earlier stated.

Research Question 1: What is the attitude of student teachers towards the teaching practice exercise in University of Abuja?

Table 1 Weighted Mean of Responses of Student Teachers on the Organization of Teaching Practice in the University of Uyo.

S/N		Mean(\bar{x})	Std. D	Remark
	Teaching Practice exercise is an important part of my education programme	3.5758	.63804	PA
	Micro-teaching in the University should substitute teaching practice	3.2121	.20833	NA
	Students teachers are adequately prepared for the challenges they face during teaching practice	3.6061	.66136	NA
	The provision of log book for student teachers progress report during teaching practice exercise is appropriate	3.3636	.44147	NA
	The assessment pattern of student teachers on teaching practice is appropriate	3.5455	.61384	PA
	The posting of student teachings by the University is appropriate	2.8182	.59203	PA
	The time allotted for the teaching practice exercise is not appropriate for students	3.6970	.72684	PA
	Student teachers are not comfortable with writing lesson note is easy and understandable	3.7576	.76740	PA
	The teaching practice programme of the University exposed student teachers to the realities of the profession.	3.3030	.36647	PA
	I do not like the school where I did my teaching practice	2.4242	.86284	NA
	The assistance teacher did not assist me during my teaching practice	2.4242	.86284	NA
	Attitude of low esteem feeling from the students they taught	3.1818	.11446	NA

NA - Negative Attitude

PA - Positive Attitude

Table 2: Data Analysis of Students Attitude to ATS

Scale Statistics			
Grand Mean (\bar{x})	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
3.1687	0.5887	0.5087	30

Source: Research Survey 2021

Table 2 revealed the opinion of students after being expose to pretest and posttest; the 30 questionnaire items were mostly agreed upon with overall means (\bar{x}) of 3.2 and Standard deviation of 0.51. The variance was 0.59 which is indicated to be low. This means that data points are generally similar and do not vary widely from the mean. This result showed that most of the respondents agreed that Animation Teaching Strategy creates a positive attitude to climate change.

As shown in table 1, students teachers attitude towards items 1,3,4,6 and 10 indicated negative while their attitude towards items 2,5,7,8, and 9 were positive. On the overall

organization, the students' attitude was negative.

Research Question 2: What difference exist between male and female student teachers' attitude in University of Abuja?

Table 3 Mean and Standard Deviation of Students' Performance Based on their Attitude

Table 3: Data Analysis of Male and Female Students Attitude to ATS

Gender	Number of Students	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Deviation	Variance
Male Students	190	21.7	8.6	5.32
Female Students	320	94.7	29.16	9.94
Total	600			

Source: Research Survey 2021

From Table 3 revealed the opinion of male and female students after being expose to pretest and posttest; the 30 questionnaire items were mostly agreed upon by the female students with overall means (\bar{x}) of 94.7 and Standard deviation of 29.16 and a Variance of 9.94. The male students also agreed to the statement with overall mean (\bar{x}) of 21.7, Standard deviation of 8.6 and a Variance of 5.32.

As presented in table 2, student teachers having positive attitude had a mean of 61.75 while those having negative attitude had a mean of 58.55. This indicates that those with positive attitude performed better than those with negative attitude.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1

Ho1. There is no significant difference in the attitude student teachers in University of Abuja.

Table 4 t-test Analysis of Student Teachers' Performance Based on their Attitude

Table 4: T-test on Significant Difference in Mean Attitude Scores

Descriptive Statistics							
Gender	Number of Students	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Deviation	Variance	T-cal	T-crit	Decision
ATS	220	51.7	10.8	7.32	0.3732	2.66	Significant
CTM	380	73.6	17.19	9.79			
Total	600						

Decision Criterion: Reject Ho if $p < 0.05$

Results in table 4 shows that $t_{cal} (0.3732) > t_{crit} (0.2660)$ at $p < 0.05$ significant level for two-tailed direction. This implies that the formulated null hypothesis one which states that there is no significant difference in the mean attitude scores of students taught climate change with animation strategy than those taught with conventional teaching method is rejected. Meaning that students attitude is positively enhanced when exposed to ATS.

Table 4 showed that the calculated probability value (.005) is less than the declared probability value (.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there exist significant differences in the performance of student teachers based on their attitude. H02: There is no significant difference between male and female student teachers performance

given their attitude. Table 5 Analysis of Variance of Male and Female Student Teachers' Performance Given their Attitude

Hypothesis 2

Ho2. There is no significant difference between male and female student teachers attitude in University of Abuja.

Table 5 t-test Analysis of Student Teachers' Attitude Based on Gender

Table 5: T-test on Significant Difference of Male and Female in Mean Attitude Scores

Descriptive Statistics							
Gender	Number of Students	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Deviation	Variance	T-cal	T-crit	Decision
Male	190	21.7	8.6	5.32	0.2324	2.25	Not Significant
Female	320	94.7	29.16	9.94			
Total	600						

Decision Criterion: Reject Ho if $p < 0.05$

Results in table 4 shows that tcal (0.2324) < tcrit (0.2550) at $p > 0.05$ significant level for two-tailed direction. This implies that the formulated null hypothesis two which states that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female students taught climate change with animation teaching strategy is accepted. Meaning that both male and female students' attitude to climate change are positively enhanced when exposed to ATS.

Table 5 revealed that the calculated probability value (.127) for gender is greater than the declared probability level (.05). Therefore the null hypothesis is retained. This implies that there is no significant difference between male and female student teacher performance given their attitude

Discussion of Findings

Attitudes are considered important predictors of behaviours. It is, therefore, essential to understand student teachers' attitudes and the factors influencing them in order to provide opportunities for desired behaviours in the classroom.

Student teachers attitude towards teaching practice exercise was found to be negative on the overall. This can be attributed to the attitude of student teachers in terms of preparation for the exercise as seen from the result in table 1. The study is in line with Ajayi (2010), who stated that assessment of teachers' attitude, proficiency and effectiveness in the primary and post primary institutions today suggests the abysmal state of teachers' preparation in our training institutions. Student teachers, in the phase of lack of model teaching practice laboratory in training institution would definitely result in their training having negative effect on their attitude thereby affect their efficiency in transiting from theory to practical. This is in line with Ahmed, Said, Zeb, Shihatullah, Rehman (2013), who stated that teachers with positive attitude affect their ability, results in positive approach to teaching thereby enhance the performance of the teacher. The findings of the study also indicated that male student teachers performed better than their female counterparts, though not significant. The result indicates the contrary of what is believed of female teachers having passion for

teaching than males therefore performing better than males. This could be attributed to males being serious with the teaching profession because it is the profession that a greater percentage of persons are employed looking at their performance.

Conclusion, Implication of the Study

From the data collected and analysed, the discussions, the literature reviewed and the findings of the study, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions about the study.

The study found that students teacher attitude on the overall was negative. It was also found that teachers with positive attitude performed significantly better than those with negative attitude. This indicated that teacher having positive attitude were more motivated and had self-competence that enable them performed better. Finally, the study found no significant difference between male and female student teachers given their attitude though male performed better.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, discussions and conclusion from this paper, the following recommendations are made:

1. Institute of Education, University of Uyo should ensure that all student teachers are properly groomed in all teaching and pedagogy courses before proceeding on teaching practice.
2. All group of teaching practice students should undertake all courses that would assist them in their practice such as micro teaching guide before proceeding on teaching practice
3. The University of Uyo should allow student teachers choose where they are to be posted within the zone designated for the practice; this would to some extent alleviate the suffering of student thereby enhancing their attitude towards the exercise.
4. The university should endeavor to also ensure that practicing student teachers to be paid as those students who go on Industrial Attachment SIWES.

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