

Teaching Practice Supervision and Student Teachers' Skills Acquisition in Government Teacher Training Colleges in South West Region of Cameroon

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of teaching practice supervision on student teachers' skills acquisition in government teachers training colleges in South West Region of Cameroon. The research design for this study was survey. The target population of this study was 887 students and teachers of government teacher training colleges that are functioning effectively in the South West Region of Cameroon. The accessible population of this study was drawn from five teacher training colleges consisting of 285 class three students and 167 teachers teaching class three. The sample size of this study was 90; comprising of 80 students and 10 teachers. The simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the sample size. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaire for students and interview guide for cooperating teachers. Data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Data from student teacher questionnaire were analysed using Pearson's product moment while thematic analysis was used to analyse data collected from the interview guide. The findings revealed that cooperating teachers have an influence on student teachers' skill acquisition in teacher training colleges. It also shows that supervisors have a positive influence on student teachers' skills acquisition in government teacher training colleges in South West Region of Cameroon. Finally, it was also noticed that student peers have a positive influence on student teachers' skills acquisition in teacher training colleges in South West Region of Cameroon. Based on the above findings, it was recommended that, cooperating teachers should always organise pre- and post-conferences. Also, it was recommended that the government school principals and the Regional Inspectors should organise regular seminars/workshops to train teachers of their role as cooperating teachers. Lastly, it was recommended that seminar/workshop should be organised for the supervisors before they go for teaching practice supervision.

Key Words: Student-Teacher, Cooperating Teacher, Supervisor and Skills Acquisition.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching practice is a period that a student teacher spends teaching at a school as part of his or her training, that is, a temporary period of teaching in a school undertaken under supervision by a person who is under training to become a teacher. According to the University of Botswana teaching practice handbook (2011, p. 6) "the primary aim of teaching practice is to assist the student teacher to develop competencies, personal characteristics, understanding, knowledge and skills needed by a professional teacher. A skill can be defined as the technique or ability to do something well while skill acquisition is the art of learning to do something in order to earn a living and or to survive.

For any student undergoing a professional course in education, teaching practice is inevitable. It is that aspect of the student-teacher's professional training programme during which they are exposed to the real school and classroom situation in order to help them develop their skills in the act of teaching. Teaching practice is designed to give the student-teachers an opportunity to put into practice, the theories relating to the principles and practice of education, which they have learnt (Oluwafemi, 2010). It is also a basic professional requirement, the un-fulfillment of which the student-teacher cannot qualify as a teacher. It is therefore necessary that due attention is given to it. In teacher training colleges, teaching practice is done every year. The teaching practice that is done at the first year is the prerequisite for that which is taken in the next year. This teaching practice courses are compulsory and a student cannot graduate without validating them. The cooperating schools are supposed to train student-teachers in all aspects of the teaching profession including preparing, teaching and evaluating lessons, administering and scoring teacher made tests, filling students' progress report cards, and

actively participating in all co-curricular activities. This exercise usually runs concurrently with lectures in the teacher training colleges. So, these colleges rely heavily on the effective collaboration from the cooperating schools in taking adequate measures to accommodate this situation.

According to Oluwafemi (2010) and Al-magableh,(2010) , the student-teacher should not just go through the process of teaching practice, teaching practice should also go through the student-teacher such that its aims and objectives are achieved rather than defeated. The student-teacher is also regarded as part of the school system and thus expected to participate in all teaching activities within the school system mentioned above until the expiration of the exercise that usually last for about eight to ten weeks. Teaching practice exposes the student-teacher to the real school and class situation where she/he acquires some practical experiences in the art of teaching, as well as get adapted or acquainted with the social settings of the institution. Although, the primary concern is passing useful educational knowledge over to the students using every achievable means until learning takes place in them, they still have to participate in all teaching activities within the school system. Since teaching practice has academic, social and personality effects on student teachers, the main idea that underlines this study of teaching practice is the truism that teaching skills are acquired and developed by both practice and reflection and that this process is continuous from the student-teacher gaining their initiation, to the mature teacher setting him / herself new and more sophisticated teaching objectives (Oluwafemi, 2010 & Al-magableh, 2010).

The key players in the teaching learning process are; cooperating teachers in primary schools, GTTC supervisors and teaching partners(peers). Exploring the perspectives of students and cooperating teachers who are affected by student-teaching would help us better conceptualize the practicum process and provide insights into achieving more transparent, consistent and sustainable training standards. The cooperating teachers' perspectives could prove to be instrumental to help teachers make the transition between the work in faculty classrooms and work as a full-fledged independent teacher. Student-teaching is a highly regarded activity in teacher education, and there exists today considerable support for the assertion that the quality of the student-teaching experience depends largely on the professional abilities and attitudes of the cooperating teachers (Lane, et al, 2003). The problems experienced during student teaching may influence the development and professional qualifications of student-teachers and also result to the overall success of student teaching. Therefore, it is not surprising to notice that research related to student teaching focus largely on the possible problems student-teachers encounter and perceptions of student-teachers on the process (Al-magableh,2010).

There are various models of educational supervision such as clinical, peer coaching, and developmental supervision. Clinical supervision is a therapeutic process which aims to improve professional competency among clients. The pioneer of this model Goldhammer (1969), and Cogan (1973) defined supervision as an ongoing process where the most experienced therapist will guide his or her less experienced supervisee. James and Massiah (2019) also found clinical supervision as time-consuming, teachers' lack of training and competence, and distrust. Peer coaching supervision involves two or more professional colleagues who collaborate together to reflect their classroom practices and solve the problem that occurs by guiding each another and sharing ideas that facilitate in developing new skills (Robbins, 1991). Or collaboration between student teachers through the process of observing each other teaching and then giving him or her feedback.

Developmental supervision aims to support teachers to become autonomous in their educational practice. However, this is not applicable for all teachers as their developmental level; personal and professional skills may vary. The approach should be adapted based on the teacher's needs (Brunelle et al., 1988). In another study, Brunelle et al. (1988) categorize teachers into four types: First, teachers who are dependent on their supervisor and want to be directed on what they should do to solve the problem; second, teachers who prefer to collaborate with their supervisor in overcoming the problem; third, teachers who take their supervisors as theoretical resources to solve the problem; finally, teachers who prefer to enhance their teaching on their own through their experiences. This shows that individual teacher's needs are different. These differences occur as teachers' experiences vary which entails different levels of professional development needed in directing them (Glickman et al., 2001). In developmental supervision, the supervisor uses directive assistance when the teachers have low developmental level, expertise, and commitment like trainees. Supervisor is responsible in solving problems faced by the teachers. Teachers who are at moderate level of development, expertise, and commitment are complemented with collaborative assistance. In collaborative approach, teachers and supervisors work as a team in solving problems. Nondirective approach is suitable for teachers who are functioning at high level of developmental level and commitment to teaching. Teachers who can find solutions to the problems that they face in their teaching will experience this type of assistance. Hence, the supervisory goals should increase teachers' abilities which lead them to develop their thoughts in higher level (Glickman, 1990). Developmental supervision encourages teachers to reflect their teaching for self-improvement (Glickman, 1981, 1990). Similarly, Glickman et al. (2001) claimed that this model known as developmental model utilizes collaborative, nondirective, and directive approaches that depend on individual teacher's developmental levels. Glickman et al. (2001) also defined developmental model as "the match of initial supervisory approach with the teacher or group's developmental levels, expertise, and commitment" (p. 190).

Strieker et al. (2016) in their studies reported the evidences of equal engagement in directive, the collaborative, and the nondirective approach which were inherently more collegial.

In general, it is true in many contexts where teachers around the world have the perceptions that classroom observations can cause stress, discomfort, and nervousness (Aubusson et al., 2007; Borich, 2008). Besides, even though the main purpose of classroom observation is to develop teachers' professional growth, in real, it is more on evaluating than developing (Shah & Al Harthi, 2014). It is considered incompetent and threatening as it is more to subjective, judgmental, and imprecise (Mercer, 2006). Besides, school supervision is not well developed in Cameroon. Principals as supervisors tend to ignore their role as educational supervisors (Nek et al., 2000). Besides, school management teams do not pay much attention toward supervision (Suseela, 2007). Lack of attention can cause severe impact to the entire practice of supervision as it can influence the teachers, students, and the school as well. The comparative study by Izham et al. (2013) found that teachers were not really satisfied with the supervision practices carried out in secondary schools in Kuala Lumpur. As they are not satisfied, it can affect their work performance too. Sharma et al. (2011) also found that the process of supervision is not carried out efficiently in three Asian countries including Malaysia. It is proven through teachers' responses where they claimed that supervisors are more intent to find their faults than help them improve their performances. Moreover, they felt they are being insulted as they do not agree with the way supervision is conducted. In another study, Mohd Zaki (2001) found that principals ignore their task to supervise the teachers and if they do so their approach is more hierarchical, bureaucratic, and autocratic. Even though the role of supervision has moved from evaluating teachers' ability to providing support and encouragement for improvement, it is still superficial that teacher can improve their performance through supervision.

Teachers in school may have different perceptions on their supervisor's technique used to improve their instructional supervision. This is due to the teachers' developmental level, expertise, and commitment. This can influence their attitude toward supervision that they experience which ultimately influences their performance. Supervisors are there to develop the intention of supervision by applying different approaches and strategies on different teachers. This is because teachers as adult learners may vary in terms of their backgrounds, experiences gained, abilities, and level of concern for others (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000; Glickman et al., 1998). A recent study in Malaysia shows mixed result in which knowledge and technical skills of teachers are found related to positive attitude to supervision, while interpersonal skills were the barriers (Khun-inkeeree et al., 2019). Thus, it is important to link supervision to evaluation into a seamless process to be more effective (Hvidston et al., 2019).

Some supervisors attitude toward supervision most of the time is moderate and they see the process of supervision as inspection rather than a collaborative process. Student -teachers prefer to be observed, and have consultation with their supervisors to get feedback to improve their teaching usually through the process of pre and post conferences. Some of the supervisees are usually very happy when their supervisors don't supervise them. Most supervisors go for supervision only once. In addition, some of the cooperating teachers especially in the private schools are not trained. Some of the student teachers usually complain of financial constraints in terms of transportation to their cooperating schools and as a result do not go there frequently as required. The student teachers are usually found rejoicing, at the end of the exercise having gone through the rigours process of teaching practice successfully, but their remarks usually make it look like a burden than a gainful exercise. Whereas, teaching practice is meant to help them cultivate good teaching habits and hence lifelong teaching skills.

The major question now is, are these trainees ready mentally and psychologically prepared? That is, do they acquire all the paedopsychological skills that they are expected to learn during teaching practice when they are finally recruited as teachers? It's against this background that this researcher decided to investigate the relationship between teaching practice supervision and student teachers' skills acquisition.

Training of student teachers has an apprenticeship component called student teaching practice. It usually lasts for a period of about eight to ten weeks period during which the student teacher enters the classroom of an experienced teacher, called the cooperating teacher, and observes the cooperating teacher's method of instruction for about two weeks before being allowed to teach. The student teacher then begins to develop a style and method of his own. In addition to the cooperating teacher's possible influence on the student teacher, the regulation requires that the supervisors should visit the classroom in which the student teacher is located for about two to three times, the purpose of the supervision being to observe the student teacher's teaching behavior and to help the student teacher improve the teaching techniques involved. Therefore, a question central to teacher training is: What are the skills that are developed in a student teacher during the student teaching experience?

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teaching practice is an exercise that links theory to practice in order to sharpen the student-teacher up for the profession and evaluate such student-teacher in terms of the amount and quality of professional skills that

have taken place in them. This supervision is usually done by cooperating teachers, college teachers and teaching partners, i.e.; by student-students. Most Student-teachers usually regard it essentially as an evaluative programme. They are therefore mainly concerned and interested in the evaluation (grade) they will earn at the end of the exercise. Almost forgetting that it is an exercise that is supposed to link theory to practice in the field. For the above reason, the tendency is for them to put up their best performance in the presence of the supervisor, they try as much as possible to teach using teaching aids, chalkboard, diagrams and sketches to the best of their abilities and the reverse is almost true when not under supervision.

In the effort of improving teaching, supervision can be one of the strategies to enable teachers to achieve the goal. Teachers are one of the key inputs to education delivery; thus, the quality of education partially depends on the way they are trained and supervised. This is because supervision is genuinely concerned with the growth and development of students. Besides, many researchers claim that supervision has the capability to improve classroom practices and lead to student success by improving teachers' professional growth and their work performance. In these modern times, the view of supervision has changed from inspection to school-based collaborative process that aims in improving instruction. It is a form of guidance for teachers to enhance their teaching skills through various methods such as classroom visits, educational workshops, seminars, and training courses which help to meet teachers' needs. Supervision provides equal importance to students, and teachers by having constant interaction between the cooperating teacher, supervisor and the student teacher to improve the teaching and learning processes.

Students' teachers' continuous learning can assist them to be more efficient and effective. This can be achieved through supervision which is considered as a part of professional development. It is based on the above argument that, this researcher decided to investigate the relationship between teaching practice supervision and student teachers' skills acquisition in GTTC.

III. THEORITICAL REVIEW

This study is guided by two theories namely, theory of skill acquisition by Anderson's Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) theory (1982) and Logan's Instance theory of automatization (1988). The recent research on the nature of skill acquisition is divided between two opposing theories, the ACT theory (Anderson, 1982, 1987, 1992), and the Instance theory of automatization (Logan, 1988, 1990). The ACT theory provides a comprehensive account for the manner in which general skills are acquired. In contrast, the Instance theory (Logan, 1988; 1990) proposes that skills are highly specific in nature, constrained to the events encountered during training. A significant amount of recent research has focused on the theoretical and empirical aspects of skills acquisition (Corbett & Anderson, 1989). Common elements that forge a link between the proposed theoretical arguments and the empirical research are the assumptions that: (1) practice can lead to improved performance and (2) the amount of transfer of skill from one task to a subsequent task is dependent on the number of shared elements between the tasks (Frensch, 1991; Pirolli & Anderson, 1995; Spelman & Kirsner, 1997). The implication of the link between practice and performance is such that a task that initially required the individual's full attention and substantial effort can, after practice, be carried out effortlessly, faster and with greater accuracy (Anderson, 1982 & Logan, 1988; 1990).

Skills acquisition can be conceptualized as a three-stage process (Fitts, 1964). The initial cognitive phase, as described by Fitts (1964), lasts for only a few trials. while the individual learns the instructions and formulates performance strategies. This stage involves significant attentional resources, as the developing strategies are based upon general strategies consisting of knowledge learned from experience with previous tasks. Knowledge is rule-based and explicit with the subsequent performance slow and error prone. In the second stage, the associative stage, performance is refined. Strategies learned in the previous stage are strengthened if it contains features appropriate to the task. This feedback mechanism enhances the development of new associations between stimulus-specific cues and appropriate responses. During the final stage, the autonomous stage, skills become faster and more efficient~ with the components of the performance strategy less contingent on external influences or cognitive control. As performance of the task requires increasingly less processing, the rate of improvement with each subsequent performance episode slows, at which stage automaticity is reached. Anderson (1982) and Logan (1988) proposed a three-phase model of human information processing, in which the qualitative differences in performance at each stage are believed to result from the shift from controlled processing to automatic processing. Performance in the initial phase is dictated by controlled processes, with the combination of controlled and automatic processes influencing performance in the second phase. The third and final phase is characterized by automatic processing.

ACT and the Instance theory make different predictions regarding the transfer of skills. Transfer can be defined as the extent to which skills acquired during performance of one task can influence performance on a

different yet similar task (Kramer, Stayer, & Buckley, 1990). There are three types of transfers namely; (1) positive transfer, where previous experience enhances performance on a new task; (2) negative transfer, where previous experience impedes performance on a new task and; (3) zero transfer, where previous experience has no influence on performance of a new task. The present study is primarily concerned with the potential for positive transfer between tasks, focusing on the individual's capacity to use skills learnt in one domain to aid in performance and the subsequent acquisition of skills in another domain.

Logan's Instance Theory of Automisation (1988, 1990) proposes that skilled performance is reliant on the retrieval of domain specific knowledge from memory of past solutions. According to Logan (1988, 1990), in the initial stages of skill acquisition, the individual relies on the execution of a general algorithm to generate a conscious solution to any novel stimuli. Each time the algorithm is executed the solution is stored in episodic memory, as an instance. These instances are stimulus specific and are retrieved on subsequent encounters with the stimulus. Automaticity is achieved when the control of performance moves from algorithmic computation, noted in early practice, to single step memory retrieval, noted late in practice (Logan, 1988, 1990; Logan & Klapp, 1991). Central to the Instance Theory are three main assumptions, obligatory encoding, obligatory retrieval and instance representation. Obligatory encoding means that attention to an item or event results in unavoidable encoding of the item or the event in memory. The quality of the stored memory is dependent on the conditions of attention. The second assumption of obligatory retrieval states that attention to an item or event is sufficient to activate retrieval from memory of whatever information has been stored about the stimulus in the past. Memory retrieval may not always be successful, but it is attempted regardless of intention. Logan (1988) links the acts of encoding and retrieval, claiming that the same act of attention to an item or event can provoke either or both processes. The final assumption, instance representation, proposes that each episode or encounter with a stimulus is encoded, stored and retrieved separately in memory as an instance, even if it is identical to a previous episode (Logan, 1988). Thus, Logan views automatic processing as fast and effortless. Prior to reaching the point of automaticity, performance may be automatic on some trials but not on others (Logan, 1988). Logan (1988) describes the skill acquisition process using the metaphor of a race between the execution of a general algorithm and the retrieval of instances. The larger the number of instances stored in memory, the greater the likelihood that one will be retrieved before the algorithm has been completed. In this way practice on a task can be seen to provide additional instances readily available in memory, rather than a qualitative improvement in the, strength of the memory. The Instance theory states that instances pertaining to given stimuli may fall along a distribution of retrieval times. Logan has not specified the exact nature of these memory traces and what properties or conditions make one instance faster than another, although he appears to imply that chance is involved (Greig & Speelman, in press). The focus is on having the memory traces available, how they got there is less important (Logan & Klapp, 1991). The Instance theory can account for the Power Law of Learning by virtue of the race between the execution of an algorithm and the retrieval of instances (Logan, 1988, 1990). Extended practice adds more instances to memory, increasing the likelihood that instances will be available that can be retrieved in less time than is necessary for the algorithm to be executed. While performance may improve indefinitely, the greater the number of instances, the less likely it is that any new - instances will be significantly faster than the already 'fast' ones (Logan, 1990; Logan & Klapp, 1991). Thus, performance improves as a function of the number of presentations of a particular stimulus (Logan, 1988, 1990).

The scientific roots of Skill Acquisition Theory can be found in different branches of psychology, which ranges from behaviorism to cognitivism and connectionism (Dekeyser & Criado, 2013). This theory draws on Anderson's Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) model which itself is a kind of cognitive stimulus-response theory (Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007). As mentioned by Rajuan, Beijaard, & Verloop (2007), It is a neo-Piagetian theory that amalgamates elements of both cognitive and behaviorist theories.

IV. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

According to Tamo (2012) cited in Awandia (2022), education is the sum total of a person's learning experiences during his or her lifetime. Education is the process by which an individual acquires knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes for his or her own benefit and to be a useful member of his or her society. Education is very important for every nation of the world because the transmission of cultural heritage and technological advancement of any nation depends on it. Education is therefore bedrock of every society. That is, any nation that toys with education should know that it is sitting on gunpowder that is bound to explode one day. In recognition of the importance of education, every nation including Cameroon usually allocate a huge budgetary for education yearly. Similarly, parents and guardians spend a lot of money yearly to finance their children education. Parents and guardians usually expect accountability from the schools to which they pay huge school fees for the education of their children. In other words, the school proprietors have to justify the money they collect from parents as school fees by ensuring that effective teaching and learning take place in their schools,

otherwise, they may risk low patronage as parents may withdraw their children to better schools (). This process can only see the light of the day through effective teaching and pleasant learning as basic means to nurture productive citizens. The multifidous professional roles and qualities of the teachers blend to make up an effective teacher. When a good teacher brings his/her abilities and visions for a better society to bear on his/her teaching, he/she shall become a unique, responsive professional who would continually see himself/herself accountable for the educational progress and failure of their entrusted youths. For this to be achieved, the teachers must be well trained. Teaching practice is the main way by which student teacher translate theory to practice and it is through teaching practice that skills are acquired.

Teaching practice popularly is a process of putting in action (rather than theory) the ways or methods of imparting knowledge for a period of time by a student under the skillful guidance of a professional teacher, with the aim of improving their skills. Teaching practice can also be referred to as practical learning on task with the able guidance of an expert in the area of study (Adzongo, Shir & Hembah, 2016). Oyekan (2000) sees teaching practice as an activity by which the student-teachers are given an opportunity in equal school situations to demonstrate and improve training in pedagogical skills over a period of time. According to Adzongo, Shir and Hembah (2016) students' teachers who go for teaching practice are exposed to field experiences, internship or practices as a component part of training.

Teaching practice is generally mandatory for every student teacher. It is also a prerequisite for the award of teachers' certificates or diplomas. It is the first opportunity given to a student-teacher to participate in activities involved in teaching in actual situations before the introduction of micro teaching. This opportunity to teach under a typical school condition in a selected cooperating school helps the student-teacher in securing experience in observing and participating actively in all diverse educational activities of teachers in the school. Teaching practice as the name implies is necessary but a 'scare' for would be teachers (aspiring teachers). It is a stage through which an education student must pass through before he/she qualifies as a teacher. It can also be referred to as practicalizing what is being learnt theoretically (Adzongo, Shir & Hembah, 2016). Oyekan in Adzongo, Shir & Hembah (2016, p. 92) summarize the objectives of teaching practice as follows: (1) inculcating in the student-teachers the basic teaching skills and ethics which facilitate the teaching-learning process (2) providing the student-teachers an opportunity to imbibe practical classroom life experiences (3) exposing the student-teachers to the dynamic social life system of the school as they interact with the learners and staff (4) use physical facilities and participating co-curricular activities (5) identifying their strengths and weaknesses in lesson presentation while thinking on possible means to improve their teaching capabilities (6) inculcating the ability to use instructional materials to explain and illustrate basic concepts and process for greater understanding (7) developing healthy relationships towards the learners, community and members of the teaching profession (h) enhancing the supervisory capacity of the co-operating teachers (9) facilitating exchange of innovative educational ideas between the students-teachers training institutions and the cooperating schools (10) providing an avenue for the student-teachers and their supervisors to translate theory into practical and (11) exposing the weakness in teacher training programmes to the educators for prompt correction and improvement. These objectives stated are geared towards enhancing skills acquisition of student-teachers.

To facilitate student-teachers' transition from internship to permanent skills acquisition, they are advised to meticulously learn from real experiences of practicum process because it might influence their future teaching practices. To make the process, effective, it is important to investigate the role that stakeholder - cooperating teaches, supervisors and peer play in enabling the student teachers to acquire teaching skills. Exploring the perspectives of cooperating teachers, supervisors and pupils who are stakeholder in teaching practice can help better conceptualize the practicum process and provide insights into achieving more transparent, consistent, and sustainable training standards. Student teaching experiences are usually accepted as the most influential components of a teacher education program, and have the power to shape student-teachers' development as novice teachers (Glickman, et al, 2001). Any process to strengthen teacher education programs must include a careful study of student teaching because it is usually the final education course students take and the most influential field experience in a teacher education program.

Cooperating teachers may influence student-teachers' profession-related socialization, career satisfaction, perceptions of the professional role, philosophies of teaching, instructional practices, and perhaps even their decision to stay in the profession (Britzman,2000). Despite the strength of such views and supporting evidence of the power of cooperating teachers, there has been a strong debate about the selection of cooperating teachers. Some studies point to the arbitrary selection of cooperating teachers as well as their inadequate preparation for their work as supervisors (Glickman, et al 2001). The problematic context of mentoring: Thus, the selection of cooperating teachers should be carried out through the cooperation of faculties and schools and a selection and evaluation criteria could be instrumental so as to minimize, if not totally eliminate, the problematic aspects of mentoring.

Teaching Practice Supervision and Student Teachers' Performance Glickman, et al (2001) proposed that supervisors should help supervisees, realize their potentials and usefulness. The supervisor must observe the teacher's work, ask questions about why the teacher used certain teaching methods and provide information on the best teaching practices, hence enabling the teacher to improve. Therefore, supervision offers both teachers and their supervisors the opportunity to work together to improve student learning (Kirk, Macdonald & O'Sullivan, 2006). It is against this background that this study sought to find out the influence of teaching practice supervision on student teachers' skills acquisition in teaching in GTTC. According to Glickman, et al (2001) school practice supervision improves a student teacher's classroom practice and academic performance. It also provides for professional growth and development of the teacher (Figueroa, 2004). Okumbe (2007) identifies two strands of supervision as: general supervision and instructional supervision. General supervision encompasses activities that take place mainly outside the classroom, while instructional supervision entails those activities taking place inside of the classroom in order to improve teaching and learning making it more result oriented for the learners (Abu, Akinloye, & Olaoye, 2014). Figueroa (2004) viewed supervision as a formative process that focuses upon professional development and the improvement of instruction. It is characterized by a collegial, helping relationship between administrators or teachers and the teachers in a climate of trust and mutual understanding. Figueroa (2004) further stated that supervision of instruction involves motivating the teacher to explore new instructional strategies. The teacher must be made aware of the educational goals and standards to be implemented. Hunsaker & Hunsaker (2009) assert that observer/supervisor provides due feedback and appropriate resources for the teacher to utilize. Therefore, effective supervision should result in growth and learning by the teacher and the student. By implication, supervision guides curriculum content and instructional materials selection that will facilitate both students and teachers' academic growth and development. This study therefore, examined how supervision is related to student teaching skills acquisition in GTTC.

In school settings principals and head teachers have rules and regulations that guide them in monitoring the quality and quantity of teaching and learning in their institutions. Effective supervisory relationship enables the principal to constantly monitor and receive feedback about student's performance. This requires the principals and head teachers to demonstrate effective leadership as teachers are more likely to perform their roles based on how they view the school principal as a leader, and how they perceive and relate to the school environment, (Okorie, 1995 in Udebunu, 2015). This study establishes the relationship between school practice supervision and student teachers' skills acquisition. According to Eya & Chukwu (2012) effective supervision of student teachers during teaching practice is one way in which quality assurance can be guaranteed. Supervisors are supposed to establish a rapport with their student teachers. This helps to establish a facilitative environment in which the supervisees develop confidence, trust, love and dedication to duty. To achieve this, a teaching practice supervisor should be adequately trained in administration or have administrative experience. Teaching practice supervisors are responsible for improving and maintaining teaching and learning standards of student teachers in school (Silsil, 2008). It is the responsibility of the supervisor to guide the student teachers as they perform their duties. Instructional supervision is important because it guides student teachers on effective lesson planning and preparation of schemes of work and related classroom practices including record keeping and assessment. These activities contribute to better performance of student teachers which in turn results in improved students' performance in examinations (Silsil, 2008).

Glickman, et al (2001), views Teaching Practice Supervision as a formative process that focuses upon professional development and improvement of instruction. It is characterised by a collegial, helping relationship between administrators and Student Teachers in the climate of trust and mutual understanding. The Student Teacher must be aware of the educational goal and standard to be implemented. By implication supervision guides curriculum content and instructional materials selection that will facilitate both Students and Teacher's growth and development. Therefore, supervision signifies a common vision of what teaching and learning can and should be (Glickman, et al 200) hence it should be developed collaboratively by competence supervisors, cooperating teachers and the administration. Glickman, et al. (2001) proposes that supervisor should help supervisees to realize their potentials and usefulness. The supervisor must observe the student teacher's work, ask question about why the student teacher used certain teaching methods and provide information about the best teaching practices, hence enabling the teacher to improve. Teaching practice supervision offers both the teacher and supervisor the opportunity to work together and enhance competence (Glickman et al, 2001).

The supervision process requires that: supervisor works with student teachers to plan and deliver instructions that meets the learning needs of all pupils regardless of their individual learning styles, development and cognitive levels; Oversees how student teachers organise and Manage classroom environment for maximum academic performance; Observe keenly how student teachers manage classroom interaction and Pupils behaviour to create safe conducive learning atmosphere for pupil's academic success; Work cooperatively and collaboratively with student teachers, parents, and other members of school community for the benefit of pupil's learning; Use appropriate assessment tools to determine student teachers' improvement; Use reflective practice

to evaluate effectiveness of meeting instructional objectives; Create a dynamic environment which fosters positive, effective communication among pupil's, teachers, parents, and the administration of the school and demonstrate self-confidence, advance knowledge and experience in the field of supervision.

It is based on this context that, this researcher decided to investigate the relationship between teaching practice supervision and student teacher skills acquisition in GTTC.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H₀: There is no significant relationship between teaching practice supervision and student teachers' skills acquisition.

H_A- There is significant relationship between teaching practice supervision and student teachers' skills acquisition.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used survey research design. The target population of this study was 887 made up of all students and teachers of government teacher training colleges that are functioning effectively in the South West Region of Cameroon. The accessible population of this study was 442 drawn from five teacher training colleges. This consisted of 275 class three students and 167 teachers teaching class three. The sample size of this study was 90 comprising of 80 students and 10 teachers. The simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the sample size. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaire and interview guide. Data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Data from student teacher questionnaire were analysed using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient while thematic analysis was used to analyze data from interview guide for cooperating teachers.

VI. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1 shows analysis of the interview of the cooperating teachers on student teachers' skills acquisition during teaching practice in their cooperating schools.

Themes	Groundings	Sampled quotations
1. What is the role of the cooperating teacher?	7	"To ensure lessons are properly prepared, presented and evaluation adequately implemented to attained the objective of teaching practice" "To ensure students teachers are constantly taking the exercise serious" "They support the student teachers in acquiring social emotional skills such as empathy, cooperation and problem-solving strategies,
2.What is the role of the student-teacher (peers)?	8	"They help each other to look for teaching aid/ instructing materials. "They write down all the observations made by their cooperating teachers and supervisors during the teaching learning process."
3. What is the effect of a student-teacher in your classroom?	9	"It has both positive and negative effects" "Teachers are moved or pushed by the student-teachers' presence. For examples: 'cooperating teachers co-operate with the student-teachers and this act as motivating factor to cooperating teacher.' "Cooperating teachers usually feel younger and more energetic when student-teachers are in class. "Cooperating teachers do more research before coming to class when student teachers are assigned to them." "Student-teachers' anxiety, boring classes, and slow pace are negative aspects regarding the student-teachers' affect." "Lessons got more enjoyable because some of the trainees had a nice voice and mastery of content."
4.How has the presence of student teachers affected your own practice?	7	"Exchange of ideas and experiences, increase in motivation, satisfaction of helping out and fostering reflective practice were given to be the influential factors by the cooperating teachers."
5.What do you like about		

having the student-teacher?	6	‘Activities such as games and other techniques and teaching styles used in the classroom made the lessons enjoyable’. ‘The entertaining nature of some of their lessons, motivated me into adapting some of my lessons.’
6.What do you dislike about having the student-teacher?	8	‘They were obedient and supported me in teaching, setting of examination, marking and filling of report cards’ Poor classroom management due to the pace of the lessons, increased noise, and concentration problems were prevalent in some of the classes handed by student teachers.’
7.Do you have any other observation to make concerning teaching practice?	7	‘Supervisors should visit their students’ teachers at least three times during the teaching practice period. Some supervisors don’t come at all while some come only once or twice which is insufficient.’ ‘Some of the student teachers do not take the exercise seriously because their school supervisors don’t also show seriousness in their supervisory role.’ ‘We assign group lessons to students’ teachers so as to encourage collaboration, communication skills and interpersonal relationship.’ ‘We ensure that lessons are properly prepared, presented and evaluated adequately to attained the objective of teaching practice’’
8.Name some of the essential skills the student teachers are expected to acquire during the teaching practice exercise	8	Lesson planning, lesson delivery, assessment process, spirit of collaboration, interpersonal relationship, caring, positive attitude towards teaching, leadership qualities, decency in dressing, creativity, dignity, confidence and assiduity.’

Table 2 shows the Relationship between Teaching Practice and Student Teachers Skills Acquisition

Variable	N	Γ_{xy}	p-value	mean	Std
Cooperating Teachers	80	0.285	0.001	11.34	4.99
Student Teacher Skills Acquisition	80			11.21	4.85

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). $t_{critical} = 0.183$

The result of the analysis reveals that the calculated Γ_{xy} -value of 0.285 is higher than the critical Γ_{xy} - value of 0.183 at .05 level of significance with 78 degrees of freedom. Also, the p-value of 0.001 is lower than 0.05. With the result of this analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant relationship between teaching practice supervision and student teacher’s skills acquisition was rejected and the alternative which states that there is a significant relationship between teaching practice supervision and student teacher’s skills acquisition was retained. A further exploration of the effect showed that $\Gamma_{xy} = 0.285$ was positive. This indicates that the better the teaching practice supervision the more the skills acquisition by student’s teachers in GTTC.

VII. CONCLUSION

Based on the opinion of respondents on the influence of supervisor on student teachers’ skills acquisition from both the questionnaire and the interview guide, most of the cooperating teachers and supervisors were of the view that supervision plays a significant positive role on the life of students in enhancing their skill acquisition during teaching practice exercise. Supervisors are able to make sure lessons are prepared and presented in a logical manner. This was done through monitoring of the teaching practice process and constant school visitation by supervisors. “Ensured lessons are properly prepared, presented and evaluation adequately implemented to attain the objectives of teaching practice” They also ensured students teachers are constantly taking the exercise serious. To make sure all the student teachers are well directed, pre and post conferences were held before and after every lesson respectively with the cooperating teacher in collaboration with the supervisors each time that they came for supervision.

From the analysis of interview conducted with respondents, it was also noticed from the response that supervision of teaching practice had a significant positive influence on student teacher skills acquisition in GTTC.

The following summarized points were stated by supervisors and cooperating teachers as the objectives of teaching practice:

1. To expose student-teachers to real life classroom experiences under the supervision of professional teachers.
2. To provide the forum for student-teacher to translate educational theories and principles into practice.
3. 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.
4. To familiarize student-teachers with real school environment as their future work place.
5. To provide student-teachers with an opportunity for further acquisition of professional skills, competencies, personal characteristics and experience for full-time teaching after graduation.
6. To help student-teachers develop a positive attitude towards the teaching profession.
7. To serve as a means of assessing the quality of training being provided by teacher training institutions (GTTC)
8. Observe qualified and experienced teachers;
9. Relate aspects of the university courses to the classroom situation;
10. Apply the basic sticks of planning, preparing, and presenting suitable materials to meet the needs of their classes;
11. Develop organizational skills and self-confidence; and
12. Establish good working relationships with pupils, teachers and other members of the school community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, it was recommended that, cooperating teachers should always organise pre- and post-conferences so as to facilitate the teaching practice exercise for trainees. Also, it was recommended that the government school principals and the Regional Inspectors should organise regular seminars/workshops to train teachers of their role as cooperating teachers so as to make them more effective. Lastly, it was recommended that seminar/workshop should be organised for the supervisors before they go for teaching practice supervision so as to enough them to be more effective and efficient.

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