

Students' Perception Of Teaching Practice Exercise In Bamidele Olumilua University Education, Science And Technology Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT:- The study investigates the perception of the students towards teaching practice exercise in Bamidele Olumilua University of Education Science and Technology ikere in the research design employed was descriptive research design. The population for the study comprised of 300 and 400 level students enrolled for teaching practice exercise in the College of Education Bamidele Olumilua University of Education Science and Technology in 2023/2024 academic section. The sample for the study consisted of 150 students, who were selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. A self-design questionnaire termed student teachers perception of teaching practice exercise questionnaire (STPTPEQ) was used to gather information for the study. One research question was generated while two hypotheses were formulated. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics of mean and percentages while the hypotheses were tested through an inferential statistics of t-test at 0.05 significance level. The result of findings showed that most of the students are not favorably disposed to teaching practice exercise. However, 400 level students fare better in terms of positive perception about teaching practice exercise. Recommendations were proffered on ways to adequately induct the students on the relevance of teaching practice exercise to their training.

Keywords: Teaching Practice, Perception, Student, Training

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching is one of the most established and dynamic professions, with a long history of development and expansion. It plays a critical role in shaping individuals' knowledge, skills, and understanding, as it is carried out by individuals regarded as more knowledgeable. It has a significant impact on how people develop their knowledge, abilities, and comprehension. Teaching is often perceived as the act of a teacher standing before students, using tools such as a chalkboard or marker, and assigning tasks for students to complete (Seweje, 2010). It is a deliberate and structured process aimed at promoting learning (Awotu-Efebo, 1999) and is a dynamic interaction between teachers and students, designed to inspire meaningful changes in student behavior. According to Butts (1973), teaching can be viewed as the body of knowledge that is imparted, similar to religious teachings or a belief system. Teaching also refers to a career or profession pursued as a livelihood, especially in an educational setting where the goal is to educate others.

From Butts's (1973) perspective, teaching is a profession offering specialized services to a group of individuals. The main objective of teaching is to transfer knowledge and skills that empower students to become productive members of their communities. This aligns with Oyekan's (2000) view that teaching is a multifaceted profession that nurtures human resources for personal and financial growth. Consequently, it is crucial for institutions that produce teachers to equip them with the necessary skills and qualities for effective teaching.

The Role of Teaching Practice in Teacher Training

Institutions that train teachers integrate teaching practice as a core component of their curriculum, typically during a designated period of the academic program. Teaching practice offers student teachers the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in a real classroom setting. Teaching. According to Njidi & Sikaya (2003), teaching practice provides an essential opportunity for student teachers to experience the act of teaching before entering the professional world. It is a compulsory part of teacher education programs, often attracting two or four credit units, depending on the nature of the course. According to Kiggundu (2007) observed that teaching practice exercise is one of the most important. The typical duration of teaching practice

ranges from four to six weeks and usually takes place during the third or fourth year of the teacher education program.

In order to prepare them for the real teaching profession Student teachers are generally placed in schools based on their subject area specialization. While teaching practice aims to expose students to various aspects of school life, it places particular emphasis on classroom practice, with supervision by lecturers who provide immediate feedback. The evaluation process often includes a combination of internal assessors and an external examiner who conducts random assessments and moderates the internal grading process. As Ogbazi notes in Jegede (2009), Nigeria's industrial development faces challenges due to a shortage of qualified human resources, including teachers. Jegede (2009) emphasizes the need for skilled workers, such as qualified teachers, who can effectively contribute to the development of society. Okorie (2001) also highlights the importance of teacher training, stating that students must be exposed to relevant activities to acquire the practical skills required for their professional roles.

Teaching practice is pivotal in helping pre-service teachers understand the complexities of effective teaching. According to Altintas and Gorgen (2014), its goal is to ensure that pre-service teachers are adequately prepared for the profession. By engaging in teaching practice, student teachers have the chance to reflect on their pedagogical approaches and develop critical teaching skills.

Challenges and Importance of Teaching Practice

Before becoming fully immersed in the teaching profession, student teachers gain practical experience through teaching practice. This hands-on experience is essential in preparing them for the realities of the teaching profession. According to Kiggundu and Najimuli (2009), teaching practice offers a real-world setting that exposes student teachers to the richness and complexity of teaching, although it can sometimes be a challenging experience. The importance of teaching practice cannot be overstated as it helps build self-confidence and provides future teachers with basic teaching skills. Perry (2004) supports the notion that teaching practice enables student teachers to acquire essential skills for effective classroom management and instruction. A study by Rebecca and Emma (2003) comparing self-efficacy between practicing teachers and student teachers found that working teachers felt more prepared and confident in their teaching abilities. This increase in self-efficacy is believed to stem from the experience, as Bandura (1986) asserts that real-world experiences are more impactful in building confidence than hypothetical ones. Therefore, student teachers are expected to develop confidence and teaching skills during their teaching practice experiences.

Teaching practice plays a crucial role in preparing teachers for the professional world, as it allows them to translate theoretical knowledge into practical application. Madubuike (1981) affirms that teaching practice is the only way to ensure teaching effectiveness. It offers student teachers invaluable exposure to the teaching and learning environment, allowing them to build the competencies required for a successful teaching career.

The Teaching Practice Program at Bamidele Olumilua University

At Bamidele Olumilua University of Education Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti, the teaching practice exercise adheres to university and National University Commission (NUC) guidelines. The program consists of two six-week phases, usually scheduled after the second and third-year examinations. The College of Education coordinates placements in secondary schools across Ekiti State. Before beginning teaching practice, student teachers must complete foundational courses such as educational technology, an introduction to the teaching profession, and micro-teaching. These courses are designed to prepare them for the challenges they will face in the classroom. Each student teacher is provided with a logbook to document their experiences, which are evaluated by both supervisory teachers focusing on various aspects of teaching, including lesson planning, delivery, classroom management, and personal qualities.

Challenges Encountered During Teaching Practice

Despite the benefits of teaching practice, some student teachers experience dissatisfaction due to challenges such as logistical issues, lack of support, inadequate mentorship, and long commutes. Additionally, students may face frustrations due to the absence of allowances and the varied perceptions of school-based mentors. These challenges often influence how students view their teaching practice experience.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching practice provides student teachers with opportunities to plan, teach, evaluate, and refine their teaching skills. However, at Bamidele Olumilua University, student teachers often report dissatisfaction with their teaching practice experiences. This issue raises concerns and highlights the need for a comprehensive study to examine the factors influencing student teachers' attitudes and their overall effectiveness in the teaching profession.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore student teachers' attitudes toward teaching practice and how these attitudes affect their performance. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Assess the perceptions of student teachers towards the teaching practice exercise at Bamidele Olumilua University of Education Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti.
2. Investigate the effect of gender on student teachers' perceptions of the teaching practice exercise at Bamidele Olumilua University.

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the perceptions of student teachers toward the teaching practice exercise at Bamidele Olumilua University of Education Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti?
2. Is there a difference in the perceptions of male and female student teachers toward the teaching practice exercise at Bamidele Olumilua University of Education Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti?

By addressing these questions, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into the relationship between student teachers' attitudes and performance, which will inform improvements in teacher education programs.

II. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was employed for this study, which is suitable for gathering factual, attitudinal, or behavioral information from a sample population (David & Suthon, 2004). The study's population comprised all student teachers enrolled in the College of Education at Bamidele Olumilua University for the 2022/2023 academic session, placed in 54 secondary schools across Ekiti State. Stratified sampling was used to select participants based on their level, program, and gender, with random selection within each group.

A self-developed questionnaire titled the "Students' Perceptions of Teaching Practice Exercise Questionnaire" (SPTPEQ) was used to collect data. The questionnaire had two sections: Section A gathered demographic data, while Section B contained 12 items to assess student teachers' perceptions of the teaching practice exercise. The questionnaire was validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation, and reliability was established with a Cronbach Alpha score of 0.78. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and percentages) for the research questions and inferential statistics (t-test) for testing hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level.

III. RESULTS

Research Question 1

What is the perception of students towards teaching practice exercise in Bamidele Olumilua University of Education Science and Technology?

Table1: Percentile distribution on students' disposition to Teaching practice exercise

S/N	ITEM	YES		NO	
		N	%	N	%
1	I like teaching practice exercise because is an important part of my program me	50	33.3	100	66.7
2	I was not happy when we were informed of the commencement of the teaching practice exercise	52	34,7	98	65,3
	I was eager to get to my school of teaching practice exercise because I have adequately prepared for it	71	47,3	79	52,7
4	I consider teaching practice exercise as part of my training for life career	96	64	54	36
5	I enjoyed my period of teaching practice exercise	51	34	99	66
6	The teaching practice programme of the University exposed student teachers to the realities of the profession	100	66.7	50	33,3
7	I adequately prepared for the Challenges they face during teaching practice	100	66.7	50	33,3
8	I do not like the school where I did my teaching practice	96	64	54	36
9	I do not like the school where I did my teaching practice				
10	The assistance teacher did not assist me during me Teaching practice	66	44	84	56
11	I enjoyed my period of teaching practice exercise				
12	Attitude of low esteem feeling from the students they taught				

Based on Table 1, the students' perception of teaching practice exercise appears to be unfavorable. A significant majority, (66.7%), expressed lack of enthusiasm for the exercise, while 98% indicated unhappiness about participating in it. However, the table also reveals that a considerable portion of student teachers (64%) acknowledged that teaching practice is an integral part of their professional training. On average, the positive disposition toward teaching practice is 46.95%, which is lower than the negative disposition at 53.05%. This indicates that students are generally not favorably inclined toward teaching practice exercise

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female students Bamidele Olumilua University of Education Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti to teaching practice

Table 2: Perception of male and females students to teaching practice exercise

Source of Variation	N	Mean	SD	Df	t.cal.	tcrit.	Remark
Male	78	5.0	1.48	1118	1.36	1.96	NS
Female	72	5.2	1.42				

P < 0.05

Table 2 indicates that the calculated t-value (1.36) is less than the critical t-value (1.96). Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted. This suggests that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female students regarding the teaching practice exercise.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the perception of regular and sandwich students of Bamidele Olumilua University of Education Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti to teaching practice exercise.

Table3: Perception of regular and sandwich students to Teaching practice exercise

Source of Variation	N	Mean	SD	df	tcal.	tcrit.	Remark
Regular	66	6.8	1.28	1118	1.54	1.96	NS
Sandwich	46	7.0	1.32				

P < 0.05

Table3 indicates that the calculated t-value (tcal = 1.54) is less than the critical t-value (tcrit = 1.96). As a result, the null hypothesis is accepted. This suggests that there is no significant difference in the perception of regular and sandwich students regarding the teaching practice exercise.

Findings from this study revealed that both male and female students shared similar perceptions of the teaching practice exercise. This suggests that there is no significant difference in how male and female students view this activity. These results align with observations made by several scholars who have explored gender differences in academic settings. For instance, Adedayo (2008) noted that students' abilities in the definitional aspects of Physics were consistent regardless of gender. Similarly, Heller and Parsons (1981) found no differences in the feedback responses between boys and girls when exposed to a stimulus. This might explain why male and female students perceive the teaching practice exercise in a similar manner. The findings against that of Kiri and Ugborugbo (2008) who observed that male teachers tend to perform at their best during their younger years, up to the age of 30, while female teachers excel most during middle age, typically between 31 and 50 years.

The study also revealed that both regular and sandwich students share a similar perception of the teaching practice exercise. This could be attributed to the fact that both groups were exposed to the same learning experiences and taught by the same lecturers, regardless of their program.

Recommendation

- 1) Before graduating as a teacher, College of Education in the University should make sure that all student teachers have received the appropriate training in all teaching pedagogy.
- 2) Students going on teaching practice should complete all courses that will help them, such as the micro teaching guide before beginning teaching practice.
- 3) The University should make an effort to guarantee that student teachers receive some amount like their counterparts going for SIWES as compensation.

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