

The Perception of Tertiary Institutions Prospective Teachers on the Benefits of Teaching Practice

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Abstracts: This study assessed the perception of two tertiary institutions prospective teachers' on the Benefits of Teaching Practice in Ogun State. Survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample of four hundred students was randomly selected for the study. Prospective Teachers Perception on Teaching practice Benefits Questionnaire (PTPTPBQ) with the reliability coefficient of 0.80 was administered on the respondents. Data collected was analyzed using Mean Score, Charts, Percentages and t-test of significance. The study reveals that prospective teachers have low perception on the benefits of teaching practice also, finance and housing were the two major challenges faced by prospective teachers.. It is evident from the findings that there is need for concerted effort by school to orientate prospective teachers on the benefits of teaching practice. Also the major challenges faced by prospective teachers should also be addressed to allow them have good grasp from the benefits of teaching practice.

Keywords: Teaching practice, Benefits, Content Mastery, Pedagogical Knowledge, Challenges

1. Introduction

The need for education for the overall general development of a nation cannot be sidelined. It is widely alleged that education is essential to development for continual liberation of human both at the rural and urban centers. Having qualitative education on which a country can depend means that its teacher education cannot afford to short fall of basic needs of the society. Meanwhile, the quality of teacher produced under teacher education matters a lot to the survival of the general education of a society. Teacher produced by the process of teacher education ought to be equipped with basic skills required for teaching process. Teaching knowledge, including knowledge of content and pedagogy, has significant contribution to how a teacher discharges his responsibility (Darling-Hammond,2006). Essential to teaching profession is teacher education which is meant to produce well trained and certificated teachers in various fields of education to continue to boost educational and general societal development. Teacher education is an avenue established through which teachers are made after completion of certain requirements. Any nation serious about its development and willing to prepare for its generation unborn will take into consideration, the development of teachers training .World- wide, teachers-education have been subjective based on the needs of the nation. Where teacher's education is not adequately facilitated, the students and the whole nation will be at the negative receiving end in such society. Fafunwa (1974) confirms that teacher education should be basically related to every phase of development in Nigeria for wherever one turns, be it economic, political or social spheres of activities, one is faced with the over-reoccurring problem of trained manpower needs but no adequate training can take place without competent teachers to handle the programme. Teaching being a noble profession cannot afford to be left in the hands of unqualified personnel as the future of the generation unborn will

be left in the hands of these teachers. In Nigeria, teacher education program exists in consonance with the various levels of education that is NCE , B.Ed. and PGDE for Colleges of Education and Universities.

Teaching practice is an integral part of teacher's education meant to equip and produce well trained and qualified Bachelor of Education teachers among other forms teaching certification criteria. Different names may have been used to term teaching practice based on previous studies carried out. A number of terms such as the practice teaching, student teaching, teaching practice, field studies, infield experience, school based experience or internship are used to refer to this activity (Taneja, 2000). Teaching practice is a time when all learned theoretical concepts and ideas in educational psychology, management of classroom, subject content, curriculum development, various philosophies dealing with education are called to use (Akinsola, 2014).

Conventionally, teaching practice is the first official opportunity for trainee teacher to involve in actual teaching experience (Trowbridge & Bybee, 1994). Ashraf (1999) pointed out that the term teaching practice embraces all the learning experience of student teachers in schools. Teaching practice should allow for display of acquired skills being put into display, the avenue is also supposed to train prospective teachers in different roles as obtained in school environment. A well-structured, monitored and positively perceived teaching practice is capable of producing teachers who are sound in all domains of education (cognitive, affective and psychomotor). It is expected that a qualified teacher should be grounded in both content and pedagogy such that he will be able to respond to all classroom situations as different occasions demands. There are other benefits prospective teacher can benefit from teaching practice, but pedagogical and content mastery remains centre.

PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE BENEFITS: Expectedly, prospective teachers should acquire pedagogical knowledge while on teaching practice. Pedagogical knowledge refers to the act of teaching that equips a teacher with the act or skills required in teaching and facing all classroom challenges. Pedagogical knowledge is used to facilitate effective teaching practices in ways that aim to make learning more accessible to students. Shulman (2000) suggests that gaining wisdom of practice requires trialing and evaluating pedagogical knowledge towards attaining mastery experiences. More so, practice makes perfect is a common saying, the more a prospective teachers practices teaching in the classroom, the better he becomes in the act of teaching after some while with the assistance of cooperating teachers and supervisors who should give constructive criticism.

CONTENT MASTERY BENEFITS: Peters (1977) opines that, if anything is to be grounded as a specific preparation for teaching, priority must be given to a through grounding is something (content) to teach. Content mastery is an essential component of teacher knowledge is neither a new nor a controversial assertion. Deborah and Mcdiarmid (2006) asserted that the myriad task of teaching, such as selecting worthwhile learning activities, giving helpful explanation, asking productive questions and evaluating students learning, all depends on the teachers understanding of what is that students are to learn. Conant (1963) reiterated that if a teacher is largely ignorant or uninformed, he can do more harm than good to the students. Wambugu et al. (2013) opines that one of the advantages of teaching practice is that the deep understanding of the subject matter will provide a foundation for content knowledge which will enable the teachers to make ideas accessible to their learners. He further explains that teaching practice component aims at improving confidence, putting theory into practice, learning about student behavior, testing knowledge of subject matter, receiving constructive criticism, discovering teaching strengths and weakness and developing a core set of pedagogic values to which a professionally competent teacher adheres to strictly. However, there should be a strong relationship between the content mastery and its delivery (Pedagogy) as both are sine-qua non to teaching-learning process hence, these benefits if well-articulated will go a long way in enriching the standard of teachers quality before finally

assuming full responsibility as a teacher. This is not to suggest that there are no challenges faced by prospective teachers while on teaching practice exercise.

2. Common Challenges Faced by Students on Teaching Practice

Bishir (2005) found that the teaching practice programme at the University of Ebb only met the needs of the secondary cycle of education and ignored those of the primary cycle. Also, study conducted in Egerton University investigating the postgraduate diploma in education (PGDE) students' perception of the role of practicing schools and university supervisors during teaching practice, indicated that student teachers valued the assistance and advice given during assessment by the supervisors and the schools (Wachanga et al., 2001).

Adekunle (2000) further highlighted the problems associated with teaching practice as:

- (i) Inadequate time which leads to a situation in which supervisors only assess the students' lesson plan without having time to assess the practical teaching.
- (ii) Unserious attitude of the secondary school students towards the exercise which often results to the student- teachers not gaining the skills, confidence and knowledge needed to cope with the classroom situations. Diab (1999) identified the following challenges: transportation, lack of teaching aids in the cooperative schools, student teachers not being invited to staff meetings, inability to access the school library, lack of interaction with colleagues and principals' reluctance to solve their training related problems. Alfasar and Altamar (2004) did an evaluated teaching practice programme in Kuwait University from student teachers perspective. He further concluded that the administrative roles performed by the training team and cooperative schools were sources of problems for trainees. This was in variance with the finding of Abo (2003) who found problem related to supervisor and cooperating teachers. Chirese and Chiresche (2010) found no gender difference in students' perception on teaching practice assessment score.

Teaching practice in Nigerian Universities as an activity is one of the criteria required for graduation in faculties of education observations have shown that there is a turn down in the quality of teaching practice being offered in the Universities. It appears that teaching practice as being currently run in the Universities is considered as inadequate in terms of benefits attached. Despite the benefits attached to teaching practice, there are still challenges facing the prospective teachers on teaching practice, the more the challenges, the more those challenges tend to cover the benefits that prospective teachers are expected to derive from teaching practice. Different works consulted focused more on the activities of the school, internal supervisor and external supervisors in relation to teaching practice and not much was found on the perception of the students on the benefits derived from teaching practice. Since prospective teachers are supposed to be the primary beneficiary of teaching practice, their perception counts a lot. Baker and Bal (2010), Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) reiterate that when individual can shape their work in such a way that it is perceived as an enjoyable, they tend to perform better (Hakanen & Toppinen, 2008) and shows innovative and charismatic behavior when a task is to be completed ,the mind-set or perception of the subject is always very important to the survival of the task. The study seeks to investigate the perception of prospective teachers on the benefits of teaching practice.

3. Research Questions

1. What is the perception of Prospective Teachers on the benefits of teaching practice?
2. What are the major challenges faced by prospective teachers on teaching practice?
3. In which of the two areas do prospective teachers benefit more during teaching practice?
 - a. Pedagogical Knowledge
 - b. Content mastery

3.1 Hypotheses

H₀₁. There is no significant gender difference in the perception of prospective teachers towards benefits of teaching practice

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the perception of prospective teacher from a full fledge University of Education and prospective teachers in a faculty of education in a conventional University in their perception on the benefits of teaching practice.

3.2 Research Methods

This study employed descriptive survey research design. The population consists of all prospective-teachers in the faculty of education, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye and Tai Solarin University of Education for the 2014/2015 academic session who just completed their teaching practice for the session. The researcher used those who have completed their Teaching Practice because while still on the exercise, their perception may still change.

Sample comprised 400 prospective teachers selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The prospective teachers were stratified into full fledge University of Education (Tai Solarin University of Education,) and Faculty of education students (Olabisi Onabanjo University students), and gender sub-groups, to ensure representativeness from each institution, simple random sampling technique was used to select 200 from each institution and 200 students from each gender sub-groups. However, prospective teachers who have NCE certificate and other recognized teaching certificates were excluded from the study. The prospective teachers responded to a self-constructed and validated instrument, Prospective Teachers Perception on Teaching practice Benefits Questionnaire (PTTPBQ). The instrument has 20-item and it is a four point Likert scale questionnaire with Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree as response options(representing 4,3,2,1 respectively). The instrument was presented to two educational evaluation experts who also have long experience in teaching practice supervision for perusal, to ascertain its content and face validity. The corrected instrument was trial tested on 40 prospective teachers of University of Lagos, Faculty of Education (UNILAG) who have teaching practice experience. The process yielded reliability coefficient of 0.80 using Cronbach Alpha method.

The PTTPBQs were administered on the prospective teachers immediately after the completion of their Teaching practice exercise under the researchers' supervision and two assistants and monitoring to avoid wrong completion, misplacement and unnecessary peer influence. All the 400 completed questionnaires were retrieved, sorted and used for data analysis. The total score of all the items in the questionnaire was taken as the index of perception of benefit level. Data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using frequency counts, charts, percentages, mean scores and independent t-test at 0.5 level of significance.

4. Analysis Results

Research Question 1

What is the perception of prospective teachers on the benefits of teaching practice?

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents' Perception on the benefits of teaching practice

Acceptance Level	No of Trainees	Percent (%)
Low	248	63
High	142	37
Total	400	100

Table 1 shows that the responses of 248 (63%) prospective teachers indicated low perception on the benefits of teaching practice, while the responses of 142 (37%) prospective teachers indicated high perception on the benefits of teaching practice. In essence, the perception of prospective teachers' on the benefits derived from teaching practice is low. That the prospective teachers in the Ogun state recorded low perception on the benefits teaching practice does not portray good outcome, because the prospective teachers of today are the future teachers for any educational system. If they perceive teaching practice to have low benefits, they may not want to put in more seriousness especially when they have to attend the teaching practice for the second time. One reason for this low perception on the benefits of teaching practice could be attributed to supervisor inadequacy. In some cases the cooperating teacher is not on ground or where students may not even have a cooperating teaching in his field. This finding is in line with Wachanga et al. (2001) who indicated that student teachers valued the assistance and advice given during assessment by the supervisors and the schools, but where they are not available creates a barrier.

Research Question 2

What are the major challenges faced by prospective teachers while on teaching practice?

Table 2: Distribution of the Major challenges faced by prospective teachers while on teaching practice

Major Difficulties	Frequency	Percent (%)
Transportation	60	15
Cooperating teachers	80	20
Finance	120	30
Housing	140	35
Total	400	100%

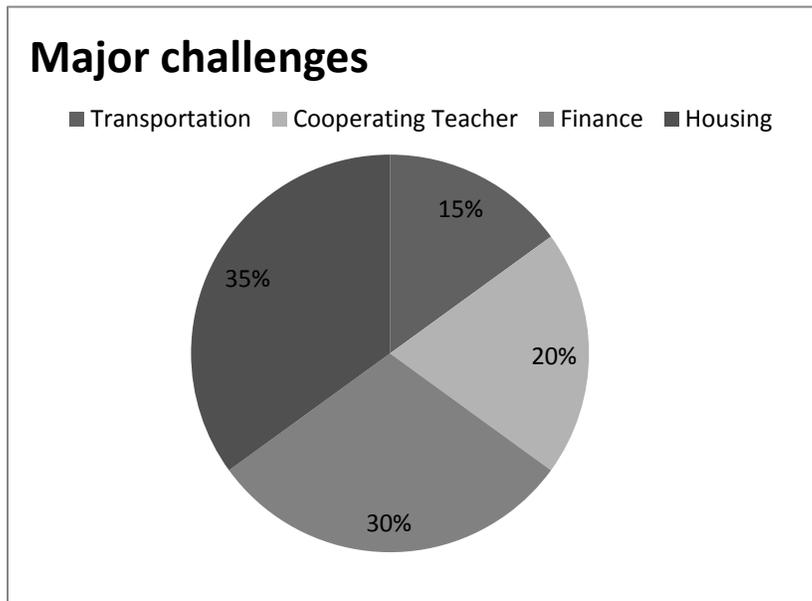


Figure 1: Pie chart showing prospective teachers major challenges on teaching practice

Table 2 and figure 1 revealed the major challenges faced by prospective teachers during teaching practice. The results show that 60 (15%) prospective teachers sees transportation as major challenge faced during teaching practice; 80(20%) sees their cooperating teacher as a source challenge; 120(30%) sees finance as the major challenge during their teaching practice; while 140 (35%) sees Housing as major challenge faced during teaching practice . Hence, the major challenges faced by prospective teachers in the two institutions are Housing and Finance respectively. This could be because students are posted outside their area of residence in school. This further corroborate Okobia et al. (2013) findings that lack of accommodation during the teaching practice is the no challenge identified by prospective teachers out of the 21 other challenges listed. This finding corroborates Diab (1999) supported that some problems were particularly identified by the study. These include: transportation, lack of teaching aids in the cooperative schools, student teachers not being invited to staff meetings, inability to access the school library, lack of interaction with colleagues and principals’ reluctance to solve their training related problems. The reason may not be far-fetched because in some instances students are posted by the school teaching practice committee, such student may not have any relative in such area to stay with. Worst still, some cooperating can’t afford to provide accommodation for some of these students. This is further compounded by the fact that most of the prospective teachers can’t afford to get accommodation because of lack of finance, even for those who can afford, the landlord in such hosting community may not be willing to let out their rooms on short term.

Research Question 3

In which of the two areas do prospective teachers benefit most during teaching practice

- ✓ Pedagogical Knowledge
- ✓ Content mastery

Table 3: Distribution of respondents on the area of benefit derived during teaching practice

Areas of benefits	No of Trainees	Percent (%)
Pedagogical	235	58
Content	165	42
Total	400	100

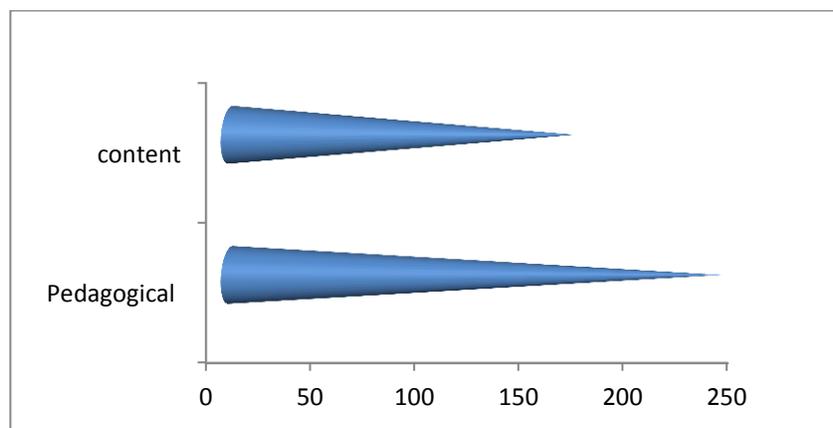


Figure 2: Chart showing prospective teachers area of Benefits on Teaching Practice

The results in Table 3 and figure 2 show that 235 (58%) prospective teachers perceive that they derive benefits from pedagogical while 165 (42%) trainees perceived that they derived content benefits while on teaching practice. Hence, majority of the prospective teachers agreed that they derived more pedagogical benefits than content benefits. This could be as a result of the fact that some cooperating teaching already felt over loaded with classroom teaching, hence just give out classes out to the prospective teacher to teach without checking for his content mastery level, hence can't add to the content knowledge of the prospective teacher. The assumption that the prospective teacher should be capable to teach is a class assigned to him may not hold at times. This most times happens in a situation where students are assigned to teach related subject and not particularly his subject area of field.

Hypothesis 1

Ho1. Is there gender difference in the perception of prospective teachers on the benefits of teaching practice?

Table 3: Gender difference in Respondents' perception on benefit of teaching practice

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df.	t	Sig. of t
Male	200	30.45	4.036	398	.0342	.974 P=0.05
Female	200	31.23	4.107			

Table 3 reveals a non-significant outcome ($t=0.342$, $p>0.05$). This implied that the observed difference between male and female prospective teachers on the benefits of teaching practice in the two institutions is not significant. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant gender difference in the prospective teacher perception on the benefits of teaching practice is hereby retained. This could have been so due to the fact all students receives same instruction from their schools and face the same challenges while on teaching practice apart from issues that are gender specific. This finding corroborates the finding of Akinsola (2014) who find no means difference in the anxiety level of pre-service teachers. This could have been so because the same learning opportunities were given to both male and female while in school and on teaching practice.

Hypothesis 2

Ho2: There is no significant difference between prospective teachers from a full fledge University of Education and prospective teachers in a faculty of education in a conventional University in their perception on the benefits of teaching practice

Table 4: Difference in Respondents perception on the benefits of teaching practice based o institution

Institutions	N	Mean	SD	df.	T	Sig. of t
University of Education	200	30.99	4.158	398	.259	.769 P=0.05
Faculty of Education	200	30.88	3.947			

Table 4 reveals a non-significant outcome ($t=0.259$, $p>0.05$). This implied that the observed difference between full fledge university of education and faculty of education, in a conventional university. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant institutional difference in the prospective teacher perception on the benefits of teaching practice is hereby retained. This could have been so because there is already a benchmark by NUC to be followed.

5. Conclusion

The study indicated that prospective teachers have low perception on the benefit derived from teaching practice. This indeed is a great minus which implies that there are challenges faced by these students which may have cover up the expected benefits. Hence, students only see it as pre-requisites for graduation and not the benefits attached. The major challenges students faced according to the study is Housing (accommodation) and finance. The study further reveals no mean significant difference on prospective teachers' perception on the benefits of teaching practice based on gender and type of institution.

6. Recommendations

It is evident from the findings that there is need for concerted effort by school to orientate prospective teachers on the benefits of teaching practice. Also the major challenges faced by prospective teachers should also be addressed to allow them have good grasp from the benefits of teaching practice. Prospective teachers can also be motivated by cooperating schools to further boost the morale of the students upon completion of their teaching practice. Accommodation also should not only be seen as students' challenges, the school can provide accommodation where available or at least encourage the hosting community to let the room at a cheaper rate.

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