

Attitude of Students towards Teaching Practice Exercise in Nigerian University: A Case Study of University of Uyo, Uyo

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Abstract

This study assessed students teachers' attitude towards teaching practice exercise in the faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom of Nigeria. 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 Faculty 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. Among others, 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.

INTRODUCTION

Pre-historically, it is conceived that there was an aspect of teaching and learning either from examples or through trial and error processes. The sources through which learning is made possible could be either a human or an abstract phenomenon. As such the availability of a source connotes the idea of a teacher. The teacher is seen as a surrogate and a reservoir of knowledge in our historic era. For his knowledge to be of use to others, there must be a process through which it is imparted.

Knowledge dissemination is through a process know as teaching which refers to the act of imparting knowledge, ideas and attitude to those available for learning. Embedded in this concept is that teaching would not take place unless students are learning and in order to know what teachers are teaching, teachers also have to understand what students are learning from them.

The implication of the purpose of teaching is that teaching represents learning by design where the result are measurable (Awotua – Efebo, 1999). Awotua -Efebo (1999) opined that teaching is a human undertaking whose purpose is to help people learn. He further stated that it is an interaction between a teacher and a student under the teacher's responsibility, in order to bring about an expected change in the student's behaviour.

The development of any country all over the world has continued to be intricately tied to educational development in which the teacher is the critical element (Ejima, 2012). Ejima (2012) further stated that the quality of a teacher depends on his or her preparation for professional role as a distinct practitioner. The preparation of teachers in Nigeria is done through the colleges of education, the National Teachers Institute (NTI) and Faculties of Education in Nigeria Universities. The institutions meant for the preparation of teachers have teaching practice as a part of their training which is often earmarked for a specific period of time. A period where teachers-in-training are posted to schools to teach, demonstrate in practical terms the knowledge and skills they have acquired during training.

Teaching practice is a situation where a student teacher is given the opportunity to try the act of teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession: The classroom It grants student teachers experience in the actual teaching and learning environment (Njidi & Sikaya, 2003). It is an important course undergone by students who are about entering the teaching profession where they are expected to exhibit the theoretical skills obtained during the course in the institution into practical situation in real life. Kiggundu and Najimuli (2009) citing the south African Norms and standards for Education (2002) stated that teaching practice is meant to provide for the authentic context within which student teachers are exposed to experiences of the complexities and richness of the reality of being a teacher. They further stated that it could become a demoralizing and sometimes very frightening experience.

Teaching practice is a means through which a student's suitability for the teaching profession is measured in the University of Uyo or elsewhere. The faculty 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 faculty 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 Faculty 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 enable the faculty of education properly allocate the number of students teachers per school. A coordinator assisted by other members of the faculty staff ensures that the teaching practice exercise is successful.

Students teachers are expected to 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 faculty 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 undergone the rigorous movement from where they are posted to the university campus for either registration, payment of fees, just to mention some. The mix-feelings of students' teachers also arise as a result of the geographical distance, low and uneven level of teacher expertise, non payment 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.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Teaching practicing is an important tool 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. According to Abdullahi (2010), A good teaching practicum should stimulate student teachers to be greatly committed to the attainment of excellence and the process should furthermore enable them to be more serious and devoted to work to professional expectation. The University of Uyo student teachers instead of being stimulated to be greatly committed have always come with the problem of constant complaints after every teaching practice. 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. Investigate the attitude of student teachers towards the teaching practice exercise in the University of Uyo.
3. Find the difference between male and female student teachers performance given their attitude

RESEARCH QUESTION

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 the University of Uyo?
2. What difference exists in the attitude of student teachers towards the teaching practice exercise in the University of Uyo.
3. What difference exist between male and female student teacher performance given their attitude

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The study tested the following hypotheses.

1. There is no significant difference in the performance of students' teachers based on their attitude.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female student teachers performance given their

attitude.

METHOD

A descriptive survey design was used for the study. According to David and Suthon (2004), the descriptive survey design is appropriate for obtaining factual, attitudinal or behavioural information from selected samples. The population of the study consisted of all teaching practice students for the session 2012/2013 in the faculty 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 163 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). The performance of the teaching practice students was obtained from the assessment record by lecturers during the teaching practice.

The instrument (questionnaire) was validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation and their corrections were incorporated into the last format of the questionnaire before administering. For the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaires were administrated to 30 student teachers who were also on teaching practice but not part of the study. The questionnaire was administered once and the Cronbach Alpha formula was used to establish the reliability coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained. This was considered reliable for the study.

The researchers obtained permission from the head of the schools the student teachers were posted to and administered the questionnaire to them. The researchers collected the list of all the student teachers posted to the 20 schools. This was to enable the researchers match questionnaires of students teachers to their performance. The performances of the students were obtained from the Co-ordinator of teaching practice in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo. 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.

RESULTS

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

What is the attitude of student teachers towards teaching practice exercise in the University of Uyo?

This research question was answered using weighted mean as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

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

S/N	ITEM	\bar{X}	Decision
1	Teaching Practice exercise is an important part of my education programme	2.10	NA
2	Micro-teaching in the University should substitute teaching practice	2.61	PA
3	Students teachers are adequately prepared for the challenges they face during teaching practice	1.96	NA
4	The provision of log book for student teachers progress report during teaching practice exercise is appropriate	2.23	NA
5	The assessment pattern of student teachers on teaching practice is appropriate	2.27	PA
6	The posting of student teachings by the University is appropriate	1.20	NA
7	The time allotted for the teaching practice exercise is not appropriate for students	2.55	PA
8	Student teachers are not comfortable with writing lesson note is easy and understandable.	2.52	PA
9	The teaching practice programme of the University exposed student teachers to the realities of the profession.	2.62	PA
10	I like being on teaching practice due to its experiences	2.19	NA
	Overall	2.23	NA

NA - Negative Attitude

PA - Positive Attitude

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 exists in the performance of student teachers based on their attitude?

Table 2

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

Attitude	N	\bar{X}	SD
Positive	79	61.75	6.56
Negative	84	58.55	7.73

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.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What differences exist between male and female student teachers' performance given their attitude?

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation of Male and Female Student Teachers' Performance Given their Attitude?

Attitude	Gender	N	X	SD
Positive	Male	42	62.19	6.33
	Female	37	61.24	6.87
Negative	Male	41	59.83	7.74
	Female	43	57.33	7.60
Overall	Male	83	61.02	7.12
	Female	80	59.14	7.49

As shown in table 3, Males with positive attitude had a mean of 62.19 which is greater than the mean (61.24) of their female counterparts with positive attitude. Also males with negative attitude had a mean of 59.83 which is greater than the mean (57.33) of their females counterparts with negative attitude. On the overall, Male had a mean of 61.02 while their female counterparts had a mean of 59.14

HYPOTHESES TESTING

t-test and the Analysis of Variance were used in testing the hypotheses at 05 level of significant.

HYPOTHESIS 1

H_{01} : There is no significant difference in the performance of student teachers' based on their attitude

Table 4

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

Attitude	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	tcal	Sign at $P < .05$
Positive	79	61.75	6.56	161	2.84	.005
Negative	84	58.55	7.73			

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.

H_{02} : 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

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sign at $P < .05$
Corrected model	565.90	3	188.63	3.68	.013
Intercept	587747.02	1	58747.02	11454.48	.000
Attitude	400.32	1	400.32	7.80	.006
Gender	120.92	1	120.92	2.36	.127
Attitude * gender	24.60	1	24.60	0.48	.490
Error	8158.53	159			
Total	597446.00	163			
Corrected Total	8724.43	162			

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

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. This is why Ogundipe (2002) stated that student teachers should be properly groomed in all technique of teaching and pedagogy, whether he/she has been on practice before or not, since it is not fire-brigade programme for quack nurse, doctors or lawyers to make a professional out of them. 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. The result is in line with the opinion of Harlin, Edward and Brier (2002), who stated that student teachers experiences during teaching practice Influence their attitude and perception regarding their future careers as educators.

The study also ascertained the performance of student teachers' based on their attitude. The result showed that student teachers with positive attitude performed significantly better than those with negative attitude. This could be attributed to the positive attitude such as positive thinking, beliefs in services, self-regulation, dedication and autonomy that must have contributed to the self-confident of student teachers with positive attitude. 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. This is inline with Akiri and Ugborugbo (2008), who stated that male teachers perform best when they are younger up to thirty (30) years while female teachers perform best in middle age between thirty one and fifty (31-50) years.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, 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.

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) Faculty 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 sewage in the faculty of sciences.

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