

Assessment of Challenges Experienced by Trainee-Teachers During Teaching Practice Exercise in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the challenges and prospects of teaching practice as perceived by trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State. The descriptive research design using the survey method as adopted in this study. The population covers all the one thousand four hundred and twenty three (1423) Education Students in 400 level in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma in the 2017/2018 session. A sample of four hundred and twenty seven (427) students from the Faculty of Education was drawn from the population. The instrument that was used for the collection of data was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. Guttman Split-Half Reliability Coefficient of the instrument was 0.75, 0.78, 0.82 and 0.79 for classroom, environmental, instructional and teaching practice prospects respectively. The researcher and two (2) trained research assistants administered the instrument to trainee-teachers. Research questions 1, 2, and 3 were analyzed using percentage (%), mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (S.D). A bench mark of 2.5 was used to rate level of agreement or disagreement on the items. The result showed that the challenges facing trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice bordered on classroom management such as managing poor arrangement of the sitting position of students, controlling student's movement in and out of the class, avoiding disruptive behaviour among students in a classroom and maintaining classroom punctuality rules. The environmental, instructional based issues confronting trainee teachers were inability of student teachers to conform to rules of the school, non-cooperative attitude of the regular school teachers with student teachers and non-involvement of student teachers in extra – curricular activities. Inability of the student teachers to utilize instructional materials properly and nervousness during lesson presentation in the classroom were some of the instructional based challenges faced by trainee teachers of the institution. It was recommended that stakeholders in teaching practice in colleges of education and universities should formally induct their student-teachers on the importance of the exercise to teacher education to ensure satisfactory teaching performance of the students.

Keywords: Challenges, Trainee-Teachers, Education, Teaching Practice, Teacher

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education literally means education given or provided for teachers to be (trainee-teachers, teacher-to-be and student-teacher) in institutions [1]. It is the process which nurtures prospective teachers and updates qualified teachers' knowledge and skills in the form of continuous professional development. Teacher education revolves around the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behaviour and skills required in the performance of effective duties in the classrooms, and in other social gatherings including churches. Teacher education is often divided into three stages namely: (a) initial teacher training; (b) the induction process involving the training and supports of the trainees during the first few years of teaching or the first year in a particular school; and (c) teacher development or continuing professional

development and intensive process for practicing teachers[1].

FRN [2] noted that teacher education is the education given to teachers and offered in Colleges of Education, the National Teachers Institutes (NTI), Faculties of Education in Nigeria Universities, National Mathematical Centre and the Nigeria Language Centres. As succinctly stated in the National Policy on Education, the goals of teacher education shall be to:- produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system; further encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers; help teacher fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals; provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their

assignment and to make them adaptable to changing situations; and enhance teacher' commitment to the teaching profession [2].

To attain the aforementioned goals, Section 5, item 94 - 96 of the National Policy on Education [2] further stipulates that all teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained; teacher education programmes shall be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties. At the National Certificate on Education (NCE) and degree levels, education programmes shall be expanded to cater for the requirements of technical, vocational business and special education while teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in methodology and curriculum through regular exposure to innovations in the profession. In compliance to the above stipulation, university administrators and educators in Colleges of Education, the National Teachers Institutes (NTI), and Faculties of Education in Nigerian universities; recognize the importance of equipping would-be teachers with skills through teaching practice and practical teaching.

Teaching practice and practical teaching are two similar but distinct training periods in the teacher education programme of trainee teachers. The former (teaching practice) is the first real class teaching exposure that is often observed in secondary schools with students by trainee teachers who are in 300 level in the Faculty of Education of a university or any other degree awarding teacher training institution such as a College of Education nationwide. The training takes a mandatory period of about three –six months which is set aside by the Faculty of Education to make would-be teachers get exposed to classroom teaching practices and equip themselves with the skills needed to become effective teachers. On the other hand, practical teaching is the second mandatory exercise that is often observed in secondary schools by trainee teachers in 400 level for a period of five to six months. This second step exercise is designed to concretize prior knowledge acquired during the first-shot of trainee-teachers initial teacher training (teaching practice) which is often in the third year of their programme.

The concept of teaching practice is made clearer by looking at the objectives of the exercise as enumerated by [3] who noted that practical teaching helps to: provide prospective teachers with the opportunity of establishing an appropriate teacher-students relationship; provide an opportunity of evaluating the students potential as a teacher and suitability for the teaching profession; develop personal relationship with others administrators, teachers, parents and students; provide the future teachers with experience in school to overcome the problem of discipline and enable him/her develop

method of control; provide an opportunity to put theories into practice and develop deeper understanding of educational principles and their implication of learning; enable the student teachers effectively plan and prepare lessons; develop skills in the use of fundamental procedures, techniques and method of teaching; develop desirable professional; interest, attitudes and ideas relative to teaching profession; enable students acquire desirable characteristics/traits of a teacher and to display appropriate behaviour; provide student-teachers with opportunity to have teaching evaluation and to gain from constructive criticism; provide an opportunity for self-evaluation for self-discovery of their strength and weakness; and develop skills in future teachers for improved performance.

The foregoing shows that the one of the prospects of teaching practice is a training opportunity it offers to promote the quality of the teacher education programme. Aside this, [1]confirmed that exposing trainee-teachers to teaching practice does not only help to bridge theory learnt in the classroom with real class practices but also provides the opportunity of establishing an appropriate teacher-student relationship, developing personal relationship with others - administrators, teachers, parents and students in school, providing an opportunity to put teaching theories into practice. This is made possible because it enables most trainee teachers to feel themselves growing through experience and get linked to a culture of teaching. Unfortunately, the attainment of these inherent benefits or prospects is often confronted with a lot of challenges. Some of the challenges confronting student-teachers during teaching practice include but are not limited to: unwillingness of principals and even supervisors to cooperate with the trainee-teachers, inability to adapt to the school rules and regulation, poor classroom adaptation, low encouragement from teachers of the school to cooperate with students. [4] grouped these challenges into three major categories namely: classroom management, environmental related and instructional-based challenges.

Classroom management challenges border on factors that could hinder trainee-teachers ability to utilize various class resources of time, material, students and space in the attainment of pre-determined lesson objectives. These challenges covers one or more issues bordering on managing poor sitting arrangement of the students, controlling students' movement in and out of the classroom, controlling noise making, avoiding disruptive behaviour among students in a classroom environment among others.

Environmental challenges are another area of teaching practice challenges confronting trainee-teachers during the mandatory teaching practice exercise. These challenges border on inability of a

trainee-teacher to effectively relate with individuals within the school environment and adapt to the realities to achieve their predetermined objective of successfully gaining the necessary skills, knowledge and exposure needed to become an effective teacher. Some environmental related challenges include inability of student teachers to master the subject matter, inability of the student teachers to utilize instructional materials properly, inability of the student teachers to apply appropriate teaching skills, non-availability of relevant textbooks, non-availability of curriculum guidelines, marking student exercise, inability of student teachers to improvise instructional material, nervousness during the delivery lesson presentation or instruction.

An Instructional-based challenge is the last area of teaching practice challenge recognized by [4]. This challenges border on factors that could hinder a trainee-teacher's ability to effectively plan a lesson, present and evaluate the delivery of instruction in class. Instructional-based challenges cover one or more of the following: inability of student teachers to master the subject matter, inability of the student teachers to utilize instructional materials properly, inability of the student teachers to apply appropriate teaching skills, non-availability of relevant textbooks, Non availability of curriculum guidelines, marking student exercise, inability of student teachers to improvise instructional material, nervousness during lesson presentation in the classroom among others. In order to achieve the goals of teacher education in Nigeria which among others include to produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system and enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession; it is pertinent to determine the challenges and prospects of teaching practice as perceived by trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State.

Recent studies on challenges of education students on teaching practice have been carried out in various areas. For instance, [4]examined the challenges facing trainee-teachers of Federal College of Education (Technical) Umuze during teaching practice exercise. The result of data analysis of the study revealed some challenges facing student teachers during teaching practice exercise which includes classroom management, environmental challenges, curriculum development and instruction and supervisory are the challenges facing trainee-teachers of Federal College of Education.

Koross [5] examined the challenges that trainee-teachers encounter while in the schools that they are attached for teaching practice. The findings of this research indicate that trainee-teachers experiences had an impact on their perception of the teaching profession and they did experience challenges while

on teaching practice.[6]examined challenges encountered by pre-service teachers during teaching practice. The result showed that student trainee-teachers were able to identify most of these challenges, which to the researchers is a good starting point for finding solutions.

Okobia, et al [7] investigated the challenges faced by trainee-teachers during teaching practice exercise. The result shows that poor arrangement of the sitting position of students, controlling student's movement in and out of the class are the class management challenges facing trainee-teachers. [3] examined various problems trainee-teachers face during the teaching practice exercise and proffer possible solutions. The result further showed that trainee-teachers do not differ in their perception of the problem being faced by the trainee-teachers.[8] evaluated environmental related challenges facing teaching practice of Northwest University, Kano. Findings revealed lack of accommodation for the student teacher, lack of resources such as tables and chairs for the student teachers, are the environmental related challenges facing trainee-teachers in Northwest University, Kano.

Wanekezi & Mezieobi [9] ascertained the environmental challenges facing trainee teachers towards teaching practice. The findings revealed that non-cooperative attitude of the regular school teachers with student teachers and non-involvement of student teachers in extra – curricular activities as experienced are some of the environmental related challenges faced trainee-teachers towards teaching practice.[10]examined instruction-based challenges facing students in the Faculty of Education among the student teachers in a Nigerian University during the 2002\2003 teaching practice exercise. The findings from this study indicated that inability of the student teachers to apply appropriate teaching skills is one of challenges facing trainee-teachers among the student in a Nigerian.

Priye [11] evaluated the impact of instructional-based challenges facing teaching practice on trainee teachers in tertiary institutions in Nigeria: the Niger Delta University Experience. The result showed that lack of on-availability of relevant resources such as textbooks and curriculum guidelines lack affect trainee-teachers in their teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. [12] examined the issues that constitute participation of trainee-teaches with teaching/non-teaching staff in Nigeria. The result of the study revealed that both trainee-teachers do not show moral support to teaching/non-teaching in the institution in Cross River States. [10] examined the reform outcome of reflective teaching introduced by the Faculty of Education among the student teachers in a Nigerian University during the 2002\2003 teaching practice exercise. The findings from this

study indicated that trainee-teachers student teachers were elated and had opportunity for professional growth as they practiced reflective teaching.

Uzoehina [13] examined lecturers' perception on the impact of teaching practice exercise on student-teachers' professional growth in Anambra State and found that teaching practice exercise promoted student teachers' pedagogical preparations and classroom adaptation. Although, this study contributed to knowledge, the author did not investigate from the possible challenges that could be hindering student-teachers' professional growth during their teaching practice exercise. Hence, a knowledge gap exists. In another study by [3], they examined the problems student-teachers face during practical teaching exercise in Nigeria using Faculty of Education students from three universities namely, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti; Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko and University of Benin, Benin-City. Although, their study found that many the student teachers face challenges such as social adjustment with school staff and accommodation issues during their practical teaching most especially when they are posted outside the university town, the study majorly focused on environmental related challenges and did not attempt to examine the perceived prospects of teaching practice among students from diverse domains such as classroom management, environmental and instructional based challenges.

From the foregoing, studies have been carried out on challenges of education students during practical teaching using various universities in Nigeria (including University of Benin, Edo State). But none of the studies, to the best of the researcher's knowledge has examined the classroom management, environmental and instructional based challenges confronting trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria during teaching practice. Carrying out this investigation among trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria is the knowledge gap this study sought to fill.

Research Questions

This study provided answers to the following research questions:

- a) What are the classroom management challenges facing trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice?
- b) What are the environmental related challenges facing trainee-teachers of

Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice?

- c) What are the instructional-based challenges facing trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice;

Method of Study

The descriptive research design using the survey method was adopted in the study to examine the challenges and prospects of teaching practice as perceived by trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State. The population covered all the one thousand four hundred and twenty three (1423) Education Students in 400 level in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma in the 2017/2018 session. A sample of four hundred and twenty seven (427) students from the Faculty of Education was drawn from the population. The instrument that was used for the collection of data is a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The first questionnaire was titled: challenges and prospects of teaching practice questionnaire (CPTPQ). The first instrument (CPTPQ) was designed for trainee-teachers to elicit information on the perceived constraints and prospects of teaching practice in schools.

The questionnaire (CPTPQ) was divided into Section A and B. Section A will consist of the bio-data of teachers such as: the name of their department while Section B will be used to collect data on perceived constraints and prospects of teaching practice in schools. The questionnaire contains a total of 30-items covering five segmented parts. The aspects and corresponding items are namely: classroom management challenges (items 1-5), environmental related challenges (items 6-10) and instructional based challenges (items 11-15). The items were rated on a four point scale type of: Strongly Agree -4, Agree- 3, Disagree -2 and Strongly Disagree - 1. The face and content validity of the instruments were ensured by the researcher. The reliability of the instruments was determined using Guttman split-half reliability method. The research questions 1, 2 and 3 were analyzed using percentage (%), mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (S.D).

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the classroom management challenges facing trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice?

Table 1: Summary of Classroom Management Challenges facing Trainee-Teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice

s/n	Items	N = 427		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Remark
Classroom management challenges				
1	Managing poor arrangement of the sitting position of students	2.69*	.994	Agreed
2	Controlling student's movement in and out of the class	2.64*	.873	Agreed
3	Controlling noise making	2.41	.841	Disagreed
4	Avoiding disruptive behaviour among students in a classroom	2.64*	.942	Agreed
	Maintaining classroom punctuality rules	2.81*	.880	Agreed

* Significant mean ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$)

The result in Table 1 showed that students agreed on items 1, 2, 4 and 5 at a mean score range of 2.64 to 2.81 while they disagreed on item 3 at mean score of 2.41 respectively. Hence, the result showed that the classroom management challenges facing trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice include: managing poor arrangement of the sitting position of students, controlling student's movement in and out of the class, avoiding disruptive behaviour among students in a classroom and maintaining classroom punctuality rules.

Research Question 2: What are the environmental related challenges facing trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice?

Table 2: Summary Analysis on the Environmental Related Challenges facing Trainee-Teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during Teaching Practice

s/n	Items	N = 427		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Remark
Environmental related challenges				
1	Inability of student teachers to conform to rules of the school of practice	2.77*	.969	Agreed
2	Lack of accommodation for the student teacher	2.32	.674	Disagreed
3	Lack of resources such as tables and chairs for the student teachers	2.40	.965	Disagreed
4	Non-cooperative attitude of the regular school teachers with student teachers	2.52*	1.001	Agreed
5	Non-involvement of student teachers in extra – curricular activities	2.68*	1.139	Agreed

* Significant mean ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$)

Result in Table 2 showed that respondents agreed on items 1, 4 and 5 at a mean score range of 2.52 to 2.77 while they disagreed on item 2 and 3 at mean score

range of 2.32 to 2.40 respectively. Hence, the result showed that the environmental related challenges facing trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice during teaching practice include: Inability of student teachers to conform to rules of the school of practice, Non-cooperative attitude of the regular school teachers with student teachers, and Non-involvement of student teachers in extra – curricular activities.

Research Question 3: What are the instructional-based challenges facing trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice?

Table 3: Summary Analysis on the Instructional-based challenges facing Trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice

s/n	Items	N = 427		
		\bar{X}	S.D	Remark
Instructional based challenges				
1	Inability of the student teachers to utilize instructional materials properly	2.64*	.814	Agreed
2	Inability of the student teachers to apply appropriate teaching skills	2.44	.700	Disagreed
3	Non-availability of relevant resources such as textbooks and curriculum guidelines marking student exercise	2.45	.813	Disagreed
4	Inability of student teachers to improvise instructional material	2.28	.902	Disagreed
5	Nervousness during lesson presentation in the classroom	2.65*	.806	Agreed

* Significant mean ($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$)

The result in Table 3 showed that students agreed on items 1 and 5 at a mean score range of 2.64 to 2.65 while they disagreed on item 2, 3, and 4 at mean score range of 2.28 to 2.45 respectively. Hence, the result showed that the instructional-based challenges facing trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice include: inability of the student teachers to utilize instructional

materials properly and nervousness during lesson presentation in the classroom

DISCUSSION

The result showed that the classroom management challenges facing trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice include: managing poor arrangement of the sitting position of students, controlling student's movement in and out of the class, avoiding disruptive behaviour among students in a classroom and maintaining classroom punctuality rules. The result agrees with that of [5] who revealed that trainee-teachers experiences had an impact on their perception of the teaching profession and they did experience challenges while on teaching practice.

The result is in line with that of [6] who found out those student trainee-teachers were able to identify most of these challenges, which to the researchers is a good starting point for finding solutions. The result corroborates that of [7] who stated that fifteen out of the twenty one items were perceived by majority of trainee-teachers as major challenges faced during teaching practice exercise. The result further shows that poor arrangement of the sitting position of students, controlling student's movement in and out of the class are the class management challenges facing trainee-teachers.

The result showed that the environmental related challenges facing trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice during teaching practice include: Inability of student teachers to conform to rules of the school of practice, Non-cooperative attitude of the regular school teachers with student teachers, and Non-involvement of student teachers in extra – curricular activities. The result agrees with that of [3] who found out that trainee-teachers do not differ in their perception of the problem being faced by the trainee-teachers.

The result is in line with that of [8] who stated that lack of accommodation for the student teacher, lack of resources such as tables and chairs for the student teachers, are the environmental related challenges facing trainee-teachers in Northwest University, Kano. The result supports that of [9] who ascertained that non-cooperative attitude of the regular school teachers with student teachers and non-involvement of student teachers in extra – curricular activities as experienced is some of the environmental related challenges faced trainee-teachers towards teaching practice.

Result showed that the instructional-based challenges facing trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice include: inability of the student teachers to utilize instructional

materials properly and nervousness during lesson presentation in the classroom. The result agrees with that of [10] who stated that inability of the student teachers to apply appropriate teaching skills is one of challenges facing trainee-teachers among the student in a Nigerian. The result is in line with that of [11] who revealed that lack of on-availability of relevant resources such as textbooks and curriculum guidelines lack affect trainee-teachers in their teaching practice in tertiary institutions in Nigeria

The result showed that the feeling uncomfortable getting along with existing teachers of the school, finding it difficult to contribute in discussions raised by other teachers of the school, teachers of the school are unapproachable and finding it difficult to cope with the head teacher's leadership predisposition are the related issues of trainee-teachers relationship with the teaching/non-teaching staff of the teaching practice programme as perceived by trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State.

CONCLUSION

Based on findings, it is concluded that the challenges facing trainee-teachers of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State during teaching practice border on classroom management such as managing poor arrangement of the sitting position of students, controlling student's movement in and out of the class, avoiding disruptive behaviour among students in a classroom and maintaining classroom punctuality rules. The environmental, instructional based issues confronting trainee teachers were inability of student teachers to conform to rules of the school, non-cooperative attitude of the regular school teachers with student teachers and non-involvement of student teachers in extra – curricular activities. Inability of the student teachers to utilize instructional materials properly and nervousness during lesson presentation in the classroom were some of the instructional based challenges faced by trainee teachers of the institution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the findings, are the following recommendations:

- 1) Stakeholders in teaching practice in colleges of education and universities should formally induct their student-teachers on the importance of the exercise to teacher education to ensure satisfactory teaching performance of the students
- 2) The supervisors of the student-teachers should be trained on how to encourage trainee –teachers who could be finding some recurrent difficulties with coping with real time classroom experiences with learners of diverse learning abilities.
- 3) The teaching practice must be thoroughly monitored to ensure total compliance with the principles guiding the exercise

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