

Attitude of Student-Teachers towards Teaching Practice In the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper is a descriptive survey which sought to ascertain the attitude of student teachers towards teaching practice. This study was conducted in the Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt. The sample comprised of 120 Students who were on teaching practice in 2008/2009 Session, 10 principals and 20 teachers of practicing schools were drawn by simple balloting. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The instrument for data collection was a 40 – item questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument was validated and an internal consistency of 0.87(87%) was calculated using Cronbach Alpha techniques. Data was analyzed using means and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed that if all the strategies for improving students attitude towards teaching practice would be adopted the students' attitude towards teaching practice, no doubt, will be affected positively. Based on the findings, recommendations were made among others that the Faculty should have a micro-teaching laboratory where the students will be well exposed to the rudiments of teaching before they should be sent to schools for actual practice.

Keywords: altitude, teaching practice, cronbach alpha techniques, micro-teaching laboratory, actual practice

INTRODUCTION

The global claim that education is a major, sure and potent instrument for the attainment of sustainable development in all human society today can not be overemphasized. Developing countries face barrage of extraordinary problem among which are abject mass poverty, ignorance etc. The solution of course, lies in proper education of the masses. Thus education according to Ogunna (1981) helps cushion high rate of illiteracy effect, emancipate the masses from the shackles of ignorance, equipping them with cognitive skills to induce development and also make them aware politically, economically and enables them produce and develop teaming human resources, producing caliber of personnel imbued with skills for productivity. Ukeje (1988) pointed out that education unlocks the door to modernization/sustainable development but that, it is teacher that holds the key to the door'. Thus, the teacher has the responsibility of translating educational policies into practice and programmes into action. Okafor (1991) speaking about the secret of America's power, pointed out that America built her greatness in the classroom. Developing countries, Nigeria in particular should emulate this.

It is clear from the foregoing that the role of the teacher in sustainable development cannot be quantified, especially in training personnel in various areas of the workforce. However, the teacher needs to be properly educated and trained for professional efficiency and inculcated with a positive attitude that

will enable him/her go through the training properly and come out well equipped for the responsibility ahead. Many nations have solved many of their problems through education and the secret lay in effective classroom activities. The secret of Athenian greatness lay in the caliber of teachers (sophists). By the same token, today the secret of America's greatness emerged from the classroom. Professors place high premium on teaching practice because it enables the students practicalize all the theoretical teachings on the educations principles and practice. Furlong et al., (1988) noted that the profession practical experience is necessary in all professions and carries a high cumulative grade point average (CGPA). A student may never graduate without the experience. Taneja (2000) noted a number of term, such as the practice teaching, field studies, infield experience, school based experience or internship are used. In view of this, teaching practice occupies a key position in the programme of teacher education and is the common professional element in preparation of teachers. It is the first official opportunity for trainee teacher to involve in actual teaching experience. Trowbridge and Bybee, (1994). Sharafaddin and Allison (1969) noted, trainee teachers see themselves grow through experience and they begin to link to a culture of teaching. During teaching practice, they feel engaged, challenged and even empowered. Ashraf (1999) pointed out that the term teaching practice embraces all the learning experience of student teachers in schools. Stones and Morris

(1977) opined that the term teaching practice run three major connotations: the practicing of teacher skills and acquisition of the role of a teacher, the whole range of experience that students go through in school, and the practical aspects of courses as distinct from theoretical studies.

Teaching practice is the name of the preparation of student teachers for teaching by practical training. It is the practical use of teaching methods, teaching strategies, teaching principles, teaching techniques and practical training and practice or exercise of different activities of daily school life. It is a cardinal and indispensable aspect in the preparation of teachers. It is the common professional element in the preparation of trainee teachers. The concept of teaching practice is made clearer by looking at some of the objectives of teaching practice as enumerated by Akbas (2002), as follows:

1. To provide prospective teachers with the opportunity of establishing an appropriate teacher pupil relationship.
2. To provide an opportunity for evaluating the students potential as a teacher and suitability for the teaching profession.
3. To develop personal relationship with others administrators, teachers, parents and students.
4. To provide the future teacher with experience in school to overcome the problems of discipline and enable him/her develop method of control.
5. To provide an opportunity to put theories into practice and develop deeper understanding of educational principles and their implications for learning.
6. To enable the student teachers effectively plan and prepare lessons.
7. To develop skill in the use of fundamental procedures, techniques and methods of teaching
8. To develop desirable professional interest attitudes and ideas relative to teaching profession.
9. To enable student teachers acquire desirable characteristics/traits of a teacher and to display appropriate behaviour.
10. To provide student teachers with opportunity to have teaching evaluation and to gain from constructive criticism
11. To provide an opportunity for self evaluation and to discover ones strength and weaknesses.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Iniobong (2008), opined that the future of any nation depends on the quality of teachers. The maxim that

no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers and that no nation can rise above the level of its teaching staff shows the role of the teacher and teacher education programmes in national development. With the introduction of Universal Basic Education (UBE) only well trained teacher can successfully translate the objectives of UBE to reality. Education, according to Lassa (1996) is the key to national development and only teachers hold the key and can turn it to national development. In order to acquire practical professional experience to meet up with the above task, the trainee teachers are sent on teaching practice. This enable the prospective teachers to be well prepared for the assumption of duty as professionally, motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teacher who will encourage the spirit of inquiry, creativity and intellectual development among the beneficiaries of educational system.

The problem of the study therefore, is to ascertain the attitude of the students teachers towards teaching practice.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In general term, the purpose of this study is to ascertain the attitude of the students in Faculty of Education in Nigerian Universities towards teaching practice as an impetus for their professionalization. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the attitude of the student teachers towards teaching practice.
2. identify the problems facing practical teaching and its related activities in Nigerian universities.
3. Identify strategies for improvement in the attitude of the student teachers.

Research Questions

1. What is the attitude of the student teachers towards teaching practice?
2. What are the problems facing practical teaching and its related activities in Nigerian universities?
3. What are the strategies for improving the attitude of student teachers towards teaching practice?

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the 200 and 300 level students on the problems facing practical teaching and its related activities.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

The design of the study is a descriptive survey which attempts to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of the population.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in University of Port Harcourt

Population of Study

The target population comprised of all the students in 300 and 200 levels in Faculty of Education who were on teaching practice, all the principals and teachers of the school used for teaching practice.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Simple balloting was used to choose 20 students from each of the six Departments who were on teaching practice, 10 principals and 20 teachers of the schools used for teaching practice. The total sample used for the study was 150.

Instrument for Data Collection

Instrument for data collection was developed by the researchers. The instrument was a 40 – item questionnaire made up of three sections. Section ‘A’ was on personal data which sought to ascertain among others, the student teachers academic level, Section ‘B’ sought to elicit information on the degree of agreement with the item statement presented in the questionnaire titled “Student Teachers and Teaching Practice (STTP). Section ‘D’ was structured to elicit responses from the principals and teachers of practicing schools on their observations in students attitude towards teaching practice. The modified likert scale was used and the weightings were Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The average of these

$$\text{points is } 2.50 (4 + 3 + 2 + 1) = \frac{10}{4} = 2.50$$

This would be used in data analysis.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was face validated by two experts in Education Science and Education Foundation. They were expected to validate the instrument in terms of relevance to the topic, ambiguity of statement, clarity of language and adequacy of the items. The experts, after examining the instrument made some corrections which were effected in the final draft of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was trial-tested on ten students; 5 from 300level and 5 from 200 level who were not used in the study. The reliability of 0.87(87%) was calculated using Cronbach Alpha technique. This value was deemed appropriate for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The researchers distributed the questionnaires with the aid of lecturers who supervised students on teaching practice. The questionnaires were retrieved on the spot.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive data analysis (mean and decision) were used to answer the research questions. A mean of 2.50 and above indicates agreement with the item statement while a mean of 2.49 and below indicate disagreement. For ease of analysis of the research question 1, a mean of 2.50 and above was regarded as positive attitude while 2.49 and below was regarded as negative attitude. In research question 2 and 3, a mean of 2.50 was taken as “agree” 2.49 and below as “disagree”. The null hypothesis was tested with Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at P < 0.05.

RESULTS

The results were presented in line with the research questions and hypothesis.

Table 1(a) Mean Ratings of the 300 and 200 Level Student Teachers on Their Attitude towards Teaching Practice

S/No	Items on the Attitude of Student Teachers Towards Teaching Practice	300 level T/P students	200 level T/P Students
1	Teaching practice is very good experience and should be allowed to continue	2.56 positive	2.60 positive
2	Teaching practice is a fun and should be extended to 6 months	3.00 Positive	2.97 Positive
3.	I have never been absent from my school location since I was posted	2.61 Positive	2.55 Positive
4	I am always regular to school	2.50 Positive	2.62 Positive
5	I am always there at my school location whether I have period to teach or not	2.63 Positive	2.76 Positive
6	I am always ready with my lesson notes	2.62 Positive	2.82 Positive
7	I like to teach my lesson than watching the regular teacher use my period.	3.00 Positive	2.98 Positive
8.	I prefer being supervised by my lecturers	2.50 Positive	2.62 Positive
9	I have mutual understanding with my students and the school authority	2.62 Positive	2.72 Positive
10	I teach all my lessons with instructional materials	2.50 Positive	2.55 Positive

In Table 1, the mean ratings of the 300 and 200 level students show that the respondents scored up to 2.50 and above showing that they have positive attitude in all the listed items.

Table 1(b) Mean rating on the observed attitude of the 300 and 200 level students towards Teaching Practice by the Practicing Schools

S/No	Observed attitude of the students towards Teaching Practice	Principal	Teachers
	The following attitude were observed in the students during Teaching Practice		
11	Prompt report to the school location	2.10 Negative	2.30 Negative
12	Diligent to duty	2.50 Positive	2.52 Positive
13.	Regularity to school	2.61 Positive	2.70 Positive
14	Punctuality to school	2.11 Negative	2.12 Negative
15	Resourceful	2.60 Positive	2.50 Positive
16	Good relationship with teachers and students	2.72 Positive	3.00 Positive
17	Obedient/respect to school authority	2.50 Positive	2.60 Positive
18.	Readiness to take instruction/corrections	2.62 Positive	2.72 Positive
19	Decency in dressing	3.20 Positive	3.13 Positive
20	Ability to teach	2.20 Positive	2.11 Positive

Table 1(a) reveals that the mean ratings of the students showed that the respondents scored up to 2.50 and above showing that they have positive attitudes in all the listed items except in 14 and 20 where the principals and teachers scored below acceptable mean (2.11 and 2.12) and (2.20 – 2.11) respectively.

Table 2: Mean Ratings on the Problems Facing Teaching Practice in the Universities

S/No	Items on the problem facing teaching practice	300 Level Students	200 Level Students
	The following are the problems facing teaching practice in University of Port Harcourt		
21	Inadequate preparation of students for teaching practice	2.71 Agree	2.60 Agree
22	Lack of necessary equipment, facilities and materials for preparation of the students before sending them out for teaching practice	2.91 Agree	3.00 Agree
23.	Unwillingness of the students to report to their school locations	2.10 Disagree	2.10 Disagree
24	Few number of practicing schools within Port Harcourt	3.00 Agree	3.10 Agree
25	Poor learning environment in the practicing schools, such as class congestion, poor ventilation, poor facilities and equipment	3.10 Agree	3.00 Agree
26	Lack of accommodation for the student teachers especially those posted very far from the university	3.15 Agree	3.40 Agree
27	Short practicing period	3.00 Agree	3.05 Agree
28	Rejection of students by some schools	3.25 Agree	3.15 Agree
29	Lack of transportation fare on the part of the student teachers	2.71 Agree	2.52 Agree
30	Inaccessibility of some school locations by students and lecturers	2.91 Agree	2.90 Agree

Table 2 reveals that the mean ratings of the students shows that the respondents scored up to 2.50 and above, showing that all the respondents agreed that all the listed items are the problems facing teaching practice.

Table 3 below reveals that the mean responses of the 300 and 200 level students reached to the acceptable mean of 2.50 and above. This is an indication that all

the designated strategies should be adopted for improvement in the attitude of the students on teaching.

Table 4 below also shows that F-calculated is -0.0.5 while F-Critical is 3.11. the F-Calculated is less than the F-Critical. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis of no significant difference. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the two groups.

Table 3: Rating on Strategies for Improving Students Attitude Towards Teaching Practice

s/no	Items on strategies to improve the attitude of the students towards teaching practice	300 level T/P students	200 level T/P Students
	The following strategies should improve the attitude of the students towards teaching practice		
31	Students should be well prepared before posting to schools	2.71	2.62
32	Micro-teaching laboratory should be put in place and be used to groom the students well enough before teaching practice	2.92	2.80
33.	As much as possible students should be sent to good schools, considering the accessibility and nearness to the university	3.10	3.20
34	University should give each practicing students some financial support for their upkeep during the period of teaching practice	2.50	2.62
35	The university buses should be used to convey the students to their various school locations	3.01	3.00
36	The school authority should liaise with far school locations to arrange accommodation for the students	3.11	3.12
37	Lecturers should not collect gifts either in form of money or materials from the students	2.92	2.80
38.	Lecturers should inform the students when they want to visit each school for supervision	2.52	2.61
39	Teaching practice handbook should be made available to students	2.92	3.00
40	Students should be briefed before reporting to their school locations	2.50	2.60

Table 4: ANOVA Summary for the Mean Ratings of 300 and 200 Level Students on the Attitude of Students towards Teaching Practice

Source of Variation	Sum of Square	DF	Mean Square	F-Calculated	F-Critical
Between groups	0.01	2	-0.005	-0.015	H ₀₁ not rejected
Within groups	50.554	157	0.322	0.005	
Total	50.555	159			

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

In Table 1, the mean ratings of the respondents 300 and 200 level students, the principals and teachers indicated generally that the students have positive attitude towards teaching practice except that some would not report promptly to their school locations and sometimes they would not be punctual to school. This might be due to inaccessibility of some school locations, far distance and sometimes traffic congestion in town.

In Table 2, the mean ratings of the 300 and 200 level students indicated agreement that all the listed items are problem facing teaching practice in the Nigerian Universities. The ANOVA mean ratings of the 300 and 200 level students revealed that there is no statistical significant difference.

In response to research question 3, the respondents agreed that all the stipulated strategies would be adopted to ensure positive attitude by the students towards teaching practice. This shows that the students are unanimous in their mean ratings. One could therefore conclude that if all the stated strategies would be adopted, no doubt, the students

attitude towards teaching practice will be affected positively.

CONCLUSION

The attainment of quality education will be a mirage without adequate preparation of manpower who will dispense the knowledge. This calls for serious consideration of stipulated strategies to be adopted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to build positive attitude of students towards teaching practice in Nigerian Universities, we recommended as follows:

1. Faculty should have a micro-teaching laboratory where students will be well exposed to the rudiments of teaching.
2. There should be teaching practice handbook for the students to have a uniform method of writing lesson notes. Rules and regulations of practical teaching will also be stipulated in this hand book.
3. Students should be sent to good schools with suitable learning environment.
4. The school location should be accessible both for lecturers and students.

5. The Faculty should find out whether the schools have need for students teachers to avoid the embarrassment of rejection.
6. For every far school location, the faculty should liaise with the schools to make sure that these students are well accommodated.
7. Lecturers should endeavour to visit the students and supervise the actual teaching process.
8. The duration of teaching practice should be increased.

All hands must be on deck to refocus the attitude of the students towards teaching practice.

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